

# MOTHER INDIA

DECEMBER 5, 1973

Joint Issue of November-December

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## EDITORIAL NOTE

THIS issue was ready by November 17 when the Mother passed away. Nothing could be changed in it, but a few writings have been added, all—except the “postscriptum” to an article — at the commencement, to meet the new situation as far as the human mind, face to face with a divine event, can hope to do so in some ways at this moment.

A separate supplement, printed at the last minute, has also been included.

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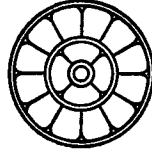
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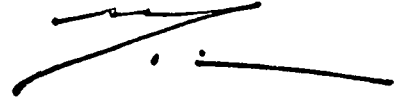


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



Editor: K. D. SETHNA

Managing Editor: K. R. PODDAR

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*“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”.*

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## **A MESSAGE BY NOLINI**

Mother once told me — “If ever I leave my body my Consciousness will remain with you.”

Mother is present amongst us and Her work continues.

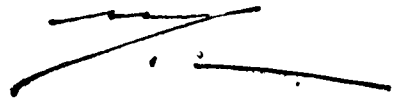
Let us once more dedicate ourselves for Her work of transformation with utmost sincerity and faithfulness.

21-11-1973

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## **WHAT THE MOTHER ASKS FROM US**

Be simple,  
Be happy,  
Remain quiet,  
Do your work as well as you can,  
Keep yourself always open towards me.  
This is all that is asked from you.



## A REPORT

### ADAPTED FROM THE SUPPLEMENT TO THE "BULLETIN OF SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF EDUCATION"

IN May this year the Mother took a very critical decision. What it was She did not announce, as was quite Her way, but there was a great change in Her exterior daily programme. She practically ceased all Her external activities from the 21st May and later met no one at all except those who attended on Her physically.

It was clear to us, however, that She was working on the transformation — but to what result we did not know.

The doctors who examined Her did not find anything specifically wrong with Her medically, yet She remained withdrawn within Herself most of the time and took very little food. She continued in this way till the 17th November. On that day, there did not seem to be any particular difference. In the late evening when She asked to be lifted up, the attendants noticed signs of unusual discomfort and sent for the doctor. This was at about 7.00 p.m. At 7.25 p.m. Her heart stopped. The doctor tried to revive it by an external massage but it did not respond — so he pronounced that the Mother had left her body.

The body was then prepared for being kept in state and the Mother was brought down from Her room to the Meditation Hall downstairs and She was laid in state there. By about 3.00 a.m. of the 18th the members of the Ashram were informed of Her passing and they began to come to the Meditation Hall for a last Darshan. The government departments were informed and All India Radio. The public were admitted to have Her last Darshan by 4.30 a.m. From 4.00 a.m. onward, the news was sent around India and the world by telegram, cable and telephone calls. There were many responses, one from the President of India, one from the Prime Minister and several from the Governors of various states. The Lieutenant Governor of Pondicherry came at once.

The message that was sent to everyone was as follows: "The Mother left Her Body on 17.11.73 at 7.25 p.m. The immediate cause of Her passing away was heart failure. The body is kept in state for the last Darshan of the disciples, devotees and the general public. It will remain in state as long as it is possible to keep it. Her message is well known in Her living utterance : 'A New Humanity shall arise.' Let Her will be done."

The doctors examined the body twice a day. On the morning of the 19th they felt that it would not be advisable to keep it in state beyond the morning of the 20th. So it was decided to have the samadhi on the 20th morning and to lay the body of the Divine Mother in a casket at 8.00 a.m. of the 20th November. The news was circulated all around and preparations began to be made for the samadhi. The Samadhi of Sri Aurobindo was opened.

A casket was made of one-inch-thick rosewood and the inside was lined with a pure silver sheet and over this was a lining of felt and then white silk satin. On the lid of the casket was fixed a symbol of the Mother in pure gold.

At 8.00 a.m. on the 20th November the Mother's body was laid in the casket, which was then covered and sealed hermetically.

The casket was carried to the Samadhi and lowered into the chamber just above the vault in which Sri Aurobindo's body had been laid in 1950. Nolini and André scattered some rose petals over the casket and concrete slabs were placed to cover the chamber. There was then a meditation for about ten minutes.

A running commentary on the event was given by All India Radio. After the meditation, wreaths and bouquets of flowers were laid on the Samadhi by the Government of Pondicherry, the French Consul and others. The members of the Ashram, the visitors who had come from all over the country in large numbers and the general public were then permitted to pay their respect at the Samadhi.

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# THE PASSING OF THE MOTHER

A COMMENT BY K. D. SETHNA

THE Mother of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram left her body on November 17 at 7.25 p.m. Clinically, her departure has been attributed to heart-failure. Spiritually, we may assert that there could never be a failure of the Mother's heart in the sense either of ceasing to work or of falling short of its goal. Her physical heart was only an outer expression, under self-imposed limits, of a power that was endless in its working. We may well describe it in Sri Aurobindo's words about the central character in his epic *Savitri* — she who was figured as the incarnation of the Supreme Shakti:

A heart of silence in the hands of joy  
Inhabited with rich creative beats  
A body like a parable of dawn  
That seemed a niche for veiled divinity  
Or golden temple door to things beyond.

What this heart of a Yogini *par excellence*, this living echo of the Divine Consciousness, represented by its physical pulsation is revealed in another passage in the long description of Savitri:

A deep of compassion, a hushed sanctuary,  
Her inward help unbarred a gate in heaven;  
Love in her was wider than the universe,  
The whole world could take refuge in her single heart.

Surely, the fate of such a heart cannot be designated in clinical language. And what its import may be is best discerned from the Mother's own pronouncement to the present writer after Sri Aurobindo left his body on December 5, 1950.

When she was shown the Note giving a short account of the puzzling unexpected event, she paused over the expression: "the mortal remains of Sri Aurobindo." She said: "There was nothing 'mortal' about Sri Aurobindo. You must write only 'remains'." A moment later she added: "Sri Aurobindo did not die of physical causes. He had complete control over his body."

The writer asked: "Will you not throw some light on the mystery of his passing?"

The Mother replied: "It is all quite clear to me. But I am not going to tell you anything. You must find out the truth yourself."

"Mother, give me then the power to find it out."

At this, she blessed her disciple.

Appealing to the Master for inspiration, the disciple spent nearly a fortnight preparing himself for his editorial in *Mother India*. The light dawned at last and he



wrote his piece: *The Passing of Sri Aurobindo — Its Inner Significance and Consequence*. The Mother gave her full approval to it and later ordered 15,000 copies to be printed in pamphlet form. On the first anniversary of Sri Aurobindo's departure the disciple wrote a second article, which again had the Mother's sanction. This article, less known than the other, has been slightly adapted and republished in the present issue. From these two compositions, clues may be drawn in general to understand something of the step the Mother took twenty-three years afterwards along the same lines as the Master.

We may briefly say that in the interests of her work for the earth's transformation, for the ultimate divinisation of the very cells of the human body with the power of that great discovery of Sri Aurobindo and herself, the truth-conscious all-illuminative Supermind, she chose to give up her physical sheath. The advantage resulting from such an act, under the challenging circumstances prevalent in earth-life, is suggested in her own utterance last year, which we have quoted as *Words of the Mother* in this very issue. She conveys to us that Sri Aurobindo now possesses more power for action than when he was in his body and that only by means of his so-called death could he get the increased capacity which had become necessary. We may further mark that the Mother characterises the action of Sri Aurobindo as "concrete" and almost "material". The same holds for her own action today. If we are to understand her passing in the terms she has herself set up *vis-à-vis* Sri Aurobindo's, there can be no other conclusion.

And when we think of both she and Sri Aurobindo — once joint Avatars of the Supermind — working together from a greater coign of vantage, there should be no grief or despondency on losing sight of that marvellous embodiment of divine love and loveliness that the Mother was for ninety-five years upon earth. The integral transformation of the world's evolutionary life, down to its most material aspect, for which she toiled with the smiling "God-touch" that can accomplish all, shall take place as promised in God's good time.

In the meanwhile we may rest our souls in the assurance she gave when the writer of these lines expressed his bewilderment on losing the physical presence of Sri Aurobindo — the gracious Master to whom he had turned for literary as well as spiritual progress and who had read and commented on everything written by his pupil. The Mother, pressing the pupil's hand, said: "Nothing has changed. Ask for help as you have always done and it will always be there. Nothing has changed."

Who knows if the Mother's physical presence itself will long be absent! We are aware that the Supramental Body was already with her, waiting to fuse with the human form she had worn for our sake. We are aware also that the lengthy struggle she recently went through was only the Yogic endeavour of the human form to open completely to the Supramental Body. Perhaps this form did enough and its exalted agony was needed no more to enable the Supramental Body to manifest. Perhaps that Body, having assimilated the achievement of the other and thereby gained sufficient

density for its subtle-physical substance, can now materialise itself on its own in a not too distant future.

Whatever be the case, most certainly we have not seen the end of the Mother's earthly mission. A gigantic labourer of love like her does not leave her children in the lurch. All her movements, however enigmatic, are bent on bringing the empyrean into the abyss. A Body of immortal knowledge and force and bliss — a visible and palpable divinity — must be assumed to be the objective of every activity of the Mother as of Sri Aurobindo, even though our mind may fumble and see nothing but a luminous haze.

We must not merely say: "All will be well." We must even say. "All *is* well — and shall be still better!"

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## **THIS SECRET SPLENDOUR**

**A POEM BY MINNIE N. CANTEENWALLA**

THOU hast withdrawn with flying golden banners,  
 Golden trumpets with music mute —  
 Our hearts lie injured, bleeding — a barren world —  
 A Krishna with a voiceless flute!

I have loved Thee for these forty years and more,  
 But now is still Thy radiant smiling face.  
 Reveal to us the meaning of this secret splendour,  
 The mystery of Thy seeming withdrawal of Grace.

Yes, merely "seeming" to our stunned saddened eyes —  
 For, Thy eternal glorious Promise we know.  
 Thy undying Consciousness pervades all time,  
 Only the beloved outer being is now laid low.

Thou art still the Keeper of our souls,  
 Of our very lives the Treasury —  
 Those two fragile hands the Safety of our universe.  
 Our inner citadel rests for ever in Thee!

---

# AN EXPERIENCE ON THE MOTHER'S SAMADHI DAY

## A RECORD BY LALITA

HEART-broken and utterly depressed I came to You, my dearest Mother, feeling lost and forlorn. It was between 1 and 2 a.m. on the 20th November.

“Is this a defeat of the Divine?” I asked.

Why did you leave Your body when all along we were expecting its transformation?

Life was not worth living any longer, for all my hopes and aspirations were centred in You. You were the heart of my heart, my sole guide and protector.

As I sat complaining thus and weeping inwardly near Your body which lay in state in the Meditation Hall, I felt a strong Force pulling me deep within myself until I lost all sense of time and space.

My physical mind, which is usually very active, ceased its noise. My body, which was full of pain and discomfort after a long and tiring journey, became so quiet that I was hardly aware of its presence.

Then slowly You appeared, as if from behind a veil. You were clad in a pale-gold robe. You looked young and beautiful — radiant with a brilliant white light.

This light was strongest round the head, circling it with an indescribable halo. It extended intensely down to the waist. Still lower, it was a little less bright. From Your body it spread out to the whole world.

Seeing me gaze at You in utter amazement, You smiled Your sweet and loving smile and said, “There is no defeat of the Divine. This too is a triumph leading to Glory.”

When You spoke these words I understood them perfectly; later when I tried to explain them in the mental way their precise meaning evaded me. Actually words as we know them were not uttered, but I could hear within me what was silently conveyed.

You added, “I have not left you and never will. Forget ego, give up self; live and work in harmony and unity for the Divine.”

Then, opening both Your palms and interlacing Your fingers, You finally said, “And the Advent will not be far.”

I was greatly heartened by Your Message. All sorrow and forlornness passed from me.

The vision withdrew as if You had gone into another room, and I gradually woke up and became conscious once more of time and space and all that they hold for us.

## TRIBUTES TO THE MOTHER

### FROM THE PRESIDENT AND THE PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA AND THE LT. GOVERNOR OF PONDICHERRY

THE President, Mr. V. V. Giri, in a condolence message to the Lt. Governor of Pondicherry, says. "Her dynamic role as a spiritual leader and the spirit behind the Sri Aurobindo Ashram shall ever live as a standing testimony and symbol of her life and work."

The President has also requested the Lt. Governor to convey his sincere condolences to the members of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

Addressing a women's gathering in Kanpur on Sunday, the Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, described the Mother as a "dynamic lady" who had adopted Indian culture and enriched it.

In a condolence message issued in New Delhi on Sunday evening, Mrs. Gandhi said:

"I am profoundly grieved at the passing away of the Mother. It was rather a privilege to know such a being and to have her in our midst for so many years. May her words continue to give sustenance to her disciples and others.

"The Mother was a dynamic, radiant personality with tremendous force of character and extraordinary spiritual attainments. Yet she never lost her sound practical wisdom which concerned itself with the running of the Ashram, the welfare of society, the founding and development of Auroville and any scheme which would promote the ideals expressed by Sri Aurobindo.

"She was young in spirit, modern in mind but most expressive was her abiding faith in the spiritual greatness of India and the role which India could play in giving new light to mankind."

The Lt. Governor of Pondicherry, Mr. Cheddi Lal, said: "She was the centre of Divine Consciousness. Though she has left us physically, her spirit will continue to inspire all humanity to cherish the high ideals of Sri Aurobindo."

*(From The Indian Express, Monday, November 19, 1973, p. 5)*

# WORDS OF THE MOTHER

ABOUT DECEMBER 5, 1950

(From a Talk on December 20, 1972)

You have nothing to ask?

*I asked myself a question about Sri Aurobindo. I wanted to know at what point he had arrived when he passed away — at what point of transformation? What difference in the work, for example, is there between what you are doing and what he was doing at that time?*

He had gathered in his body a great amount of supramental force and as soon as he left... You see, he was lying on his bed, I stood by his side, and in a way altogether concrete, — concrete with such a strong sensation as to make one think that it could be seen — all this supramental force that was in him passed from his body into mine. And I felt the rubbing of the passage. It was extraordinary — extraordinary. It was an extraordinary experience. For a long time, long time like that (*gesture of passing of the Force into the Mother's body*). I was standing beside his bed and that continued.

Almost a sensation — it was a material sensation.

For a long time.

That is all I know.

*But what I wanted to understand is at what point of the inner work, for example, the cleaning of the subconscious and all that, did it stand? What difference is there, say, between the work he had done at that time and the work to which you have come now? I mean to say, is the subconscious less subconscious or...*

Oh! yes, that, surely, surely.

Well, this is the mental way of looking at things. I do not have it any more.

*Yes, Mother.*

(Silence)

*The difference is perhaps a difference in the general or collective intensity of this Power, of this Force — is it not so?*

There is a difference in the *power* for action. He himself — possesses more action, more power for action now than when in his body. Besides, it is for that that he left, because it was necessary to act in that way.

It is very concrete. His action has become very concrete. Evidently it is something which is not at all mental. It is from another region. But it is not ethereal nor... It is concrete. One could almost say that it is material.

## THE SACRIFICE OF SRI AUROBINDO

1:26 a.m., December 5, 1950. A moment like any other, in a night like many a night — except to those who watched in the room where for over two decades Sri Aurobindo had lived. For them there was all human history coming to a cryptic climax: after summing up in himself the aspiration of man in entirety — man the soul, the mind, the life-force, the body — and after bringing a power of complete godhead to answer this fourfold aspiration, Sri Aurobindo was throwing away the earnest of the final and supreme triumph, a physical being in which the very cells were beginning to flower into a divine substance such as the world had scarcely dreamt of in even its most apocalyptic hours.

The doctors who were his attendants knew their patient to be no mere mortal: they treated his body for what they recognised it to be, a vehicle of supernatural light, and they had to accept the mysterious “No” he had categorically returned to their question: “Are you not using on yourself the sovereign spiritual force with which you have saved hundreds?” The body that seemed able to live without end by the protection of an all-transformative power was being allowed by its master to suffer extreme uraemia and pass into profound unconsciousness. Indeed the doctors were permitted — as if out of compassion for them — to try their palliatives; but there was no suspension of Sri Aurobindo’s fiat that though he had the whole perfection of man in his own hands he should lay aside its last victory in himself and embrace death.

No doubt, it was not death in its utter commonness. The uraemia that preceded it had been unique. Every medical sign was there of its absolute hold over the body’s reactions — save one: Sri Aurobindo, as if by an independence of comatose brain and nerve, could command consciousness again and again, inquire what the time was or ask for water. Unique also was the sequel of the uraemic poisoning. Between the instant when life clinically ended and the instant when the body was laid in a casket and lowered into a special vault in the Ashram courtyard, nearly five days passed without a trace of decomposition. And many saw with even their physical eyes the body glowing with what the Mother had called the concentration in it of the light of the Supermind, the Divine Consciousness in its integrality which Sri Aurobindo and she had been labouring with the patience of heaven-sent pioneers to bring down for the first time to suffering earth. Mortality in its normal form was not here; yet something of its age-old doom was present and that was a question-mark glaring in the face of every disciple and making most enigmatic that varied wonderful life of seventy-eight years, triumphant over all human difficulties.

The question-mark cannot be completely removed. Depths beyond depths lie in an event of this nature: the human mind is unable to compass them all. But a few significances gleam out for an initial understanding and set a general perspective in which our aching and groping gaze may rest.

There was no failure on Sri Aurobindo’s part: this is certain from the psycho-

logical and physical details put together — of the preceding months as well as of the actual illness. There was only a strange sacrifice. And if Sri Aurobindo the indomitable gave the sacrifice, it must be one that was a sudden terrible short-cut to some secret victory for God in the world at the cost of a personal consummation. What occasioned the sacrifice appears to have been earth's insufficient receptivity to the Aurobindonian gift of the descending Supermind. Something in the gross constitution of terrestrial creatures would not thrill to the Grace from on high, would not appreciate with a response deep enough the colossal work that was being done at a selfless expense of energy and with a silent bearing of "the fierce inner wounds that are slow to heal". If the earth's consciousness had been more receptive, the crisis of the human body's conversion into terms of divinity would have begun in a less radical shape and without so extreme an upshot for one individual in the van of life's fight towards perfection. Hence much of the responsibility for the upshot lies with the absence of co-operation by the mind of the race. It was as if the beings Sri Aurobindo had come to save had turned his enemies — not deliberately in all cases, yet with a dullness of perception and an inertia of the will that were as crucial.

This dullness and this inertia were not only an obstacle to the descending Divine: they were also perilous for the world itself. To the obscure occult forces — powers and principalities of darkness — which always oppose the Divine's work and which were reacting against the tremendous pressure of the Aurobindonian light in a vast upsurge, to these forces bent on a final calamitous counter-attack across the battlefield that is man, man's dullness and inertia gave a ground of support and thus signed his own doom. Sri Aurobindo, born to put his mission above everything else, could not but follow the course he did: how could he betray the long-invoked Supermind whose hour on earth was preparing to strike, or let the world which he had bound to his heart pay disastrously for its unreadiness before the divine advent? He gathered, as it were, the myriad antagonist spears into his own breast, took upon himself a globe-wide catastrophe. Most unlike him would it have been to do anything in the crisis save sanction the very worst that could happen to him because of humanity's unresponsiveness, and somehow weave it with his invincible spiritual art into the design of his own master mission.

That mission was the conquest of the very foundations of life's imperfect structure through the ages. Not only to build a golden dome but to transform what he symbolically called the dragon base in the Inconscience from which the universe has evolved: this was Sri Aurobindo's work. And it had to be done one way or another. There could have been a way of slow conquest, preserving his own body by a careful rationed spirituality which would run no deadly hazards for the sake of rapid salvation of the sorrow-burdened world. The way of revolutionary evolution, thrown open like an abyss, was to let his body admit an illness symbolic of the drive of the Inconscience from below and, after a limited though intensely significant contest, carry in an actual death its own godlike presence into the stuff of the Inconscience. Death was the glory-hole desperately blown into the massive rock of that stuff for the physical divinity of

Sri Aurobindo to permeate in a direct and literal sense the darkness wrapped within darkness which the Vedic seers had long ago intuited to be Nature's cryptic womb of lightward creation. By identifying his physical divinity with that primal Negation of the Divine, he has effected an immediate entry into the heart of the enemy's camp: he has taken by surprise the central stronghold of all that frustrates and destroys, all that renders precarious the body's beauty, frail the life-energy's strength, flickering the mind's knowledge, and swallows up in its monstrous void the marvellous legacy left to mankind by the hero and the sage.

By passing beyond the visible scene he has not passed to some transcendent Ineffable. He who had held incarnate within himself both the potency and the peace of the Transcendent—the creative Supermind, the Truth-Consciousness of the ultimate Spirit—needed no flight from the universe to reach the Highest. Nor like a background influence would he act now on earth, he whose whole aim was not only to widen and heighten the individual but make all wideness and height focus themselves and become dynamic in the individual instrument. Still in the foreground of events, in the thick of time's drama with eternity as his theme, still as a concentrated individualisation of the wide and the high, an organised being in whom the Supramental *kāraṇaśarīra* or causal divine body has descended into the *sūkṣma śarīra* or subtle body built of mind-stuff, life-stuff and even what we may term subtle-physical as distinguished from gross-material stuff, he stands close to earth with his sacrificed corporeal substance as a firm irremovable base and centre in the Inconscience for spreading there his immortal light and changing earth's fate from the sheer bottom of things no less than from the sheer top.

This is how the occult eye sees the paradoxical climax whose twenty-third anniversary falls today. And as one watches the holy spot that is Sri Aurobindo's *samadhi* in the midst of his Ashram and all about is the aroma of flowers and incense-sticks expressing the mute prayer of the thousands of hearts to whom he is the Avatar of a super-humanity to be, the concrete close reality of the Master of the Integral Yoga requires no proof. But the entire sacrifice, with its immense mysterious potency, was possible because, commemorating each anniversary and conducting the Ashram, there is amongst us his co-worker, his manifesting and executive *Shakti*, the Mother. It is because she, in harmony with his plan to fight from two bases, remains on earth to foster the golden future, that he could draw back from the visible scene as if to pull inward the taut string of the spiritual bow and make the God-tipped arrow fly swifter and farther. She who has been one with him in the Supramental attainment, one in vast vision and integral work, joint-parent of the new age in which the outer physical as well as the inner psychological is meant to be Godlike and wonderfully immune, she is the bridge across which Sri Aurobindo's triumph of winning all while seeming to lose everything moves in ever-increasing beauty and power into Matter's ignorant world of a life that is but death in disguise. Without her embodied mediation, without her retention of the Aurobindonian consciousness in full visibility before us, the upward illumining of the Inconscience by Sri Aurobindo for Matter's transformation



would lack in completeness of result. Her protective hold on earth justifies the withdrawal he has accomplished: her radiant presence fulfils the miraculous power of his absence.

By the co-operation between that absence and this presence a leap in spiritual evolution has been made. A hint of it is in a new expression that comes again and again over the Mother's face. The Supermind, whose realisation and subsequent descent are the Aurobindonian Yoga, seems now not only active as before from above, unfolding its gigantic downward dynamism in its own time, but also operative as a gleaming nucleus of World-Will from even the physical brain-level of the embodied consciousness that is the guru, day after day, to the Godward movement of our souls. In other words, the Supermind possessed overhead by the Mother is now commanded more and more by her from its own growing poise below. The wish of the very earth-self in her begins to be binding, so to speak, on the creativity of her own Supreme Self in the Transcendence. This means a developing adjustment of the incalculable time-rhythm of the Supramental descent from on high to the impatient beat of the aspiring human heart. The possibility dawns of a rapturous acceleration of the Truth-Consciousness's transforming process — and a greater, more luminous mastery of material life, a deeper invasion of the body by the Immortal Existence, a swifter and more palpable progress towards the conquest of darkness and death for which the secret decisive blow was struck in that strangely fateful moment in the dead of night twenty-three years ago.

K. D. SETHNA

(Adapted from the Editorial of *Mother India*, December 5, 1951)

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## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(Continued from the issue of October, 1973)

*(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 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.)*

NOVEMBER 7, 1956

*“The Shakti, the power of the Infinite and the Eternal descends within us, works, breaks up our present psychological formations, shatters every wall, widens, liberates. she frees the consciousness from confinement in the body; it can go out in trance or sleep or even waking and enter into worlds or other regions of this world and act there or carry back its experience. It spreads out, feeling the body only as a small part of itself, and begins to contain what before contained it; it achieves the cosmic consciousness and extends itself to be commensurate with the universe. It begins to know inwardly and directly and not merely by external observation and contact the forces at play in the world, feels their movement, distinguishes their functioning and can operate immediately upon them as the scientist operates upon physical forces, accept their action and results in our mind, life, body or reject them or modify, change, reshape, create immense new powers and movements in place of the old small functionings of the nature. We begin to perceive the working of the forces of universal Mind and to know how our thoughts are created by that working ..”*

*(The Synthesis of Yoga, pp. 172-73)*

*Sweet Mother, how are our thoughts created by the forces of the universal Mind?*

Because the forces of the universal Mind enter into our heads. We are in a bath of forces, we are not aware of this. We are not something enclosed in a bag and independent of the rest: all forces, all vibrations, all movements enter into us and pass through us. And so we have a certain mental force held in, that is to say, ready for use by the formative or creative mental power. These are as it were free forces. As soon as a thought coming from outside or a force or movement enters our consciousness, we give it a concrete form, a logical appearance and all kinds of precisions; but in fact all this belongs to a domain of which one is rarely conscious.

But this is not a special instance which occurs from time to time: it is something constant. If there is a current of force passing, with a particular thought formation, one sees it passing from one into another, and in each one it forms a sort of centre of

light or force which keeps the imprint — more or less pure or more or less clear, more or less mixed — of the initial current; and the result is what we call “our” thought.

But our thought, one could say, is something which does not exist. It can be “our” thought only if, instead of being like a public place as we generally are in our usual state (we are like a public place and all the forces pass there, come and go, enter, depart, jostle each other and even quarrel), if instead of being that, we are a consciousness, concentrated, turned upwards in an aspiration, and open beyond the limits of the human mind to something higher; then, being thus open, it brings down that higher something across all the layers of reality, and that something may enter into contact with our conscious brain and take a shape there which is no longer the creation of a universal force or a personal mind stronger than ours, but the *direct* expression and creation of a light which is above us, and which may be a light of the first order if our aspiration and opening allow it. That then is the only case in which one can say that the thought is our thought. Otherwise, all the rest is simply a notation of passing things: we note down, we clothe a force with words, a force altogether universal and collective which enters, goes out, moves and passes freely from one person to another.

*But how does the thought get formed in the universal Mind?*

In the universal Mind?

*You say that it comes from outside, don't you?*

Ideas have a higher origin than the mind. There is a region of the mind, higher than the ordinary mind, in which there are ideas, which are typical ideas, prototypes truly; and these ideas descend and are clothed in mental substance. So in accordance with (how to put it?) the quality of the one who receives, they either keep all their true virtue and original nature or get deformed, are coloured, transformed in the individual consciousness. But the idea goes far beyond the mind, the idea has an origin much higher than the mind. Hence, the functioning is the same from either the universal or the individual point of view; the individual movement is only representative of the universal one. The *scale* is different, but the phenomenon is the same. Of course these are no longer “thoughts” as we conceive of thoughts; these are universal principles (but that’s the same thing), universal principles on which the universes are built.

The universe, after all, is only one person, only one individuality in the midst of the eternal Creation. Each universe is a person who takes shape, lives, dissolves, and another takes shape — it is the same thing. For us the person is the human individual; and from the universal point of view the person is the universal individual; it is a universe in the midst of all the universes.

NOVEMBER 14, 1956

The Mother finishes reading  
*The Synthesis of Yoga.*

Now we have finished. Do you have something to ask about this subject, in conclusion? What are your reflections? Your comments?

*(Silence)*

Good. What effect has this had on you? Has it helped you, did you have the impression that this put you upon the way, that it gave you the *key* of the discovery?

You have not thought of anything? You did not feel anything, did not experience anything, you did not.. did you listen?

*(Long silence)*

Now the last question; if you do not answer, we shall not talk about it any more: Did this make you feel like doing yoga or not?

*(The Mother looks around)* A nod of the head, but all the same that's something.

Yes or no? A little, much, not at all? . . Then *(turning to a child)* you may speak. Has it made you feel like doing yoga or not?

*There were chapters — when I read and understood it well, then I felt a great aspiration. But at other times...*

Yes? Because you did not follow or because there was no response?

*I think sometimes because I did not follow and sometimes because I did not concentrate properly.*

Has anyone else something to say?

*Mother, when you read, it gives a great encouragement to do yoga, but when one tries to visualise the effort that must be put in, one hasn't much confidence in oneself.*

When I read it is all right and then it burns out!... Then I must read to you on that subject very often in order to re-light the spark!

Very well, next time we shall take *Thoughts and Glimpes*.

Is that all? Has anyone a question to ask on the subject?

*Mother, how can one conquer the desire to appear good in the eyes of others?*

Ah! Good Lord! .. To appear good in others' eyes, to have the approbation of the public? Is that it?

First, the best way is to ask oneself why one wants others' approbation. For what particular reason, because there are many reasons.... If you have a career and your career depends on the good opinion others have of you, then that's a reason of utility. If you have a little vanity — or much vanity — and like to be complimented, that's another reason. If one attaches a great value to others' opinion of oneself because one feels they are wiser or more enlightened or have more knowledge, that's yet another reason. There are many others still, but these are the three chief ones: the reason of utility, the reason of vanity (usually this is the strongest) and the reason of progress.

Naturally, when it is a reason of progress, the attitude is not quite the same, for, instead of trying to make a good impression, one must first endeavour to know the impression one actually makes, in all humility, in order to profit by the lesson this gives. That is quite rare, and in fact, if one isn't too oversimple, generally one attaches importance only to the opinion of those who have more experience, more knowledge and more wisdom than oneself. And so that leads us straight to one of the best methods of cure. It is exactly the coming to understand that the opinion of those who are as ignorant and blind as ourselves cannot have a very great value for us from the point of view of the deeper reality and the will to progress, and hence one stops attaching much importance to that.

Finally, if one is sincere one no longer desires approbation except from one's teacher or one's guru or from the Divine Himself. And that's the first step towards a total cure of this little weakness of wishing to make a good impression on people. Now, if the movement comes from utility, the reason I spoke of first, the question does not arise here, for here we do not depend upon the opinion others have of us, neither for living nor for developing. So there remains the most frequent instance, the one most difficult to cure: that kind of small, very foolish vanity which makes one want to be complimented and not like being criticised. Then the best way is to look at oneself, to see to what an extent one is ridiculous, petty, paltry, stupid and all that, to laugh a little at oneself and resolve to do without others' compliments.

That is all I have to offer you.

It is evident that if it is a question of yoga, of yogic discipline, a preliminary indispensable condition is to free oneself from this little stupidity of wanting to be appreciated by others. That is not the first step yet on the path, it is one of the first steps of preparation for being able to enter upon the path. For so long as one needs to be appreciated and complimented, one is a slavish being with a deplorable weakness.

Fundamentally, it is better not to care at all about what others think of you, neither good nor bad. But in any case, before reaching this stage, it would be less ridiculous to try to find out the impression one makes on others simply by taking them as a mirror in which one sees one's reflection more exactly than in one's own consciousness which is always excessively indulgent to all one's weaknesses, all the blindness, all

the passions, all one's ignorance. There is always quite a charming and pleasant mental explanation to give oneself a good impression of oneself. But to conclude, when one has the chance of getting a teaching a little more worthy of one's faith, worthy of one's confidence, about the condition in which one is, it is better not to ask the opinion of others, but only to refer all to the vision of the guru. If one really wants to progress, this is the surest path.

*Voilà.* Is that all?

*Mother, I had a question. The control of one's own movements and the control of the vast life around oneself, — are these two interdependent or independent?*

Self-control and the control of what surrounds you?... That depends on the point of view from which you see. The police commissioner, for instance, has a certain control over the circumstances around him, but generally he doesn't have much self-control! (*Laughter*)

What exactly do you want to know?

(The disciple reads) *To understand the meaning of "control over the vast life around it."*<sup>1</sup>

Oh! it is a phrase from the book!

It is quite evident that one must first begin by self-mastery, else one has no action on the surroundings except that of increasing the confusion.

*To give an example, Vivekananda had no control over his own anger, but he had a great mastery over the life around him.*

This is the first time I am hearing that. He had no control over his anger? Who has said this?

*It is in his biography.*

Is it he himself who said it? Is it authentic, this story?

(Another disciple) *Yes, sometimes he used to get carried away.*

But he knew it himself?

<sup>1</sup> "It is thus by an integralisation of our divided being that the Divine Shakti in the Yoga will proceed to its object; for liberation, perfection, mastery are dependent on this integralisation, since the little wave on the surface cannot control its own movement, much less have any true control over the vast life around it."

*Yes, he knew it.*

In any case, he did not have a great mastery over his surroundings: he had a great influence, which is a very different thing. One can't control outer matter if one does not control inner matter, for it is the same thing. But he had an influence, which is quite different. It is not a mastery, it is an influence. That is, he could *arouse* certain movements in others, but he could not control them, it was they themselves who had to control them through the awakening, it was not he — I say "he", whoever it may be — that does not matter, it is a general rule.

It is, moreover, childishly simple, for mastery means the knowledge of handling certain vibrations; if you know how to handle these vibrations you have the mastery. The best field of experimentation is yourself: first you have the control in yourself and having it in yourself you can transmit the vibration to others, to the extent you are capable of identifying yourself with them and hence of creating this vibration in them. And if you cannot handle a vibration in yourself, you don't even know the procedure, you don't even know what to do, so how can you control it in others? You may encourage them by words, by an influence over them, to do what is necessary in order to acquire mastery, but you cannot control them directly

To control something, a movement, is simply to replace by means of one's presence, without words or explanation, the bad vibration by the true one. It is this which constitutes the power of mastery. It does not lie in speaking, in explaining, with words and explanations and even a certain putting out of force, you may have an influence upon someone, but you do not control his movement. The control of the movement is the capacity of setting against the vibration of this movement a stronger, more true vibration which can stop the other.. I could give you an example, a very easy one. Two people are arguing in front of you; not only are they arguing, but they are on the point of coming to blows; so you explain to them that this is not the thing to do, you give them good reasons for stopping and they come to a stop. You have had an influence upon them. But if simply you stand before them and look at them and put out a vibration of peace, calm, quietude, without saying a word, without any explanation, the other vibration will no longer be able to last, it will fall away of itself. That then is mastery.

The same thing applies to the cure of ignorance. If you need words to explain something, that is not true knowledge. If it is necessary for me to say all that I say for you to understand me, that is not a mastery, it is simply that I am able to exercise an influence upon your intelligence and help you to understand and awaken in you the desire to know and discipline yourselves, etc. But if I am not able merely by looking at you, without saying anything, to make the light enter within you, the light which will make you understand, I won't have mastered the movement or state of ignorance. Do you understand this?

So I may tell you with certainty that at least in this matter, if it is historically correct that Vivekananda had movements of anger which he could not control, that

is, that he flew into a rage in either word or action, well, in this matter then he was incapable of controlling those around him. He could only awaken in them similar vibrations, and so probably justify in them their weakness as regards this. He could say to them in so many words "Above all, don't fly into a temper", but that is no good at all. It is the eternal "Do what I say, not what I do." But that has no effect.

*(Silence)*

*Mother, the problem comes up in our class.*

Oh! oh! you get into a temper with your students? *(Laughter)*

*To control and discipline them, what should one do when one has no self-control?*

Then one can't! *(Laughter)*

*But the way you describe it, this control will take a whole lifetime!*

Ah! that's a pity! *(Laughter)*

But how do you hope.... Let us see, you have an undisciplined, disobedient, insolent pupil; well, that puts out in the atmosphere a certain vibration which, besides, is unhappily very contagious; but if you yourself do not have in you the opposite vibration, the vibration of discipline, order, humility, of a quietude and peace which nothing can disturb, how do you expect to have any influence? You are going to tell him that this should not be done? — Either that will make things worse or he will make fun of you!

*Usually...*

And if perchance you yourself do not have control and get angry, then that's finished! You lose for ever all possibility of exercising any authority over your students.

Teachers who are not perfectly calm, who cannot stand every trial and do not have that quietude which nothing can disturb, who don't have self-respect — those who are like that will get nowhere. One must be a saint and a hero to be a good teacher. One must be a great yogi to be a good teacher. One must have a perfect attitude to be able to exact a perfect attitude from the students. You cannot ask anyone to do what you don't do yourself. That is a rule. So look at the difference between what is and what ought to be, and you will be able to estimate the extent of your failure in class.

That is all I can offer to you

And I may add, since there's the occasion for it: we ask many students here when



they grow up and know something, to teach others. There are those, I believe, who understand why; but there are also those who think it is because it is good to serve in some way or other and that teachers are needed and we are happy to have them. But if you ask me, I tell you (for it is a fact) that I have never asked anyone educated here to give lessons without seeing that this would be for him the best way of disciplining himself, of learning better what he teaches and of reaching an inner perfection he would never have if he were not a teacher and had not this opportunity of disciplining himself, which is *exceptionally* hard. Those who succeed as teachers here — I don't mean having an outer, artificial and superficial success, but becoming truly good teachers — that means that they are capable of making an inner progress of impersonalisation, of eliminating their egoism, controlling their movements, capable of a clear-sightedness, an understanding of others and a patience which stands all tests.

If you go through that discipline and succeed, well, you have not wasted your time here.

And I require all those who accept to give lessons, to accept it in that spirit. It is very well to be nice and give service and be useful; that naturally is good, a very good thing; but that is but one side and perhaps the least important of the problem. The most important one is that it is a Grace granted to you to be able to reach a self-control, an understanding of the subject and of others which you would never have without this opportunity.

And if you have not profited by it all these years you have been teaching others, that means that you have at least half-wasted your time.

(*Silence*)

Is that all? Convinced? You are going to set to work!

(Another disciple) *Mother, what you have said concerns every teacher, his inner attitude?*

Yes

*But concerning the outer organisation of the school, how do you want it to be done, because at the moment there is much dispute among the teachers.*

Disputes! I hope not many!

*Discussions* (laughter).

How do I want it?

I can tell you things in general, you know, but the details of the organisation ... What is your problem, anyway?

*So far what you have said about the University consists of general ideas, but what about the details?*

Yes....

*There are many different opinions; so what is the true way you want us to follow?*

But excuse me, first you must tell me from what point of view. "Organisation" is very vague, isn't it? If it is about programmes of studies, that's quite a formidable subject which can't be settled like that. If it is the method of teaching, that is something quite personal (personal in both cases). The general plan is easy, that is, it has been given quite clearly; but unless you give me an instance in which let us say there is some discussion and different opinions....

*For example, let us take one point, Mother. You have said that the student must be given full liberty. Now, some interpret this as meaning that there should be no fixed classes, for the student should be left free to do what he likes, to come to the class or not as he likes, etc. So in this case, there should not be fixed hours for each class. And in this case the organisation becomes very complicated—how to arrange the classes?*

Quite impossible! But when have I said that the student must be left free to come or not to come?.

Pardon me, you must not confuse things. I have said and I repeat that if a student finds himself altogether out of tune with a subject, for example, if a student feels his ability for literature and poetry and has a distaste for or at least an indifference to mathematics, if he tells me: "I prefer not to follow the mathematics course," I do not tell him: "No, it is absolutely necessary to do so". But if a student has decided to follow a class, it is an absolutely *elementary* discipline that he follows it, goes to it regularly and behaves himself properly there; otherwise he is *altogether unworthy* of going to school. I have never encouraged anyone to roam about during class-hours and to come one day and absent himself the next, never, for, to begin with, if he can't submit to this quite elementary discipline, he will never acquire the least control over himself, he will always be the slave of all his impulses and all his whims

If you don't want to study a certain branch of knowledge, that is all right, no one can compel you to do it; but if you decide to do a thing in life, whatever it may be, if you decide to do a thing, you must do it *honestly*, with discipline, regularity and method. And without whims. I have never approved of anyone being the plaything of his own impulses and fancies, never, and you will never be able to get permission from

me for that, for then one is no longer a human being, one is an animal. So, here is one of the questions quite settled, without any discussion.

Now, another problem?

*That will be for next time!* (Laughter)

Good. Let us keep it for another time. We shall stop now.

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## TWO POEMS

### HIGHER LAND

THERE is a higher land of love  
 An instant glimpsed, its presence known.  
 Love's conscious wholeness truly glowing  
 All-fulfilling, ever flowing.  
 Immortal home of rest eternal,  
 The rest of truth, eternal growing.  
 Where satisfaction's not a question  
 And rejection's no divisive ending.  
 Within, it is our heart's desire,  
 Self-renewing, everlasting,  
 Illumined wholesome universe,  
 Infinitude of love alone.

### PERSONAL LOVE

My heart is loving thee  
 For loving me.  
 Curiously empty.  
 Ever hungry to be filled  
 With my own reflection in thee,  
 My chosen facet of love's infinite mirror.

LORETTA

## TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of October, 1973)

*(These talks are from the note-books of Dr. Nirodbaran who used to record most of the conversations which Sri Aurobindo had with his attendants and a few others after the accident to his right leg in November, 1938. Besides the recorder, the attendants were. Dr. Mamlal, Dr. Bacharlal, Puram, Champaklal, Dr. Satyendra and Mulshankar. As the notes were not seen by Sri Aurobindo, the responsibility for the Master's words rests entirely with Nirodbaran. He does not vouch for absolute accuracy, but he has tried his best to reproduce them faithfully. He has made the same attempt for the speeches of the others.)*

JUNE 29, 1940

RADIO News had it that Mittelhauser under Wegand's persuasion had given up resistance and accepted the armistice.

P: There is unconfirmed news that General Nogues also is doing the same.

SRI AUROBINDO: It must be true then.

P: The Belgian Minister also seems to be negotiating with Hitler about terms on which they can return to Belgium

SRI AUROBINDO. The General is out then!

*(This talk was before the walk. After the walk Sri Aurobindo began.)*

SRI AUROBINDO: Raja Gopal (CR) is getting uneasy. He says that India is like a pet cat kept in the jungle (by the British). *(Laughter)*

S: He wants to support the war effort.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, he wants to go to war.

S: He wants to go back to the Ministry also. It seems about 13 people voted against him in Working Committee.

SRI AUROBINDO: He is a practical politician. If the colonies surrender, England remains all alone. If she gets India with her then she can get India's manpower and resources and in that case America also may join. That is the only way left to meet Hitler. In America the two parties are pro-Allies. I hope she will have the grace to do what is necessary.

S: I don't think the British are likely to concede anything to India yet. They will say, "If we go down, let them also"; and if they want to retain authority after the war, they won't like to arm India. Besides, it is very difficult to part with power.

SRI AUROBINDO: Oh yes!

N: The English psychology is to give in when they are forced to and no other way is left. Otherwise they don't act.

SRI AUROBINDO: If they want to act, they can do so provided they have the right

man. *E.g.* after the Boer War, Sir Campell-Bannerman gave self-government to South Africa. Self-government has been granted also to Iraq and to Egypt. In Egypt they have kept control of the Suez only. That is the advantage over Germany that you can deal with England; while with Germany — (*Sri Aurobindo began to shake his head*).

N: I suppose Britain has a fear that we may not help her in the war if Dominion Status is given.

SRI AUROBINDO: There can be an understanding I hope the Viceroy will come to an agreement with Gandhi. If the Government does not want to make any advancement on previous terms why do they call these people?

S: What is the Congress stand now?

SRI AUROBINDO: Constituent Assembly, I suppose — Rangarh Resolution.

N: The Congress stand is to sit till their demand of Constituent Assembly is acceded to.

SRI AUROBINDO: I suppose it is Nehru who leads now.

N: Now that the Viceroy has 4 Moslem Prime Ministers on his side; he can easily make some compromise between Congress and the League.

SRI AUROBINDO: Quite so.

P: The best way is for the Viceroy to tell Jinnah that he is going to give self-government to India in spite of the League's refusal and resistance and if Jinnah goes against it, he will be brought under the Defence Act. One thing Jinnah is afraid of is jail. He will never go to jail. That is the only way. (*Sri Aurobindo began to smile*).

S: It seems — Hertzog is also clamouring in Africa for peace with Germany.

N: That he has been doing since the beginning of the war.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, that means there will be a split there, Natal and Cape Town are mostly English and they will form a separate state. The others want white domination in Africa over Indians and natives. The old race superiority under German rule — they can safely carry it through....

This Mittelhauser has been brandishing his sword all the time and now he quietly puts it down.

P: Now German and French troops will kiss and embrace as in Bessarabia.

S: But why did he brandish it at all? He could as well have kept it inside.

SRI AUROBINDO: Quite so. If Africa also accepts, then it will be difficult for Indo-China and Madagascar to hold out.

P: The Belgian Minister also is speaking of submitting.

SRI AUROBINDO: Like Norway?

S: Poland only remains.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, Poland has the best record so far.

S: The Poles won't submit, I hope.

SRI AUROBINDO: No, they are not politicians.

P: Besides, they have nothing to gain. Their whole country is now under Nazi rule.

SRI AUROBINDO: They have had long training in resistance to subjection and they have never yielded.

S: When the world becomes free from Nazi domination France should be kept in subjection.

SRI AUROBINDO (*laughing*): Yes, she doesn't deserve freedom.

#### EVENING

SRI AUROBINDO: Pétain seems to have adopted the Fascist method. He has arrested Mandel and said it was by a mistake. When Mandel demanded that in that case he should make a public apology or keep him in custody he kept him in custody. Then this motor accident of Reynaud looks a suspicious affair, nobody knows where he is. If it is an accident everybody ought to know where he is. Either they have tried to assassinate him or Reynaud has used it as a cover to escape.

S: Why has Mittelhauser given up resistance?

SRI AUROBINDO: Weygand, it seems, flew to Syria and persuaded him.

P: I think he must have said that the colonies wouldn't be touched and they would remain with France after the peace.

SRI AUROBINDO: Are they such fools as to believe in Hitler's words?

N: It would be surprising indeed if even now they were taken in by him.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is the Asuric influence cast all over the world. The Mother says that in *Apocalypse* there is a prophecy that before the millennium when anti-Christ will come everybody will believe in his sweet words and be deceived and no one will judge him by his acts.

S: Japan also is turning Fascist.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, she has asked for "hands off the East" and is trying to adopt an Eastern Monroe Doctrine. But that has been her well-established policy for 30-40 years, to drive out the Europeans from the East. Now is the best opportunity for her.

N: I won't be surprised if France uses her army against England.

S: That will be the last step.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is what Weygand must have told Mittelhauser—that the French should get whatever they can. Japan is not like Hitler. She can wait patiently but she never gives up her policy. When the right time comes she will strike.

S: She has recognised the Bordeaux Government.

SRI AUROBINDO. Of course. The Bordeaux Government has accepted Japan's demand not to send arms to China through Indo-China.

N: But Japan intends to occupy it, it seems, unless America comes in.

SRI AUROBINDO: America can't do anything, because Japan will come by land. In the Dutch Indies she could have intervened with her fleet. That is why Japan kept quiet.

N: Britain is now all alone; she hasn't replied to the Japanese note yet.

SRI AUROBINDO: I have been all my life wanting the downfall of the British Empire but the way it is being done is beyond all expectation and makes me wish for British victory. And if I want that England should win, it is not for the Empire's own sake but because the world under Hitler will be much worse.

N: The world is already getting darker and darker.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, but that has been foreseen.

S: Foreseen by whom?

SRI AUROBINDO: Foreseen since the age of the Bible that the Asura will dominate the world for a time.

(*After a while*) Gandhi's interview with the Viceroy seems to be the same old story. There is likely to be no change in Simla's attitude. Poor Gandhi, he was in such high spirits! Simla's atmosphere has spoiled Linlithgow, it seems.

N: Roosevelt has invited Wilkie, the Republican Candidate.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, to discuss the defence policy — to ask whether he will follow the same policy. He is also pro-Allies.

P: Nishtha says nobody knew him in America and he is a big businessman.

SRI AUROBINDO: Because he is of the West? Perhaps.

S: Dr. Kher has given a lecture in favour of a war committee and asked everybody to sink all differences now. He has tried to imitate Raja Gopalachari by using metaphors and examples. He says — India and England are two goats. The Indian goat must allow the English one to pass over her.

SRI AUROBINDO: Raja Gopalachari's examples are more apt and come more easily. The example of the pet cat is a very fine phrase and it describes the exact situation.

(*To be continued*)

NIRODBARAN

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## STRAY THOUGHTS

### WHILE SEARCHING FOR THE MISSING PAPERS ON SRI AUROBINDO'S ACTION AGAINST THE BRITISH ROLE IN BENGAL IN 1906-1910

TOWARDS the end of September 1971, Suprobhat turned over a letter to me with some requirements from the Centenary Library chief, Jayantital.

Jayantital wanted a complete set, if possible, of the Daily *Bandemataram* from 6th August 1908 to August 1909. Also, copies of the Bengali weekly *Jugantar*, from April 1906. (Sri Aurobindo had written in the early issues.) The letter hinted that all these were likely to be available in West Bengal State Archives of the Intelligence Branch.

I had for over 6 years broken all contacts with the Intelligence set-up, with which I had once been associated. So I remember immediately responding with the following objections, which I thought rather clever:

(a) Did not Sri Aurobindo comment that only he could speak of his past actions, giving them their true force and significance and that none else could know anything at all of his life? He said: 'It has not been on the surface for men to see'.

(b) Did not the Mother mention that Sri Aurobindo had changed his view considerably and that he had held this change to have been perfectly natural?

(c) Did we not already have accounts of Sri Aurobindo in Bengal by Rishabhchand published in the *Bulletin*?

(d) Also, were there not the accounts by Purani, Nirodbaran and Nolini. So, why was all this information required again?

The reply was an eloquent silence — I was being irrelevant! To help my inner urge I recollected the verse in the Gita about how the devotees of the Divine

*Kathayantaśca mām nityam, tuṣyanti ca, ramanti ca*<sup>1</sup>

Anything on Sri Aurobindo could bring nothing but joy. So why not do what I had been asked? I got on with the job.

I

The search led me straight to the *Bandemataram* Case and the Alipore Bomb Case in which *Jugantar* had been held to be "a limb of the conspiracy".

<sup>1</sup> Mutually talking about Me, they are ever contented and joyful — Gita, X - 9.



Months passed and the attempts to find papers led me to see many officials, retired and serving, search various Record Rooms, files, boxes and almirahs. I called my adventure the 'Mystery of the Missing Papers'. The search is not yet ended.

In the process we have been able to procure the following which are now in the Ashram :—

(a) Photocopies of the Warrant of Arrest of Sri Aurobindo in the *Bandemataram* Case; the judgement of Mr. Kingsford the Chief Presidency Magistrate and his acquittal of Sri Aurobindo; and Sri Aurobindo's statement bearing his signature and corrections in a delicate and beautiful hand;

(b) Photocopies of the Commitment Order by Mr. Birley and the Judgement of Beachcroft on Sri Aurobindo in the Alipore Bomb Case;

(c) A photocopy of Sri Aurobindo's defence in the Case;

(d) Photocopies of certain exhibits against him:—

1. The then unpublished article on "The Morality of Boycott";
2. A letter from Tilak before the Surat Congress;
3. Unsigned tributes in English from Indian students in Tokyo and a poem of tribute in blank verse in Bengali from students in Bombay;

4. A letter by R.C. Dutt;

5. A copy of a fascinating letter of 20th December 1907 to Sri Aurobindo — not published for incomprehensible reasons;

(e) A record of Beachcroft's examination of Sri Aurobindo (then 35 years old);

(f) A record of Beachcroft's examination of Nolini (then aged 20 years). Photocopies of the Commitment Order by Birley and the Judgement of Beachcroft on Nolini (Beachcroft really liked him!);

(g) The High Court Judgement in respect of the appeal against the Death Sentences on Barin and Ullaskar and against other sentences;

(h) 181 extracts of the *Jugantar* weekly covering the period 1906-07, translated into English (very faithful translations according to the Chief Justice).

No original *Jugantar* copy in Bengali has yet been found in Calcutta.

(i) A copy of a comprehensive brief (56 pages) prepared by Crown Solicitors Orr and Dignam for a proposed appeal against Sri Aurobindo's acquittal;

(j) Copies of the Bengal Government Confidential Home Political Files containing notes by the Lt. Governor, the Chief Secretary, the Legal Remembrancer, the Advocate General, in respect of the proposed appeal;

(k) Copies of the Confidential Files on Sri Aurobindo's speeches after his acquittal with proposals for another case against him and of the notes discussing a Government-of-India suggestion for his deportation.

Apart from the above we now have references of over 350 extracts of the *Bandemataram* daily and it is proposed to copy out the ones which are not already secured.

So much for what we have obtained as yet. Now for a few side-lights which struck me as interesting during my probe. I would like to share these with the reader.

First, I was impressed professionally by the time and place selected by Sri

Aurobindo We may remember that it was less than 50 years from the Mutiny of 1857 that Sri Aurobindo's political and revolutionary activities took place. J.C. Nixon, I.C.S., in his account of the "Revolutionary Organisation in Bengal" (1917: 8 volumes) comments on Sri Aurobindo, *Jugantar*, *Bandemataram* and the major outrages by the *Jugantar* party. About Sri Aurobindo he says, "In Baroda he came into contact with one Thakur Sahib, a member of a secret society which is said to have existed on the Bombay side from the days of the Mutiny. Under this influence he began to deliberate on the idea of national freedom and unity and to create schemes for the liberation of India from the foreign yoke."

The area Sri Aurobindo selected for his operations had, again, the maximum chance of a possible success. It was Bengal Presidency as then constituted, consisting of 9 Divisions: Calcutta, Burdwan, Presidency, Orissa, Patna, Chotanagpur, Rajshahi, Dacca and Chittagong. Units of the Regular Army were then mostly concentrated in the North-West. There used to be a weak Brigade in Calcutta with detachments in Chittagong, Patna and Dacca. The countryside had poor road facilities and in the East, in Bengal, it was full of rivers and streams, difficult for months for any organised army to operate in, yet most suitable for local, determined, rebellious groups. Further, the people here at that time were politically most alert, extremely dissatisfied and very well provided with journals, dailies, weeklies and monthlies. In Calcutta Division alone (one of the nine Divisions) there were twenty weeklies, one fortnightly, three monthlies and five dailies, all in Bengali, totalling over 70,000 copies, not a great figure by present standards but a reasonably high one at the time (1906). (Report No. 40 of 1906-IB Report of Native Papers in India.)

Secondly, he started a Training Centre for officers in Irregular Warfare. In fact going through the list of over 4000 documents and about 400 articles exhibited in the Alipore Bomb Case (Case no. 9 of September 1908) I was attracted by the seizure of certain Army Manuals and a textbook in Bengali on Modern Warfare, *Bartamān Raṇanīti*. The following Army Manuals were found in the Garden:

- (a) Army Regulations (dealing with discipline);
- (b) Modern Weapons and Modern War (concerned with background theoretical training);
- (c) Manual of Military law (relating to military offences/punishments);
- (d) Company Drill (bearing on group discipline);
- (e) Battalion Drill (bearing on bigger group discipline),
- (f) Field Exercises (explaining Section and Platoon manouvres under fire);
- (g) The Attack Drill Made Easy (treating of battle drill for deliberate attack — disciplined war),

These Manuals were some of the essential Army Pamphlets for Officers and were used for basic training of men for war. Here, I remembered that Sri Aurobindo in Baroda had a friend, Lt Madhav Rao Yadav, a State Force Officer.

*Bartamān Raṇanīti*, however, took me by pleasant surprise. It was obviously a Training Manual for Officers or leaders. It was not just a translation, but, compiled in

Bengali it linked current weaponry with that of India's past and tackled military history and tactics. It also studied lessons of the Boer War and the Russo-Japanese War of 1904. At the time of writing it must have been very up-to-date. I have not come across any textbook in *any Indian language* teaching modern warfare in such a professional manner. It must have drawn heavily from the Army Pamphlet *Modern Weapons and Modern War*, but the editing was good (with occasional spelling mistakes in English words given in parenthesis which remind me of similar lapses on Barin's part mentioned by Beachcroft in his judgement of the Alipore Case.) Nolini also had a list of military books with him and was a member of the Imperial Library, Calcutta, which stored all Army pamphlets then.

Let me give some details of this Bengali Manual.

It contains two parts. Part I has 5 chapters and Part II 8 chapters dealing with various operations of war.

In Part I, the first chapter discusses "War as a Law of Creation", possibly a reprint of a *Jugantar* article dated 21-10-1906, reported under the title "Struggle as a Law of Creation" by the IB. The second chapter discusses, in the light of past weapons, the rifle, the siege guns, the field artillery including machine guns, the shell, the bombs, mines, torpedoes, bayonets and defines the characteristics and uses of these weapons as compared to their earlier types.

The third chapter defines certain terms, *e.g.*, base of war, theatre of war, line of communication, role of commissariat, ammunition, supply, garrison, etc. It then goes on to discuss the Army organisation and show how modern studies demonstrate that a Divisional system of the Army in the future would be more economical and effective than the Army Corps system currently in vogue. It illustrates profusely its reasonings from the Boer War and the Russo-Japanese War. Next, it dwells on the importance of Battle Drill, Unity of Command, Regimental Traditions and so on. All very correctly professional and in simple understandable language.

The fourth chapter deals with the Arms and Services, the nine distinct lines — the infantry, the cavalry, the artillery, the sharp shooters, the scouts and reconnoitring parties, the sappers and miners, the engineer corps, the commissariat and the medical staff. Their roles are explained with illustrations drawn from past wars and contemporary ones (in that period the Boer and the Russo-Japanese).

The fifth chapter deals with the use of the Army in implementing the strategy for success. It lays down five principles for success — selection of a suitable and helpful field for the decisive battle, use of cover and construction of defences, secrecy and concealment of positions, securing of intelligence and a short and protected (safe) line of communications.

Part II deals with various operations of war. It begins with the importance of planning for war including having more than two cover plans and/or alternative plans. It goes on to discuss and distinguish between strategy and tactics, proceeds to concentration after securing adequate intelligence. It dwells on using cavalry and sharp shooters and emphasises all the time concealment and camouflage. It next discusses

the skilful employment of artillery before a decisive battle is launched with reserves, and illustrates with examples from Napoleon. It also cautions against lack of coordination and centralisation of command over the artillery, using the example of an attack during the Russo-Japanese War. Next it goes on to deal with 'Attack', including breaching of obstacles, envelopment and convergent advance. It quotes the German military writer Hoening on Circumvallation — the war of the future: note the German blitzkrieg of 1940. The next chapter deals with Night Attack and is excellently illustrated with lessons drawn from the latest battles.

The Chapter that follows deals with the principle that trained leaders should NOT die in battle. Leaders, Senior Officers must remain alive, even if defeated, to train men to fight again as War is a Law of Nature. (We may note that this principle was adopted later also by the German General Staff in the two World Wars.)

The sixth Chapter also deals with "Irregular Warfare" or what is now called Guerilla Warfare. It deals with history, draws lessons from Shivaji's tactics against the armed but road-bound Moghul Army of Aurangzeb: it discusses the great success of the Boer farmer-irregulars — only 50,000 against a six times as stronger Regular British Army. It discusses Wellesley's great success in Spain against Napoleon, then almost thought to be invincible.

This portion is skilfully written and shows that small, organised and armed groups can bring the Administration of a large, ill-developed (in terms of roads, etc.) country to a grinding halt through chaos in business, stoppage of revenues, unemployment, breakdown of law and order, etc. It brings out how the Regular Army finds it almost impossible to function in such an area in absence of a secure line of communications and in view of its heavy requirements. It then contracts with this the Irregular who can live on the land, and illustrates this from Shivaji's men, who used suddenly to appear, strike terror and vanish before the Regular Moghul Army could get organised to deal with them.

The seventh Chapter shows how Irregular Warfare develops into a successful violent Revolution, and why it is suitable. It first deals with what the Enemy can do against such a possibility. It is a recognised military approach to discuss the Enemy first, his likely courses of action, and then discuss and decide on our own course of action. The chapter, after discussing all the likely Enemy courses, lays down the following:

- (a) The first blow is half the battle.
- (b) Widespread intelligence network and sudden attacks, *e.g.*, "If news comes of a battalion crossing a river, order various groups of the District to attack suddenly from various quarters. Surprise is of the essence. A pitched battle may be necessary."
- (c) Destroy the Chiefs of some Indian States who are "Loyal" as without this the area concerned cannot be made suitable for Irregular Warfare. Sudden attacks on Armouries, etc., would still need a pitched battle.
- (d) It is vital to be efficient in operations of war and to be skilled in arms to avoid capture and achieve breakout when encircled.

(e) When the Enemy is weakened, through shortage of ammunition and supplies, advance and violently attack; do not wait for "surprise" attack (*i.e.*, follow the normal procedure of Advance and Attack).

(f) The longer the irregular warfare runs, the greater is the possibility of a successful Revolution: the Indian troops would desert the foreigner; the Hill tribes would rebel and be on the war-path (NWFP then); young men trained in irregular warfare become skilled in weapons and fearless. All the virtues of a soldier are developed in them. Thus, such warfare is a wonderful training ground for youth.

The last and eighth Chapter concludes with emphasising the suitability of Irregular Warfare in an undeveloped country, repeating the historical examples.

By and large, *Bartaman Raṇanīti* at the time was an excellent text book for the training of potential leaders for war. It is an officers' manual and provides good basic military material with practical training in weapons and explosives, with men devoted to the Motherland; a group of 50 trained officers could produce at least 5000 men trained in such warfare in about 5 to 7 years. Considering that training had started in 1907, and that in another 7 years the Great War (World War I) was to break out, one wonders whether the Revolutionary Organisational set up under Barin could ever be branded 'visionary'. But was it Barin's conception or Sri Aurobindo's?

It is known that Sri Aurobindo, in 1901/1902, about the time of his marriage to Mrinalini, had tried in Calcutta to put across the idea of Irregular Warfare. People then had smiled, and he was thought to be impractical. As it happened, the Organisation got exposed through what were perhaps premature "adventures"

*(To be continued)*

LT. COL. G. L. BHATTACHARYA

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## INVERTED TEMPLE

PILLAR on massive pillar plunging down  
From some foundation of immobile sky —  
Inverted temple of tranquillity, white  
With secrets quarried out of constellate deeps —  
An offering and a call from stirless heavens  
To tremulous earth: “Behold this structure, bare  
Of golden presence, waiting for some vast  
Power to be shrined in its pure silences.  
This holy void is the Infinite bowing low  
To the sleep that is a locked Almightyness.  
Wake, godhead greater than the unfallen spheres,  
Turn the resplendent roof touching dull clay  
A floor for thy small feet to trample stars!  
Fill the descending pillars with the force  
Of thy arousal: lift through them the Word  
Unknown to us but gemmed in the ancient dark  
Where One above the azure hierarchies  
Sealed His eternal image — One who dared  
Self-death to unveil omnipotence in blind dust.”

AMAL KIRAN

## ACTION AND CONTEMPLATION IN THE LIFE AND WORKS OF SRI AUROBINDO

(*This is the paper read by Prof. Angelo Morretta at the International Symposium, New Delhi, 5-7 December, 1972.*)

ALTHOUGH he was born a century ago and 22 years have passed since he died it is still difficult to place the work of Sri Aurobindo, the most imposing and original thinker of modern India — let alone assimilate it in the history of philosophy, whether Indian or western.

Simone Weil said that today we require “another type of saint”, I would like to say that in Sri Aurobindo we are confronted with “another type of philosopher” upon whom we would do well to meditate. In making this assertion I refer both to the individual personality of the great sage of Pondicherry — and to an general appreciation of Indian culture itself. For some thousands of years it has subtly penetrated man’s consciousness in a manner peculiar to itself and therefore not definable according to the general concepts we have, in the West, of both “philosophy” and “sainthood”.

No one can deny that Western philosophy is in a critical state. The various histories of philosophy which discuss both the theories and the philosophers who expound them make this abundantly clear. Even the great Western thinkers who appeared at the dawn of the twentieth century — from Russell to Wittgenstein, from Whitehead to Husserl, from Heidegger to Jaspers or Sartre — reflect that crisis to a greater or a lesser extent in their works. Their method or their language may vary, but each one of them tries to find a solution to the dilemma and fails. In other words, there is a strange vacuum in modern Western philosophy, a sense of disquiet, which we find again in all the essential aspects of modern life and thought. We are left perplexed and discontented. This is why we hear on all sides a call for a “return to the sources”, that is to say, to a way, of thought that is complete and essential, the pre-Socratic school, for example Plato himself, who was the greatest idealist of the Graeco-Western world, has had a “come-back” among the intellectuals of today.

In a period of “transvaluation of all values,” as Nietzsche defined the nineteenth century, men are looking not only for these same genuine values but also for a *method*: a method that will enable them to re-discover those fundamental values which at one time in the past constituted the glory of Western thought, too. Today, more than ever, we feel the lack of a philosopher “of a peculiar stamp”, capable of leading us to those “primary” certainties upon which Hegel, the last of the great thinkers of the Western world, based his own absolute certainties. This type of philosopher existed in ancient Greece. He was Plato. Before Plato there was Heraclitus — (and it is no mere chance that led Sri Aurobindo to devote an essay to this philosopher). There were Pythagoras and Anaximandros. In the period of decadence even Rome had a Greek called Plotinus, the author of the *Enneads*. In order to understand the rela-

tionship between these ancient western philosophers and those of India we need only refer to the fundamental study of another great modern thinker, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religion and Western Thought*.

But before coming to the subject of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy as such, I would like to show how the author of *The Life Divine* was able to develop his philosophy in the *humus* of Indian tradition, a tradition which Sri Aurobindo appears to have over-thrown, but which in reality he strengthened, while giving it different values and aims. This "new type of thinker", to which I have referred, a thinker the whole world is seeking or needing, has never been lacking in Indian tradition, whether today or in the past. From the ancient poetical-metaphysical revelations of the mighty ancestral *Rishi* up to modern times, the search into the problems of knowledge within the limits of Indian culture has never wandered from the main theme of genuine philosophical thought — which is, essentially, not only a research into the nature of the Absolute, but also the attainment of human perfection. That is to say, man's liberty in the most complete meaning of the term. The problem of the conflict between Science and Knowledge, for instance, has reached a decisive point, both in the West and in the East. Any solution but that which Sri Aurobindo offers us, a solution that is both practical and theoretical, is senseless. We should remember that *The Life Divine* was written between 1914 and 1921, that is to say, when Science and technique were already well on the way to representing what they do today. But the conflict between Science and Knowledge is as old as the world, if we consider it properly, and may be resolved in the terms of a balance between *Parā* knowledge and *Aparā* knowledge, that is to say, *primary* or spiritual knowledge and *secondary* or material knowledge, as laid down by the Mundaka Upanishad from the very dawn of Indian culture.

Whenever men and society withdraw from *primary* knowledge in order to dedicate themselves only to *secondary* knowledge the result is the drama of fixed schemes of values and of human life itself. Therefore we find many similarities and dissimilarities between the greatest idealist of ancient Greece and the greatest idealist of modern India, that is, between Plato and Sri Aurobindo. The comparison is not intended to be merely illustrative and historical. On the contrary, it comprises the whole idiom of Western thought in contrast with Eastern thought.

Even his life shows that Sri Aurobindo had many elements in common with Plato. It is a fact that the greatest Greek philosopher longed to be a man of action, a reformer, although he was an idealist to the highest degree. He wanted to apply his own ideas to the living reality of mankind and history. Plato's philosophy was not only theory, it was also practical. The perfection he desired, the moral life *in* the *polis* and deriving *from* the *polis*, was aimed at achieving human liberty based on a maximum degree of knowledge. This *could* not be other than "realisation" (in practical terms) At heart this is the vision, the desire, of every genuine philosopher at all times and in all countries: to contribute something to the evolution of mankind, so that man, even as an historical being, may really become MAN.



But why did Plato and other great philosophers of the West fail to succeed in this undertaking? Although the divine master of Athens offers us, in his *Republic*, the most brilliant *mimesis* that may be attained in the human condition between history and pure spirit, between the world of the senses and the principles guiding it, he tragically fails. Undeniably, the maximum ideals in this world of minimum spiritual requirements must inevitably fail, to a certain extent and in a certain sense. But now a days we are better able to distinguish the fleeting aspects of the Platonic vision of reality: that is, a Utopia which tried to impose itself indiscriminately upon both history and meta-history. In fact, Plato considered Truth as Truth-Beauty only to be contemplated and therefore for him Knowledge became chiefly a kind of aesthetic enjoyment, even if it was sublime. The Philosopher in Plato's *Republic* therefore symbolises the archetype of the *Perfect City* itself. In other words, even at that time the West lacked a hierarchy of real values for Being — a sharp distinction between Action and Contemplation. The sensible and the super-sensible, the world of phenomena and that of noumena, to use Kant's terminology, had not yet been properly defined according to a natural and spiritual, universal and social perspective.

Nothing of this kind occurred in India. From the very beginning the theme was not only contemplation but also "knowledge *synonymous* with realisation". This conception of knowledge, which is at the same time realistic, is the hinge upon which Indian thought turns, and has been since the days of the Purusha-Sukta of the Rishi Paramesthin, up to the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo. Neither action nor contemplation can be conceived or realised without a real perception of the "scale of reality", which leads in its turn to the four fundamental human structures, symbolically represented by the "four castes" as they appear in the Veda. There is a structural difference between them. India has always recommended the technique of Yoga, which is a kind of "science of the spirit", to those desirous of attaining a real and efficient state of knowledge. This is why Sri Aurobindo himself developed his theory of Integral Yoga as the practical foundation or basis of spiritual realisation.

In his youth Sri Aurobindo was a man of action, at least in a common sense. When he retired to Pondicherry at the age of thirty-eight, however, a real and proper *mutation* occurred in his personality and in his vision of the world. It was a structural change in his very being, such as we shall not find in the history of our great Western thinkers. Possibly St. Francis may give us some idea of a similar change occurring in medieval Europe: in his youth he was a soldier who later devoted himself to realising the ideal of Christian sainthood. Pascal is another striking example from the seventeenth century. Indeed, he is an extremely *modern* example, for when he was only twenty-three years old and already a great physicist, he decided to drop everything and become an apologist of Catholicism in its purest form. Tolstoi may perhaps be counted among such examples, although in his case the transformation had, in the main, a social basis. Among Western writers we may number Dostoievsky, who, on discovering the Gospels during his exile in Siberia, changed his ideological concepts

completely and was transformed from a "progressive" to an apologist of a genuinely Russian tradition.

Many of Sri Aurobindo's old companions-at-arms, unable to understand his abrupt transformation from a man of action to a contemplative, have considered this development as a fall, indeed, as a kind of betrayal. Until the years preceding his exile he had been a leader of those in favour of the use of violence in the struggle for independence and a passionate nationalist, together with Tilak, so much so that his friends had already singled him out as their political leader and statesman in the liberated India of the future. Nowadays we no longer consider the transformation as something strange or as a betrayal. On the contrary, it appears inevitable and essential, not only with regard to Sri Aurobindo's own genius but also with reference to the varying relationships between action and contemplation that India has to offer. The change undoubtedly occurred, not only because this particular man of genius willed it to be so, but also due to the truth inherent in the message which Indian culture has always possessed. Sri Aurobindo was bound to discover this truth at some time or another. Only Buddha himself offers us an example of a similar transformation. He renounced the kingdom he had inherited from his father, renounced the world, in order to devote himself entirely to the life of the spirit. Perhaps the very fact that men of this kind were thoroughly familiar with the temptations and limitations of a life of mere action, before dedicating themselves to a life of contemplation, makes their renunciation doubly significant.

To return to Plato: we can trace still another kind of spiritual bond he shared with Sri Aurobindo. Both the philosopher of Athens and the saint of Pondicherry are revivers and "revolutionary" transmitters of a tradition older than that of their respective founders. For Plato it is Socrates who represents the matrix of a philosophy that was to be accepted throughout the Western world. Sri Aurobindo, on the other hand, found his Socrates in the great Vedic seers: the Kanva, the Atri, the Angiras and Vasistha or Visvamitra are his ideal models, as well as being the forerunners of an incomparable ontological and cosmological revelation.

As always, it is a matter of a different presentation of the problem of means and ends in the two traditions, although they spring from similar roots. As soon as Sri Aurobindo had discovered the full significance of that "knowledge-realisation," intuited so powerfully by the Fathers of the Aryan-Hindu tradition, he had no other choice — and there is really something superhuman in the energy he devoted to following his vision. His works are the fruit of that "Mutation" which at a cursory glance appears inexplicable. During the forty years he passed in a semi-monastic retreat his vast work comes to life as the product of a labour that was as immense as it was binding. Without his work Indian culture today, as well as that of the past, would be immensurably poorer. The energy he exhibited in the *Ashram* of Pondicherry, with the support of that extraordinary woman whom we call "The Mother", is but another aspect of the Karma-Yogi he was. This is the path of action that is not exhausted in the mere glory of history, but is fulfilled in divine glory. It is

the more arduous path, since the spirit follows other paths than that of action itself and requires perfect humility in addition to tenacity — just as the real “conquerors” of the world do. The greatest victory, especially in a period such as the one we are living in today, is to realise the highest ambition it is given man to know: that is, to apprehend in oneself and for the benefit of others the living spirit of the whole universe. This is a “performance” that today seemed to be impossible even in India.

Plato is still here among us today, for since he followed the same path up to a certain point, he discovered the real image of the world in the ideal archetypes. Sri Aurobindo, who follows that very same path right to the very end and as an Indian, found that these “archetypes” are effective and living, an organic element in human nature — indeed, they are able to lead us on to a new humanity whose framework is, essentially, supreme knowledge. This is the point of departure of *The Life Divine*. Our maxims and highest ideals are not considered in this work as sporadic evasions or impulses leading us upwards, but as innate virtues, the raw material of an organic evolution of the Spirit we bear within us, which one day we shall (or we should) realise as “normal” realities

The text of the Purusha-Sukta, in fact, clearly indicates not only the goal we are striving towards, but also the means that will enable us to reach it. Out of the four original castes we may choose, in addition to the social significance they possess, the four types of man which Nature has fore-ordained from primitive creation. As far as we are concerned at the present, we may limit ourselves to two only: the man of action and the man of thought, or the contemplative. In these days of violent revolution we are co-involved in a state of indescribable confusion, for we are no longer able to distinguish between *Parā* knowledge and *Aparā* knowledge; this inability, however, leads to a dangerous state of chaos and at times even to catastrophe. The spiritual man does not differ from the man of action only because he observes the rites of an established religion or holds forth on philosophical concepts or created works of art, but also because he is actuated, in himself, by *Parā* knowledge. The man of action, therefore, cannot refuse to listen to the suggestions the spiritual man or the contemplative may have to offer him, for they show him the principles governing the world. Even the ideals of the great visionaries have to be revealed in a concrete manner, often at personal cost and sacrifice among men — although men repeatedly betray them and are incapable of comprehending them in all their entirety.

(To be continued)

ANGELO MORRETTA

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## THE POET AND EVOLUTION

SUMMONED by a dim sweet siren note out of the future  
like a light filtering through the forest of scientific data  
The poet thought of evolution  
and knew as he looked out of the window at the tree,  
impenetrable to his molecules,  
that one day, he would, one day,  
with a vagrant shrug, slip off the incorrigible responses,  
the blood and nerve taboos of his ancestors,  
and pass through the tree  
his molecules politely stepping aside  
for those of bark and wood,  
in well appointed ecstasy, man-particularity devoured.

Emerging drunken on the other side  
the poet ducks his head.  
He's through the maze and half expects his hand to sprout a leaf,  
his foot a root, his mouth a blossom,  
and fears the social consequences.

He may not want for very long to be a tree  
Today he's going out to tea

But it's too late, Come be a universe

And now from arms and hands flow streams that widen into  
silver beams;  
spring cities spawning life and men that dance their purpose,  
each one a tree, a stream that widens into silver beams;  
ten million, million men that dance their purpose.

The poet stares. The tears are running down his yellow cheeks  
the timid taster of tomorrow shrinks.  
The tree still beckons.  
He turns aside

The poet's truisms are lost,  
and truth untamed, will sneak away like a mad fox  
The poet weeps

MAGGI

# 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 October, 1973)

6

### THE FUNDAMENTALS OF TEILHARD'S FAITH: THE TRUE NATURE OF HIS CHRISTIANITY — WHAT IS BASIC TEILHARDISM? — WHAT PLACE HAS HIS CHRISTIANITY IN IT? — TEILHARDISM AND THE MODERN RELIGIOUS INTUITION

(e)

ONE of the last Teilhard-quotations we picked out from Rideau's book<sup>1</sup> had the phrase applying the attributes "irresistible" and "infallible" to the "universe".<sup>2</sup> In this expression we may read a virtual summing-up of what we have termed Teilhard's basic religion. It answers to the "cosmic sense" he often spoke of as something born with him. And Rideau quite openly recognises the foundational and self-sufficient character of that sense for Teilhard, as indeed no intelligent student of Teilhardism can help doing. He<sup>3</sup> writes: "Teilhard was a romantic, and his keen sensibility was so excited by the immense spatial dimension of the universe, by the power and complexity of cosmic energies, without qualifying that emotion by critical assessment, that he made of the world an initial, paramount, primordial entity. No doubt this world is dialectically linked with man and ascends towards a fuller degree of spirit; but, in its very development, it is affirmed as absolute and governs his whole view of being and existence."

Rideau<sup>4</sup> frowns at Teilhard's "romanticism". He sees it as part of the modern scientific spirit which assigns a primary place "to nature and to action upon nature" and gives rise to "philosophies of becoming". He is doubtful whether those philosophies will retain their hold for long and feels that Teilhard was not cautious enough when he based everything on a scientific formulation of his cosmic sense and brought even traditional Christianity to this touchstone. "Though the force and usefulness of some of Teilhard's criticism should not be overlooked", Rideau envisages with Bergson a non-Teilhardian turn of man's mind in the future: "this hypothesis would weaken the case he made out against a theological system and a Christian attitude that is not sufficiently receptive to the modern spirit."

<sup>1</sup> *Teilhard de Chardin: A Guide to His Thought* (Collins, London, 1967).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 369.      <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 246.      <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 246-7.

Rideau is right in assessing "the passion for action" in an objective environment, which, as current science ordinarily goes, is not conducive to "the development of interior and mystical potentialities".<sup>1</sup> However, Teilhard's science is not end-stopped, but flows over and gets "enjambé" to religious prospects. Rideau is aware of this: "what Teilhard tried to do was, in principle, praiseworthy and in conformity with a long philosophical tradition: he sought to use science (particularly in its biological branches essentially linked with history) in order to induce from it, almost experimentally, the existence of God, and from that a religious apologetic." While appreciating Teilhard's ultra-scientific project, Rideau expresses his reservations. He continues: "Nevertheless, the biological law of unification, backed by the rational demand for unity, cannot be fully transposed to the plane of a human history, for the latter is subject to the indetermination of moral freedom, to the alternative of the spiritual option, as it is to God's loving battle with sinful man "

Whether or not Rideau's stricture be quite correct, his setting forth of the "romantic"-*cum*-scientific Teilhard concedes and endorses a point that has often been debated: Teilhard's affirmation of what Rideau<sup>2</sup> calls "the universe in the vastness of its extension and the power of its energies" as a world that is "absolute" — "an initial, paramount, primordial entity". What is of further pertinence is Rideau's reference to the Teilhardian induction of God's existence from this entity and then from that existence "a religious apologetic", the process of demonstrating that the Personal God, loving and lovable, of ultra-or hyper-physics is concerned not only to reflect Himself in man's consciousness by way of a general worship-instinct and then of a precise revelation but also to appear in an incarnate mode in the course of world-history. In short, that He evokes religion, inspires a Bible and produces a Christ. Yes, Teilhard attempts to guide the modern age through his phenomenology to Christianity or, more correctly speaking, from a hyper-physics to a "hyper-Catholicism" — that is, to an extreme extension of the central Catholic dogma of "Christ is all" into that Christian version of pantheism — "pan-Christism" — with its Universal Evolver Christ. But Rideau is not quite logical in equating Teilhard's "religious apologetic" with "a long philosophical tradition". Teilhard does use Science in the interests of religion but there is a momentous difference between his apologetic procedure and that of a whole line of Christian philosophers in the past.

Rideau<sup>3</sup> tells us that in his sense of *nature* and of man, Teilhard follows in the steps of *Saint Thomas* who also based his thought on the analogy of being, on the correspondence between the 'orders' and on nature's pre-adaptation to the supernatural." But Rideau<sup>4</sup> himself admits a little later. "[Teilhard] did not, of course, deny man's supernatural end, but by making religion a function of life, a privileged natural organ of cosmic history, he tended to transpose the 'kingdom of heaven' to the terrestrial plane, as something to be hoped for in world-time. Again, while retaining God's transcendence in relation to his work and the gratuitous character and newness

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 247.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 246.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 239.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 245.

of the Christian mystery, all his intellectual and emotional bent led him to emphasize the connexions and continuities between Creation and Creator, between the world and Christ. His logical insistence on unity and his aspiration for the universal caused him, while retaining the distinction between them, to unite in *synthesis* and in theory orders or planes that are separated by their distance from the mystery." We may remember that, for Teilhard, God is conceived as an extension of the world's progress and figured under the form of the world's evolutionary peak, Omega Point. He makes this peak the test of religious truth. Everything has to be in accord with Omega Point. No religion, no revelation can have any force for Teilhard if it is unaware of Omega or bypasses it. This stand of Teilhard's has always to be kept in mind when defining his "religious apologetic".

Rideau seems apt to ignore it in an important place. If we look at Teilhard's apologetic in a broad general fashion we may stress, as Rideau does, a passage penned in 1946. Rideau<sup>1</sup> writes: "In his *Esquisse d'une dialectique de l'esprit* (1946, in *L'activation de l'énergie*, pp. 149-58) Teilhard sets out clearly the 'successive phases of his apologetics or, if you prefer it, dialectic': (1) discovery of Omega as the 'purely immanent focus of Convergence'; (2) discovery of God as the personal centre of attraction not only for the world but for free consciousnesses; (3) discovery of the Christian phenomenon and faith in the Incarnation; (4) discovery of the Church, the germ of the 'supervitalization' of history. The distinction and dialectical connexion of the stages of the religious quest are well brought out by these phases, in particular the transition into the order of revelation. It is worth noting that the second phase opens with a question: that of 'knowing whether there are not hidden *messages*, as yet unnoticed by our observation' (*Ibid.*, p. 153). The enquiry, still rational, into the divine is continued by an *historical* enquiry. 'It is here, in the very midst of the human phenomenon that the Christian problem emerges and demands our attention. Historically starting with the Man-Jesus, a phylum of religious thought appeared in the human mass' (p. 154) ..."

Then Rideau approaches a passage in Teilhard which has aroused much controversy but which, according to us, is the most explicit key to the core of his specific "ism". Referring to his own note on Teilhard's apologetics Rideau<sup>2</sup> remarks: "It is in this context that one should interpret the controversial passage from Teilhard ...". The passage in question is quoted, but not in full. So before citing Rideau's comment, we may pick out the complete text as first presented in a critical article in the Vatican's mouth-piece, the *Osservatore Romano* of July 1, 1962. We shall follow the official translation, which has recently come out, of the essay *How I Believe* (1934),<sup>3</sup> where the text occurs.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 376      <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Christianity and Evolution* (Collins, London, 1971), pp. 99, 103.

Teilhard writes: "If as the result of some interior revolution, I were to lose in succession my faith in Christ, my faith in a personal God, and my faith in spirit, I feel that I should continue *to believe invincibly in the world*. The world (its value, its infallibility and its goodness) — that, when all is said and done, is the first, the last, and the only thing in which I believe. It is by this faith that I live. And it is to this faith, I feel, that at the moment of death, rising above all doubts, I shall surrender myself.... I surrender myself to an ill-defined faith in a world that is one and infallible — wherever it may lead me."

Rideau's comment<sup>1</sup> runs "Père de Lubac, while admitting that there is some ambiguity in this passage, forcibly demonstrates that it expresses an approach both justified and classical. Teilhard, addressing himself to an unbeliever and adopting an existential point of view, seems to make a clean sweep of his religious faith; but he does this only to develop to its conclusion the basic affirmation of the world and unfold the dialectical stages that can lead the unbeliever to the recognition of God and of Christianity. Both on the objective and the personal level, the order of nature and that of the supernatural are connected by a dialectic of analogy and discontinuity. The passage from one order to the other is achieved by a gratuitous initiative on the part of God, which resumes and transcends nature, and subjectively by an act of faith that transcends, without denying, the initial affirmation of the world (H. de Lubac, *The Faith of Teilhard de Chardin*, London, 1965, pp. 136 ff<sup>2</sup>). In a recent book the eminent theologian Père Guy de Broglie shows also that Christian faith appears not as the result of two different intellectual processes (one purely rational, the other purely mystical) but as the climax of a single spiritual activity, animated by grace and receptive of the good tidings that crown it (*Les origines de crédibilité de la Révélation Chrétienne*, Fayard, 1964)."

All this insistence on the need of a direct revelation in order to reach the total Christian vision is not irrelevant to Teilhard's stand, and we may also grant that what Teilhard throws aside at the start is certain to be recovered if he pursues to its end initial faith in the world and that this very faith leads him to the position in which the need of a direct revelation of the Christian vision is logically compassed; for, if a Personal God issues from the dialectic of faith in the world, not only the strong possibility but also the extreme probability of such a God directly communicating Himself to man and even incarnating Himself in history and founding a Church as His growing Mystical Body arises by sheer force of reasoning. Situated as Teilhard was, the direct communication could be conceived only as Judaeo-Christianity and the incarnation as the Man-Jesus and the Mystical Body as the Roman Catholic Church. But when we have traced the broad shape of the Teilhardian apologetic we have not yet got to the heart of the matter: we have not yet explicated all the definite and decisive terms of the "controversial" passage.

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp 376-7      <sup>2</sup> This book appears in our footnotes in its paperback form as *Teilhard de Chardin: The Man and His Meaning* (A Mentor Omega Book, The New American Library, 1967) and the Corresponding pages there are 131 ff.



Why is the passage “controversial” at all? Why is de Lubac constrained to write: “We would not deny that there is something over-nice and paradoxical in the turn which Père Teilhard gives to his thought . . .”<sup>1</sup> — “His style of writing in the opening passage of *How I Believe* is philosophically unsatisfactory until it is explained by what follows . . .”<sup>2</sup> — “Here at the very beginning of his apologetic task he finds himself obliged to use language that is still elliptical and involves a certain ambiguity . . .”<sup>3</sup> Merely to undertake an apologetic task cannot render a piece of writing so difficult to “Christianise”. Every Christian reader could understand that for the sake of argument the writer has to proceed as if he did not believe *ab initio* in the spirit, the personal God and Christ. The apologist commences on what is common ground between his interlocutor and himself: here this ground should be the world of natural experience, which one pragmatically accepts as worth living in and working for. An additional merit of the world for a modern thinker would be its interrelated vastness and its evolutionary career with a present climax in Man. Beyond this, no apologist who is alleged to write for an unbeliever can go. But does not Teilhard give us much more than a science-tinged practical acceptance of the world?

He gives us a fervent mysticism of the universe. He endows the cosmos not only with a unified character, not only with value in general, but also with infallibility and goodness. He has endowed the world with a secret unerring intelligence heading towards some glorious goal, a concealed heart of absolute love which makes it lovable to us and inspires us to trust implicitly in its forward-looking guidance. Teilhard’s faith is in some supreme divinity whose appearance is the world of natural experience. He cannot precisely define this faith with which he starts, but there is no denying that the faith is most firm and is felt as intrinsically justified. What is even more unusual for an apologist who has Christianity at the back of his thought, Teilhard’s world-mysticism is openly declared to be the first and last and only thing he believes in. All else — spirit, personal God, Christ — are considered secondary and superadded. Their existence is not necessarily denied; neither is their value in any way negated. And if nothing about them is asserted, it is because the stage proper to any assertion about them has not been reached. Just because Teilhard has supposed a situation in which he might lose faith in them, we have no reason to think that he has actually lost faith. So much can be conceded to de Lubac and his tribe. But on the other hand we have no reason to hold that Teilhard can afford to start with a clean sheet merely because he knows that he will be able to fill the sheet with all the contents of the New Testament. Nothing to that effect is implied in the words. There is no question now of either a straight *pro* or a straight *contra* for spirit, personal God and Christ. But while a straight *contra* is absent, an oblique *contra* of a specific sort is present. We are unmistakably told that all through his life right up to the moment of his death Teilhard, though he might not actually choose to do so, could live without them. They do

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 132.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 158.

not belong to the fundamentals of his faith. All that is fundamental, the sole thing that he is sure of and regards as indispensable — the one and only essential for him in his religious life from birth to death — is his world-mysticism. If this essential carries him towards faith in spirit, personal God and Christ, he is prepared to embrace that faith. But even if it does not, he is ready to follow its lead, confident that it will never let him down and that somehow it will fulfil him. He can doubt everything else but he will succeed in banishing at all times all hesitation here — and this world-mysticism is the single religious experience he requires for the very act of living, as it were, and for final as well as constant peace of mind and happiness of heart.

Teilhard could not be more precise and categorical as regards these implications. He would appear ambiguous, paradoxical, over-nice, philosophically unsatisfactory under just one condition — namely, that we try to “Christianise” his basic religious stance. We are far past a Christian apologist’s pretension of unbelief. We have the downright confession of a belief that is deeper in Teilhard than Christianity and that can even do without it. In view of his well-known devotion to Christ we may be tempted to read here a hidden Christianity and then we shall be forced to feel uneasy and to explain away the non-Christian, though not inevitably anti-Christian, mysticism that is the bedrock of Teilhard’s soul — a mysticism that can be defined simply as the ineradicable inner sense of a God who is a World-Soul, within whose bosom all things and beings are ultimately held and borne both intelligently and lovingly towards their as-yet-unknown consummation in the context of an unavoidably slow and difficult cosmic process.

An honest analysis of the so-called controversial statement is bound to yield a special kind of pantheism. This pantheism blends the universal and the personal without making any philosophy or dogma out of the blending. It is the pantheism to which Rideau draws our attention when he<sup>1</sup> notes that “in *Christ in the World of Matter* (1916, *Hymn of the Universe*, pp. 53, 54) Teilhard deliberately disguising his own identity,” wrote: “‘I had always,’ he went on, ‘been by temperament a pantheist . . . I live at the heart of a single, unique Element, the centre of the universe and present in each part of it: personal love and Cosmic Power.’”

The pantheist temperament which provides the theme of the opening of *How I Believe* is frankly acknowledged by Teilhard more than once in the course of the same essay. Thus, he<sup>2</sup> mentions “the cosmic sense from which germinates the whole organism of my faith.” Again we read: “I tried to place at the head of the universe which I adored from birth the risen Christ whom others had taught me to know”<sup>3</sup> Evidently Teilhard considers himself to be a born pantheist, an adorer of the world as divine in its inner substance and in its wholeness. Once more we read. “From the point of view we are adopting here, Christianity would appear to satisfy the essential religious tendency which impels man towards some sort of pantheism.”<sup>4</sup> In the same vein but with a direct personal note we have the confession: “Now I realize that on the model

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 279.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 124.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 136.

of the incarnate God whom Christianity reveals to me, I can be saved only by becoming one with the universe. Thereby too my deepest pantheist aspirations are satisfied."<sup>1</sup> Earlier in the essay, as if to leave no misgiving about the radical drift of the "controversial" passage, a new reference to the religious state of self-sufficient world-mysticism such as we have found there, is broadly framed. Tracing the individual development of his faith, Teilhard speaks of its culminating "at a point at which were I to lose confidence in all revealed religion, I would still, I believe, be firmly anchored."<sup>2</sup>

With these pronouncements before us, it is not only inadequate to speak of the opening words as a mere apologist's procedural gesture: it is also futile to argue that whatever apologetics operates in them is of the general or classical type in a confused mode. Teilhard<sup>3</sup> himself goes out of his way to disown any general operation: "...these pages make no claim to determine the theory of a general apologetics. All I am proposing to do is to describe, so far as I understand them, the developments of a personal experience. As such, what I have to say will not satisfy everybody." Later he<sup>4</sup> distinguishes his venture from the classical type: "In all the old apologetics, the choice of religion was principally governed by the consideration of the miraculous." And what exactly is Teilhard's own style of apologetics, as differing from the classical, we can gather from a quotation by Rideau:<sup>5</sup> "You will note the interesting apologetical approach I feel driven into. *Visibilia* are to me no longer simply a logical premise to some chain of reasoning that leads to the *invisibilia*. They now constitute for me an *initial world* of faith of which the world of supernatural faith is only the development. I wonder whether that is not the only legitimate apologetics . . ." (Letter of 25 February, 1929). Here the classical procedure is spotlighted as the chain of reasoning which starts with the visible order of things as premise and ends with the invisible order as conclusion. Teilhard's non-classical or rather anti-classical procedure takes the world of natural experience as in itself a revelation, a basic presence of the Divine — independent of what is termed supernatural revelation and actually constituting a foundation without which supernatural revelation would have no substance and would lack any possibility of existence. Do we not have here the exact position of the "controversial" passage? And we may observe that the lines on the Teilhardian neo-apologetics occur in the same letter that pins down "the things in which I believe".<sup>6</sup> We have already cited the credo in an earlier chapter; what is of moment here is that, although the total Teilhard cannot dispense with "some Christ", his credo makes no bones about listing "first and fundamental, the value of the world".<sup>7</sup> This phrase along with that about the *visibilia* being for him "an *initial world* of faith", should clinch our reading of the pseudo-enigma that de Lubac has created out of the primary posture of *How I Believe*.

Practically the same posture — and with the further characteristic that, unlike as in the letter mentioning "some Christ", it announces itself without adding any

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 119.

<sup>6</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 650

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 649.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 650.

secondary article of belief — confronts us in another Teilhard-quotation by Rideau:<sup>1</sup> “In future, the only religion for man is the religion that will teach him in the first place to recognize, love and serve with passion the universe of which he is a part” (*Le sens humain*, 1927).

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Not that Teilhard could ever completely do without Christianity, but Christianity comes in only to intensify and enrich the world-mysticism that in various ways fills his entire consciousness. We get an emphatic picture of his position — world-mysticism in the full foreground, with Christianity a reinforcing touch from the background — in a letter of April 16, 1948, which has even the main motifs of our passage running through it: “All I can find to say from the whole edifice of my experience, my reason, and my deepest convictions, is this: ‘whatever happens, ... hold fast and do not lose confidence (however ironic it may seem) in the value, the interest and even the fundamental and ultimate goodness of the world.’ In a Universe in which we find that we have awakened one day, without asking to, or understanding why, and in a Universe which, however, really seems to be going somewhere, engendering something, after we have done our best in staying afloat and our strength fails, the great infallible and fundamental gesture is to abandon ourselves confidently (I think with our whole Christian experience we must say, *lovingly*) to the current that bears us along. In this atmosphere of blind surrender, the absurd and the unjust are transformed and take on a meaning. This is the prayer of prayers.”<sup>2</sup>

How primary and pervasive this “prayer of prayers” was in Teilhard’s life may be felt in the very fact of what Rideau<sup>3</sup> terms his “stead-fastness” as a Roman Catholic priest. Rideau<sup>4</sup> tells us: “A letter of 15 July, 1929 speaks of the end of an interior crisis and his firm determination never to break with the Church and the Society of Jesus: I am conscious of feeling myself fundamentally bound to both, for new and even more cogent reasons — by which I mean that I believe I would be betraying “the world”, if I deserted the post I have been assigned to. In this sense I love them both, and I want to work, as an individual atom, to perfect them *from within*, with no trace of antagonism ..’ ” Here we have three truths to set together. One is that Teilhard’s “steadfastness” is not a mere adherence to what the Church and the Society of Jesus teach as Christianity. Secondly, his own Christianity is considerably different from theirs and he sees the need to change theirs into his own vision. Thirdly, his aim in not leaving them is to act as an inside force to bring about the required perfection of them — in short, their Teilhardisation. Lastly, all these Teilhardo-Christian movements spring basically not from loyalty to the Vatican but from loyalty to “the World”. The World in which he is borne along as an inseparable element is to him the physical

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid*, p. 307

<sup>2</sup> *Letters to Two Friends* (The Fontana Library, Theology and Philosophy, Collins, London, 1972, p. 103)    <sup>3</sup> *Op cit*, p. 298.    <sup>4</sup> *Ibid*.

presence of an all-wise guiding Power that has his unquestioning love. He believes this Power to have made him a Jesuit Churchman and that is the reason, above all others, why he remains one. Faith in the World is at the back of even his career as a member of the Catholic clergy. When he says of the Church and the Society of Jesus: "In this sense I love them both", he clearly refers to the duty to them he has derived from a deeper duty, the obligation of not "betraying" the World. His vocation as a priest as well as his mission to reform the institutions he serves are at bottom taken up for the World's sake and because of a faith beyond Christianity as such.

Before moving further, we may make for the sake of exactness a certain observation. The adoration of the world as being inwardly a divine Person and acting as such in its totality through the aeons is not itself the religious evolutionism which Teilhard so often expounds. The cosmogenesis of an already existent Omega towards its own emergence in the space-time process is not the same as the single infallible World that Teilhard worshipped from birth. The presence of a Pan-Person under the appearance of a natural order of things precedes in his experience the presence of universal evolution which he felt to be a Pan-Person. De Lubac<sup>1</sup> informs us that when the First World War broke out in 1914 Teilhard's "scientific ideas had already matured": "In contrast with the mental attitude that predominated in his environment, generalized evolution was already to him a matter of conviction." Rideau<sup>2</sup> also gives the time-bracket 1908-1914 for Teilhard's growth into an evolutionist. One of Rideau's excerpts<sup>3</sup> from him vividly recalls the great occasion of this growth soon after his return from a three-year teachership in Cairo: "It was during my theology years in Hesting (that is, immediately after the marvels of Egypt) that there gradually grew in me — much less as an abstract notion than as a presence — until it filled my whole interior climate, the consciousness that all around me flowed the deep all-embracing ontological drift of the universe" (*Le Cœur de la Matière*, 1950).

What Teilhard's being was charged with from the very start of his life was an intuition with three levels of depth.<sup>4</sup> At its most elementary, it gave him "the live sense of universal relationships of interdependence". At the next deeper step it disclosed that "the universe forms a system endlessly linked in time and space" and constitutes "one bloc". At the final stratum it provided the inevitable conclusion from the word "bloc": "the world constitutes a whole." This whole laid itself bare as "a global reality whose condition is that of being more necessary, more consistent, richer and more certain in its ways, than any of the particular things it embraces".<sup>5</sup> In fact, "there are no longer any 'things' in the world: there are only 'elements'". Carried a little further, this transition from things to elements makes us "speak of their 'identity'". The infinite multiple of the cosmos is "necessarily completed in some unity".<sup>6</sup> All this is independent of the question. "Is it a static totality we are concerned with or a dynamic? Is it material or spiritual? Is it progressive in its movement, or is it periodic and circular?"<sup>7</sup> Just the overwhelming presence is there of the unitary and

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 295.

<sup>4</sup> *Christianity and Evolution*, p. 100.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

unifying whole behind the apparent multiplicity, a oneness existing with a plenitude of being and a certainty of action and taking care of all its elements that are really identical with one another in spite of their surface differences. Prior to any recognition of an evolutionary process mounting higher and higher, Teilhard stands with the statement:<sup>1</sup> "Does not the presence of the Whole in the world assert itself for us with the direct evidence of some source of light? I do indeed believe that that is so. And it is precisely the value of this primordial intuition which seems to me to hold up the whole edifice of my belief."

Such an intuition can very naturally, under the impact of modern physics and biology, go past the ordinary materialistic conclusions of science and taking the world's most advanced element, Man, for the starting-point of a synthesis of phenomena, flower into the well-known Teilhardian vision of a march of complexity-consciousness towards Omega Point which is at once "God Ahead" and "God Above." But in itself it is just a special pantheism blending, as we have said, the universal and the personal. The impression of its being pantheism is particularly strengthened by the "elements" getting termed not only a unified ensemble but also an ultimate "identity". If they are secretly identical with one another, then the whole, whose elements they are, must, in the last computation, have an identity with them. At the stage where Teilhard's credo is, he merely calls his intuition "cosmic sense".<sup>2</sup> He distinguishes it from its full flowering when he uses the phrase. "the spiritual-evolutionary point of view to which faith in the world has led me."<sup>3</sup>

*(To be continued)*

K. D. SETHNA

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 118.

# SRI AUROBINDO AND THE PROBLEM OF NATIONAL EDUCATION IN INDIA

(*This is in continuation of the articles entitled "Education in India", which appeared in Mother India in 1971 and is published in response to a demand from our readers.*)

IN the September and December 1971 issues of *Mother India*, we have hinted at some of Sri Aurobindo's views on the problem of national education in independent India. We have seen what he considers should be the aims of education in itself, and of "national education" in particular. We have tried to give an idea of the principles and methods underlying the system of education in ancient, classical and post-classical India and ventured to express some criticisms. We have stressed Sri Aurobindo's view that we must, if India is to fulfil her high destiny, keep to the essential spirit of our ancient system, and yet adapt the forms to the needs of the present and the future.

All this, it will be objected, has been a too "theoretical" if not "metaphysical" approach to the question. How about the very real and practical problems facing the planner and the administrator of education? A very legitimate question this, and we shall try now, to the best of our ability, to throw whatever light we can from the teachings of Sri Aurobindo; we shall bring in the *Mother* too, for She has not only been actively engaged for the last fifty years and more in the practical field of educating India — and the world — but has also given us precious hints as to how best to organise education at all levels, in her magnificent Talks and other Messages. We shall, for our purpose, freely draw not only on the later and more well-known writings of the Master, but also on whatever material we can lay hold on from his earlier writings.

## ITS SCOPE

First, we must consider what the scope should be of the training to be provided. It must answer the needs of all the parts of our being: the body, the senses, the emotional and the aesthetic nature, the character and will, the imagination and reason, the memory and the "intuitive" power to discriminate between the true and the false. In an ideal system, there must also be provision for moral training and spiritual training. The training provided must include all knowledge in its scope, all the *beaux arts*, all the sciences, all the "humanities", all the languages with a rich heritage, all the practical and useful arts; above all, it must teach the student the first and most important art, namely, that of knowing himself.

This, it may be said, is a tall order. We agree. But we are discussing the maximum that is possible; we do not suggest that the possible will always be the practicable. Circumstances of each case must be an important factor to consider, and the limit of the immediately practicable may grow with time. And when we speak of knowledge, we do not limit the term to the fund of knowledge already in possession of

man; the scope for research and discovery of new knowledge, or even for the restatement of old knowledge is enormous, one might say almost limitless.

It is important to mention in this connection that in the view of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, education does not begin at a given age and end with a degree. Education is a continuous process, beginning at birth, or perhaps even before birth for antenatal influences play an enormous part in the formation of the coming child, and the possibility of planned progress at all levels — that is after all the meaning of education — does not cease till death.

#### PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical education, that is, a scientifically planned and systematically organised method of cultivating the physical frame in all its aspects and potentialities, is a comparatively new concept. Whatever may have been done in this respect by ancient and medieval India — we shall have occasion to refer to it in the present context, and there is a well-known tradition of physical training among the upper classes of medieval and modern Japan, — it is to the modern West that belongs the credit of giving to physical education the importance it deserves. We in India have just begun to adopt some of the Western methods of training and organisation, although it is rather disconcerting to hear that some of the physical training colleges are at the moment going a-begging for students.

The beginnings of the modern physical culture movement in India may perhaps be traced to the nascent spirit of Swadeshism around the turn of the last century. In Maharashtra it was associated with the Sivaji Utsava inaugurated by Tilak. In Bengal the inspiration came from a Japanese aristocrat, Baron Okakura, who helped found, through the organising genius and patriotic sentiment of some of the Bengal leaders, Sarala Ghoshal and P. Mitter of Calcutta, being the most prominent to take the lead in this matter, followed almost immediately by stalwarts like Pulin Das of Dacca and small groups of physical culture enthusiasts among the rising generation of young men in Bengal. These early attempts had been primarily directed towards definite political goals and were smothered by the action of the British bureaucracy. But the tradition of physical culture, organised in private clubs and akharas continued not only in Bengal and Maharashtra but the movement spread in other parts of India. Even the schools aided or conducted directly by the Government came to have their "Drill masters". With the coming of Reforms in 1919, the Indian ministers in charge of Education and Health in the Provinces and at the Centre gave a strong filip to the physical culture movement, particularly in the form of athletics, games and other sporting events, so much so that Indian teams have been regularly participating in the World Olympic games and are also featuring prominently in international tournaments in cricket and tennis.

What have the Mother and Sri Aurobindo to say with regard to this development?



At the outset, it may be of interest to know that as we have suggested in another connection<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo prepared and published (in Bengali) in a series of articles written for the *Yugantar* journal (1906) a complete blue-print of armed revolution, which naturally included a detailed scheme of military training for our young men. He had earlier taken an active part — though this could not be done openly as he was still in the Baroda State service and he would not like to embarrass the Maharaja by encouraging “anti-British” activities — in trying to coordinate the activities of the various physical culture groups in Bengal.

The necessity of proper physical training for our young men — women and young girls had not yet ventured out in this field as they did at a later stage of the Indian freedom movement — remained uppermost in his mind throughout the Swadeshi period, as his writings in the *Bandemataram* (1906-08) and the *Karmayogin* (1908-10) journals edited by him amply bear out. We may illustrate this from some representative quotations. It will be seen that what he tried to emphasise most in these early writings was that a first condition of success in the fight for freedom and for the regeneration of this ancient people was the development of physical prowess and strength in our young men and the cultivation in them of the habit of disciplined and organised collective action to secure these ends. The last point is of especial importance in this context, because this remained a main theme of his last pronouncements on the subject, in his Messages to the *Bulletin of Physical Education* of the Ashram in its first issues of 1948. The Mother took up the cue in her Messages and Talks; she had already started the collective organisation of a systematic programme of physical training of the boys and girls as well as of the grown-up men and women in the Ashram to give practical shape to Sri Aurobindo’s ideas.

“The individual, standing alone, cannot develop; he depends on the support and assistance of the group to which he belongs. The group itself cannot develop unless it has an organisation...which will give free play for the development of its activities and capacities — physical, moral, intellectual.”<sup>2</sup>

It may be added in parenthesis that in Sri Aurobindo’s view the collective organisation of physical training has an immense value for the moral and intellectual development both of the individual participants and the group as a whole, whether this be a small club or the entire nation. To this point we shall revert while referring to Sri Aurobindo’s Messages to the Ashram *Bulletin*.

There is another side to the question of physical education that looms large in Sri Aurobindo and the Mother’s teachings on Yoga and spirituality, and which already found clear expression in the early writings.

“Those who allow others to take possession of their body cannot long remain in possession of their soul. Spirit may be superior to body, but they are so intimately connected that the supremacy of one cannot be maintained by surrendering the

other. Those who want initiation in spiritual secrets are first asked to take care of their physical health. The preservation of the body in a sound condition is the first requisite for all spiritual advancement. It is a vain philosophy that seeks to set a gulf between the spirit and body. . . It is by leaving aside all considerations of the body that we have come to grief.”<sup>3</sup>

“It is now the fashion,” says Sri Aurobindo in a tone almost verging on that of rebuke, “to associate cowardice with spirituality. How many of these so-called Sannyasis who air their opinions about Hindu religion, are acquainted with the fact that when Sri Chaitanya was forbidden by the Mahomedan Kazi to lead his grand Sankirtan party in the public streets, he asked his followers to organise a larger and stronger party capable of offering resistance if needed and with himself at its head marched to the Kazi’s house on the very evening from which the executive order was to be enforced?”<sup>4</sup> Courage, it is true, is not physical courage alone. But a strong physical frame and its disciplined use in manly games and sports contribute not a little to the building of courageous manhood.

It is important to dwell a little on the question of courage, physical no less than moral; for on it a good deal hangs. In his early writings Sri Aurobindo laid an emphasis on this aspect of human development that has perhaps not been clearly enough brought out. “Do and dare”, as we all know, became the watchword of the Indian freedom movement; but if we are to seek the origin of this *mantric* phrase, we have to turn to the pages of Sri Aurobindo’s *Bandemataram*.

“Constitutional agitation . in countries that are subject to autocratic rule, needs, as a condition of success, the determination of the people to do and dare whatever the situation may demand for the realisation of their aims and ideals. This is what the present situation in the country demands.”<sup>5</sup>

“What India needs especially at this moment is the aggressive virtue, the spirit of soaring idealism, bold creation, fearless resistance, courageous attack on the passive tamasic spirit of inertia of which we have already too much. We need to cultivate another training and temperament, another habit of mind. We would apply to the present situation the vigorous motto of Danton that what we need, what we should learn above all things is to dare and again to dare and still to dare ...”<sup>6</sup>

We had been too prone to adopt “constitutional” methods of agitation. “But the so-called constitutionalists ignore the fact that in the present stage of human evolution, no moral force can be effective without the silent support of physical force.”<sup>7</sup>

The communal riots that broke out in East Bengal, at Comilla, Dacca and Mymensingh early in 1907 in the wake of the Swadeshi movement and the Bureaucracy’s apathy in checking the hooliganism and attacks on peaceful citizens coupled with the indiscriminate acts of police rowdiness let loose on the citizens of Barisal about the

same time, amply demonstrated the correctness of Sri Aurobindo's view, and gave a strong fillip to the physical culture movement in Bengal. Taking advantage of this helpful sign, Sri Aurobindo wrote:

“In a revolutionary period, events are our sole instructors.... They brace our nerves, strengthen our arms, steel our hearts. They call forth and develop our fighting powers.... Their moral is that side by side with the national schools, there should be *akharas* (physical training centres) all over the land ...”<sup>8</sup>

And again,

“We must organise physical education all over the country and train up the rising generation not only in the moral strength and courage for which Swadeshism has given us the materials, but in physical strength and courage and the habit of rising immediately and boldly to the height of even the greatest emergency. *That strength we must train in every citizen of the newly created nation*, [the italics are ours] so that for our private protection we may not be at the mercy of a police efficient only for harassment<sup>8</sup>.... And the strength of the individuals we must carefully organise for purposes of national defence....”

“It is high time we abandoned the fat and comfortable selfish middle-class training we give to our youth and make a nearer approach to the physical and moral education of our old Kshatriyas or the Japanese Samurai.”<sup>9</sup>

For, as Sri Aurobindo was going to emphasise in his *Karmayogin* writings,

“As for the past one thousand years the progressive ideal in India has been that of Brahminhood, so in the age upon which we are entering, the progressive ideal will be that of the Kshatriya or Knight.... The Rajput will be the type of aspiration rather than the saint. The whole preoccupation of society will be with manliness and strength rather than with subtle shades of refinement and social prestige.”<sup>10</sup>

How this is to be brought about, by what practical steps and under what manner of organisation, are the points we will have next to consider.

(To be continued)

SANAT K. BANERJI

#### References

- <sup>1</sup> “Sri Aurobindo Architect of India's Freedom”, *Mother India*, October 1972.
- <sup>2</sup> “The New Thought”, *Bandemataram*, 29.4.07.
- <sup>3</sup> “Religion and Politics”, *Ibid.*, 2.8.07.

- <sup>4</sup> "Politics and Spirituality," *Ibid*, 9 11.07  
<sup>5</sup> "The Realism of Indian Nationalist Policy," *Ibid.*, 24 4 08.  
<sup>6</sup> "Defying the Circular," *Ibid*, 2 6 07  
<sup>7</sup> "The Realism of Indian Nationalist Policy", *loc. cit.*  
<sup>8</sup> "Last though not Least", *Bandematai am*, 24 4.07.  
<sup>9</sup> "British Protection and Self-protection," *Ibid*, 18.3 07  
<sup>10</sup> "The Ideal of the Kshatriya," *Karmayogin*, 11 9 09

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## ON REASON AND NATURE

you  
 can chart  
 the journeys of the stars  
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 keep their count  
 or tell us  
 how  
 she dwarfs  
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 the source of light  
 or how  
 she paints  
 the loveliness on seas ....

you  
 can fly  
 rockets to the moon  
 but you cannot  
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 or tell us  
 of the romance  
 in her light ....  
 you are brilliant

she is light  
 you are beautiful  
 she is the diamonds  
 and the seas...  
 the moon  
 the sun  
 the stars  
 and the beauty in you ....

WILLIAM T. NETTER

# IS WORLD-NEGATION TAUGHT BY THE INDIAN SCRIPTURES?

## SANKARA'S ANSWER AND SRI AUROBINDO'S

*(We are here reproducing the section, "World-negation is not taught by the Scriptures", from the book, Worthy is the World: The Hindu Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo, by Beatrice Bruteau (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, U.S.A. 1971), pp. 181-90. The author (born in 1930) has had a distinguished cultural career and is at present writing a book on Teilhard de Chardin and the Hindu tradition entitled Evolution Toward Divinity. Her present publication is a masterly study of Sri Aurobindo's thought and brings striking insights into its originality and creative significance for the world of today and tomorrow as well as into its organic relation with the deepest currents of India's past spirituality. The excerpt we are presenting is a piece of excellent research bearing on a question vital to all students of Indian spiritual philosophy. We offer our grateful acknowledgments for it to Associated University Presses Inc., U.S.A.)*

SRI Aurobindo insists that his integral position, recognizing the reality of both the transcendent and the cosmic, is attested by the Hindu Scriptures.

World-negation, he says, is certainly not taught by the Bhagavad Gita, in which each further penetration into the secret of wisdom ends with the admonition to engage in action. Mayavada, which arose about the same time as the composition of the Gita, teaches that maya ceases for the individual when by knowledge he returns to his true and eternal state of identity with the inactive, immutable Brahman. Therefore the renunciation of action is the way to liberation. This is one way of solving the problem of life: escape into something outside the world, void of all qualities and all action.<sup>1</sup> It is the way Arjuna, in the Gita, at first reacts to the prospect of engaging in the terrible action that confronts him in the battle of Kurukshetra. But Krishna, the divine Teacher, will not let him abandon action. He must rather attain to an inner superiority of all claims of the senses, the mind, and the emotions, wherein he will be able to act freely, without being dominated by the forces of life.<sup>2</sup>

The Gita teaches that action is itself the means of liberation, and even after liberation should still be practiced.<sup>3</sup> Inward—not outward—renunciation is the way which leads to calm and self-possessed action in the world, the ideal of the Gita.<sup>4</sup>

Like the Gita, the Upanishads, Sri Aurobindo claims, accept the Becoming of Brahman as real, and with it the validity and righteousness of delight in temporal

<sup>1</sup> *Essays on the Gita*, p. 78. The edition is that of 1950, published by The Sri Aurobindo Library, New York. <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49. <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78. <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

existence and the effective use of the world's energy. (LD, 797)<sup>1</sup> Of the two great world-negating religions of India, established by two of her greatest thinkers, the Buddha and Sankara, it must be said that with respect to the ancient Vedic and Vedantic tradition, the Buddha's position is heterodox<sup>2</sup> and that of Sankara is only one synthesis and interpretation of the Upanishads among others.

It is the Upanishads themselves and not Shankara's writings, the text and not the commentary, that are the authoritative Scripture of the Vedantin.<sup>3</sup>

To show how Sri Aurobindo and Sankara differ in their interpretation of the Upanishadic teaching and how Sankara's basic principle of granting only one poise to Brahman is not necessarily a correct interpretation of the Vedantic tradition, we will examine in detail one set of related texts.

Sri Aurobindo frequently refers to the Upanishadic verse, "All this is Brahman," from Mundaka Upanishad 2.<sup>4</sup> Similar verses can be found in Svetasvatara Upanishad III. 15: "The Purusha is all this that is, what has been and what is yet to be," and in the Bhagavad Gita VII. 19: "All is the Divine Being." Sri Aurobindo interprets these texts as meaning that the world is fully real.

Sankara, however, denies this interpretation in his *Commentary on the Vedanta Sutras*, which are themselves commentaries on the Upanishads. Sutra I.3.1, for instance, refers to Mundaka Upanishad II.2.5:

He in whom the sky, the earth and the interspace are woven as also the mind along with all the vital breaths, knows him alone as the one self (*ātmānām*): Dismiss other utterances. This is the bridge to immortality.<sup>5</sup>

The Sutra itself reads:

The abode of heaven, earth, and so on is Brahman, on account of the term "own" (*sva-śabdāt*), referring to *ātmānām* in the Upanishad.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> LD is the abbreviation for *The Life Divine*. The edition used is the one of 1960, published by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, Pondicherry

<sup>2</sup> In the *Essays on the Gita*, Sri Aurobindo, after lamenting the fact that the Gita's view of action had no opportunity to enter deeply into the Indian mind at the time of its composition, because of the overwhelming tide of Buddhist asceticism, appends an interesting footnote in which he says "At the same time the Gita seems to have largely influenced Mahayanist Buddhism and texts are taken bodily from it into the Buddhist Scriptures. It may therefore have helped largely to turn Buddhism, originally a school of quietistic and illumined ascetics, into that religion of meditative devotion and compassionate action which has so powerfully influenced Asiatic culture." P. 78.

<sup>3</sup> Sri Aurobindo, *The Ideal of the Karmayogin* (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1950), p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Radhakrishnan, *The Principal Upanishads* (London Allen & Unwin, 1953), p. 695.

<sup>5</sup> Radhakrishnan, *Upanishads*, p. 684

<sup>6</sup> The Vedanta Sutras of Badarayana, with the commentary by Sankara, translated by George Thibaut (Dover Publications Inc., New York, 1962), I: 15556.

Sankara, in his commentary on this Sutra, takes notice also of verses II,2,10-11 of the same Upanishad:

His shining illumines all this world.  
Brahman, indeed, is this universe.<sup>1</sup>

Sankara says that these verses might arouse "a suspicion that Brahman is a manifold variegated nature."<sup>2</sup> He counters this interpretation by pointing to the words of the Upanishad which read "know him alone as the one self." In order for the verse to be significant, he says, only the highest Self can be meant, and the highest Self is not manifold.

The Self is not to be known as manifold, qualified by the universe of effect; you are rather to dissolve by true knowledge the universe of effects, which is the mere product of Nescience, and to know that one Self, which is the general abode, as uniform.<sup>3</sup>

He supports this interpretation with a reference to Katha Upanishad II,1,10: "From death to death goes he who sees any difference here."<sup>4</sup> His conclusion is that the statement "All is Brahman," or "Brahman, indeed, is this universe," "aims at dissolving the wrong conception of the reality of the world, and not in any way at intimating that Brahman is multiform in nature."<sup>5</sup>

The *Vedanta Sutras* of Badarayana are an attempt to put together the various teachings found in the Upanishads, and they represent the foundation of the Vedanta school of Hindu philosophy. As such, the work's authority as an authentic Hindu tradition is very high. Therefore, the difference between Sankara and Sri Aurobindo over the interpretation of the points treated in this text is significant for the question of which of them represents a true Vedantic (orthodox) teaching.

Sankara's fundamental position in his interpretation is that Brahman cannot be both qualified and unqualified (as, some would argue, is required by faithfulness to the Upanishads), since that would be contradictory. Similarly, Brahman cannot be admitted to be really conditioned; therefore, however Brahman may be described, it is always unqualified. The appearance of qualities, the division of the Reality into Brahman with form and Brahman without form, is occasioned, as we have seen, by the different states of consciousness of the human subject: waking, dreaming, deep sleep, and the superconscious state. In deep sleep Brahman is without form; in dream and waking consciousness it is with form; in the superconscious state it is neither.

However, the researches of P.M. Modi<sup>6</sup> on the *Vedanta Sutras* (also known as the

<sup>1</sup> Radhakrishnan, *Upanishads*, p. 685, where the verses are identified as numbers 11 and 12.

<sup>2</sup> *Commentary*, I,3,1, (Thibaut, I 155) <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* <sup>4</sup> Radhakrishnan, *Upanishads*, p. 634

<sup>5</sup> *Commentary*, I,3,1; (Thibaut, I 156).

<sup>6</sup> Professor of Sanskrit, Samaldas College, Bhavnagar, Ph. D. from Kiel, where he learned to apply a full-scale critical apparatus to these ancient texts.

*Brahma-Sutra*) have indicated that Sankara's interpretation is not to be accepted without further question. S.N. Dasgupta, in his Foreword to Modi's *A Critique of Brahma-Sutra*,<sup>1</sup> says that while Modi has been "sympathetic and fair to Sankara" and has not "read his own philosophical creed into the Brahma-Sutra," he has "proved to our satisfaction that at least in many places Sankara's interpretation is either doubtful or unacceptable. Sankara seems to have been often interested in reading his own philosophy in the Sutras and loyalty to the Sutras does not seem to be his strong point."<sup>2</sup>

Modi's view is that the author of the Sutras denies precisely this contention of Sankara's that Brahman's being with form or without form depends on the state of consciousness of the subject. He holds rather that Brahman is both with form and without form in all the states.<sup>3</sup> Modi submits that the two aspects of Brahman, personal and with form, on the one hand, and impersonal and without form, on the other, are recognized by Badarayana as objective and of an equal status.<sup>4</sup> They are aspects of Kārana Brahman, Brahman as making, doing, performing, or producing.<sup>5</sup>

It is Modi's opinion that Badarayana probably obtained his doctrine of the twofold Brahman from earlier Vedantic writers who had applied to Brahman Yaska's<sup>6</sup> interpretation of Vedic deities as both personal and impersonal.<sup>7</sup> This would make the acceptance of Brahman as having two poises, without form and with form, or transcendent and cosmic, appear to be an authentic strain in Indian philosophy which was offset only by the work of Sankara.

A supporting argument can be found in the discussion of causality where, according to Modi, the author of the Sutras takes the position that the effect of Brahman's action is identical with Brahman and that all changes come from Brahman's own action.<sup>8</sup> This, taken together with the conception of Kārana Brahman, would seem to affirm full reality for the world.<sup>9</sup>

From the interpretation of these key texts from the Upanishads themselves and their most revered commentary, we see that Sankara's world-negating position is not to be uncritically assumed as the orthodox view of the Indian philosophical tradition. Sri Aurobindo has considerable support from textual critics in his contention that world-negation is not taught by the Scriptures and that the twofold Brahman is.

If the true interpretation of the Upanishads is questionable, that of the Vedic

<sup>1</sup> Published in Bhavnagar P M Modi, 1943.

<sup>2</sup> S N. Dasgupta is the author of the standard *History of Indian Philosophy* in 5 vols. P. 7. (Cambridge Cambridge University Press, 1922-1955).

<sup>3</sup> Modi, p. 4      <sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p. 5.      <sup>5</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>6</sup> An early interpreter of the Vedic hymns. On the twofold Brahman, cf Prasna Upanishad V.2

<sup>7</sup> Modi, p 7.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, pp 5-6

<sup>9</sup> Cf. a somewhat similar dispute which Sri Aurobindo has with Sankara over a passage in the Gita Sankara reads "Brahman is the jiva itself" (his theory of superimposition), whereas Sri Aurobindo holds that the phrase means "Brahman has become the jiva" — a real creation. The grammarian, Kapali Sastry, through a detailed analysis of the construction of the passage and other uses of the words concerned, shows that Sri Aurobindo's rendering is correct. Cf. T.V. Kapali Sastry, *Sri Aurobindo: Lights on the Teachings* (Madras. Sri Aurobindo Library, 1948), pp. 155ff.



hymns is almost unknown. Two interpretations have been popular among scholars: the ritualistic, following Sayana, and the naturalistic, the construction of European philologists. It is one of Sri Aurobindo's most important contributions that he offers a new interpretation of the Veda which gives a more profound meaning to the ancient literature.

According to Sri Aurobindo, the Vedic sages were not possessed of the impatience of later spiritual aspirants (such as the Mayavadins) who, eager to rest their minds in the One in a way that they could logically understand, forsook the paradox of the created Many and thus missed union with the "great Unknowable," (LD, 42) not that this impatience was an unnatural reaction in an age which isolated the religious quest from the rest of natural activity. Once the spiritual ideal of life had been separated from the other motives of man's life (his vital needs, his desires, and his ethical aspirations), life itself was deprived of genuine significance.

But in Vedic times it was not so. A balanced view prevailed which recognized four aims of life: Artha (material goods), Kama (pleasure), Dharma (righteous conduct), and Moksha (liberation). Periods within a lifetime were provided in which to cultivate each of them. A man would be successively a student, a householder, a recluse, and renunciate.

The world-view of the Veda is one which recognizes the joys of life.<sup>1</sup> It concerns itself not only with spiritual and moral values but with material well-being, speaking of an optimum life-span of a hundred years of unimpaired efficiency of the senses and limbs, adequate prosperity, knowledge, progress, and happiness.<sup>2</sup>

Throughout the Samhitas there is a sense of elation at the beauty and glory of the material world and of buoyant optimism. It may be said that while the Upanishads seek Satya, Truth, in the absolute sense (Vedanta), the Samhitas lay greater emphasis on Rita (that includes Satya on the ethical plane) in its aesthetic, ethical, social and ritualistic sense, as Eternal Order. Thus the Samhitas want both (the spiritual leader) and (the secular ruler) to work energetically and in mutual concord.<sup>3</sup>

The reality of the world was never questioned in Vedic times.<sup>4</sup> The world was not only real but full of promise, wealth, and opportunity.<sup>5</sup> There was "no basis for any conception of the unreality of the world" in the Vedic mentality; the world was not "a purposeless phantom, but ..the evolution of God."<sup>6</sup> Maya, for the Vedic seers, meant a selective faculty of knowledge which differentiated finite phenomena

<sup>1</sup> B.G. Gokhale, *Indian Thought Through the Ages A Study of Some Dominant Concepts* (London: Asia Publishing House, 1961), p. 87

<sup>2</sup> A. C. Bose, *Hymns from the Vedas* (New York: Asia Publishing House, 1966), pp. 10-11

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 50

<sup>4</sup> M. Hiriyanna, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1964), p. 44.

<sup>5</sup> Gokhale, p. 123.

<sup>6</sup> S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1923), I, 103.

within the infinitude of the Reality. "It is by maya that the Infinite finitizes, the static being becomes dynamic becoming, and out of the Absolute the world of phenomena emerges."<sup>1</sup>

This sense of the One diversified in the Many is a recurrent theme in the Veda.

One in many births, a single ocean holder of all streams of movement, sees our hearts.<sup>2</sup>

Such am I (am One) and the Gods have found me established in the Many, permeating and taking possession of the Manifold.<sup>3</sup>

This world exists in Him; He is merciful. This God is One only. All Gods or worlds become one in being in Him.<sup>4</sup>

He is the One and One alone, and in him all Devas become the One alone.<sup>5</sup>

Sri Aurobindo's own researches in the Vedic texts uncovered for him a psychological and mystical interpretation of the verses which not only cast light on the significance of the hymns but illumined his own spiritual experience. He claimed to have found the lost secret of the Veda. The "secret" says that the Divine is already present, planted deep in every being, the same Divine in all. As infinity incarnate in the finite, it expands, this is the spiritual-material evolution of which our world is the (thus-far) product.

The sense of a living synthesis of the spiritual and the material is strong in all the Vedic Samhitas. The hymns pray for intellectual and spiritual power, for moral purity and strength, but also for physical health and material prosperity. The rishis speak freely of Heaven as Father and Earth as Mother and pray unabashedly,

O Godhead, guard for us the Infinite and lavish the finite.<sup>6</sup>

Considering passages such as this, typical of the general tenor of the ancient Vedic hymns, Sri Aurobindo feels justified in charging that Mayavada is not faithful to the Vedic view of life and in claiming that his own integral non-dualism is an orthodox position.

BEATRICE BRUTEAU

<sup>1</sup> S. Chatterjee, "Mind and Supermind in Sri Aurobindo's Integralism", in H. Chaudhuri and Fr. Spiegelberg, eds, *The Integral Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo* (London. Allen & Unwin, 1960), p. 40.

<sup>2</sup> Rig Veda, X. 5.1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, X. 125.3.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, X. 121.21.

<sup>5</sup> Atharva Veda, XIII. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Rig Veda, IV. 2.11.

**LOTUS-FLAME**  
**OR**  
**SURYA-MAN**

*(Continued from the issue of October, 1973)*

THE stage was set for a primeval play,  
A passion-act of epic significance.  
Behind flamed ever the unbodied sperm of bliss,  
The sculptor-hand, the architect of light  
That shaped the cause of things with unfallen will.  
Nature could feel a throb, a dream uncaught,  
An elusive ripple born in a distant sea,  
The source without a beginning or a close.  
All in its breast was there tardy and lost;  
All lived immune within its secret soil  
Awaiting the revealing hour, the time of God.  
The rise and fall of the beginning's worlds,  
The ingatherings vague, the outpourings large and quick  
That blazed an hour in the space of eternity  
To die and end in the stark somnolence,  
Were preludes to a giant flowering to come,  
An index to the masterpiece of the Sun.  
For a far-striding will, an undying seed  
Was the cause, the hub of a creation asleep.  
The key was lost in the original drowse  
To be discovered by the slow soul-quest  
And longing's flame emerging from the pit.  
A path was there no eye of Time could bare,  
A golden link bridging all things to a source  
Remote from the reach of erring energy's sweep,  
Ungraspable by the slow inconscient thrust.  
To wake and then be lost is not the end;  
To dream and then plunge in the maze of the dream,  
To see but grow blind in an unseeing vast  
Groping one's way to discovery's surprise  
Are not the close of things in eternity.  
There was an end to the enigma's whirl,  
The unpatterned worlds in an unsure universe.  
There was a precious clue the heavens have missed.

There was a point that solved all riddles here,  
 The gleaming secret point of God in Time.  
 This unveiling's quest was the perpetual ache  
 Dominant in the atom and the star,  
 Moving measureless in the seed of things.  
 And in the primal worlds this striving flamed,  
 A recurring tide behind the cosmic change,  
 The whisper of God pulsating in the void.

*(To be continued)*

ROMEN

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### SONNET NEAR SOCORRO

THE dark, dull green that spangles rock and sand,  
 A palely fulvous spreading mottled soft  
 With tufts and bushes — deep immensity  
 Of azure with a blazing heart all gold,  
 No cloud upon its vaulting clarity  
 And vivid peace ingathering all word —  
 A calm so powerful to draw one high;  
 The air is clean, and soft with growing warmth  
 The year advances: while the thick-wooled sheep  
 Upon the sparse grass feed contentedly,  
 Their lambs about them lightly gamboling:  
 As clear the vistas grandly stretch and blend,  
 And dim the horizontal strata cut  
 The rocks of low hills with their clumps of green.

JESSE ROARKE

# THE MOST FORGOTTEN HERO IN HISTORY: TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE

## A REMINDER-SPEECH OF WENDELL PHILLIPS

*(Very few remember the name of Toussaint L'Ouverture who lived from 1743 to 1803, while millions have acclaimed that of Napoleon. Toussaint was a contemporary of the mighty Frenchman: he was called the Bonaparte of St. Domingo. The two Bonapartes stood ranged over against each other: this was the most unfortunate thing in the heroic Negro's life and the most infamous in the career of Napoleon. Wendell Phillips, 1811-1884, American orator and abolitionist, made a memorable speech on Toussaint. His glowing appreciation should have left no excuse for history to forget Toussaint, who, we may note, also drew an ardent sonnet from Wordsworth. At the end of Phillips's oration we have appended this exalted tribute which, in spite of declaring its hero's unforgettability and containing two of the poet's most quoted lines, has still failed to make Toussaint hold in the world's memory the place he deserves — as one of the greatest men.)*

HE had been born a slave on a plantation in the north of the island, — an unmixed Negro, — his father stolen from Africa. If anything, therefore, that I say of him to-night moves your admiration, remember, the black race claims it all, — we have no part nor lot in it. He was fifty years old at this time. An old negro had taught him to read. His favorite books were Epictetus, Raynal, Military Memoirs, Plutarch. In the woods, he learned some of the qualities of herbs, and was village doctor. On the estate, the highest place he ever reached was that of coachman. At fifty, he joined the army as physician. Before he went he placed his master and mistress on shipboard, a freighted the vessel with a cargo of sugar and coffee, and sent them to Baltimore, and never afterward did he forget to send them, year by year, ample means of support. And I might add that, of all the leading negro generals, each one saved the man under whose roof he was born, and protected the family.

Let me add another thing. If I stood here to-night to tell the story of Napoleon, I should take it from the lips of Frenchmen, who find no language rich enough to paint the great captain of the nineteenth century. Were I here to tell you the story of Washington, I should take it from your hearts, — you, who think no marble white enough on which to carve the name of the Father of his Country. I am about to tell you the story of a negro who has left hardly one written line. I am to glean it from the reluctant testimony of Britons, Frenchmen, Spaniards, — men who despised him as a negro and a slave, and hated him because he had beaten them in many a battle. All the materials for his biography are from the lips of his enemies.

About the time he reached the camp, the army had been subjected to two insults. First, their commissioners, summoned to meet the French Committee, were ignomin-

iously and insultingly dismissed; and when, afterward, François, their general, was summoned to a second conference, and went to it on horseback, accompanied by two officers, a young lieutenant, who had known him as a slave, angered at seeing him in the uniform of an officer, raised his riding whip and struck him over the shoulders. If he had been the savage which the negro is painted to us, he had only to breathe the insult to his twenty-five thousand soldiers, and they would have trodden out the Frenchmen in blood. But the indignant chief rode back in silence to his tent, and it was twenty-four hours before his troops heard of this insult to their general. Then the word went forth, "Death to every white man!". They had fifteen hundred prisoners. Ranged in front of the camp, they were about to be shot. Toussaint, who had a vein of religious fanaticism, like most great leaders, — like Mohammed, like Napoleon, like Cromwell, like John Brown, — he could preach as well as fight, — mounting a hillock, and getting the ear of the crowd, exclaimed: "Brothers, this blood will not wipe out the insult to our chief; only the blood in yonder French camp can wipe it out. To shed that is courage; to shed this is cowardice and cruelty beside;" — and he saved fifteen hundred lives.

I cannot stop to give in detail every one of his efforts. This was in 1793. Leap with me over seven years; come to 1800; what has he achieved? He has driven the Spaniard back into his own cities, conquered him there, and put the French banner over every Spanish town; and for the first time, and almost the last, the island obeys one law. He has put the mulatto under his feet. He has attacked Maitland, defeated him in pitched battles, and permitted him to retreat to Jamaica; and when the French army rose upon Laveaux, their general, and put him in chains, Toussaint defeated them, took Laveaux out of prison, and put him at the head of his own troops. The grateful French in return named him General in Chief. "*Cet homme fait l'ouverture partout,*" said one, — "This man makes an opening everywhere," — hence his soldiers named him L'Ouverture, *the opening*.

This was the work of seven years. Let us pause a moment, and find something to measure him by. You remember Macaulay says, comparing Cromwell with Napoleon, that Cromwell showed the greater military genius, if we consider that he never saw an army till he was forty, while Napoleon was educated from a boy in the best military schools in Europe. Cromwell manufactured his own army; Napoleon at the age of twenty-seven was placed at the head of the best troops Europe ever saw. They were both successful; but, says Macaulay, with such disadvantages, the Englishman showed the greater genius. Whether you allow the inference or not, you will at least grant that it is a fair mode of measurement. Apply it to Toussaint. Cromwell never saw an army till he was forty; this man never saw a soldier till he was fifty. Cromwell manufactured his own army — out of what? Englishmen, — the best blood in Europe. Out of the middle class of Englishmen, — the best blood of the island. And with it he conquered what? Englishmen, — their equals. This man manufactured his army out of what? Out of what you call the despicable race of negroes, debased, demoralized, by two hundred years of slavery, one hundred thousand of them imported into the island

within four years, unable to speak a dialect intelligible even to each other. Yet out of this mixed, and, as you say, despicable mass, he forged a thunderbolt and hurled it at what? At the proudest blood in Europe, the Spaniard, and sent him home conquered; at the most warlike blood in Europe, the French, and put them under his feet; at the pluckiest blood in Europe, the English, and they skulked home to Jamaica. Now if Cromwell was a general, at least this man was a soldier. I know it was a small territory; it was not as large as the continent; but it was as large as that Attica which, with Athens for a capital, has filled the earth with its fame for two thousand years. We measure genius by quality, not by quantity.

Further, — Cromwell was only a soldier; his fame stops there. Not one line in the statute book of Britain can be traced to Cromwell; not one step in the social life of England finds its motive power in his brain. The state he founded went down with him to his grave. But this man no sooner put his hand on the helm of state, than the ship steadied with an upright keel, and he began to evince a statesmanship as marvelous as his military genius. History says that the most statesmanlike act of Napoleon was his proclamation of 1802, at the Peace of Amiens, when, believing that the indelible loyalty of a native-born heart is always a sufficient basis on which to found an empire, he said: "Frenchmen, come home. I pardon the crimes of the last twelve years; I blot out its parties, I found my throne on the hearts of all Frenchmen," — and twelve years of unclouded success showed how wisely he judged. That was in 1802. In 1800 this negro made a proclamation; it runs thus: "Sons of St. Domingo, come home. We never meant to take your houses or your lands. The negro only asked that liberty which God gave him. Your houses wait for you, your lands are ready, come and cultivate them," — and from Madrid and Paris, from Baltimore and New Orleans, the emigrant planters crowded home to enjoy their estates, under the pledged word that was never broken of a victorious slave.

Again, Carlyle has said, "The natural king is one who melts all wills into his own." At this moment he turned to his armies, — poor, ill-clad, and half-starved, — and said to them: "Go back and work on these estates you have conquered; for an empire can be founded only on order and industry, and you can learn these virtues only there." And they went. The French Admiral who witnessed the scene said that in a week his army melted back into peasants.

It was 1800. The world waited fifty years before, in 1846, Robert Peel dared to venture, as a matter of practical statesmanship, the theory of free trade. Adam Smith theorized, the French statesmen dreamed, but no man at the head of affairs had ever dared to risk it as a practical measure. Europe waited till 1846 before the most practical intellect in the world, the English, adopted the great economic formula of unfettered trade. But in 1800 this black, with the instinct of statesmanship, said to the committee who were drafting for him a Constitution: "Put at the head of the chapter of commerce that the ports of St. Domingo are open to the trade of the world." With lofty indifference to race, superior to all envy or prejudice, Toussaint had formed this committee of eight white proprietors and one mulatto, — not a soldier nor a negro on the

list, although Haitian history proves that, with the exception of Rigaud, the rarest genius has always been shown by pure negroes.

Again, it was 1800, at a time when England was poisoned on every page of her statute book with religious intolerance, when a man could not enter the House of Commons without taking an Episcopal communion, when every State in the Union, except Rhode Island, was full of the intensest religious bigotry. This man was a negro. You say that is a superstitious blood. He was uneducated. You say that makes a man narrow-minded. He was a Catholic. Many say that is but another name for intolerance. And yet — negro, Catholic, slave — he took his place by the side of Roger Williams, and said to his committee: "Make it the first line of my Constitution that I know no difference between religious beliefs."

Now, blue-eyed Saxon, proud of your race, go back with me to the commencement of the century, and select what statesman you please. Let him be either American or European; let him have a brain the result of six generations of culture; let him have the ripest training of university routine; let him add to it the better education of practical life; crown his temples with the silver of seventy years; and show me the man of Saxon lineage for whom his most sanguine admirer will wreath a laurel rich as embittered foes have placed on the brow of this negro, — rare military skill, profound knowledge of human nature, content to blot out all party distinctions, and trust a state to the blood of its sons, — anticipating Sir Robert Peel by fifty years, and taking his station by the side of Roger Williams before any Englishman or American had won the right; — and yet this is the record which the history of rival states makes up for this inspired black of St. Domingo.

It was 1801. The Frenchmen who lingered on the island described its prosperity and order as almost incredible. You might trust a child with a bag of gold to go from Samana to Port-au-Prince without risk. Peace was in every household; the valleys laughed with fertility; culture climbed the mountains; the commerce of the world was represented in its harbors. At this time Europe concluded the Peace of Amiens, and Napoleon took his seat on the throne of France. He glanced his eyes across the Atlantic, and, with a single stroke of his pen, reduced Ceyenne and Martinique back into chains. He then said to his Council, "What shall I do with St. Domingo?" The slaveholders said, "Give it to us." Napoleon turned to the Abbé Gregoire, "What is your opinion?" "I think those men would change their opinions, if they changed their skins." Colonel Vincent, who had been private secretary to Toussaint, wrote a letter to Napoleon, in which he said "Sire, leave it alone; it is the happiest spot in your dominions; God raised this man to govern; races melt under his hand. He has saved you this island; for I know of my own knowledge that, when the Republic could not have lifted a finger to prevent it, George III offered him any title and any revenue if he would hold the island under the British crown. He refused, and saved it for France." Napoleon turned away from his Council, and is said to have remarked, "I have sixty thousand idle troops; I must find them something to do." He meant to say, "I am about to seize the crown; I dare not do it in the faces of sixty thousand



republican soldiers: I must give them work at a distance to do." The gossip of Paris gives another reason for his expedition against St. Domingo. It is said that the satirists of Paris had christened Toussaint the Black Napoleon; and Bonaparte hated his black shadow. Toussaint had unfortunately once addressed him a letter, "The first of the blacks to the first of the whites." He did not like the comparison. You would think it too slight a motive. But let me remind you of the present Napoleon, that when the epigrammatists of Paris christened his wasteful and tasteless expense at Versailles *Soulouquerie*, from the name of Soulouque the Black Emperor, he deigned to issue a specific order forbidding the use of the word. The Napoleon blood is very sensitive. So Napoleon resolved to crush Toussaint from one motive or another, from the prompting of ambition, or dislike of this resemblance, — which was very close. If either imitated the other, it must have been the white, since the negro preceded him several years. They were very much alike, and they were very French, — French even in vanity, common to both. You remember Bonaparte's vainglorious words to his soldiers at the Pyramids: "Forty centuries look down upon us." In the same mood, Toussaint said to the French captain who urged him to go to France in his frigate, "Sir, your ship is not large enough to carry me." Napoleon, you know, could never bear the military uniform. He hated the restraint of his rank; he loved to put on the gray coat of the Little Corporal, and wander in the camp. Toussaint also never could bear a uniform. He wore a plain coat, and often the yellow Madras handkerchief of the slaves. A French lieutenant once called him a maggot in a yellow handkerchief. Toussaint took him prisoner next day, and sent him home to his mother. Like Napoleon, he could fast many days; could dictate to three secretaries at once; could wear out four or five horses. Like Napoleon, no man ever divined his purpose or penetrated his plan. He was only a negro, and so, in him, they called it hypocrisy. In Bonaparte we style it diplomacy. For instance, three attempts made to assassinate him all failed, from not firing at the right spot. If they thought he was in the north in a carriage, he would be in the south on horseback; if they thought he was in the city in a house, he would be in the field in a tent. They once riddled his carriage with bullets; he was on horseback on the other side. The seven Frenchmen who did it were arrested. They expected to be shot. The next day was some saint's day; he ordered them to be placed before the high altar, and, when the priest reached the prayer for forgiveness, came down from his high seat, repeated it with him, and permitted them to go unpunished. He had that wit common to all great commanders, which makes its way in a camp. His soldiers getting disheartened, he filled a large vase with powder, and, scattering six grains of rice in it, shook them up, and said: "See, there is the white, there is the black; what are you afraid of?" So when people came to him in great numbers for office, as it is reported they do sometimes even in Washington, he learned the first words of a Catholic prayer in Latin, and, repeating it, would say, "Do you understand that?" "No, sir." "What! want an office, and not know Latin? Go home and learn it!"

Then, again, like Napoleon, — like genius always, — he had confidence in his

power to rule men. You remember when Bonaparte returned from Elba, and Louis XVIII sent an army against him, Bonaparte descended from his carriage, opened his coat, offering his breast to their muskets, and saying, "Frenchmen, it is the Emperor!" and they ranged themselves behind him, *his* soldiers, shouting, "*Vive l'Empereur!*" That was in 1815. Twelve years before, Toussaint, finding that four of his regiments had deserted and gone to Leclerc, drew his sword, flung it on the grass, went across the field to them, folded his arms, and said, "Children, can you point a bayonet at me?" The blacks fell on their knees, praying his pardon. His bitterest enemies watched him, and none of them charged him with love of money, sensuality, or cruel use of power. The only instance in which his sternest critic has charged him with severity is this: During a tumult, a few white proprietors who had returned, trusting his proclamation, were killed. His nephew, General Moise, was accused of indecision in quelling the riot. He assembled a court-martial, and, on its verdict, ordered his own nephew to be shot, sternly Roman in thus keeping his promise of protection to the whites. Above the lust of gold, pure in private life, generous in the use of his power, it was against such a man that Napoleon sent his army, giving to General Leclerc, the husband of his beautiful sister Pauline, thirty thousand of his best troops, with orders to reintroduce slavery. Among these soldiers came all of Toussaint's old mulatto rivals and foes.

Holland lent sixty ships. England promised by special message to be neutral; and you know neutrality means sneering at freedom, and sending arms to tyrants. England promised neutrality, and the black looked out on the whole civilized world marshalled against him. America, full of slaves, of course was hostile. Only the Yankee sold him poor muskets at a very high price. Mounting his horse, and riding to the eastern end of the island, Samana, he looked out on a sight such as no native had ever seen before. Sixty ships of the line, crowded by the best soldiers of Europe, rounded the point. They were soldiers who had never yet met an equal, whose tread, like Caesar's, had shaken Europe, — soldiers who had scaled the Pyramids, and planted the French banners on the walls of Rome. He looked a moment, counted the flotilla, let the reins fall on the neck of his horse, and, turning to Christopher, exclaimed: "All France is come to Hayti: they can only come to make us slaves; and we are lost!" He then recognized the only mistake of his life, — his confidence in Bonaparte, which had led him to disband his army.

Returning to the hills, he issued the only proclamation which bears his name and breathes vengeance: "My children, France comes to make us slaves. God gave us liberty; France has no right to take it away. Burn the cities, destroy the harvests, tear up the roads with cannon, poison the wells, show the white man the hell he comes to make;" — and he was obeyed. When the great William of Orange saw Louis XIV cover Holland with troops, he said, "Break down the dikes, give Holland back to ocean;" and Europe said, "Sublime!" When Alexander saw the armies of France descend upon Russia, he said, "Burn Moscow, starve back the invaders;" and Europe said, "Sublime!" This black saw all Europe marshalled to crush him, and gave to his people the same heroic example of defiance.

It is true, the scene grows bloodier as we proceed. But, remember, the white man fitly accompanied his infamous attempt to reduce freemen to slavery with every bloody and cruel device that bitter and shameless hate could invent. Aristocracy is always cruel. The black man met the attempt, as every such attempt should be met, with war to the hilt. In his first struggle to gain his freedom, he had been generous and merciful, saved lives and pardoned enemies, as the people in every age and clime have always done when rising against aristocrats. Now, to save his liberty, the negro exhausted every means, seized every weapon, and turned back the hateful invaders with a vengeance as terrible as their own, though even now he refused to be cruel.

Leclerc sent word to Christopher that he was about to land at Cape City. Christopher said, "Toussaint is governor of the island. I will send to him for permission. If without it a French soldier sets foot on shore, I will burn the town, and fight over its ashes."

Leclerc landed. Christopher took two thousand white men, women, and children, and carried them to the mountains in safety, then with his own hands set fire to the splendid palace which French architects had just finished for him, and in forty hours the place was in ashes. The battle was fought on its streets, and the French driven back to their boats. Wherever they went, they were met with fire and sword. Once, resisting an attack, the blacks, Frenchmen born, shouted the "Marseilles Hymn," and the French soldiers stood still; they could not fight the "Marseillaise"! And it was not till their officers sabered them on that they advanced, and then they were beaten. Beaten in the field, the French then took to lies. They issued proclamations, saying, "We do not come to make you slaves; this man Toussaint tells you lies. Join us, and you shall have the rights you claim." They cheated every one of his officers, except Christopher and Dessalines, and his own brother Pierre, and finally these also deserted him, and he was left alone. He then sent word to Leclerc, "I will submit. I could continue the struggle for years, — could prevent a single Frenchman from safely quitting your camp. But I hate bloodshed. I have fought only for the liberty of my race. Guarantee that, I will submit and come in." He took the oath to be a faithful citizen; and on the same crucifix Leclerc swore that he should be faithfully protected, and that the island should be free. As the French general glanced along the line of his splendidly equipped troops, and saw, opposite, Toussaint's ragged, ill-armed followers, he said to him, "L'Ouverture, had you continued the war, where could you have got arms?" "I would have taken yours," was the Spartan reply. He went down to his house in peace; it was summer. Leclerc remembered that the fever months were coming, when his army would be in hospitals, and when one motion of that royal hand would sweep his troops into the sea. He was too dangerous to be left at large. So they summoned him to attend a council; and here is the only charge made against him, — the only charge. They say he was fool enough to go. Grant it; what was the record? The white man lies shrewdly to cheat the negro. Knight-errantry was truth. The foulest insult you can offer a man since the Crusades is, you lie. Of Toussaint, Hermona; the Spanish general, who knew him well, said, "He was the

purest soul God ever put into a body." Of him history bears witness, "He never broke his word." Maitland was traveling in the depths of the woods to meet Toussaint, when he was met by a messenger, and told that he was betrayed. He went on, and met Toussaint, who showed him two letters, — one from the French general, offering him any rank if he would put Maitland in his power, and the other his reply. It was, "Sir, I have promised the Englishman that he shall go back." Let it stand, therefore, that the negro, truthful as a knight of old, was cheated by his lying foe. Which race has reason to be proud of such a record?

But he was not cheated. He was under espionage. Suppose he had refused: the government would have doubted him, — would have found some cause to arrest him. He probably reasoned thus: "If I go willingly, I shall be treated accordingly;" and he went. The moment he entered the room, the officers drew their swords, and told him he was prisoner; and one young lieutenant who was present says, "He was not at all surprised, but seemed very sad." They put him on shipboard, and weighed anchor for France. As the island faded from his sight, he turned to the captain, and said, "You think you have rooted up the tree of liberty, but I am only a branch; I have planted the tree so deep that all France can never root it up." Arrived in Paris, he was flung into jail, and Napoleon sent his secretary, Caffarelli, to him, supposing he had buried large treasures. He listened awhile, then replied, "Young man, it is true I have lost treasures, but they are not such as you come to seek." He was then sent to the Castle of St. Joux, to a dungeon twelve feet by twenty, built wholly of stone, with a narrow window, high up on the side, looking out on the snows of Switzerland. In winter, ice covers the floor; in summer, it is damp and wet. In this living tomb the child of the sunny tropic was left to die. From this dungeon he wrote two letters to Napoleon. One of them ran thus: —

"Sire, — I am a French citizen. I never broke a law. By the grace of God, I have saved for you the best island of your realm. Sire, of your mercy grant me justice."

Napoleon never answered the letters. The commandant allowed him five francs a day for food and fuel. Napoleon heard of it, and reduced the sum to three. The luxurious usurper, who complained that the English government was stingy because it allowed him only six thousand dollars a month, stooped from his throne to cut down a dollar to a half, and still Toussaint did not die quick enough.

This dungeon was a tomb. The story is told that, in Josephine's time, a young French marquis was placed there, and the girl to whom he was betrothed went to the Empress and prayed for his release. Said Josephine to her, "Have a model of it made, and bring it to me." Josephine placed it near Napoleon. He said, "Take it away, — it is horrible!" She put it on his footstool, and he kicked it from him. She held it to him the third time, and said, "Sire, in this horrible dungeon you have put a man to die." "Take him out," said Napoleon, and the girl saved her lover. In this tomb Toussaint was buried, but he did not die fast enough. Finally, the commandant was

told to go into Switzerland, to carry the keys of the dungeon with him, and to stay four days; when he returned, Toussaint was found starved to death.

WENDELL PHILLIPS

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## TO TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE

TOUSSAINT, the most unhappy man of men!  
Whether the whistling Rustic tend his plough  
Within thy hearing, or thy head be now  
Pillowed in some deep dungeon's earless den; —  
O miserable Chieftain, where and when  
Wilt thou find patience! Yet die not; do thou  
Wear rather in thy bonds a cheerful brow:  
Though fallen thyself, never to rise again,  
Live and take comfort. Thou hast left behind  
Powers that will work for thee; air, earth, and skies,  
There's not a breathing of the common wind  
That will forget thee, thou hast great allies;  
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,  
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

## BEYOND THE DREAD OF DEATH

Next moment we may live or may not live;  
With a parting call the messengers of Death  
Knock at our door, claim back the vital breath.  
But most men steeped and meshed in ignorance stay,  
Even forget that they shall die one day.  
Yet is to them Death's fright so terrible  
That it conditions their life-movements all.  
This dread is held by the traditional thought  
Grand impetus and method to promote  
Momentous discipline in search of God,  
Freedom, ere strikes the inevitable Rod.  
And this has given rise to detachment utter  
For all material things, their gaudy glitter.  
Man's business with the world has been detested  
So that no time, no blow of breath is wasted;  
For wasted is the moment that's not spent  
To win release from life's imprisonment.  
Before Sri Aurobindo no one spoke  
Of immortality of the very yoke  
That binds man's spirit, the body's mortal mould,  
Transfiguration in the image of gold.  
O now that possibility is come,  
For body to be the Undying's deathless home.  
For this truth to be realised concretely  
One must abolish from one's self completely  
All dread of Death. Indeed one should not fear,  
Try to escape into the silence sheer  
Of the Absolute and sever all connection  
With the worldly play, God's ground of blissful action.  
Dread nor desire the world and death — prepare  
Yourselves and all the souls of the world to share  
The new Sun-broken light-force, ready to be  
The living moulds of immortality.

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

# LANGUAGE OF THE UNIVERSES

## REFLECTIONS ON THE APPROACHING COMET AND RELATED PHENOMENA

### I

A NEW comet approaches, forerunner and announcer of a momentous period in the earth's history. Through this and other phenomena the Supreme speaks to His creation in clear language today. He reveals Himself, His plan, His goal. It is no longer possible for man to say he is ignorant of the cosmic design and its meaning and direct relation to himself. He can no longer hide behind the mask of his ignorance, nor can he cover his eyes and indulge in his pleasures and his strifes, his abuses, his sufferings and his pain. Today man knows, but he rejects this knowledge because it tells him at every instant that the time has come to forego his ego, the time has come to work for truth, for light, for harmony and love. He can no longer pretend to ignore the purpose of creation. The Supreme speaks to man clearly now, and each one can perceive in his own way — by means of a unique and individual language between the Creator and himself — the path he must take and the demands made upon him in order that the chaos of today gives way to the unity and harmony of tomorrow.

The approaching comet announces this truth. It is one of the ways the Lord has chosen to speak to us, one of His languages. A potent language in truth because it is universal.

On June 30, 1973 the Earth witnessed an eclipse, one of the longest in 1,433 years. The only longer one occurred in 1955, the year preceding the Supramental Manifestation of 1956. That year, 1955, was a numerological 2 vibration; the year of this latest eclipse was 1973, also a numerological 2, and it prepared the way in turn for an important period on Earth. A potent light descends, but with its descent an inevitable upsurge of darkness takes place. This was symbolised by the eclipse of June, the temporary darkening of the Light<sup>1</sup>.

Thus when a time of acceleration occurs — a more intensified manifestation of light — we are often bewildered by the paradoxical situation of an exteriorisation of greater, or at least more evident, falsehood. In fact, often the increased facility for progress and peace is not so apparent and is only perceived by those whose vision is able to penetrate more deeply and pierce the veil of superficial darkness that attempts to cover the truth and submerge the greater manifestation in a sea of falsehood.

Today the signs are clear and the language of the Lord is more direct, and these signs that we can perceive in the workings of the cosmos are more obvious, sometimes to a degree that amazes us, we wonder how it is that the whole of creation is not able to understand this language.

A wonderfully clear example of this clarity can be shown through the discovery of the three new planets, Uranus, Neptune and Pluto. These planets are directly con-

<sup>1</sup> See *Mother India*, July, 1973, "The Darkening of the Light."

nected to our 9th Manifestation because they co-rule the signs of the Manifestation, Capricorn, Aquarius and Pisces. The details of their discovery are not arbitrary coincidences but indicate rather that the evolution is being sensitised to a much greater extent, because the planets in question represent higher octaves or greater frequency waves of three planets of the ancient scheme, Mercury, Venus and Mars. We must understand that these planets have long been there but we "see" them at the time our civilisation is able to manifest that which they represent. The years in which the three new planets were discovered are very significant and therefore in a simple manner it can be shown that, in what regards our 9th Manifestation, the force permeating the worlds is one of perfection, down to the most minute detail. In order to perceive this it is first necessary to understand that certain things have been arranged for our times which make it easy to comprehend this cosmic language. One of these is the decimal system, and in particular India's contribution to the world of mathematics, the Zero. Another is the calendar in use at present, connected to the decimal system. A third is the method of theosophical addition — that of adding all the digits in a number to arrive at one single digit.<sup>1</sup> And the fourth is the planetary system itself which at present consists of 9 planets plus the Sun. This is not a coincidence and, though there may be others discovered or seen later on, it is necessary for our purposes, those of the possibility of carrying on this "conversation" with the Lord, that the system consist of 9 planets in this Age of Aquarius. What is to come later will have its own rhythm and meaning; for us the important thing is to understand what occurs and what is, now — because by speculating on future conditions we often fail to understand the present. It is sufficient to point out one thing regarding the discovery of other planets in our system: the whole structure of the universe, particularly our system from which we can judge the rest, is built up on the trinity, or a triune manifestation. In our solar system through the planets of the ancient scheme and the three latest ones we can clearly see this. There are three groups of three, — Mercury, Venus and Earth, the *interior* planets, then the three *superior* planets Mars, Jupiter and Saturn, and finally the *extra-Saturnian* ones, Uranus, Neptune and Pluto. Therefore if another is to be finally discovered we can be certain that it will form a part of a further trinity, bringing the final count to twelve.

Let us observe the scheme of the discovery of the new planets therefore; in all there are 9 and we arrange and number them according to their distance from the Sun.

(0)	Sun	○	
(1)	Mercury	♿	
(2)	Venus	♀	
(3)	Earth (Moon)	♁ - ☾	The Sun, not being a planet and what is for us the Centre, is placed at the ○ point, and through other articles written on the question of symbols and numbers, it was
(4)	Mars	♂	
(5)	Jupiter	♃	

<sup>1</sup> It must be pointed out that the name used, *theosophical addition*, refers to the divine wisdom acquired by this method of calculation as the word "theosophic" signifies and not any particular orthodox group or system



- (6) Saturn            ♄            shown why we must consider the count to be
- (7) Uranus           ♅            0 to 9, and not 1 to 10. This will be made
- (8) Neptune         ♆            particularly clear in a diagram reproduced
- (9) Pluto            ♇            further on.

Thus we have the three new planets located in the 7th, 8th and 9th orbits around the Sun. (We do not consider the orbits of the asteroids since they do not form a crystallised centre.)

I mentioned that these new planets were higher octaves of certain ancient planets. Thus we have Uranus to be a higher octave of Mercury, Neptune a higher octave of Venus, and Pluto a higher octave of Mars. Astrologers may disagree among themselves as to the rulership of these new planets, but there is no one who disagrees on the ancient planets to which they are connected by degree of affinity and similar frequency range. Keeping this information in mind we can then show how the moment of their discovery formed a pattern which is truly one of the most extraordinary things I have come upon up to the present.

Uranus is a higher manifestation of Mercury and on the scale Uranus is 7 and Mercury 1. Taken together, always by means of theosophical addition, this equals 8. Uranus was discovered in 1781, which numerologically comes to 8.

Neptune is the higher manifestation of Venus, and on the scale Neptune is 8 and Venus 2, both equalling 10, or 1. Neptune was discovered in 1846, numerologically equalling 1.

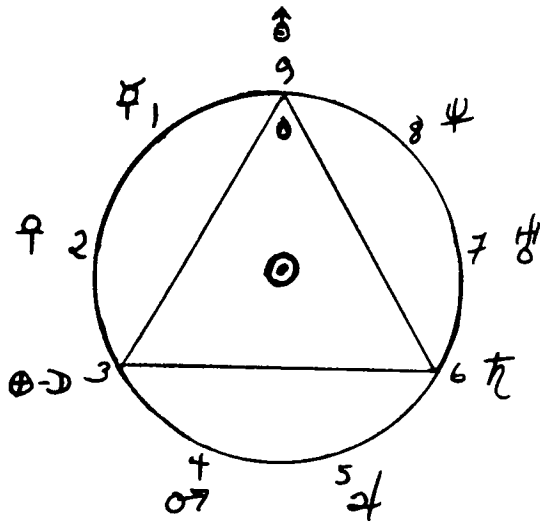
Pluto is the higher manifestation of Mars and on the scale it is the 9th orbit, while Mars is the 4th. 9 and 4 are 13, which then equals 4. Pluto was discovered in 1930, a numerological 4. A chart would read like this:

PLANET	YEAR	COMBINATION OF ORBIT NUMBERS	
9. PLUTO	<b>1 9 30</b> = 4	9 + 4 = 13 = 4	(18° ♄ = 9)
8. NEPTUNE	<b>1 8 46</b> = 1	8 + 2 = 10 = 1	(26° ♃ = 8)
7. URANUS	<b>1 7 81</b> = 8	7 + 1 = 8	(25° ♅ = 7)

Note the graduation of 7,8,9 in the century numbers in bold type in the chart, which also fall into the pattern of 7,8,9 of the orbit numbers.

When one planet fitted into the design, it was interesting; when the second did also, it seemed to be a remarkable "coincidence"; but when the third also fell into the pattern, it was overwhelming. If the reader has had the patience to follow through this simple pattern he should also understand it is deeply significant that the very planets connected to this Age of Unity and Perfection reveal such a harmonious arrangement, and such a clarity on the part of the Supreme towards His creation. We can then understand why we use this particular calendar, this particular number system, and so on. It would be very difficult to improve upon such a design of perfection.

But the pattern is not yet complete. I next looked to see what degree of the zodiac the planets were in exactly on the dates of their discovery. And this information further proved the remarkable quality of the pattern: Uranus was in 25° Gemini, therefore a numerological 7; Neptune was in 26° Aquarius, a numerological 8; and



Pluto was in  $18^{\circ}$  Cancer, a numerological 9, as shown in the column in brackets. In the diagram here the planets are placed around the circle, that all-meaningful diagram which showed the exactitude of the work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother in our Manifestation.<sup>1</sup> It can therefore be seen how the triangle touches 3 (Earth-Moon), 6 (Saturn) and 9 (Pluto). These are the three important steps in our evolution, and because they fit into the design in this manner they reveal the course the evolution is taking. It should be known that these planets in them-

selves are connected by numbers: the Moon takes 29 days to make a synodic revolution around the Earth and Saturn takes 29 years to circle the Sun. Further, Saturn rules the Earth sign Capricorn, and Pluto is co-ruler of Capricorn, thus sharing this position with Saturn; both therefore—and for many other reasons too lengthy to explain in this treatment—are intimately connected to the Earth. And the comet on its way was first seen to be approaching from the region of *Pluto*, and will be perceived by the Earth when the Sun is in the sign of Saturn and Pluto, *Capricorn*. I hope that it is clear to the reader therefore how the coming comet is related to this triangle, or the divine intervention in creation, that which upholds and sustains the evolution and carries it to a determined goal. Sri Aurobindo occupies the position of Pluto in the diagram ( $1872=9$ ), and the Mother is at the place of Saturn ( $1878=6$ ). By this exposition we can be made to understand how these harmonies work in our lives in a most precise manner, which to some could appear purely arbitrary; that is, I believe that with the explanation of the pattern involving the discovery of these all-important planets, there no longer remains any question as to the validity of these methods of deciphering the cosmic laws and harmonies that I have been explaining at length in past articles, namely the importance of the circle divided into 9 and the matter of theosophical addition, which is the key process in all the discoveries.

## 2

If one looks at the happenings in the world today with a vision of the whole and not the parts, with a unified perception, the political, economical and social conditions can only reveal to us that falsehood has been conquered. Durga's work in essence has been accomplished, and all that which remains and appears to contradict her work

<sup>1</sup> See *Mother India*, May, 1973. "Symbols and the Question of Unity."

are only outer formations, lingering ghosts of once potent forces that slowly but surely are exhausting all their energies and are being absorbed into the source of Light.

The comet approaching from the region of Pluto is in direct symbolic rapport with the eclipse of June 30, 1973 which occurred in Cancer, the sign of the Moon, as well as the minor one of January 4, 1973, occurring in Capricorn, the sign of Saturn. When these three events are seen as a connected unit they reveal to us the importance of the coming year. For one who is able to understand this universal language of the Supreme, and read the cosmic harmonies as one would read a book, it becomes immediately evident that there is a tremendous acceleration in process. The signs follow quickly upon each other; the movements, separated in time but connected in meaning, follow each other at narrower intervals, and thus we are more easily able to understand them and capture their message of unity. It is only by attaining this capacity, a vision of unity, that we can decipher this cosmic language; with a disconnected eye the events remain a mystery.

1974 is a momentous year. This new and immensely bright comet is the announcer. It comes when the Sun is in Capricorn, the sign of the Divine Mother's victory and the establishment of her reign on Earth. It is the sign of Pluto, the planet *par excellence* of the new era. A comet is a luminous body, like the Sun; it moves generally in an elliptical orbit around the star and makes its appearance sometimes at very great intervals of time. Its head has a bright nucleus and certainly we can say that it is symbolically a radiant messenger of the Sun, our physical representation of the Divine. The comet's tail becomes visible when it is near the Sun and for us, with regard to the comet in question, this will be seen clearly when the luminary is in the sign of Capricorn, in *direct* opposition to the position in the celestial sphere where the eclipse of June 30, 1973 took place, thus touching that very important axis of evolution, Cancer and Capricorn. The eclipse signified temporary darkness, unusually long — the comet signifies temporary light, unusually bright.

The meaning of the Comet in the symbolic sense can be given in this way: at the time of its arrival in the vicinity of the Sun which will make it clearly visible from Earth, there will be a minor solar eclipse, a brief darkening of the light, on Christmas Eve. But immediately then there is the advent of one of the most brilliant manifestations of light man has record of. This light comes to cast out the darkness and it is meaningful that the period of its advent is the very time of the traditional coming of the Saviour, or the Festival of Light of old—the birth of the Sun-God Mithras, the Christ, or Aeon, born of the virgin, Kore. In truth we can say that of all cosmic phenomena up to present times, this Comet and its connection to past eclipses of importance and past comets, could very well be taken as the announcement of the re-appearance of the Solar-God, the Christ, or the light that casts out all darkness. Also it must be remembered that the time it appears corresponds to the period of the Vijaya Dashami in the astrological sense, when the light of the Divine Mother is victorious over the forces of darkness, and the reign of truth is established on Earth.

Moreover, there was another event of major importance in the realm of pheno-

mena that makes use of the universal language: the immense solar explosions of August, 1972. No records exist of solar activity, such as that which occurred in that all-important month and year. The Sun threw out such a quantity of energy into the atmosphere that scientists wondered what the results would be on Earth, some even fearing major catastrophes. There was talk of perhaps new and strange diseases appearing, of the aging process being accelerated; others said perhaps a rejuvenation process could begin. The weather of course all over the globe was affected, and it is a fact that during solar explosions the growth of plant life is greatly accelerated. Particularly we must keep in mind that the explosions took place when the Sun was in Leo, the sign which it rules.

Without a doubt the solar explosions of August, 1972 were phenomena intimately related to the actual period of acceleration in evolution which, as far as perceivable phenomena are concerned, began at that time. The energy the Sun cast into the atmosphere is responsible in the material sense for a tremendous pressure on the physical, and as a consequence we can note this pressure in that sphere, either through malaise, strange diseases or the need suddenly to deal with the physical and tackle problems of long standing lodged in the body. Questions of inertia or *tamas* in the physical, for example, are made more acute. In a word, the rhythm and balance of the body demands a solution at this time.

On May 18, 1972, preceding the solar explosions, the following dream-vision came to me: a huge, resplendent, golden-red Sun was low in the sky, almost on the horizon. From this red Sun a great tail, or trail, extended through the cosmos down to Earth, passing so close that one was able to reach out and touch it, and then it swept up and its end was lost in the clouds and infinity. The image was still and silent, like a glorious painting — eternal, existing in a timeless suspension. The tail itself was marvellous; there was a conglomeration of all the various geometric forms, triangles of all sorts, rectangles, etc., and all these forms were so arranged — in a perfect harmony of arrangement — as to make a square. The square tail was made of the very stuff of the Sun, and weaving through it was a golden element. One was able to stretch out one's hand and grasp some of this "cotton-woolish" element. It was potent, to such a degree that only a small bit held between the fingers began to alter the flesh, nothing so terrifically noticeable, but there was a decided unexplainable and unique alteration. One started to eat a bit and the same process was felt, an alteration of the breathing, the heartbeat, the pulse. The element was so powerful that it was impossible to hold it for long, but the change was of a very strange and indefinable order, yet exceedingly potent, — a quiet, silent but powerful action of an accumulation of energy. The square tail therefore contained all the forms and was itself contained in and emanated from the sphere of the Sun, the Divine, the light which alone can resolve all of mankind's problems, those spiritual and symbolic, as well as those physical. Being the centre of our system it is our immediate source of energy, and will sustain and care for all our needs and save us from the follies we have committed in the atmosphere and against the very body of the Earth we inhabit. At the August 15th darshan

following the solar explosions there was a huge, red Sun painted on the wall-hanging behind the Mother.

In the world at large the matter of pollution becomes ever more acute. The body of the Earth demands attention in order to regain its balance or readjust, shall we say, to a greater harmony. We tend to cry out against those who in our eyes are responsible for the existing pollution; but it must be kept in mind that this forms a part of the evolutionary process and is inevitable in the fulfillment of the Earth's physical destiny. As the individual goes through the travail of readjustment to the greater forces manifesting at this time, which produce his numerous difficulties in the body, so the earth itself — and no doubt the other planets — must perforce pass through a period of intensified readjustment. We cannot avoid the process, and the raging question of pollution is the means by which the greater equilibrium will take shape. These are the labour pains before the new birth. Naturally in order to surmount this phase it is necessary that man tackle the problem from the standpoint of the collective ego, as it is necessary to solve the question of individual transformation in the individual ego. No other way but its elimination will lead to the light and harmony that are destined to manifest.

This appears to be the situation at present, since the time of the solar explosions: there is a substance permeating the worlds that has a most potent transforming power but is to us a mystery and will require a long period of adjustment before the body will actually be able to support this pressure without undue negative results. The preparation has long been in effect, otherwise the great recent intensification would have had altogether disastrous effects.<sup>1</sup>

We must keep our position in the cosmos in mind, however, when studying the universal language. It can be perceived in this way. Man inhabits the Earth, and the Earth has a satellite, the Moon; these two revolve around a common centre of gravity, and *it is this centre*, this potent "void" which orbits around the Sun together with all the other planets and their satellites. The Sun in turn, together with all *its* satellites, revolves around the *galactic centre*, that potent nucleus of energy toward which we move, situated at the centre of our Milky Way Galaxy. It is our greater centre and its direction relative to the earth corresponds to the position of the Sun when it is in the zodiacal sign of Capricorn. We are situated toward the outer rim of the Galaxy, being sucked into the centre, and no doubt the closer we move the finer must our substance become.

To sum up, there are three spiralling movements which concern us in our Galaxy:

<sup>1</sup> Here are some comments of the Mother made on 29.10.1965 about the comet that then appeared. "The preceding night I had met the being of the comet in space. His form was somewhat like a human form but clearly he was not human, he had long beautiful red hair, his body was fair and golden. The being brought some jelly-like substance, orange red in colour to the earth's atmosphere to facilitate the transformation of matter. I remained long with the Comet who showed me how to spread this substance in matter."

It is interesting to note that this occurred in 1965, a numerological 3 year, the same as 1974, at an interval of 9 years, and that it followed the Supramental Manifestation of 1956, a numerological 3 by 9 years.

our Earth's dance with the Moon, the planets and satellites (Earth included) around the Sun, and the Sun and planets around the galactic centre. If we had a greater vision we could perceive *the Movement*: all the galaxies revolving around and being absorbed into the unique Centre. In the future this movement will be perceivable and measurable, and its discovery will give the scientific proof to the Hindu concept of the outgoing and incoming Breath, the days and nights of Brahma. When we come to know our exact position in the cosmos relative first of all to the centre of the Milky Way, and then the Milky Way's relation together with the other Galaxies to this Unique Centre, we shall be able to be more precise as to the stage of evolution of humanity. In effect, all can be understood and explained by breath, from the individual standpoint to the cosmic. In breath lies the key to a higher knowledge and the understanding of the workings of the cosmos, and in this sense therefore the microcosmos and macrocosmos are one.

When considered in relation to the vast scale, man can appear of course as a pathetically unimportant piece in the diagram. His contribution to the unfolding movement of the universe is at one of the lowest levels, if we take time and space as means of measurement. But once one enters into the sphere which carries us beyond these barriers, which is to be found in consciousness, the position of earth beings with regard to all the manifestations becomes equal, for the movement of liberated consciousness is faster than the speed of light. The breathing rhythm of a universe is the very same as man's proportionately, and for the economy of creation and the purposes of the evolutionary process, the value is the same. Because of mind and its linear means of perception we think in terms of vast and small, long or short. In the spherical method of perception, once the barriers are broken, the qualities of time and space become entirely different.

In comparison with other worlds ours is of course a very dense manifestation; the physical body, when compared with other bodies — the subtle physical for example — is an atrocious concentration of tamasic particles, — the difference between a dog and a bird we can say. The liberty felt in these other more subtle bodies makes living in our actual condition an appalling experience. Nonetheless, we are evolving toward a greater harmony in this sense.

The announcement of this 1973-1974 Comet is this:

“We are entering into a period when a much greater effort will be required, when man will be forced to exert himself to the maximum in order that all the barriers and divisions be finally abolished. The time has come when a definite movement toward unity is to be accomplished. And this is to take place at first within the centre of the movement. Failing there it will fail in the world at large.

“The period that opens before us in 1974, lasting a number of years from that time, will bring with it tremendous pressure for unity and harmony. The pressure in the cosmos will be very strong, that is, the cosmic forces will be working in a most intensified manner to bring this about. At this time a greatly increased assistance will be available to those who are sincere in the work for transformation. We enter a

period of unity, when only unity can save humanity. All efforts must be channeled in this direction, because after this period of heightened aid, if this condition of unity is not the prevailing truth throughout the land, we enter a period of destruction. At that time the forces working for the evolution will be of a different order. They could produce drastic and violent destruction, eliminating in one forceful sweep all that stands in the way of a universal manifestation of divine love. For a number of years these forces are of a gentle but insistent and imperative nature, — ones of facility, ease and felicity. But they demand nonetheless a total transformation and opening to the light. In a word, the pressure on the ego will be in this direction — imperative pressure, but a force of ease, of harmony, of love.

“If this does not produce the transformation required, that which is to occur at a future time, the violent pressure that works in the manner of an impulsive thrust, taking no heed of what stands in its way, will destroy the elements that are rigid and blocked and obstinate, and cause tremendous destruction in the individual and in the world.

“If in the period before us the work is successful, that imperative thrust will find no resistance and there will be no question of destruction.

“It is up to each individual, for each individual is responsible and within him lies the power to harmonise or divide.”

This is the message of the Comet, in the universal language of the Absolute’s cosmic harmonies.

29 August, 1973

PATRIZIA NORELLI-BACHELET

### POSTSCRIPTUM

In the light of the recent event of November 17, I would like to call the readers’ attention to an article that appeared in the July, 1973 issue of *Mother India*, “The Darkening of the Light”. It contains information directly related to the “illusory victory of the Falsehood”

The Mother’s passing did not fit into the Sacred Triangle we have often discussed, as Sri Aurobindo’s did, which represents the points wherein the Light is crystallised in the scheme of cosmic harmonies. Her passing is a part of the Work as seen in the cosmic design, but not the part *which is to be lasting*. Nonetheless we see the Supreme’s “control” in the event — she was totally surrendered to his will, and he chose to take her exactly 18 days and 18 hours before his Mahasamadhi. Moreover, she had entered into the period of Scorpio, the sign of Death, in her own life scheme on May 20, 1973, the time of her final retirement. The Sun in the actual sky when she left the body was also in the sign of Scorpio. This is the 8th sign and corresponds to the 8th Book of *Savitri*, the Book of Death. But it is not the final book, nor is it the final sign. Two books later she conquers Death, two signs later also, in Capricorn, the 10th sign, the Divine Mother’s Victory is complete. It is announced in *Savitri*; it is announced by the Comet which comes precisely in this 10th sign.

Death in the cosmic plan is only the beginning of the real Work. It is the point of *degeneration* and *regeneration*, after which the kingdom of Light is established on Earth. Death is the Great Illusion, and nothing more. Had the Mother’s passing taken place next year, then touching the 6th point of the Sacred Triangle, Death would have been crystallised in the Earth’s evolution for the whole of humanity. But it does not form a part of the Triangle of Light. The Supreme’s Will as manifested in the lives of His Incarnations leads to a greater Life.

The Light comes now and shall cast out the darkness.

The things that were promised *as being fulfilled*.

20.11.1973

PATRIZIA

# SEVEN LIVES

## A SAGA OF THE GODS AND THE GROWING SOUL

*(Continued from the issue of October, 1973)*

### CHAPTER VI

#### PART I

WHISPERING as sibilantly as the cascading water of the fall, Silent Daughter began:

“Reawaken your memory with me, my love, for this time, once more we shall return together. Remember ... remember well .... Remember with me the rock fort in the centre of Bharat — for how could you ever truly have forgotten it? Deogarh, house of God, when the Moghuls had not yet come through the Northern passes, and the Turk, Alauddin, still ruled from his stronghold at Delhi.”

Slowly, slowly, as she talked, reality for them both began to change its form. Unicorn, its mountain, and the ledge on which they were sitting started to fade, and a new scene took birth — a great rock promontory with smooth, sheer sides rising many hundred feet from a plain of waving grass. “We have arrived, dear one,” Silent Daughter was saying. “This was your home since the beginning of this human birth. But I have recently come from a Rajput’s realm as your bride ....”

They found themselves standing on the topmost parapet of the rock fort looking out upon the wealth of their kingdom that was measured in mile upon mile of rich, crop-bearing soil, and rolling grassland for the cattle and horses. Golden One was smiling.

“Yes, my sacred queen,” he replied. “Six months ago it was that I finally succeeded in wresting you from your father as my bride.” His smile had come with him from the other world, and the evening sun lit up his countenance as though to emphasise how closely his human form resembled the radiant godly form of his inner being.

“We brought you back here on just such an evening as this,” he continued, “With the horsemen going before our elephants, their golden standards parting the air before my heavenly prize of a beauty so rare that no man save a wild ape would dare to lay a hand upon her.”

“Perhaps it was that your prize basked in the sunlight of the noblest of princes —”

They caught each other’s gaze and laughed aloud, then became silent, for the magic of the evening had begun to assert itself. And the time in the day had come when the clatter of the guards outside the doors always seemed to become far and dim, when courtiers and servants were barred entry to the royal chambers, and when the villages below slowly twinkled to life as did the night sky with the lighting of the kitchen fires that dotted the darkening plain like emerging stars. It was at this time that Deogarh’s



new king, Shankaradev, found his consort Kamal Rani the most beautiful, for the mauve and purple of the sky made her soft features seem still more ethereal, and her silk-swathed figure all the more delicate and perfectly formed. Yet perhaps it was also the time when he was most in awe of her, for it was in this secluded circumstance that her divinity appeared most manifest.

She too had her own reasons to marvel, for of all things, she loved nothing more than beauty and grace, nobility and wisdom, and all these she found in the one she had nurtured and who now appeared to the world as her overlord. The white lion sat within him with serene and majestic humility, perfectly merged and blended into his nature, and it was perhaps for this that she admired him most of all. For of all his qualities the white lion's boon was the one that set him most clearly above other men and it laid the seal and sanction of the Great One upon all his being. No wonder then that the young queen adored her king with all her heart and lavished all her gifts upon him of love, joy, and brilliance till the air in which they moved was like a bright sky where no clouds lingered.

Thus lost in each other they flung their gaze out to the silhouetted horizon where the sun was sinking in a blaze of red fire along the sky line. Only one small dot moved in the vast, still landscape. At first they did not notice it particularly, but then it became more and more unmistakable as it moved down the thread of dusty road that terminated at the outer wall of the Fort. One of the villagers returning home? No, the dot was moving too fast. A stray animal? No, its direction was too deliberate. Now at last it came close enough for them to see that it was a horseman at full gallop. When he came still closer they could discern that the horse was holding its neck low and stumbling frequently from exhaustion. Lastly, they heard the challenging voices of the guards at the gate, then the creaking and scraping of the great portal swinging open, and finally the ring of horse's hooves on stone.

A chill ran through the queen and she placed her hand on her lord's arm.

"With such messengers fly crows of ill-omen," she said. At those words she sent into the realms of human forgetfulness all trace of her divine memory, and became for the purposes of the play to be enacted, a mortal who knows no more than any other her destiny or fate to come.

The king too looked down at her and now saw no imperious goddess or queen, but the young, trembling bride of his heart, a girl as fresh and untouched as an unopened lotus bud. And all his manhood rose up within him to see her afraid, so that he himself plunged headlong into the illusion of her mortality, and almost as totally into the illusion of his own. Yet something lingered that would not go from him — a serenity and joy like a sea that never ebbs — despite the shadow of darkness that trickled unwittingly into his heart, as it had into hers, upon seeing the messenger who had entered the Fort. Nevertheless, being a man, a king, and a warrior, he checked himself instantaneously. "What is this weakness in me?" he chided himself in his own mind. "May all the ill-omens of the world come against me. I am there to stand against them."

At that moment a sharp rap sounded on the bolted door

"Throw your fear into my arms, beloved," he murmured to her as he turned. "For aren't I the just and chosen custodian of all fears and misgivings in my kingdom? I've been born and bred to protect my kind as a horse is bred for speed to race and courage to fight with his master in battle, so bury your fear in me and depart with an easy mind. I must hear the news whatever it may be, and deal with the matter immediately, if necessary. Return to your quarters, and I'll come when I can."

She didn't hesitate but slipped away like a gossamer spirit, her maidservants gathering about her as she passed through the door of her modest "palace," half rock-cut and half erected with stone blocks, situated almost at the summit of Deogarh's promontory.

Meanwhile, the king crossed the parapet in a single step, entered the rock-cut chamber behind it, and unbolted the door. Outside at the head of a curving stairway, between two of his own guards, stood a man streaked with sweat and caked with dust. He still held a short horse whip in one hand but was otherwise unarmed.

The king did not wait for anyone else to speak "Who are you?" he demanded.

"Noble Lordship, I work as a scout for your brave kinsman, Jaidev of Elichpur to the north. I have come at full speed with most urgent news. Alauddin sends Malik Kafur marching once more from Delhi upon the kingdoms of the Deccan. This time his boast is that he will end the insubordination of the Hindu rajas once and for all. Further, we have come to learn that his first target shall be Deogarh. He is at present four days march from your walls."

"Why haven't my own hand-picked scouts brought me this news? Have you heard anything of them?"

"We were together, Sire, for we often meet upon our patrols. Your two men were anxious to assess the numbers of the enemy. So against my advice they climbed a hill above the enemy camp, at dawn, to see better. But Kafur's men are not babies. They were born with swords in their hands and they have eyes in the backs of their heads. Your men were too careless about concealing themselves. They and their horses were seen, surrounded and caught. Knowing there was no further hope for them, I left my own hiding place, mounted my horse, and rode here as fast as her four legs would carry me."

"You'll be rewarded for this work, my good servant, and I shall take pains to commend you to my cousin, Jaidev." The king turned to the guards. "Have this man attended to with bed and the best our kitchens can offer. Also do not neglect to see to his horse."

"Very well, Sire." The three men saluted and made their way down the narrow stairway. As they left, a liveried servant appeared from a passage leading off to one side from the landing, for the aged retainer always presented himself in case he might be of service when the king opened the door from his private quarters. This time the order Shankaradev gave him was sharp and to the point.

"Go through the Fort and inform all concerned that I am convening council

immediately. Everyone's presence is required, the General and his officers, the ministers, and the priests. I shall be waiting for them."

The servant hurried off and all was silence again. Silence? Indeed — the eternal hourglass silence of a moment that vainly tries to capture the forever slipping by before a man's eyes, as all the sand runs through into the bottom of the glass. In that moment the king remembered the snatched half hour on the parapet with his queen — herself seemingly plucked from some dimly recollected eternity — and then returned to the hard, swift tramp of events that moved in time.

Within an hour, the rough council chamber of the Fort had filled to capacity, and all waited eagerly to hear the word of the king, flushed and excited as they already were by the news that had spread through the Fort like the waters of a flood in spate.

Shankaradev as he faced them was more lion than man .... All the sagacious serenity of the beast was there and the ferocity too.

"So our hour has come," he said in a gathering so still that the rustling of a garment could be heard across the chamber. "Through all his long reign my father appeased the Turk again and yet again. There was a time for what he did: to buy life, and what little honour remained from such dealings, with the currency of Deogarh's horses and royal elephants, her jewels and her riches gleaned from the tillage of her generous soil. There was a time to go to Delhi as my father did to bow at the feet of the Turk, and be rewarded like a faithful hound that has bitten his own mother to please his master. For these acts the sun still shines upon us in Deogarh. The Yadava dynasty still lives, and our price is still reckoned in terms of horses, elephants and gold, and not in terms of freedom or death.

"But now months have passed since the fire rendered my father's body to ashes. And in those two months the times have changed. Neither Shankaradev nor his kingdom, nor his bride, Kamal Rani, are up for sale or negotiation, though Alauddin has sent out bids for all three. The gods visit our lands and inhabit our temples. They bless our crops and regale themselves in the divine sunshine of our motherland. Our children grow and run free on our sacred earth as they cannot in the Sultanate of Delhi, and the freedom of our star-filled skies brings us a delight not given to slaves and bondsmen. It is for these things that I shall now fight, my kinsmen and compatriots. It is for these that we shall all fight, because the Turk covets all we possess and all we are. Indeed, he has already defiled them with the barbarian ugliness of his desire that knows neither beauty, nor gentleness, nor grace."

"The Turk is swift and strong, Sire. Our soldiers are tillers of the soil. His are men that fall to ravaging like starved hyenas if they are kept a week from the march or from the stench of battle."

"We shall fight and die like farmers and gentlemen then, but I must repeat that the time for us to be bullied is over. No excuse of weakness or unpreparedness can save us from our responsibility. I cannot permit another day to dawn in which Deogarh awakens a vassal state."

"We beg you to reconsider, Sire." The speaker was one of the late king's oldest

courtiers. "The Sultanate of Delhi is many hundreds of miles to the north, and they shall have little to do with us if we do not default on the yearly tribute."

"You have not understood me then," the King replied. "I will repeat only once more that the times have changed, and that the soul of the motherland within me commands me to fight. For there is a time to live, whatever the cost, and a time to fight, whatever the cost, and the voice within me speaks and tells me that the latter time has come upon us. Kafur approaches Deogarh like a black plague and the festering disease shall not settle upon her body while I live. We shall begin preparations for the defence of the Fort and the city at sunrise, when the criers are to be ready to issue orders to the populace."

The King's voice fell silent and after a momentary pause one of his brothers arose and spoke for the assembly. "No man here shall fail you, Noble Lordship. Any traitor or slacker shall have dealings with my sword."

Shankaradev smiled. "Then I am well assured, dear brother," he answered, and rising slowly, left the chamber.

The next morning brought fresh reports as the army of the Turks spearheaded further into the provinces of Deogarh's King. All the cavalry and heavy armour of the Delhi Sultanate was on the march, the informers reported, and Malik Kafur, their commander, intended to spare nothing. Indeed he fancied Deogarh as his own personal prize and Deogarh's upstart king as his personal prey.

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Since Kamal Rani had become Shankaradev's queen, she had made it her practice to visit daily the splendidly carved temple at the base of the rock fort, with its slender, graceful pillars and its cool, dark sanctuaries. Here she felt she could converse within herself and there would be none to pry into this, her most private activity. Today was one of those magical March mornings when, as she descended with her small retinue from the heights of the Fort, the countryside spread outward in a golden carpet of swaying crops, the kites whistled lazily in the cloud-streaked sky, and even the city below gave no evidence of the tumult the criers must have set in motion earlier when they had warned the people to take to arms or to flee from the impending danger — for the ways of the Turks in war had been demonstrated too often to leave room for complacency.

Today Kamal Rani had begged her lord to permit her to make her usual visit to the temple one last time before the Turks closed in, and not without a stab of anguish, he had consented. Now the Queen had passed out of the next to last of the Fort's gates. To her right stood the palaces where the court lived at ease in times of peace, though her husband with a curiously ascetic turn of character, had always preferred the rough quarters of the Fort to the easy luxury of palace life. Shortly beyond, before the Fort's outermost wall whose gate opened onto the city nestling outside like a chicken brood against a great mother hen, spread the long, low, majestic

form of the temple. Coming up to it, the Queen left her escort outside, and hurried in unaccompanied. The onlookers may have remarked upon her haste, for it was unusual, but the day too was unusual and surely none could blame her for her impatience. Kamal Rani herself felt a strange urgency in her steps she could not explain to herself — at least not until she reached the inner sanctuary. But once she crossed the sacred threshold, everything changed, for such was the magical outlet the Divine One had granted her. At that moment she entered automatically into an absorbing trance in which she became for a brief half hour not a Rajput queen by the name of Kamal Rani, but the Silent One herself, and the one she met and communed with, aside from the Divine One himself, was Shukratma.

Usually their communication was non-verbal, being merely a medium by which the goddess returned to her element for a brief daily spell, like a swimmer surfacing for air. True, the practice had once again gained her the reputation of being a creature apart from other men, for when she emerged from the temple she did so with the subtle mantle of the goddess still upon her. Her skin glowed with a rare light and her eyes became such that people were transfixed by their beauty as she passed. A grace infused her as of a breeze in a flowing veil, and without question she appeared, as she returned from the temple to her quarters, altogether the most exquisite individual the people of Deogarh had ever seen. Yet all the manifestations occurred in her without she herself retaining any remembrance of what transpired in the temple sanctuary. For the trance experience clove her to a depth so great, that her surface consciousness dared not plumb those silent and devastating poignancies. At the same time, in the physical life the hour had not yet come for the identity of Kamal Rani and the Silent One to overtly merge.

Now once again seated in the sanctuary and immersed in her godly identity, she overruled her normal practice of wordlessness, and spoke to Shukratma within herself.

“The time is upon us, purest of friends, when we must show the mettle of which we are made — and scatter upon the damp, expectant earth the Divine One’s tiny seeds that we carry in the sacred pouches of our souls.”

“Yes,” he answered. “Strange is the Divine One’s play in which none knows the seeds he plants, nor the time and manner of their flowering. The fragrance of our own blossoms belong to the birds of the air, the squirrels of the field, and the small boy that, unknown, solitary, and unwatched, herds his goats among the rocky hills.”

“Your words give me courage, Shukratma. If such be the final recipients of my inner seed, I would gladly fling it far and wide to the four corners of the horizon.”

“Yes,” he echoed again.

“But now tell me, beloved friend, that this shall not be the last time I may enjoy the solace of your company and the solace of my own inner freedom.”

“Have no fear, daughter of the gods. Once a day whenever I find you alone, I shall come to you and we shall be as we have been here.”

“Ah, it is as though you have given my life back to me — and how we shall need

your comfort in the days to come ....”

“Do not think of it so, bright goddess. Think only of the light that shines and must shine still more brightly before the work is done. Think of the meteor that must cross the sky before darkness returns, and your joy and splendour will never leave you.”

“Sage Guru, your counsel has never failed and settles about my heart like a warm, comforting hand.”

“But what of the Golden One? Tell me of him.”

“He does not flinch. He is the rock and the lion welded into one, the quiet loving spirit and the golden knight merged into one kingly human being.”

“Go then, Silent Daughter, and let your joy radiate about you, for all joy is on your side. The sun shines upon your footsteps and the Divine One frolics in the breeze around you as you walk. For no creature alive need consider itself more blessed than Silent Daughter, or Kamal Rani, Queen of Deogarh.”

She rose to go, then made her way out of the still darkness into the full blaze of the morning sun where her retinue was waiting for her with umbrellas and a silk draped palanquin. But she waved them both aside and chose to walk in the open air, slowly, seemingly absent-mindedly, to the moat-bridge of the Fort. There she halted and looked down into the dark green stillness of the water where the sun flickered among the shadows, then passed into the gloom of the inner passages and up the inner stairways to the royal quarters at the summit.

Having reached her favourite parapet with the breeze moving across it in a cool, steady stream, she looked down upon a beehive of activity. From beyond the walls of the Fort, the shouts of the townspeople and the creaking of bullock carts in the streets came to her, as those who could not remain to fight prepared to flee. At the same time, through the open gates of the Fort trickled other carts and men loaded with provisions, for Deogarh was to be readied for a siege. Within the walls she could make out her lord's brilliantly caparisoned retinue as he made a personal check of his horses, elephants, and armoury. Yet none of these sights and sounds could totally impress her with a sense of reality. On that splendid morning reality for her stubbornly chose to cling elsewhere, for she found herself lost in a strange felicity after her visit to the temple, a strange and persistent joy as of a child that has not yet heard of pain and death. All about her the earth sang, and the solidity of the rock itself spoke of a tranquil eternity; and yet somewhere, she was forced to recognize that it was an aspect of eternity that could be measured in the months or days, or even the moments of a fragile hourglass.

*(To be continued)*

BINA BRAGG

# “LIFE CAN BE BEAUTIFUL”

(Continued from the issue of October, 1973)

## HUMAN SUFFERING AND YOGA

(2)

As we are ruled by a constitution today, *Dharma*, which — to use the words of Nolini — is “the law of one’s soul”, was the dominating influence in ancient India. History testifies to the gladness of heart with which the rulers and the ruled sacrificed their all to uphold the banner of righteousness — the *Dharma*.

In former days any religion once accepted by the king became the State religion, *rājdharma*, of the people. When our Government recognises the place of Yogic education, it will bring an automatic change in the outlook of the whole nation.

Material development is certainly welcome, but it is not an end in itself. Even if we are materially well equipped and industrially well placed will it be possible to wipe away the tears from all eyes, banish suffering for ever?

According to the Mother, “All human sufferings do not come from physical destitution and cannot be cured by merely material means.”

By self-education one can reduce much suffering and acquire abiding happiness. There is one among us determined to educate himself the way the ancients did. Long-standing nervous trouble which might result in paralysing his limbs did not rouse in him a sense of alarm. He quietly took the attitude of surrender and resigned himself to the Will Divine. Who knows the mystery of the Divine dispensation! He said to himself, “If my road to victory lies through suffering why should I allow myself to be shaken? I don’t mind if my whole life passes in suffering but my victory is sure I shall never swerve from the goal of life, come what may. In all humility I lay before Thee, O Mother, as an offering, my body, my mind and all I have. Let Thy Will be done!” Such is the attitude that takes off the load of the heart and makes roses bloom on the thorns of suffering. Pain turns into pleasure.

The following words of the Mother mirror the trend of his mind:

“If you teach the body how to bear pain, it becomes more and more enduring and is less quickly disorganised. In people who know how not to be completely upset whenever they have a pain anywhere, who are able to bear quietly, to keep the poise, the capacity of the body to bear the disorder without dislocation increases. The body can bear much more than it is believed to do, if, to the pain, fear and anxiety are not added. If this mental factor is removed, the body left to itself, having no fear or apprehension or anxiety for what is going to happen, is able to bear a great deal.

“When the body has decided to bear, when it makes this decision, then immediately the sharpness, what is acute in the pain, disappears. If you have the inner calmness, then the pain changes into an almost pleasant sensation — ‘pleasant’ not

in the sense as ordinarily understood, but almost an impression of ease. And in the last stage, when the cells have faith in the divine Presence and in the sovereign divine Will, when they have this trust that all is for good, then comes the ecstasy — the cells open, become luminous and ecstatic.”

“The causes of suffering are innumerable.... Suffering can be classified into two categories. The first is purely egoistic....The other category of suffering is born of divine compassion, the suffering of love, feeling the misery of the world .... This suffering is of a purely psychic character.”

What a prolonged suffering the Mother has taken upon herself to remove human suffering and open the dawn of a New Day!

Splendid is the contribution of science in the building of the modern world. But instead of allowing the plenty<sup>1</sup> to be used by the many and helping all to be equally happy science hangs above us the fear of total extinction. There is hardly any country in the world which does not profess peace, yet increasing military budgets are a world phenomenon. According to the U.N.O. report world defence expenditure in 1970 amounted to 208 billion dollars.<sup>2</sup> What seems particularly insane is expenditure not on maintaining a certain defence capability but on adding newer tools of destruction already capable of destroying many times over all semblance of life on earth. It takes little imagination to realise that even if a small percentage were diverted to redress of human suffering this planet would become an infinitely happier place.

No one in particular is to be blamed for all this. What then compels a person to do things which, if he grows a bit conscious, he never would consent to do? What is the driving power that controls the mechanism of the universe?

It is our ego-sense,<sup>3</sup> our perverted outlook born of ignorance.

Can Yoga show a clear-cut way?

Yoga strikes at the root of ignorance.

It is the forces of falsehood which have made the world the *Raṇabhūm* (Battlefield) of their titanic turmoil. Sri Aurobindo came to teach the world to make it the *Līlābhūm* (Playground) of the Supreme Mother.

He declared: “Yoga should be revealed to mankind; without that it cannot take the next evolutionary step.”

If men could be convinced that Yoga is the panacea of all the evils of life, then “everyone would turn to Yoga”.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “Our present human crisis is essentially a crisis of excess. We have too much of many things—too many people, too much of science research, more technology than we need, far more lethal power than is good for us. We have also too little for some things, such as food and jobs—but surely the want is an inverse consequence of the excess. Had we fewer men and women to feed and find jobs for, there would be no problem.”

Mr. Mahadevan — The Editor of *Gandhi Marg*, a publication of the Gandhi Peace Foundation.

<sup>2</sup> As long as we live in the ignorant seeing, we are the ego. *The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 85.

<sup>3</sup> The root of evil is the ego-sense . *Ibid.*p. 135.

<sup>4</sup> *Bulletin*, November 1972.



The efficacy of Yoga is slowly being recognised and seeking hearts are being drawn towards it from all corners of the world. It has not yet captured the imagination of the younger generation.

It is here we have to harken to the voice of Vivekananda. “Flood India with spiritual ideas.” To spread Sri Aurobindo’s thought and prepare the mass mind “Sri Aurobindo Society” and “Sri Aurobindo’s Action” have been launched.

The old world is dying. Theirs is the clarion call to those who are ready: “The new world is struggling to be born. Turn to the Divine. The Grace may break any moment.”

*(To be continued)*

NARAYAN PRASAD

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## SEEK NOT THE HALO

GAZE not into space  
with unpermitted eyes —  
Into that strange Face  
inhabiting the skies;

Measure thy known sight  
through the wisdom of years,  
Through eyes of the Eremite  
and earth’s fragrant tears;

Yet seek not the halo  
of cosmic Fire  
In the flood and the flow  
of human desire.

NORMAN C. DOWSETT

# *Students' Section*

## **A TALK TO THE STUDENTS\***

### **OF SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF EDUCATION**

(A Talk delivered on September 22, 1973)

Friends, Brothers, and Sisters,

It is always a very great pleasure to be in the Ashram and to participate with you in your functions. I am thankful that I was able to get the opportunity of witnessing this charming little play symbolising as it does the constant warfare and conflict between the Divine Forces and the Asuric Forces, and as you can see defeating the Asuras is no easy job. It takes all the Power and the Shaktis combined to be able to do so.

You are studying in Pondicherry at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, which is now becoming increasingly a centre of world interest and the reason for that is obvious. Last year was the Centenary of Sri Aurobindo and there was a tremendous interest throughout the world, in his life and his teachings. More and more people are beginning to come to Pondicherry in order to participate in the great adventure of consciousness that Sri Aurobindo founded, and it is this adventure of consciousness which I feel those of you who are studying here are also participating in. You will naturally learn the various subjects that other children do but I like to think you will learn something in addition to that. You will learn something deeper. The message of Sri Aurobindo is specifically for the future — the future of the human race, because it is the children of today, who are going to build that future and it is only if you imbibe the Power and the Light and the Wisdom of Sri Aurobindo that this future can really be built. We have had many great men and women in this country, ever since the dawn of civilisation, but I think the important difference between Sri Aurobindo and the others is that Sri Aurobindo laid stress upon the welfare of the entire human race, and not only the physical and material welfare but indeed the spiritual rejuvenation and transmutation of the entire race. And we find today that unless science and technology are accompanied with wisdom it will not be possible for the human race to survive at all. We have today so much destructive power that unless the people involved can grasp something of the vision of the future that Sri Aurobindo and other great sages and seers have glimpses of, it will not be possible for them to move forward.

\* Dr Karan Singh, Union Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism, visited the Ashram on 22 September 1973. He attended the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education's Saturday programme of entertainment for children. He addressed the students after witnessing the programme — a playlet in French dramatised from a Vedic story.

I therefore would like to warmly compliment you upon your activities here.

The last time I recited a poem by Sri Aurobindo called "Who"; I have no intention of doing so again, in fact I have made a recording of it which no doubt some of you have heard. Another charming little poem came to mind while I was sitting here—it's called "Revelation"; perhaps you know it.

Someone leaping from the rocks  
 Past me ran with wind-blown locks  
 Like a startled bright surmise  
 Visible to mortal eyes, —  
 Just a cheek of frightened rose  
 That with sudden beauty glows,  
 Just a footstep like the wind  
 And a hurried glance behind,  
 And then nothing, — as a thought  
 Escapes the mind ere it is caught.  
 Someone of the heavenly rout  
 From behind the veil ran out.

The veil is there, the veil that separates our mental consciousness from the supramental consciousness and from time to time there are openings in that veil and there are glimpses of the tremendous world that lies beyond. I think it is the destiny of this Ashram to provide increasing glimpses into the other world behind the veil—so that with its Power and its Light and its Glory we may together build a new humanity and a New World.

DR. KARAN SINGH

### MATRIMANDIR FOLDERS

In 1971 Matrimandir folders were issued, the contribution being one rupee for one folder. It was announced that for every lakh of folders there would be a draw of a lucky number and one copy of the whole Sri Aurobindo Centenary set of 30 Volumes (Popular Edition) will be given free to the holder of the lucky number.

One lakh folders having been sold up to now, a draw has taken place. In order to enable us to send the free set, the holder of the folder No. 114301 is requested to inform us of his name and address by 31-12-73, failing which a second draw will be held.

SECRETARY  
 AUROVILLE

25. 10. 1973

PONDICHERRY-605002.

# EYE EDUCATION

## Cure of Squint

AN elderly lady teacher of our Centre of Education was maintaining good eyesight with her bifocal glasses. Suddenly one day she felt that she was seeing double images of objects. She observed that her left eye had almost gone blind; it could see neither at a distance nor nearby and her vision was very hazy with or without glasses. When she looked into the mirror it greatly shocked and depressed her to find that a convergent squint had developed in her left eye and was quite prominent, — the eye turned towards the nose.

On examination in the dark room it was found that the inside of the eye was quite normal. We assured the patient that her sight would be all right within a few weeks and she began to follow this treatment:

1. Keep the eyes closed and move the body gently from side to side. Do not open the eyes widely at any time. Stop reading and writing completely. For breakfast she was advised to take only fruits and a cup of tea. Eggs, butter, bread which made up her usual breakfast were completely stopped. This relieved the tension and she found her mind and body quite relaxed. By following this first instruction for about a month, her double vision almost disappeared and there was clarity in the vision.

2. After a month she came daily for her therapy in the clinic, for sun treatment, palming, long swing and candle practice. She had developed the good habit of blinking which is imperative in bringing about gratifying improvement in such cases, and in a month's time her left eye gained almost normal vision with a lower power of glasses; but this did not help in correcting her squint.

3. The constant presence of squint was due to some tension and weakness of the muscle. It was not due to the paralysis of the external rectus muscle as is generally believed. In such cases a special treatment 'Tarpana' helps very much to strengthen the weak muscle and correct the squint. The first course of treatment relieved the squinting state of the eyes temporarily. The squint was disappearing and reappearing. But at the end of the third course of treatment, a fortnight later, her convergent squint completely disappeared for good and the eye became normal both in appearance and function.

Another exercise which helped her to regain her lost binocular vision was daily practice on Amblyoscope. In the first days of her treatment she found it very difficult to fuse the images. Gradually, as the tension became less and the muscle became stronger the faculty of fusion developed. This was also helped by closing the good eye at home and doing all the household work for an hour or so with the bad squinting eye only. Naturally, the bad eye learned to function without effort and strain. Its use made the muscle stronger and in due course she could move her

left eye outwards without having to move her head which was not at all possible when she came first.

The cause of such a sudden onset is a severe mental strain and the long-standing habit of using the eyes improperly. It was worthwhile cross-questioning this lady teacher; for, towards the end the cause became crystal-clear, which by itself was a very great clue suggestive of treatment. It was found that her mind was burdened with anxieties and worries and that she used to feel spent after a little work. Many other minor points also helped us in determining her treatment. Now that she is absolutely normal and that she has resumed her work she feels happy and grateful. Great is our pleasure to see her well and free of a displeasing abnormality which otherwise would have tinted her life with a shade of unhappiness.

Furthermore, operations in such cases do not prove beneficial. On the contrary they may damage the functioning of the eye. The reason? Simple enough: it is like putting a thick, clean and beautiful table cloth over a table upon which someone has spilled ink. For a few minutes no problem; but soon even the table cloth will be spoiled. Similarly, operations can only correct the existing abnormality temporarily but cannot relieve the root cause, namely, strain upon the nerves responsible for the sound action of the external rectus muscle.

DR. R. S. AGARWAL  
School for Perfect Eyesight

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### SOME NEW PUBLICATIONS :

1. **Mind and Vision** — A handbook for the cure of imperfect sight without glasses, with numerous illustrations. New edition — Rs. 16/-
2. **Yoga of Perfect Sight** — A guide to develop perfect eyesight by methods conductive to spiritual vision — Rs. 12/-
3. **Secrets of Indian Medicine** — A guide to a practical synthesis of different systems for eye troubles — new enlarged edition — Rs. 12/- De luxe. Rs. 16/-
4. **Care of Eyes** — A brochure for the preservation of good eyesight — Rs. 2.50

*Available from:* **Pondicherry-2** 1. School for Perfect Eyesight.

2. Sri Aurobindo Books Distribution Agency 3. Publication Department.