

# MOTHER INDIA

JULY 1973

Price : Re. 1-25

Posting Date for MOTHER INDIA :

JAN. to OCT. issues : 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup>

NOV.-DEC. (JOINT) issue : 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> DEC.

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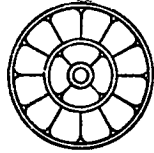
Subscription rates: Annual Rs. 12.00, £ 1.25, \$ 3.00  
Single copy Re. 1.25 in India.

All correspondence to be addressed to:

MOTHER INDIA, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry-2, India.

Editor's Phone: 782.

Publishers : Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust.



Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



# MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XXV

No. 7

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*"Great is Truth and it shall prevail."*

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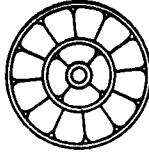
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Editor: K. D. SETHNA  
Managing Editor: K. R. PODDAR  
Published by: P. COUNOUMA  
SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM, PONDICHERRY-2  
Printed by: AMIYO RANJAN GANGULI  
at Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, Pondicherry-2  
PRINTED IN INDIA

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



## **WORDS OF THE MOTHER**

WHEN you think with words, you can express what you think with those words only. To think with ideas is to be able to put the same idea in many kinds of words. The words can also be of different languages, if you happen to know more than one language. This is the first, the most elementary thing about thinking with ideas.

When you think with experience, you go much deeper and you can express the same experience with many kinds of ideas. Then thought can take this form or that form in any language and through all of them the essential realisation will remain unchanged.

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## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(Continued from the issue of June 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 the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education but in a somewhat incomplete form. We now give, in a new English translation, the full text as it was taped, with here and there a few special additions or modifications made by the Mother herself at the time of its first publication in French in February 1968.)*

SEPTEMBER 12, 1956

*Sweet Mother, has anyone a right to ask questions if he does not practise what you say?*

One has always the right to do anything! (*Laughter*) One may ask all the questions one likes. Practising? Fundamentally that is for each one to choose, isn't it? — whether he wants to practise or not, whether he considers it useful or not. That is a thing which cannot be imposed; it must be done freely. But one may always ask questions.

Well, I am going to ask a question: "Why don't people practise?" Do you know, child, why they don't practise? (*The Mother asks others in turn*) And you? And you? ...Bah! Do you know, you?

*Perhaps because one is lazy!*

That indeed is one of the principal reasons. And so one covers one's laziness with fine reasons, the first of which says: "I cannot, I don't know" or else: "I have tried and not succeeded" or else: "I don't know where to begin!" Any reason whatever, isn't that so? The first that comes to you. Or, indeed, one does not practise because one doesn't find it worthwhile to make the effort — that is part of the laziness also, it asks for too much effort! But one can't live without effort! If one refuses to make any effort, one would not even be able to stand on one's legs or walk or even eat.

I believe that one does not practise first because this does not have a sufficiently concrete reality to dominate the other things in life; because the effort seems disproportionate to the result. But this kind of effort is only a beginning: once one is within, it is no longer the same thing.

*(Turning to the child)* And so, ask your question, even if you do not practise!

*No, I have no question, Sweet Mother.*

Oh! your question was only this! You wanted to say: "Is it being honest to ask questions and then not do anything of what you are told?" It was this?

*Yes, Mother.*

Yes!

(A disciple) *We still have this atavism of needing to be forced to do something. From our childhood we have been forced to do things. Here it is just the opposite.*

Forced? Oh! so one doesn't do anything when not forced! But a thing done through compulsion has no value.

That is all? You don't have a question, you? ... I have many but they are either very special or very common! Or else, precisely, they are only interesting for those who are eager to practise.

What do you want to hear? ... (*Silence*) Nothing, you see, you say nothing. All right, that is very good, I shall say nothing!

(A child) *Something to awaken in us a will to progress.*

(*Meditation*)

SEPTEMBER 19, 1956

*Sweet Mother, I haven't understood this well ... "Will, Power, Force are the native substance of the Life-Energy, and herein lies the justification for the refusal of Life to acknowledge the supremacy of Knowledge and Love alone, — for its push towards the satisfaction of something far more unreflecting, headstrong and dangerous that can yet venture too in its own bold and ardent way, towards the Divine and Absolute. Love and Wisdom are not the only aspects of the Divine, there is also its aspect of Power."*

(*The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 163)

What have you not understood?

Sri Aurobindo says that the vital part, the vital being is the greatest obstacle because it is unregenerate, and that there would be a possibility of transforming it if it surrendered entirely to Love and Knowledge; but as its predominant quality is force, energy, power, it does not like to submit to other parts of the being, and this justifies its refusal to submit itself, for those virtues in their essence are as high as the others. That is why it has neither the same power nor the same capacities, for it is not developed, it has not surrendered itself, and it is this which causes the dilemma: it does not submit because it has this power, and this power cannot be used because it

is not surrendered. So, how to get out of that? The vital, if it were surrendered, would be a very powerful help, extremely useful, it would make the whole process go much more rapidly. But because it knows its own power, it refuses to submit to the others; and because it does not submit, its power is not utilizable. Then, what is to be done? Sri Aurobindo states the problem (he is going to solve it afterwards; if we continue reading, after a while he will tell us how to come out of this problem), but he states it first so that we may understand the situation properly.

If the vital were a mediocre being without definite qualities, there would be no difficulty in its submitting, but it would be altogether useless. But on the contrary, the vital is a sort of fortress of energy and power — of all powers. Yet generally this power is diverted; it is not at all at the service of the Divine, it is at the vital's own service for its own satisfaction. So, as long as it is like that, it cannot be used.

It must come to understand that this energy and power which it feels within it cannot become useful unless it enters into perfect harmony with the divine plan of realisation on earth. If it understands that, it becomes quiet and allows itself to be enlisted so to say in the totality of the being, and then it gets its full strength and full importance. But otherwise, it is unserviceable. And generally, all its activities are always activities which complicate things and take away their simplicity, their purity, often their beauty, and their efficacy, for its action is blind, ignorant and very egoistic.

*Sweet Mother, is the divine plane the plane of the psychic being?*

It is higher than that of the psychic being. The psychic being is, so to say, the vehicle of the Divine, it contains the Divine, is the habitation of the Divine, but the Divine is higher than it. For the psychic being is only an aspect of the divine manifestation.

*Is not the Supermind also the psychic being?*

The Supermind is far higher than the psychic being also.

What Sri Aurobindo calls the Supermind is the element or the divine Principle which is now going to enter into play in the universe. He calls it the Supermind because it comes after the mind, that is to say, it is a new manifestation of the supreme divine Principle. And it is related to the psychic as the Divine was related to the psychic, that is to say, the psychic is the home, the temple, the vehicle, everything that must manifest outwardly the Divine. But it is divine only in its essence, not in its integrality. It is a mode of outer manifestation of the Divine, outer compared with the Divine, that is, terrestrial.

Is that all? Nothing else?

*How should we get out of the physical consciousness which keeps us preoccupied all the time and exclusively with physical circumstances?*



There is a considerable number of means.

There are intellectual means, means which may be called sentimental, artistic and spiritual means. And generally, it is preferable for every one to take the means that is easiest for him, for if one wants to begin straight away with the most difficult, one comes to nothing at all. And here we shall always come back to the same thing, to what Sri Aurobindo describes in *The Synthesis of Yoga*: it is the way of knowledge or the way of devotion or the way of works. But the way of works is precisely the one which keeps you in physical life and makes you find your liberation in it; and perhaps this is of all the most effective means, but also the most difficult.

For the majority of aspirants the way of meditation, concentration, withdrawal from physical life, rejection of physical activities is certainly easier than the way of action. But they leave the physical consciousness just as it is, without ever changing it, and unless one becomes a sadhu or an ascetic who goes out of all active life and remains in constant concentration or meditation, one achieves nothing at all. That is to say, an entire part of the being is never transformed. And for them the solution is not at all to transform it, it is simply to reject it, to get out of their body as quickly as possible. It was thus that yoga was conceived of formerly, for, evidently, it is much easier thus. But this is not what we want.

What we want is the transformation of the physical consciousness, not its rejection.

And so, in that case, what Sri Aurobindo has recommended as the most direct and most total means is surrender to the Divine — a surrender made more and more integral, progressively, comprising the physical consciousness and physical activities. And if one succeeds in that, then the physical instead of being an obstacle becomes a help.

*What does this sentence mean: "Look life in the face from the soul's inner strength and become master of circumstances" ?*

That is precisely the opposite of the method which lies in rejecting the whole of the physical consciousness and all physical events. "Look life in the face", that means: don't turn your back upon it! That means: face life as it is instead of running away from it and call to your aid the inner psychic force — that is what Sri Aurobindo says: "the soul's inner strength", the inner psychic force — and with the help of this psychic consciousness raise yourself above circumstances and master them. That is to say, instead of submitting to all that comes and suffering all its consequences, one rises above circumstances and lets them pass like things that touch you no longer and do not impair your consciousness. That is what this means.

*It is said that "to become conscious of divine Love all other love has to be abandoned". What is the best way of rejecting the other love which clings so obstinately (laughter) and does not leave us easily ?*

To go through, ah!

To go through, to see what is behind it, not to stop at the appearance, not to be satisfied by the outer form, to look for the principle which is behind this love, and not be content until one has found the *origin* of the sentiment in itself. Then the outer form will crumble of itself and you will be in contact with the divine Love which is behind all things.

That is the best way.

To want to get rid of one in order to find the other is very difficult. It is almost impossible. For human nature is so limited, so full of contradictions and so exclusive in its movements that if one wants to reject love in its lower form, that is to say, human love as human beings experience it, if one makes an inner effort to reject that, generally one rejects the entire capacity of feeling love and becomes like a stone. And then sometimes one has to wait for years or centuries before there is a reawakening in oneself of the capacity to receive and manifest love.

Consequently, the best way when love comes, in whatever form it be, is to try and pierce through its outer appearance and find the divine principle which is behind and which gives it existence. Naturally, it is full of snares and difficulties, but it is more effective. That is to say, instead of ceasing from loving because one loves wrongly, one must cease loving wrongly and want to love well.

For instance, love between human beings, in all its forms, love of parents for their children, of children for parents, of brothers and sisters, of friends and lovers, is altogether tainted with ignorance, selfishness and all the other defects which are man's ordinary drawbacks; so instead of stopping completely from loving — which, besides, is very difficult as Sri Aurobindo says, which would simply dry up the heart and serve no end — one must learn how to love better: to love with devotion, with self-giving, self-abnegation, and struggle not against love itself but against its distorted forms: against all forms of grabbing for oneself, of attachment, possession, jealousy, and all the feelings which accompany these main things. Not to want to possess, dominate; and not to want to impose one's will, one's whims, one's desires; not to want to take, receive, but to give; not to insist on the response of the other, but be content with one's own love; not to seek one's personal interest and joy and the fulfilment of one's personal desire, but be satisfied with the giving of one's love and affection; and not to ask for response. Simply to be happy to love, nothing more.

If one does that, one has made a great stride and can, through this attitude, gradually, advance farther in the feeling itself, and realise one day that love is not a personal thing; that love is a universal divine feeling which manifests through you more or less finely, but which in its essence is a divine thing.

The first step is to stop being selfish. For everyone it is the same thing, not only for those who want to do yoga but also in ordinary life: if one wants to know how to love, one must not first love oneself and above all selfishly; one must give oneself to the object of love without exacting anything in return. That discipline is elementary in order to rise above oneself and lead a life which is not altogether gross.

For Yoga one may add something more to it; it is as I said in the beginning, the will to pierce through this limited and human form of love and discover the principle of divine Love which is behind it. Then one is sure to get the result. That is better than drying up one's heart. It is perhaps a little more difficult but it is better in every way, for thus, instead of egoistically making others suffer, well, one may leave them quiet in their own movement and only make an effort to transform oneself without imposing one's will upon others, which even in ordinary life is a step towards something higher and a little more harmonious.

---

## THE MOTHER

I DO not see You as fragile,  
 But a colossal strength, withheld, controlled —  
 Ever awake, unmindful of night or day —  
 Aloof yet so very intimate. A gold

Dense light envelops your trance  
 That is yet aware of the smallest plea  
 Sent out over thousands of desolate miles!  
 Your eyes, deep-shut, withdrawn, can see

Every outstretched help-craving hand,  
 Each troubled heart and anguished face.  
 All silent prayers to You find lightning answers —  
 Your assurance, Your strength, Your grace.

MINNIE N. CANTEENWALLA

## TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

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

*(These talks are from the notebooks 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. Manilal, Dr. Becharlal, Purani, 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 25, 1940

FRANÇOIS BARON presiding over a meeting of French people at Calcutta passed a resolution that they would side with Britain.

SRI AUROBINDO: Baron has manifested.

P: Yes.

S: Did he give any speech?

SRI AUROBINDO: No, he was the President. They passed a resolution.

P: X is going to write a book on Charkha, showing the virtues of Charkha and urging that unless Europe adopts it there is no salvation for Europe. The Machine has played tremendous havoc and destroyed life. It is the Charkha alone that can save it, he says.

SRI AUROBINDO: When the Charkha was in full swing, was there no destruction?

P: Not such as caused by the Machine.

SRI AUROBINDO: There was a tremendous and widespread destruction; of course not caused by modern weapons but by the crude ones proper to those times. People were massacred on a large scale.

P: Yes, Baghdad, for example, was destroyed completely. Timur and others made no less destruction. In Baghdad he erected a minaret of skulls.

The British have invented some air raid shelters called Anderson shelters, about the size of a policeman's watch cabin. They are supposed to be proof against any explosion, even one occurring nearby. Though buildings might fall, these shelters would stand erect, it is claimed.

SRI AUROBINDO: The greatest preoccupation of modern man seems to be to find out means of destruction as well as to find out means of prevention. Human ingenuity...! but after all it is an extension of the animal ingenuity. Man is supposed to be a reasoning animal. In early days destruction was intelligible — it was necessary for self-protection.

## EVENING

The radio news: clash between the Russian and Rumanian soldiers on the frontier. Gathering of the Japanese Navy near Indo-China.

P: It doesn't look as if Russia would wait till the end of the war. A clash has started on the Rumanian frontier.

SRI AUROBINDO: It may be a rumour which will be denied later. But if true, it must be because Rumania has declared herself Nazi.

N: But if war starts between them Hitler will have to look on at present.

SRI AUROBINDO: Perhaps.

P: In that case Italy will jump in and that will bring Hitler in.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, but it doesn't look as if Russia and Italy would involve themselves at present in the Balkans.

N: Turkey is not likely to join Rumania, especially as she has fallen in line with the Axis powers.

SRI AUROBINDO: In a war with Rumania, Turkey will certainly side with Russia.

P: Oh yes. It is easy for her. They are in one line.

SRI AUROBINDO: Hitler will then have to postpone the invasion of England.

N: If England and Russia combine, will the result be good out of a combination of human and Asuric forces?

SRI AUROBINDO: Not a true combination. They may win but the result won't be good for us.

P: Japan is also bringing her Navy near Indo-China.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is to see that no supply of goods passes through to China.

N: No arms are likely to pass now as France is preoccupied.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, but other goods that may help China to continue the struggle may go through if Japan is not watchful.

N: Have you read what Jawaharlal says?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, that he doesn't think there is the slightest likelihood of a major invasion of India. Only a minor invasion from Afghanistan and such places perhaps?

N: No, he says there may be some internal disturbance during the transitional period.

SRI AUROBINDO: In the meantime there may be a transition of his head from his shoulders. (*Laughter*)

N: If Nehru says like that, how can we blame Y? Nehru who is supposed to have international politics at his fingertips!

SRI AUROBINDO: All the knowledge most Indian politicians have of the international situation is some illusions about extreme political ideas, which have been shattered everywhere.

P: Amery is bringing an Emergency Bill.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, I hope the Viceroy will have some sense in giving good terms to Gandhi when they meet.

JUNE 26, 1940

P: Hitler has given out a plan for the federation of continental Europe from which England and Russia will be barred. This man is full of ideas.

SRI AUROBINDO: His New World Order?

P: Yes, Europe will be divided into three blocks: they will have no armies.

SRI AUROBINDO: Wait a minute. How will the blocks be formed?

P: One block in the Balkans, one in Belgium, Holland, France etc. and another with Spain, Portugal and other countries, I suppose. They won't have any armies. Hitler alone will have an army.

SRI AUROBINDO: Of course, small nations won't be able to resist, except Franco's Spain; and she can have some weight and Turkey too can resist.

N: Italy's claims, as we see from the published terms of the armistice signed with her, seem to be mild. No territorial claims, only the French Mediterranean ports to be demilitarised.

SRI AUROBINDO: After which she can easily seize them whenever she wants to. She may reserve territorial claims for the peace treaty.

N: There has been a warning that Hitler may ask Italy to be mild now in order to lull the French people into a false sense of security.

S: The French fleet has been demobilised already, Churchill says, and is under German control.

SRI AUROBINDO: Oh, he has said that?

N: Yes, in the morning news it was announced. Of course one doesn't know if it is the whole fleet or only a part. This is Pétain's free Government!

SRI AUROBINDO: Pétain means that the French are not ruled by Germany as are the people of Poland and Czechoslovakia.

S: And they may expect good terms during the peace talks.

SRI AUROBINDO: Even if good terms are given, Hitler will see to it that France has no power to rise again.

S: The newspaper seems to say that Britain has recognised the Pétain Government. After all there is no gain whether they do or don't. France can't help England even if she wants to.

N: Even if she could, would she?

SRI AUROBINDO: She would; she could send goods but no commerce seems to be allowed by Hitler. France will be terribly impoverished.

P: She can trade with Italy and Germany.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is across land but if any trade is allowed by sea, it will only be under German control.

S: Why don't the colonies come to any decision? They must do it quickly,

when the enthusiasm prevails.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, they may be waiting for the full ratification of the truce. If they recognise the Government, they will be demilitarised and Japan will easily walk into Indo-China.

P: In the paper there has come out a scheme of how the German parachutists will land in England, how they will be equipped, etc.

N: Parachutes have not been very successful in France.

SRI AUROBINDO: No, the parachutists have been mostly killed. In England they won't be successful at all. Parachutes are of no use unless they are followed up by the army.

P: It seems some French officers have approached the British Consul with their offer of fighting along with the British. The customs' regulations have become tighter. The pass that was allowed to French officers is no more valid now.

SRI AUROBINDO: Of course they are justified now. If the Government had sided with the British, many of the regulations would have been relaxed.

S: The British Government has consented to buy one lakh tons of Indian sugar subject to the approval of the International Sugar Committee.

SRI AUROBINDO: Good Lord!

S: But where is the International Committee now? (*Laughter*)

SRI AUROBINDO: Quite so.

S: At such a time they are quibbling over law!

SRI AUROBINDO: The English people are legal-minded. If they want to break a law they must do it legally. So also with their morality. If they do anything immoral, they do it in a moral-seeming way so as to preserve their righteousness. (*Laughter*)

P: Dr. Rao has retired.

SRI AUROBINDO: Oh, now the P.A. will dance with joy.

N: But will the Congress Ministry come to power?

SRI AUROBINDO: Don't see any chance now.

#### EVENING

P: Japan says she recognises only the Bordeaux Government.

SRI AUROBINDO (*laughing*): Of course!

P: There is unconfirmed news that Japan has either entered 20 miles inside Indo-China or spread along the frontier.

SRI AUROBINDO: Inside means she is going to occupy the country.

N: But it was said that all frontiers had been closed.

S: The colonies are still undecided. Are they going to recognise Bordeaux too?

SRI AUROBINDO: Then they will have to be demilitarised and Japan will easily walk in. The colonies say that they are all willing to fight.

N: Not a very determined attitude. They seem to be hesitating.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, and Churchill's speech also is more hesitating than it

ought to be. They will go on fighting till they are demilitarised, I suppose.

N: They are hesitating because of the National Committee. They ought to declare the personnel.

S: They should do it soon.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, if they don't, they will let the psychological moment pass.

S: There is no news of Maudel or Reynaud.

SRI AUROBINDO: Some say that Reynaud is in America. I don't see why they can't come together. There may be some reason for their hiding.

Have you seen Hoover's statement? He says that America must prepare for her defence and only help the Allies to a certain limit so that her own resources may be kept intact for her own defence. Besides, he says, helping the Allies will be bad for the Allies. (*Laughter*) He is using this as a political stunt against Roosevelt and is trying to preach his isolationism. The world is getting queer.

N: The other day, while talking about the Divine Will, you said that Christ knew that he was to be put on the Cross and yet one part of him didn't want it. Did you mean that the crucifixion had been divinely willed?

SRI AUROBINDO: That is what the Bible says. It says that Christ came to take the sins of humanity upon himself and deliver humanity from suffering. Even then some parts of his lower vital didn't want it because of the suffering, the desertion of his disciples and the humiliation. But he felt the suffering on the cross. Otherwise there is no use in suffering. If the suffering is not real there is no meaning in it.

P: In our Puranas there are many stories of the Divine's intervention, not by His omnipotent power but according to the rules of the game.

SRI AUROBINDO: Of course, if it were to be by omnipotent power it could be done from above. Why should the Divine come down into a body for it?

C (*after some time*): Just a while ago I heard distinctly the Mother's voice saying, "Hitler will die on the 26th."

SRI AUROBINDO (*laughing*): That is too good to hope for.

C: I am not very sure about the date, whether it is the 26th or some other date.

SRI AUROBINDO: I don't care about the date. If he dies it is enough. (*Laughter*)

(*To be continued*)

---

NIRODBARAN



## THE SEEKERS OF PONDICHERRY

(Continued from the issue of June, 1973)

*(We are continuing the serial publication of the complete article which in a shortened version has appeared in The Washington Post, Sunday, April 22, 1973, beginning on p. B 1. The American paper introduced the author, H. Michael Zelnick, as follows: "The writer is an American who has lived at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram since 1968, teaching English in an Ashram School.")*

*For the already published portions of the article our acknowledgements are due to The Washington Post.)*

THE Ashram dining hall is a beautiful old house typical of many of the mansions built by the French during their long stay in Pondicherry. A single-story building with a flat roof-terrace, the architecture suggests a Greek temple. Behind massive pillars supporting a pediment on which crouch two white plaster lions on whom someone has dabbed incongruous tiger stripes, wide doorways lead into the house's seven large, high-ceilinged rooms. The rooms are spotlessly clean, the walls freshly painted, the tile floors gleaming. In a room at the rear the diners receive their food in shining stainless steel trays and bowls, cafeteria-style.

Lunch: rice, a bowl of thick green lentil-type soup, choice of milk or yogurt, fresh brown bread, bananas. Only single servings of milk or yogurt, but everything else may be had in any quantity desired. The small dark girl serving soup pouts teasingly when a diner refuses a second ladle. The man at the bread box seems determined to fill all empty spaces on the passing trays. "Ten slices? Not so much?" he asks incredulously. He cocks his head in a "C'est-la-vie" gesture, his eyes laughing.

Two of the rooms are set with tables and chairs; in the others mats and small tray stands have been placed around the floor. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother gaze down from the omnipresent photographs on the wall. "A drop of practice is worth an ocean of theories, advices and good resolutions," reads a plaque carrying the Mother's signature. Some of the diners close their eyes and concentrate for a few moments before beginning to eat. Others can't wait. Some eat in silence, some chat quietly with their neighbours. Some use spoons, some eat with their fingers in the traditional Indian fashion.

After dinner everyone deposits his empty dishes in the large concrete sinks on the side of the building: trays here, silverware there, bowls, tumblers. Each sink is manned by an Ashramite. An American boy with tattooed, muscular arms is washing the trays. A small blackboard hangs on the wall: "As I have always told you, any work, even sweeping a floor, can be a means of realising the Divine if it is done in the right consciousness." —THE MOTHER

Prosperity day. The Mother wants her children to pursue their spiritual development without having to worry about providing for the basic necessities of life. When one is accepted as a permanent member of the Ashram, it is customary for him to offer all his possessions to the Mother who in turn undertakes to provide for all his legitimate needs, spiritual and material.<sup>1</sup> Each month each sadhak submits a list of needed items and at 9.00 a.m. on the first day of the following month, the so-called "Prosperity" distribution takes place.

By 8.30 a.m. the queue begins to form before the Prosperity room. The Ashram school is closed on the first of each month and besides the adults there are several children in the line waiting to pick up the month's supplies for their families. The atmosphere is one of consecrated festivity: many of the adults in the line remember when the Mother herself made the Prosperity distribution and, even for those who don't remember, there is something numinous about this most material demonstration of the Mother's love and care for her children. \*

Promptly at 9.00 the Prosperity window opens and the line begins to move. A large genial looking man stands behind the counter.

"Rumbha." He calls the name of a short rotund woman approaching the window. One of his assistants hands him Rumbha's "Prosperity box" and, smiling, he passes it to her: several bars of soap, a toothbrush, a saree, a letter pad, two pencils.

"Arvind." Soap, razor blades, two sets of underwear, a shaving brush, a pair of pyjamas, matches.

"Michael." Soap, matches, hair oil, a bottle of ink, a pair of shorts.

A note in the Mother's own handwriting and bearing her signature is tacked to the window:

"The Ashram is meant for those who want to consecrate their lives to the Divine."

\*

The Ashram sportsground is located on the outskirts of the city, about a mile and a half from the Ashram. A fine quarter-mile cinder track, three large playing

<sup>1</sup> Quite recently this arrangement has had to be abandoned as the virtually exponential growth of the Ashram in the past few years imposed an almost impossible financial burden on the Mother. Nowadays, except in very rare cases, individuals coming to the Ashram are expected to provide for their own material needs, though, of course, the Mother continues to provide for those whom she has previously accepted.

The Ashram is largely dependent financially on contributions from devotees and well-wishers, and its financial difficulties have not been eased by the Mother's uncompromising attitude in the matter. Replying to a devotee who had expressed a desire to help the Ashram by collecting money for it and who had asked the Mother to give him a written statement of support for the work, the Mother wrote in a letter dated 29 April, 1938.

"I am not in the habit of writing for money to anybody. If people do not feel that it is for them a great opportunity and Grace to be able to give their money for the Divine cause, *tant pis pour eux!* [So much the worse for them.] Money is needed for the work — money is bound to come; as for who will have the privilege of giving it, that remains to be seen."

fields, basketball and volleyball courts, and Olympic size swimming pool, superb gymnastic and body-building equipment — it is said to be the finest athletic facility in India.

Most of the traditional yoga systems of India regard the body as an obstacle to the highest spiritual realisation, anxiously look forward to its disintegration, neglecting if not deliberately ill-treating it in the meantime. But life, Sri Aurobindo declared, is the field of his yoga and he and the Mother have always insisted that their disciples take proper care of their bodies.

To encourage the Ashramites to participate in physical education, age-based groups which meet each day for one activity or another have been formed and competitions in such things as track and field, sports and games, swimming and gymnastics, etc., are held regularly. Participation in the groups is compulsory for the children, optional for all others, but most Ashramites participate to some extent.

Prabu is a captain of one of the groups. His parents came to the Ashram from West Bengal when he was seven and he has been in Pondicherry ever since. A strikingly handsome man with wavy jet black hair, fine dark eyes and a clear golden-brown complexion, he looks something like a muscular young Indian Clark Gable. His youthful appearance belies his actual age of forty-three by a full ten years.

He is seated on the stands beside one of the soccer fields. About thirty girls from Khaki Group (25-30 years old) are arrayed before him in the throes of various callisthenic movements. Occasionally he moves forward to correct a movement or demonstrate a figure. "You don't know what a wonder it is," he says, "you can't imagine what Mother had to go through to get the groups going. Especially for the girls. Do you know what it was in India 20 years ago for a woman to wear shorts? Do you know what it's like even now outside of the Ashram? What troubles she had! I'm telling you, it's really a miracle. She used to come out to the playground herself every afternoon, every day she was coming for two or three hours to watch us doing our exercises. All the original captains she chose herself. She designed all the group uniforms herself. Everything. And what trouble they gave her. You can't imagine."

In various areas of the sportsground, Red Group — boys and girls aged 13-16 (below age 17, the groups are not segregated by sex) — are playing soccer; F-Group men (25-40) are swimming. Basketball and volleyball games are in full swing; a hefty female group captain is demonstrating figures on a trampoline, some boys are lifting weights. A group of little ones passes by, huge brown eyes in tiny faces, light blue shorts, white tops, the youngest group (ages 6 to 10). "Bonjour Prabu-da."

"Bonjour, Ajit. What is it? You are in group already? Getting strong?"

"Bonjour Prabu-da."

"Ah. Bonjour, Dipa. So you are learning to swim?"

"Yes, but it is not coming."

"It will come. You call me and show the next time you have swimming."

"Bonjour Prabu-da ..."

In the thirty-six years he has been at the Ashram Prabu has hardly ever gone out

of Pondicherry.

“I’ve been up to Madras a few times when the Mother has sent me for some errand. But that is all. The first time I was so interested. I had been in the Ashram for fourteen years without going once out of Pondicherry. I was anxious to eat in a restaurant. I went into ‘Kwality’ to have lunch...but the people, my God, they looked like they were all dead; I said, ‘Is this life?’ I could hardly eat. I came right back. The Mother thought it was quite funny. Everything is here. The Mother is here. What to go out for?”

If today it is, as Alan observed, somewhat difficult to see at first glance that anything which might be called “yoga” is going on at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, it seems that it was not always so.

“In the old days,” says Prabu, “it was quite different. For a while the Mother was using constantly her occult powers and really it was something wonderful. I tell you, there were miracles happening every day. She was bringing down beings from other planes to help in the work. Many then were seeing some gods regularly and almost daily everyone was having remarkable experiences. It was something wonderful. Then one day Sri Aurobindo called the Mother to him and said, ‘This is the way to start a new religion and gain millions of devotees but that is not what we want. Our aim is the supramental transformation and that must be done otherwise.’ That very day the whole atmosphere changed. Now things are not so spectacular, maybe not so much fun, but it is a Grace; those who know say the work is going much more rapidly.”

\*

Sri Aurobindo was born Aurobindo Ghose in Calcutta on August 15, 1872. His father, an Anglophile doctor, was determined that his children should receive a European education, and at the age of five Aurobindo was placed at the Loretto Convent School in Darjeeling. Two years later, in 1879, he was sent to England where he spent the next 14 years of his life.

Aurobindo attended St. Paul’s school in London and then went to King’s College, Cambridge, which he entered with a senior classical scholarship. His performance at Cambridge was brilliant, though after his first year Aurobindo rarely attended classes, preferring to pursue his studies, largely of languages, literature and history, on his own.

Aurobindo’s father had given strict instructions that the boy was to receive a thoroughly European education, was not to study Indian culture and was to receive no religious instruction. Nonetheless, during his years at Cambridge, Aurobindo evinced a growing concern for the state of India under the British Raj, and was outspoken in his opposition to the Moderate policies of the Indian National Congress and his demand for the overthrow of foreign rule.

Upon his return to India, Aurobindo passed thirteen years in the Baroda Civil Service including several years as personal secretary to the Maharaja of Baroda. His position barred him from open anti-British political activity, but behind the

scenes he was very active indeed, maintaining contact with anti-British leaders in Bengal and attempting to spread a plan he had conceived for the clandestine organisation of youth groups throughout the country to disseminate anti-British propaganda and train volunteers for ultimate military action. The outbreak of agitation against the Partition of Bengal in 1905 created a situation rich in revolutionary possibilities and in 1906 Aurobindo left Baroda to become principal of the newly-founded Bengal National College in Calcutta, and to play a more open role in the political movement.

During the next two years, Aurobindo was at the very center of the revolutionary movement. Indeed, it might be said that besides the uncoordinated activities of a handful of individuals, there was no real Indian revolutionary movement before Aurobindo arrived in Calcutta and became its center. Writing regularly in a number of newspapers and journals Aurobindo proclaimed the goal of full independence from British rule and organised a program of national action boycotting British goods, schools and law courts. It is generally agreed that Aurobindo's writings in one journal in particular, the *Bande Mataram*, which achieved national circulation, were among the most important factors in awakening widespread revolutionary sentiment throughout the country. At one point the British Governor of Bengal, Sir Andrew Frazer, wrote to the Governor-General Lord Minto:

"There is one matter which I desire to press very strongly on Your Excellency's earnest attention: namely the necessity for deporting Aurobindo Ghose....

"He is the leader. He is regarded and spoken of by all as the disciples regard a great Master. He has been in the forefront of all.... But he has kept himself, like a careful and valued general, out of sight of 'the enemy'.

"We cannot get evidence against him such as would secure his conviction in a court. But we have been fortunate enough to get papers which show his connection with the conspiracy, and information as to his action, quite sufficient to convince the reasonable mind and justify deportation."

Frazer's successor, Governor Baker, was later to declare to Lord Minto:

"I attribute the spread of seditious doctrines to him (Sri Aurobindo) personally in a greater degree than to any other single individual in Bengal or possibly in India.

"His attitude is one of avowed and irreconcilable hostility towards the British Government; he has openly and persistently preached the doctrine of political boycott, with the intention of making government impossible."

These reports eventually led Lord Minto to write to Lord John Morley, the then Secretary of State for India, explaining the gravity of the situation thus: "He (Sri Aurobindo) is the most dangerous man we have to deal with at present.... He has great influence with the student class.... I believe every effort has been made by his Indian friends to reclaim him and they tell me it is hopeless."

Eventually Aurobindo was arrested on charges of sedition, but as had been foreseen by the British themselves, sufficient evidence for a conviction was lacking, and he soon returned to his political activities.

Then, on April 28, 1908, an event occurred which was to be of tremendous significance in Aurobindo's life. On that evening a terrorist bomb intended for the English Judge of Muzzafarpore, a district of Bihar, exploded killing not the Judge but two innocent English ladies. Aurobindo, charged with having master-minded the plot, was again arrested. This time he spent one year in the Alipore Jail before being brought to trial. It was during this period, several months of which were passed in solitary confinement, that his spiritual life took a decisive turn.

Even before Alipore, Aurobindo had had a considerable amount of mystical experience, some spontaneously, some a result of certain yogic disciplines he was practising. However, these practices had always been subordinate to his revolutionary activities. As he later declared, "When I approached God at that time I hardly had a living faith in Him. The agnostic was in me, the atheist was in me, the sceptic was in me and I was not absolutely sure that there was a God at all. I did not feel His presence. Yet something drew me.... I felt that there must be a mighty Truth somewhere in this Yoga.... So when I turned to the Yoga and resolved to practise it and find out if my idea was right, I did it in this spirit and with this prayer to Him, 'If Thou art, then Thou knowest my heart. Thou knowest that I do not ask for liberation, I do not ask for anything which others ask for. I ask only for strength to uplift this nation, I ask only to be allowed to live and work for this people whom I love and to whom I pray that I may devote my life!'"

But in Alipore all this was changed. In a series of profound experiences which continued virtually uninterrupted during the entire term of his imprisonment, Aurobindo was given to see that his work of raising up India was only a small part of the much greater work he was destined to perform, a work which, he was informed, was not being done for India, or even for humanity as a whole, but for the Divine Himself. About the experience Aurobindo reported: "I remembered then that a month or more before my arrest, a call had come to me to put aside all activity, to go into seclusion and to look into myself, so that I might enter into closer communion with Him. I was weak and could not accept the call. My work was very dear to me and in the pride of my heart I thought that unless I was there, it would suffer or even fail and cease; therefore I would not leave it. It seemed to me that He spoke to me again and said, 'The bonds you had not the strength to break I have broken for you, because it is not my will nor was it ever my intention that that should continue. I have another thing for you to do and it is for that I have brought you here, to teach you what you could learn for yourself and to train you for my work.'"

Sri Aurobindo was usually reticent to speak in any detail of his mystical experiences but of his experience in the Alipore Jail he has given a vivid account:

"He turned the hearts of my jailors to me and they spoke to the Englishman in charge of the jail, 'He is suffering in his confinement; let him at least walk outside his cell for half an hour in the morning and in the evening.' So it was arranged and it was while I was walking that His strength again entered into me. I looked at the jail that secluded me from men and it was no longer by its high walls that I was imprisoned;

no, it was Vasudeva<sup>1</sup> who surrounded me. I walked under the branches of the tree in front of my cell but it was not the tree, I knew it was Vasudeva, it was Sri Krishna<sup>2</sup> whom I saw standing there and holding over me his shade. I looked at the bars of my cell, the very grating that did duty for a door and again I saw Vasudeva. It was Narayana<sup>3</sup> who was guarding and standing sentry over me. Or I lay on the coarse blankets that were given me for a couch and felt the arms of Sri Krishna around me, the arms of my Friend and Lover....

“When the case opened in the lower court and we were brought before the Magistrate I was followed by the same insight. He said to me, ‘When you were cast into jail, did not your heart fail and did not you cry out to me, where is Thy protection? Look now at the Magistrate, look now at the Prosecuting Counsel.’ I looked and it was not the Magistrate whom I saw, it was Vasudeva, it was Narayana who was sitting there on the bench. I looked at the Prosecuting Counsel and it was not the Counsel for the prosecution that I saw; it was Sri Krishna who sat there, it was my Lover and Friend who sat there and smiled, ‘Now do you fear?’ He said, ‘I am in all men and I overrule their actions and their words. My protection is still with you and you shall not fear. This case which is brought against you, leave it in my hand. It is not for you. It was not for the trial that I brought you here but for something else... I am guiding, therefore fear not. Turn to your own work for which I have brought you to jail and when you come out, remember never to fear, never to hesitate. Remember that it is I who am doing this, not you nor any other. Therefore whatever clouds may come, whatever dangers and sufferings, whatever difficulties, whatever impossibilities, there is nothing impossible, nothing difficult. I am in the nation and its uprising and I am Vasudeva, I am Narayana, and what I will shall be, not what others will. What I choose to bring about, no human power can stay.’”

When the trial ended Aurobindo was acquitted of the charges against him and released.

He returned briefly to his pre-imprisonment work, but the organisation he had put together had largely fallen apart as the result of his absence and of harsh repressive measures which had been taken by the British. Before any significant re-organisation could be effected, he received an order from the voice he had heard so often in Alipore. It directed him to leave British India and go to the French Indian territory of Chandernagore, from where he was ordered again to go to Pondicherry. He arrived in Pondicherry on April 4, 1910, and remained there until his death in 1950.

For a while after his remove to Pondicherry, Aurobindo remained in contact with the leaders of the liberation movement in British India. But as time went on He devoted himself more and more exclusively to his yoga and to the needs of a small but growing number of disciples who came to stay with him and eventually he completely abandoned personal involvement in political activity. He claimed, however, that as his yoga developed he became able to direct and control certain occult and

<sup>1, 2, 3</sup> Names for different aspects of the Divine in Hinduism

spiritual forces and that by the manipulation of these forces he could and did continually influence social, political and military events not only in India but elsewhere in the world as well.

About she who is known as the Mother there is far less biographical information available. In 1968, in response to many questions, the Mother published a piece called "The Reminiscences will be short." In its entirety it reads: "I came to India to meet Sri Aurobindo; I remained in India to live with Sri Aurobindo. When he left his body, I continued to live here in order to do his work which is, by serving the Truth and enlightening mankind, to hasten the rule of the Divine's Love upon earth."

It is known, however, that the Mother's original name was Mirra Alfassa, and that she was born in Paris on February 21st, 1878, into a wealthy family of Egyptian lineage. Sri Aurobindo has said that even as a young child the Mother was an extraordinary being and various comments that she herself has made indicate that as early as the age of five and six she was deeply involved in deliberately exploring and gaining control over the movements of her own consciousness. She has described one of her childhood experiences thus:

"When I was a child — about the age of thirteen and for about a year — every night as soon as I was in bed, it seemed to me that I came out of my body and rose straight up above the house, then above the town, very high. I saw myself then clad in a magnificent golden robe, longer than myself; and as I rose, that robe lengthened, spreading in a circle around me to form, as it were, an immense roof over the town. Then I would see coming out from all sides men, women, children, old men, sick men, unhappy men; they gathered under the outspread robe, imploring help, recounting their miseries, their sufferings, their pains. In reply the robe, supple and living, stretched out to them individually, and as soon as they touched it, they were consoled or healed, and entered back into their bodies happier and stronger than they had ever been before coming out of them. Nothing appeared to me more beautiful, nothing made me more happy; and all the activities of the day seemed to me dull and colourless, without real life, in comparison with this activity of the night which was for me the true life."

In her 'teens and early twenties, the Mother studied art in Paris. She has mentioned in conversation that she was well acquainted with the most important artists of Paris during this period. A number of her own paintings can be seen at the Ashram, and reveal the Mother as an accomplished artist in her own right. It is also known that during these years the Mother was the center of a group of spiritual seekers who met regularly to discuss their activities and share with one another the fruits of their experiences.

Sometime during this period the Mother made the acquaintance of Theon, a Polish Jewish Cabbalist, and became his student, undertaking a deep study of occultism which continued for several years, part of which time was spent in Algeria. She has related the following incident from this period:



“When I was coming back (to Europe) from Clemensel for the second time, Theon accompanied me.... While at sea a violent storm assailed us. The sea became very rough, high waves were continually tossing the ship about and there was apprehension of some catastrophe. The passengers...got very nervous and some of them began to weep. The Captain himself became anxious...Theon looked at me and said, ‘Go and stop it.’ The Captain was astonished; he did not understand what was meant, but I understood. I went to my cabin, lay down, and leaving my body went freely out to the open sea. There I discovered innumerable formless beings madly jumping about and creating havoc over the waters. I approached and very humbly and sweetly appealed to them to stop their mischief saying, ‘What can you gain by torturing these poor people? Please calm down and save their lives.’ I went on remonstrating and appealing to them for half an hour, after which they refrained from their activities. The troubled sea became calm. I went back to my body and came out of the cabin. When I went on deck I found all the people gathered there talking jovially.”

In early March of 1914, the Mother was aboard another ship, this time *en route* to French India. The *Kaga Maru* arrived in Pondicherry on March 29th, and the Mother was soon directed to the house where Sri Aurobindo was living along with a few disciples.

The Mother immediately recognised Sri Aurobindo as the same being who for years had visited her in dream and vision and directed her spiritual development; and despite her own extraordinary degree of realisation, she at once accepted him as her guru and completely surrendered herself to his guidance.

Her diary entry for March 30, 1914, reads:

“It matters not if there are hundreds of beings plunged in the densest ignorance. He whom we saw yesterday is on earth: His presence is enough to prove that a day will come when darkness shall be transformed into light, when Thy reign shall be indeed established upon earth.”

The Mother returned to France at the outbreak of World War I but came back to Pondicherry in 1920. During her previous stay she had been addressed by Sri Aurobindo simply as “Mira” and had been treated more or less like the other disciples among whom she was known only as an advanced disciple with a great devotion to Sri Aurobindo. But now Sri Aurobindo revealed her to the others as an incarnation of the Divine Mother, his spiritual equal and partner. The number of disciples around Sri Aurobindo was growing rapidly and Sri Aurobindo increasingly gave the Mother the responsibility of organising and ordering the life of the Ashram which had thus informally sprung into being. In November 1926, Sri Aurobindo retired to continue his yoga in almost total seclusion, and the Mother assumed complete charge of the Ashram and its activities, a charge which she continues to exercise to this very day.

(To be continued)

H. MICHAEL ZELNICK

## CALL TO THE SUPERMIND

LIBERATE me from mind, O Cosmos,  
To a mind beyond mind,  
A mind that is free,  
A mind that is heart,  
A heart that is mind.  
O heart of the mind,  
O mind of the heart,  
Liberate me to Supermind —  
A mind that is free,  
A mind that is nothing,  
A mind that is everything,  
A mind that is All —  
Free,  
Beautiful,  
Egoless,  
Powerful,  
Lovely — love-full — loving.

## O BEAUTIFUL GODDESS

O BEAUTIFUL Goddess of the Universe,  
You sing from the skies,  
You sing through the air,  
You sing to the Earth,  
And I have heard your voice.

I looked up from the Earth,  
I looked up at the heavens,  
And there I saw your form  
Singing to the Earth  
And I loved your voice.

Joyfully I listened to you,  
Joyfully I looked at you,  
Happily I left the Earth  
Meeting you in Space  
And I became your voice.

I looked down at the Earth,  
 I looked down from the skies,  
 I sang my love to Earth,  
 But stayed up in the skies.

I sang out to the Earth,  
 I sang out to the skies,  
 I sang out to the Universe,  
 As I travelled through infinite Space.

All within my Love-Goddess  
 All became the Universe  
 And everywhere was singing  
 The Voice of the Beautiful Goddess,  
 One sound...ringing...ringing...

VICTOR B. KING

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## TRANSFORMATION BY FIRE

FEVER being but a practice  
 Cleansing preparation  
 For non-consuming conflagration

Layer after layer of  
 Ego rights, ego points-of-view,  
 Ignorance inspired, acquired  
 For living in an impinging world.  
 Burned away, turned to  
 Fleeting smokeless shadows:  
 Disappearing along with darkness.

Until you may be prepared,  
 Naked, new born, exposed  
 To higher radiating flame, illuminating light.  
 The truth: more dangerous heat  
 For those as yet uncleansed  
 Than any fever's purifying fire.

LORETTA

## LETTER FROM ENGLAND

ONCE upon a time, an elderly friend visited India and in the course of his travels stayed with an Indian family. He noticed that every morning, when he cheerfully commented on the lovely day, they looked at him rather strangely. When they knew him better they asked: "James, please tell us — why do you always remark on the weather?"

It must be very difficult — in fact quite impossible — for those on whom the sun habitually shines, to imagine what a part climate plays in the lives of those who live on either of these two, small, wet islands off western Europe, with the Atlantic ocean on one side and the great land mass of the Continent on the other. Weatherwise, anything can, and does, happen. It may happen very rapidly and extremes are not infrequent. Last year, in characteristically freakish style, the longest day (summer) was colder than the shortest day (winter). It has been known to snow in 'blazing June' and to be balmily warm in the depths of December. Perhaps it is true that the extraordinary vagaries of our climate have something to do with our national adaptability. People have got to be ready for anything at a moment's notice — changes of clothes, activity, of improvisations to meet sudden alterations of circumstances dependent on the weather. It may not even be a daily but an hourly challenge.

But this tyrant who cannot be ruled; this goddess whose capricious behaviour no one has yet managed to foretell with accuracy, has for us a fascination utterly enchanting in the magic of its permutations. Always changing, it continually transmutes the world for us. Rain and sun, light and darkness, storms, rainbows, unearthly colours — that is our kaleidoscope. Days of gentle warmth and sunshine terminate in periods of static gloom or pelting rain. Depressed and cold, we are as frogs at the bottom of a well. No wonder James could not get over an endless succession of days on which the sun blazed and the skies were blue! His preoccupation, puzzling and doubtless faintly comic to his Indian friends, was due to a lifetime's involvement.

Naturally, climatic conditions such as ours are a boon to those with a bent for forecasting events and 'weather prophets' abound. Usually they are quite wrong, but this does not prevent us experiencing a shudder of apprehension or a flush of glad anticipation, according to the prognosis. Last autumn the prophecies all boded extremely ill. We were going to have the worst winter for years. Instead, we had the best — the mildest, balmiest winter in living memory. I, for one, cannot remember a winter in which the sun shone so much, or that was so serene and still. All the time Spring seemed round the corner — and Nature thought so too, for all the flowers began to appear at least a month too early. No blizzards. No gales. Nights, like the days, full of a radiant quality. Dull must have been the heart that could not feel the Bliss welling through it all!

In such a miraculous season the door is a-jar on another dimension; it is itself a harbinger of other, more subtle and inward springs. So that I was not surprised when two items came my way that seemed full of the spirit of the New Age. On the surface

they could not have seemed further apart — one concerned a monastic settlement in France; the other, a centre in Wales for schooling horses by a new method based on the study of animal communication. But they both had one factor in common. Each is concerned with applying a new type of consciousness to activities that are very old and to solving their problems by a fresh approach.

Taizé is a small village in Burgundy where a religious community has come into being remarkable — among other things — for the fact that it is Protestant, the Reformed Churches having rejected monasticism at their inception four hundred years ago. Taizé is near the ruins of the great abbey of Cluny and not far from St. Bernard's Cîteaux — a region therefore steeped in memories of the spirit. The founder and first Prior of the Taizé community, Roger Schutz, is a man of Swiss and French parentage who became convinced of the fundamental strength of monasticism — that is, “bodies of men, united by vows, to a life-long fidelity.” He felt that he must restore to the Church this element which had been rejected; but the monasticism to which he has dedicated himself and which inspires the Taizé community is no enclosed order, vowed to renunciation of the world and hidden behind high walls, but a monasticism “open to the world — to the whole world — to men and women in their actual daily life, in their need and suffering and distress” and which is still “at the heart of the Church.” United in a religious community he saw that these two principles would ensure that the monastic life would never be a flight from life, but that life would be drawn into it. Furthermore, such a community would be a centre of unity, not only to all people but to all persuasions.

Roger Schutz chose Taizé as his centre in 1940. In 1942 the German occupation made his work impossible (he was helping Jews to escape), so he went back to Switzerland. In 1944 he returned and five years later the first seven brothers were ‘professed.’ That, briefly, is the bare outline of Taizé. In writing of a visit to the community, Olive Wyon says of their worship: “No one who has been present can forget the sense of freshness and reality, of solemnity and joy....” Another visitor describes the Prior as “a man of immense personal magnetism, by reason of his profound spirituality and obviously attractive holiness...(who) radiates an infectious joy of the Spirit.... No mystic escapist from the world Schutz attacks our modern Western society for its materialism, joylessness, and preoccupation with success.”

Since its inception, both Protestant and Catholic have joined together at Taizé, making it a landmark in Christian unity. The Brothers live in the community, but go out to their callings and “work in the world” — one is the local doctor, another is expert in cooperative farming, another is a potter and so on. There are many different nationalities and some members have gone out into distant places in answer to some need.

These bare details do not explain what it is that drew 60,000 pilgrims to Taizé last year; which makes the young flock there in such numbers that they have to be accommodated in a ‘village’ of Army tents and which has necessitated the building of a new Church able to hold 3,000. (Next year Taizé is preparing for a gigantic Council

of Youth to be held there.) In a recent B.B.C Television programme called "A Place For Today" it was possible to feel something of the atmosphere of Taizé which a bare recountal cannot convey. The Brothers move peacefully amongst the immense crowds ("They do not disturb us," one remarked tranquilly). At prayers in the Church the congregation sits gathered round them. Sometimes the Prior touches a head in benediction. He is evidently a very dynamic but accessible man, whose expressive hands have an elastic grace, never restless even when they are most active. People move about in small groups talking, quiet and absorbed — and happy. The young have places where they can sit and meditate. These quiet figures in a flowery meadow I found extremely moving. Asked about their beliefs and hopes they speak a great deal of joy. They have a belief in the immediacy of life, in the importance of living *per se* which Tolstoy and the Zen masters would approve. Life itself is joy, wonder, love. In essence it is good. They remind me of Pierre's revelation in *War and Peace* after he had met Plato Karataciw, only their experience seems to be inborn, an intuitive wisdom which Pierre only learned through suffering.

Taizé is in the world and the world is in Taizé. In its tolerance, its breadth of vision, its concern with the great spiritual and social issues of the day, in its attraction for both young and old, it fulfils what Jean Guitton wrote of it after a visit: "It is a sign of the times, a sign of hope...(a) Christianity adapting itself to the new needs of a world in transition." As the economic and political unity of Europe is woven by politicians, tycoons and salesmen, the vision of Taizé constellates its spiritual togetherness. "The Risen Christ," says Roger Schutz, "comes to quicken a festival in the innermost heart of man. He is preparing a springtime of the Church, a Church devoid of means of power, ready to share with all, a place of visible communion for all humanity."

From human communication to animal communication. From Burgundy and its hills, to Camarthenshire and its mountains and that race of small, dark people, the Welsh, with their sing-song voices who, toughly through the centuries, have kept their language and culture alive, despite English domination, with a completeness that neither the Scots nor Irish have been able to equal. Here we find not only poetry and music but the most beautiful race of native ponies in Britain. If the Welsh have not quite the intense equine absorptions of the Irish, they certainly run them a close second and both share that mystique which can only be understood by those who have bred and produced that most glorious of all animals.

Near Lampeter there is a centre where a husband and wife have put into practice a new method called "gentling" (a term also used by the Portuguese, who never talk about "breaking") for taking a completely wild, unbacked pony or horse and making it tractable in a short time, without violence or fear. The age-old idea of man's domination gives way to that of "two friends" who enjoy working together. From time to time, individuals do turn up who have such a facility with animals that they can do this anyhow. Certainly the old horse "whisperers", as they were called, had techniques and secrets which enabled them to come to terms with horses very quickly, like

the Red Indians, even those who had been made rogues by bad handling.

The Blakes have based their methods on a study of how horses communicate and how they behave to each other in the wild state — how they ‘boss’ each other, how they reassure one another, how the mare soothes her foal, how they express fear, anger, pain, curiosity, pleasure, affection. Their work links up with the studies going on in other fields on dolphins — who have a better brain than man — on lions, fishes, geese and wolves. All these groups have one form of communication in common — certain movements, or postures, which may signify a whole range of messages from aggression to surrender, from the “come hither” to the “be off!” Geese, wolves and horses (and obviously a host of other animals) also use their voices in identifiable ways.

The Blakes have found that horses communicate through bodily movement and have identified over a hundred of these, but they also use the voice and telepathy. They stress the use of ‘E.S.P.’ continually in their handling of horses, who use telepathy between each other and can respond to it very sensitively with humans.

At this time, when we are seeing an almost phenomenal amount of breakthroughs of every conceivable kind, we may be witnessing in our contacts with the animal world — particularly with the higher animals such as lions, horses and dolphins — the beginnings of an entirely new and creative relationship, of which people like Joy Adamson, with her lioness Elsa, John Lilley with his dolphins and the Blakes with their horses, may be the pioneers.

In *The Supramental Manifestation* Sri Aurobindo discusses the possible changes that might occur with “a most highly developed animal mind turning towards human possibilities” under the pressure of a descent of the Truth, and he concludes: “If man began to develop the powers and means of a higher knowledge in something like fulness, if the developing animal opened the door of his mentality to beginnings of conscious thought and even a rudimentary reason, — at his highest he is not so irrevocably far from it now...this would be an immense change.” Perhaps we are seeing, here and now, the tentative beginnings of such a development.

Well, here are two places “for today”: each an experiment; both probing the immense space of our ignorance with their tiny, intrepid spacecraft of hope. Surveying them, we can echo Pierre’s words: “From old habit he sometimes said to himself: ‘What is there for me to do next?’ — and the answer was: ‘Nothing — To live. — Great God! How good that is!’”

MIRANDA

# 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 June, 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.

(a)

WE have tried to demonstrate that Teilhard is basically unorthodox and cannot be fitted into mere Christianity, as his co-religionist admirers want, just as he cannot be fitted into mere pantheism, as his co-religionist critics make out. We have marked that Teilhard himself gives a handle to either party: he continually swayed between his self-confessed inborn pantheist temperament and the equally sincere Christian responses evoked in his heart and mind by early training and later discipline. He never quite found the correct poise, to which, beyond both mere Christianity and mere panthesism, his deepest attempts at self-clarification pointed.

Not that those who would connect him to orthodoxy are as sweeping in their championship of his cause as are his critics in running him down. They admit considerable obstacles in several places and positively reject some of his ideas. But they still argue that on the whole and in his centrality he is a true Christian adhering to traditional truth no less than practice, and that even his so-called advanced notions are, in the main, really what the Church has always said in old-fashioned instead of in new-fangled forms. Such, for instance, is the conviction of Emile Rideau, S.J., in an extremely intelligent book which has the honesty to offer us an enormous number of passages illustrating all possible shades of opinion in Teilhard. He quotes a series of them which tend to give pause to the orthodox Roman Catholic, and then comments:<sup>1</sup>

“In these paragraphs the form of expression sometimes, we can recognize, goes beyond what the thought behind it will bear, so that they would seem to suggest that we must look for something that will re-fashion or complement Christianity. They may, however, be interpreted in a way that reduces them to a more classic theme. The ‘synthesis’ in question is not an augmentation of Christianity *in itself*, but an

<sup>1</sup> *Teilhard de Chardin: A Guide to His Thought* (Collins, London, 1967), p. 643.



enriching of 'our faith' by a better *appreciation* of its mystery, by an assimilation and integration of human values into the transcendence of its catholicity...."

Rideau<sup>1</sup> goes on to a passage from Teilhard which concludes with a reference to "convergence around a *Religion of Action* which will gradually be recognized as identical with, and subordinate to, a Christianity that has been *extended*, in a spirit of faith, to its extreme limit" (*Le Christianisme et le monde*, 1933).

Then he<sup>2</sup> introduces a tribute by Teilhard to Christianity. Rideau begins: "Everything that justly vindicates the sense of man can find a home' in Christianity" — and ends with Teilhard's words: "The new religion will be exactly the same as our old Christianity, but with a new life drawn from the legitimate evolution of its dogmas as they come into contact with new ideas."

Thus Rideau feels assured of the Roman Catholic nature of Teilhardism. Actually the situation is more complicated than he suspects. The complication makes its presence felt in the words: "a Christianity that has been *extended*, in a spirit of faith, to its extreme limit." We have the sense of a "faith" exceeding all accomodable extensions. The complication stares us in the face in one of the very paragraphs he has commented on. Let us take a straight look at it:<sup>3</sup>

"A hitherto unknown form of religion — one that no one could yet have imagined or described, for lack of a universe large enough and organic enough to contain it — is burgeoning in men's hearts, from a seed sown by the idea of evolution. God is no longer sought in an identification with things that annihilates personality, nor in an escape from things that de-humanizes man. God is attained (and this is infinitely more energizing and brings infinitely truer communion) by entry into the centre of the total sphere that embraces all things — a centre that itself is in process of formation. Far from being shaken in my faith by so profound a revolution, it is with irrepressible hope that I welcome the rise and anticipate the triumph of this new mysticism. For if in the end nothing, absolutely nothing, can prevent man from finally coming to rest in the form of belief that activates in him the forces of convergence *to their maximum* — then, indeed, we have the finest proof of the transcendence of Christianity. We see it in its unique power to find within itself and present to us, at the very time we need it, what at this precise moment in history is absolutely indispensable to our nature if it is to develop its power to act and adore to the full: and that is a Christ who can be and is commensurate with the universe, in other words a God — the God we look for — of evolution." To complete the sense, Rideau adds some further words of Teilhard's and says that then will be effected "the meeting between the Above of heaven and the Ahead of earth, between a 'cosmified' God and a 'personalized' evolution" (*L'étoffe de l'univers*, 1953, in *L'activation de l'énergie*, p. 406).

Surely, it is not only the form of expression that has run beyond the exact need of

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* We follow the translations of Teilhard's writings as they appear in Rideau's book. They were published before the official versions in English came out and so their wording differs from them.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 643-4.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 642.

the thought. There is the positive statement that the new religion could never have been part either of the imagination or of the description possible to any old religion. And yet we are told of Christianity's power to bring out of itself the new religion. A veritable paradox faces us — a sheer self-contradiction — unless Teilhard means by "Christianity" something that cannot be identified with any historical version of it. Christianity, to Teilhard, must stand for a religion that undergoes a complete metamorphosis so that it differs *toto coelo* from all past manifestations of Christian dogma, and yet is qualified to be called Christianity. Christianity must be a certain "truth" connected with the historical Jesus but quite independent of everything that men have understood in connection with him. It seems to be a religion of Christ divested of Christianity, if not even of the historical Jesus as figured so far.

And this is precisely what we can conclude on submitting Teilhard to a close scrutiny. At first it may look as if he has in mind the Christian religion in an older mode than the world-depreciative one that was current in his time: "At the point the world has now reached we are impoverishing it by our modern Christianity. This modern Christianity cannot, however, be the whole of Christianity.... What makes Christians sterile is that they do not love the world" (*Le néo-humanisme moderne*, lecture, 1948).<sup>1</sup> We are led to ask: "What is the rest of the Christian religion that is left out by modern Christianity?" All readers of Teilhard know how much store he sets by St. John and especially St. Paul in whom he reads a body of doctrine justifying his "faith in the world", his forward gaze towards a collective ultra-human ready to be gathered into Christ. But can we aver that Teilhardism coincides with Pauline Christianity? If we go by Rideau's information we cannot. Does he not remark on the selectivism, the tendentiousness of Teilhard's resort to his chief authority, the Pauline Epistles? Rideau writes:

"Not being really familiar with the whole of St. Paul, he paid too little attention to his description of man's fundamental cleavage and the deviation of his impulses."<sup>2</sup> — "It is interesting that Teilhard's quotations from St. Paul are chiefly taken from humanist or cosmic passages..., rather than from the dialectic of the first chapter of Romans."<sup>3</sup> — "There is no trace in Teilhard of the Pauline dialectic of death, through the death of God, of the final destruction of a fundamental alienation and a collective existential regeneration through Christ's priestly act. The Cross is never interpreted as a pardon and a return to grace."<sup>4</sup>

We see that Teilhard fastens on certain elements of original Christianity and ignores others. Even in those elements, can we take him as a faithful interpreter? Rideau<sup>5</sup> observes appropos of Teilhard's science-guided vision of evolution culminating in a super-conscious totalisation of mankind at Omega Point: "... it is doubtful whether one can see a correspondance or coincidence between what St. Paul says about the final unification of the Church and the convergence of cosmic history deduced from scientific reflexion." Touching on St. John in relation to the Teilhardian

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 326-7.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 219.    <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 627.    <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 226.    <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 218.

vision of Christ's re-appearance (Parousia) to super-naturalise a mature humanity millions of years hence, Rideau<sup>1</sup> pronounces: "...the attraction of a temporal Parousia, to be hoped for in some future, blurs and weakens the Johannine idea that it is already being realized in the *here* and *now* of history, by man's present entry into spiritual transfiguration, or his rejection of it."

So even what Teilhard takes from St. John and St. Paul is not seen by him with their eyes but with his own slant of sight. It would appear that he just takes from them what strikes him as Christianity's vital nerve freed of all particular reactions according to one temperament or another. He seems to find it chiefly in St. Paul but he does not always care for the manner in which that Apostle reacts with it. He gives us the impression that Christianity consists for him of just a few assertions: the remainder that is known as Christianity through the ages is to him negligible and dispensable.

Indeed there is a passage in Teilhard which takes into the scope of its criticism not only the modern age but the whole long period during which Christianity has flourished. All of it — from its very beginning — needs to be altered to Teilhardism. Rideau<sup>2</sup> himself has the passage among his copious notes: "After two thousand years so many of our views have been modified that, in religion, we have to slough off the old skin. The formulas we have been using have become too narrow and unyielding. We find them irksome and they have ceased to move us. If we are to go on living we must make a fresh start. By constant repetition of dogma in the same form and developing it only abstractly, we are losing ourselves in the clouds, where we are completely out of touch with what agitates the world, with what it seeks, and with what feeds its vigour. From the religious point of view we are living cut off from the world, both intellectually and emotionally. Here we have an indication that the time for a renascence is not far distant" (*Christologie et évolution*, 1944).

We have even a definite spotlighting of what this "renascence" should involve. Passages can be culled from Teilhard's writings, that leave us in no doubt of the concentrated specialised vision he had of Christianity. Rideau has, among his quotations, the following:

"The essence of Christianity is simply and solely belief in the unification of the world in God, through the Incarnation" (*Esquisse d'un univers personnel*, 1936, in *L'énergie humaine*, p. 113).<sup>3</sup>

"Christ's essential message is not to be found in the Sermon on the Mount, not even in the significant act of Calvary: it consists entirely in the proclamation of a 'divine fatherhood': to put it in another way, in the affirmation in which God, a personal being, offers himself to man as the term of a personal union" (*L'énergie humaine*, 1937, *ibid.*, p. 193).<sup>4</sup>

"The most essential aim and criterion of Christian orthodoxy may be reduced to this one point: to preserve Christ *on the scale of and at the head of creation*:

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 574.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 546.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 546.

however vast the world is found to be, the figure of the risen Christ must enclose it. Such, since St. John and St. Paul, is the fundamental rule of theology" (*Reflexions sur le péché originel*, 1947).<sup>1</sup>

We may add one more passage from outside Rideau's book. It is perhaps the earliest (1920) in the same volume (published in English) as the preceding which is perhaps the latest (1947):

"There are times when one almost despairs of being able to disentangle Catholic dogmas from the geocentrism in the framework of which they were born. And yet one thing in the Catholic creed is more certain than anything: that there is a Christ '*in quo omnia constant*'.<sup>2</sup> All secondary beliefs will have to give way, if necessary, to this fundamental article. Christ is all or nothing."<sup>3</sup>

Here in these four excerpts we have, unmistakably, Teilhard's understanding of what constituted being Christian, orthodox and Roman Catholic. It has intrinsically nothing to do with the Roman Church's proclamations at any period of history. And it affirms the right to jettison all of them. Now and then they may have had resemblances to this or that aspect of Teilhardism; but the resemblances are accidental and to Teilhard unnecessary. He has his own all-or-nothing Christ-fixation which is for him the true Christianity. According to him, the Church should turn and listen to his voice of an inspired loyal priest who stays within her fold because God has meant her to be Christ's world-body and because she has the promise of being truly Christian though so far she has been imperfect in her truth-sense. She has always fallen short of Teilhardism. The defect, of course, could not be helped in the past when the universe was not large enough and organic enough for Teilhardism to take shape, but today the defect has no excuse and must get remedied as soon as possible.

Such an attitude, implying basic irreconcilableness between Teilhard's Christianity and orthodox tradition, is so glaring in his works that not even the most fervent among his co-religionist admirers who wish to prove him fundamentally traditional and orthodox can avoid undermining their own thesis by admitting this attitude. De Lubac<sup>4</sup> well voices them all, half neutrally half ironically: "Teilhard could not escape the conviction — in some cases, possibly, one might say the 'illusion' — that in what was most personal in his thought and in that part of it, accordingly, to which he naturally attached most importance, he was ahead of the main body of the Catholic community." De Lubac<sup>5</sup> also notes in Teilhard's essay "Christianity and Evolution" of 1945 the phrase "*prae-sentire cum Ecclesia*" (= "think beforehand with the Church") and comments: "This...verb '*prae-sentire*' might cover not only an illusion but a secret pride. Its equivalent can be found in a number of his letters."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 538-9.

<sup>2</sup> 'in whom all things hold together' (Col. 1.7).

<sup>3</sup> "Fall, Redemption, and Geocentrism," *Christianity and Evolution* (Collins, London 1971), p. 44.

<sup>4</sup> "Teilhard and the Problem of Today", included in the volume *The Eternal Feminine* (Collins, London, 1971), p. 194.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 195.

<sup>6</sup> For example in a letter to Père Gorce, 4 October, 1950, Cf. *Teilhard missionnaire et apologiste*, (Éd. 'Prière et Vie,' Toulouse, 1966), pp. 42-3. (De Lubac's Note)

A Teilhard-quotation in Rideau's own book bears pointed testimony to the great gap between Teilhard's Christianity and that of his Church and of the Jesuit Order to which he belonged. In addition, it shows him active in what he considers the most strategic as well as the most loving way to make them mend the errors of their present religious stand and reach forward to the fundamentals of his faith. A letter of 15 July, 1929, tells us about these institutions: "I want to work, as an individual atom, to perfect them *from within*.. ."<sup>1</sup> The operative words for us here are not the italicised ones but the expression: "perfect them."

(*To be continued*)

K. D. SETHNA

<sup>1</sup> *Op cit.*, p 298

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## ONLY HUMILITY PAYS

WRONG bullies, goodness suffers, evil thrives,  
 Men twirl tied to the falsehood-wheels of the world;  
 Alone who gift to God their cyphered lives  
 Are not into world's death-tongued hell-fire hurled.

Save God none is their own, nor kin, nor friends;  
 Misunderstood, they yet are never cheated.  
 Offered to God and to His love-lit ends,  
 Only for Him, in Him, they live soul-seated.

Play not fire-flinging lest thyself thou burn  
 Or smear thy visage slinging calumny,  
 Thy bad-will double-forced can on thee turn  
 Or boomerang on thee thy falsity.

Thy hands, O blind, not on God's wasp-comb move,  
 But humbly pray for His honeycomb of Love.

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

## ON A CERTAIN CRITICAL FATUITY

THE sophisticated reader will know how large a field is covered by this title, even within, or perhaps especially within, English poetry. The particular case I have in mind is of a species to which the "downright" Englishman is perhaps especially prone; for though English poetry has had such a rich development, the full appreciation and even the full flowering is considerably hindered by the stubborn earth-bound character of the great majority of those born on the gem set in the silver sea. They are not proper facets, as it were, and the polish is yet to be found.

Before poetry simply fell apart under the onslaught beginning with mad-dog Hulme, the most "downright" of them all, there was always marked resistance to innovation in poetic form; and the various reactions are often not uninteresting, to a student of the slowness of human awareness. That splendid poem, Tennyson's *Boadicea*, has even yet not had the attention it deserves, because it is written in an adaptation of the difficult galliambic meter. It seems that many people are not able to read it at all, because they cannot catch the rhythm of it; though the rhythm is marked and very powerful. It was one of the favorites of Tennyson himself, for recitation; and one may well regret not having the opportunity to hear that deep musical voice roll out those mighty and mightily stirring lines. But they have been dismissed by one critic on the ground that the rhythm is like that of

Doctor, lawyer, tailor, merchant, admiral and apothecary.

This is not the exact series, but the gist is the same. The objection is on a par with the observation of another critic that "gammon and spinach" is a natural ending for the English hexameter (for him the "so-called" hexameter, for he will not admit it); this he has put forth as if it were some great discovery. This sort of thing is like most satire and parody — that is, lame satire and jejune parody of the kind that is perhaps a special delight of the "true" Englishman: putting silly and trivial stuff into great forms, that of course do not remain great under such abuse. Wordsworth has given sufficient answer to it all, in his just observation about the verses

I put my hat upon my head  
And walked into the Strand,  
And there I met another man,  
Whose hat was in his hand...

that it is the matter, and not the manner, that is unpoetical. One may as well try to dismiss Shakespeare and Milton by remarking that some of their best rhythms are like

Old rags, old bottles, buttons and shoe-horns.

And indeed I have read a remark about blank verse, made recently (by an American, however) to the effect, that he cannot read the "stuff" any more, after reading Max Beerbohm's hilarious parody of Shakespearean drama and would-be Shakespearean drama, in 'Savonarola Brown'. I enjoy the parody myself, because it is brilliant, and not trivial, gross or silly; but to no competent reader of poetry will it be a threat to Shakespeare, or blank verse itself.

And neither need thought of a meaningless string of occupations disturb one's enjoyment of the listing of British tribes in *Boadicea*; not to speak of thundering lines like these:

When about the shore of Mona those Neronian legionaries  
Burned and broke the grove and altar of the Druid and Druidess...

The paltry reactions of paltry minds notwithstanding, poetry is and remains a great gift, an elevating gift to mankind. And since form and content are not really separable — which makes even the best parody somewhat beside the mark — even *rhythmically* such an ending as "eagle and skylark" is superior to the kitchen-minded stuff given above.

JESSE ROARKE

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## EARTH PASSAGE

STARTLED sojourner; awakened instant  
Seizure of soul impulse, from sleep amazed  
Raised awed into a swift, rapt spell of sight:  
Outside, the broad and shelving beachhead lifts  
Like a drawn arc of aspiration, is  
The crescent brow of earth's planet ascent;  
Emerging from the hollowed ocean space,  
Fathoms of ether's spiral strands exult  
Like legion currents of incense curls round  
The escalating earth's promised way;  
Afar on surrounding horizon's span,  
A cresting palisade of bulwark clouds  
Silhouetted like dark crowned crags haloed  
In dawn's first faint flush. O body of earth,  
Ether-bathed, chasm-sprung, man thy promised day!

PHILLIP JOHN HOBERMAN

# THE DARKENING OF THE LIGHT

## REFLECTIONS ON THE SOLAR ECLIPSE OF JUNE 30, 1973

*(This article was written prior to the eclipse but not early enough to allow it to be included in the June issue. However, the effects of eclipses are felt not only at the exact moments of their occurrences but for a considerable period before and after as well, determined by the length of the eclipse and its position in the celestial sphere. For this reason, though it is a past event, the matter may still be considered pertinent.)*

SPEAKING about the coming eclipse the Editor of *Mother India* expressed to me his interest in an article being written on the subject, a study of the event that is causing such a stir in the world in many different sectors, from the scientific to the religious and down to the simple layman, curious about witnessing the longest eclipse in approximately 1,000 years.<sup>1</sup>

The event is, of course, of prime importance to astrologers as well as astronomers. To the former the matter goes beyond an intricate and detailed study of phenomena and points to a significance which is to relate to the consciousness of man and the course of evolution, or his perception thereof. I am aware that most astrologers view eclipses as something ominous, and tradition has always connected these happenings to dire manifestations, to earthquakes, hurricanes and other destructive natural phenomena. We can take the passing of Christ as an example, which is said to have occurred at the exact moment of a solar eclipse that covered the land in sombre darkness and was accompanied by an earthquake, a sort of reflection of the wrath of his Heavenly Father. I do not disagree with these views, in particular the connection seen between eclipses and certain destructive phenomena which could very well be the case regarding the one we are studying at present, but I propose to go a bit further into the matter, a question of perhaps a wider understanding of the process of temporary darkening of the light, which is precisely what an eclipse is: the Sun, our source of Truth-perception and our physical representation of the Divine, is shadowed for a brief span and we are unable to perceive the light, we are obscured in our vision and see only the apparent darkness. The sun of truth is subjected to this outer darkness and momentarily its rays appear to have vanished entirely. Naturally the longer the eclipse the longer the effects in the world at large and in the individual whose horoscope bears a sensitive relation to the celestial position of the phenomenon.

I am interested in the forthcoming event, but not entirely in the way others may be, nor do I attach to it such a dire significance. I believe, as has already been stated,

<sup>1</sup> Editor's Note: The precise information, received later, runs, "Where the borders of Mali, Algeria and Nigeria meet, the totality will last 7 min. 4 sec. making the eclipse the second longest in 1,433 years; the only longer one — 7 min, 7 sec. — took place in 1955. A comparable eclipse will not occur again until the year 2150" (*Time*, 25 June, 1973, p. 42, col. 1).



that the matter refers to an apparent darkening, an illusory victory of the forces of Ignorance. It could almost be stated in this way: falsehood is itself a victim of its own process of obscurity during that time — or the entire period which the event embraces — since falsehood can be said to be characterised by an imperfect vision, a partial appreciation of the World Play and its ultimate achievement. It is the opposite to a vision of Unity which Truth is and, because of that ignorance, seeing itself in the light of the temporal and not the eternal, it acts from this fragmentary vision, generally manifesting with an even greater force, spurred on by this absurd image of a world totally at its mercy and entirely caught in the clutches of lesser powers.

Therefore an event such as an eclipse does not in any way have an entirely negative effect. It often means quite the contrary: it points to an unmasking where Falsehood, believing itself to be the victor, comes forth and shows its full face, this very act being of the highest benefit to humanity in the greater vision of things. Likewise in the individual the same process can be felt. All that which is stubborn and refuses to change in the nature shows itself as truly what it is and how much effective power it holds, whether it is really capable of upsetting the progress and producing a fall. It has the effect of temporarily creating the illusion of total submersion in the lesser nature and it is our best opportunity to see what has to be done, where and how to do it, and gives us the greatest possibility for advancement, if we maintain an attitude of detachment from the movement and that of a silent witness.

Though it is not my habit nor my interest to analyse such events in the usual manner, which generally gives them far too much prominence, I do feel urged to write these words because I see the happening as important for its connection to a series of events taking shape now, in the recent past and the proximate future; because they touch two important poles, a sort of axis of evolution we can say. These poles are represented in the celestial sphere as the Cardinal signs Cancer and Capricorn.

The eclipse of June 30 is in a sense intimately related to the one which took place in the sign Capricorn at the beginning of the year. One could witness the same culminating process characterising that whole solstice period: One could witness the same culminating process: the rise of falsehood, the temporary submergence of the light, the elements of darkness appeared to be victorious and much was done in the name of Truth but corresponded to a lesser reality. The present one will touch the same point but in the reverse manner; it will signify the final and total downfall of those forces, potent elements that impede the future movement into the light. These elements come up stronger only to fall the harder. There is confusion as to the right path and its outcome, there is division and disunity, — only that we may come together once again in the light of a greater Truth and more solid realisation.

The June eclipse takes place in the zodiacal sign of Cancer. This is most important because the sign in itself represents a sort of eclipse: it is the fall from a state of light into a condition of darkness and ignorance. It is cosmically the plunge away from the solar light, Cosmic Midnight, the time of the Earth's aphelion or farthest

distance from the Sun, the culmination of the principle of Prakriti, the binding laws which chain man to his lesser nature. On the spiral of evolution it represents the Life Principle coming into manifestation, the ego, but also the gestation of the true soul, the psychic being, as well as the form of things material. The first three signs of the Zodiac give us matter in its aspect of pure energy, and Cancer — the first Water sign to appear following this primary trinity — represents organic matter, the cell. Its hieroglyph itself shows us this: ☊, a representation of two half cells, for Cancer is the sign of the Feminine Principle and maternity. It is the sign wherein the hereditary tendencies are transmitted, also that of memory, and recent scientific findings have come to reveal the function of the nucleus of the cell in this very regard; the inner order of things as put forth in the ancient zodiacal wheel represents also the ultimate material and phenomenal truths of existence.

We know therefore that the cell represents a central light covered in an outer darkness, in a sense a sort of solar system answering to the dictates of a central power. In the same manner the foetus is covered in the maternal sack, a protective device, as is the case also for the psychic being in the individual enveloped in the veils of ego — all of these things captured in the symbology of the sign Cancer. In the cell the nucleus of light is contained, the spark of consciousness, the mysterious and secret force that has the capacity to transform all that which orbits around it. And this is precisely the hinging point of the next eclipse.

In a class given some time ago on the subject, I told the students it was truly interesting to note that science had given the name *cancer* to the illness of the cells we know by that name today. I remarked that I wondered whether it was a conscious action based on the knowledge from antiquity of the simple and sublime symbols and numerical arrangements of the signs of the Zodiac — the fourth sign Cancer the crab, being precisely representative of the cell. Within a week or so one student accidentally came upon the answer. I quote from *The Human Brain* by Isaac Asimov: “Galen, a physician of Roman times, described a malignant tumour of the breast which distended nearby veins until the whole figure looked like a crab with its legs jutting out in all directions. Since that time malignant tumours have been referred to as Cancers (from the Latin ‘crab’).”

For many reasons this information is interesting. The antiquity of the name either points to an intimate knowledge of these matters at that time, therefore revealing that the ancients did indeed have a broader understanding of certain “occult” sciences than we tend to imagine, or else it suggests that the name was a haphazard choice inspired by the universal Power who gives to each thing its proper nomenclature according to a Truth and vision far wider and deeper than that of our linear mental processes. As for example the names given by astronomers to the three latest planets discovered — Uranus, Neptune and Pluto — which correspond exactly to the subtle characteristics of these planets through connection to myths of old wherein this knowledge is contained, their importance and position in the spiral of creation, and the role these play as symbols of the cycle of evolution we moved into at the time

of their discovery. Astronomers were not conscious of the truth underlying their selections, these choices coming to them by apparently unrelated means. This is, however, a rather banal topic because one of the first realisations on the spiritual path is that there is no accident, no coincidence, and that there is a power of the Divine Mother which works on all levels simultaneously and guides and directs each event down to the most minute details, with a vision of the whole that is to us staggering in its scope and capacity.

Returning to the story of the Roman physician Galen, it is also possible that he was aware of what he was doing, and the story of the distended veins looking like a crab might have been given out — if it is in fact a true story — in order to keep the knowledge secret, because this insight did, at that time, belong to the realm of higher knowledge and was thought unfit to be broadcast to the masses. In my own studies I am, however, unaware that astrologers to date have seen the sign Cancer connected to the cells as I have, though the matter is quite evident, as evident as the symbol of the next sign Leo ♌ which refers to and depicts the male sperm, and Leo is in fact the Masculine and paternal Principle. In consequence of this, I find Galen's story doubly intriguing.<sup>1</sup>

Creation reposes on four cardinal points, four pillars represented by the four Cardinal signs of the Zodiac. The first is Aries, a Fire sign, the second is Cancer, a Water sign, the third is Libra, an Air sign, and the fourth and last is Capricorn, an Earth sign, marking the final stage of evolution. As I have stated, Capricorn lies in opposition to Cancer and these two, because they are the points of perihelion and aphelion respectively, could be said to symbolise the axis of the Earth's orbit around the Sun and hence the axis and crux of the evolutionary process. When an eclipse falls in one of these cardinal points it is naturally more significant than otherwise. The fact is: we have not been able to grasp evolution as mapped out in the Zodiac because we have failed until now to understand the tenth sign, the fourth and last Cardinal pillar, Capricorn. This point signifies the divinisation of matter, and it marks the first in the trinity of Sachchidananda. We are shown that this trinity is to manifest in the densest part of creation, for the Earth element refers to Matter; we are shown that only in this way will evolution know the full gamut. Therefore esoteric tradition states that when this sign is understood, the reign of Light will have come. When man knows the unity of matter and spirit he will know the Golden Age, *Sat* of the Trinity, the Satya Yuga or the Age of Capricorn. This he cannot grasp unless he has understood the zodiac from the standpoint of a unified vision; he must be able to comprehend each sign in its simultaneous relation to the whole, he must be aware of the zodiac as a representation of a *progression within the eternal*, and must never lose sight of this reality. Only then can he follow its movements of evolution and begin to understand the heavens and their reflection within the microcosmos. And this

<sup>1</sup> After writing this article I came across the following passage in Sepharial's *Cosmic Symbolism* (p 35) "It (cancer) was known to the ancients and by them named after the sign of the zodiac which responds to the zone most frequently affected by the disease, namely the breast and stomach."

then brings him not to the denial of Matter but to the realisation that his only "salvation" lies in its divinisation; or, to put it in other terms, his salvation lies in rendering each cell conscious, opening all the elements up to the light contained in the nucleus of Divine Energy, the sustainer of his being. In Capricorn we have Mars in "exaltation", meaning that the life force or vital current therein achieves its highest manifestation. In matter Power will be victorious, Mars signifies Victory and in Capricorn he conquers Death; Mars is Kartikeya, the Divine Mother's offspring and warrior son, and he comes on his peacock of Victory.<sup>1</sup>

For the ancients it must have been an embarrassing endeavour to reconcile this fact of the fourth and last Pillar of Creation being a sign that shows Matter to be the ultimate and end of the journey. And so one can well understand that when there was the refusal to accept material creation, when spiritual thought was impregnated with the notion of Maya as illusion, astrology fell into an obscure and renegaded state. While Matter is denied there can be no possibility of a comprehension of the zodiac as representing the structure of cosmic harmonies and the map of evolution. And with the awakening in mankind of the realisation of the oneness of spirit and matter, the O and 9 respectively, there is inevitably the re-awakening of the truth of cosmic harmonies. While the sages denied the 9, for reasons of the Play, and turned only to the O, it was obvious they could not grasp the meaning of the Circle which speaks only of this, the unity of both in Brahman, and is at once the method of announcing the accomplishment of this Union in the whole of creation.

We are therefore at a privileged point in evolution, beyond even man's highest concepts, for it is now that pain, sorrow and death can disappear, because man will no longer battle to be free of the limitations of matter but will unveil the liberation of spirit in matter's hitherto unenlightened domain. By this knowledge of the inherent divinity of matter, its union and indivisible oneness with the unique Energy — matter being that Energy in a state of unrest, and spirit the same in a state of rest — he begins to render the particles of matter conscious; he awakens the inherent spark of divinity residing in each cell, and the process once begun will take on a tremendous acceleration, as if it were a rampant cancer spreading beyond any possible control, for in effect this disease is only that: it is the "negative" side of the process of divinisation of the cells or the bringing of the light into the cells. It is the falsehood of the cells and their work for destruction and death, while the same process must be carried out in the fullest light, leading not to death but Immortality.

Thus we have the sign Cancer in opposition to Capricorn, the two most potent poles of the Wheel, the Axis, we can say. One is a Water sign and refers to the cells, and the other is an Earth sign, matter, and refers to the bones. In one we find the illness cancer, the dominance of Falsehood in the cells, in the very basic structure of physical life, a sort of archetype, for this illness is in a sense archetypal; and then we have Capricorn as its opposite pole: *Sat*, the bringing of the light into the darkest

<sup>1</sup> The word 'matter' is derived from the Latin *materia*, which in turn comes from *mater* or mother.

parts, co-ruled by Pluto which represents precisely this process, the conquest and crystallisation in matter of this process, symbolically in the hardest and most enduring parts, the bones. The cells no longer succumb to the principle of Falsehood, but rather to its opposite, its positive nature; Falsehood itself dissolves in the unity of spirit and matter, revealing itself to have been only the complement in darkness, thereby affording the background of contrast necessary to make the light appear even brighter. Cancer of the zodiac is the ego, and in the light of *Sat* the ego must, and is destined to, dissolve.

Thus it can be understood why sages such as Raman Maharshi and Ramakrishna died of cancer, and why it was said in both cases that they took the sins of the world into themselves, which manifested then in this illness. People have always been baffled by the fact of saints of such calibre succumbing to this particular malady and in both cases doing nothing to cure themselves of the disease. They seem to have been indispensable parts in the ascent, taking the cellular falsehood into themselves and to a degree relieving humanity and making it possible for the Divine Mother to accomplish her work, for all are indeed her emanations. The same is to be said of Christ whose whole appearance is in itself a symbol of the ultimate goal of the 9th Manifestation. He is hung on the cross of Matter at the time of an eclipse, which signifies the temporary obstruction and delay in the process of divinisation of matter and his need to return to fulfil his mission at a later date during the Manifestation.

The 6 in the scale of the Trinity of 3, 6 and 9 as shown in the enneagram<sup>1</sup> is the point at which this process of opening the cells to the light takes place. It is the crucial point, the crux; it is the point in the scale wherein the Mother makes her appearance.

The legend of Durga tells this story.

Another factor to be considered important in the analysis of an eclipse is the precise degree of the celestial circle in which the phenomenon occurs. The degree of the one in discussion is the same degree exactly as the Sun position of the horoscope of Auroville, the latter falling in the sign Pisces, also of the Water element. It is also on the very Piscean degree in Cancer of the position of Uranus in the sky at the time of Sri Aurobindo's passing, and Uranus is the power at work that transforms.

Cancer, the sign, the cell, the illness, is of great interest to us as we meditate on the forthcoming eclipse because it points to something taking place in that domain, an obscuration bringing about a greater and more potent manifestation of the Light, something occurring in the fundamental structure of living, organic matter, as well as an unmasking and upheaval and subsequent dissolution of the most hidden aspects of falsehood. We see this regarding nations (the United States belongs to the sign Cancer<sup>2</sup>), communities and individuals. And this appears to prepare the way for the spectacular event of the end of the year, scheduled to take place when the Sun

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

<sup>2</sup> India belongs to capricorn.

enters the sign Capricorn: the appearance of a totally new comet approaching from the region of Pluto, larger and brighter than Halley's — forerunner and announcer of a new and greater Manifestation.

*Written on the solstice  
of June 22, 1973*

PATRIZIA NORELLI-BACHELET

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## THOUGHTS

“LOVE.”  
 “Love whom?”  
 “Whom not?”  
 “Love the abyss?”  
 “Why not? Is the abyss outside God's creation?  
 Do not love if you cannot.  
 But do not ask love whom and love why.”

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“Is truth-seeking a profitable business?”  
 “Most profitable — but also not profitable at all.  
 It depends.  
 Are you an owl?  
 Then not at all profitable.  
 Are you a swan?  
 Then profitable to the utmost.”

GIRDHARLAL

# SEVEN LIVES

## A SAGA OF THE GODS AND THE GROWING SOUL

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

### CHAPTER V PART 2

WITHOUT a word, Hiranyamaya followed Shukratma to a pair of cave cells a short distance from the end of the row at the South-westernmost extremity of the cliff. Each was bare except for some straw matting on the stone platform that served for a bed, a few niches in the wall for incense holders, and several miscellaneous items in the rishi's room such as a pot, a spool of heavy thread, a pair of sandals and a fresh change of clothing in a basket, all of which were neatly piled in one corner. Hiranyamaya could also discern in the fading light that the walls were painted with figures of marvellous grace, but he would have to wait till his guru lit a taper for him to see them properly.

In his own cell there were no paintings, but someone had left the half-chipped outline of a form in bas-relief on the innermost wall. Even the little pieces of stone that had fallen from the sculptor's chisel still lay on the floor where they had dropped, and the whole had the appearance of a work that would be resumed tomorrow. The form seemed to be that of a god in meditation and a serenity flowed from it even in its incompleteness; for in the light of the sinking sun, the boy could dimly see that the unknown artist had perfected and polished the oval face of the sculpture so that the form and expression of the deity looked outward upon the world almost as complete and expressive in its divine sweetness as it would ever be, while the rest of the figure remained in rough as a thumb-nail sketch in stone. Hiranyamaya studied the bas-relief for several protracted moments and then looked enquiringly at his guru.

"No, my child," the older man answered still in a whisper, "the one who did this will not return, for he came long ago and then passed on, having preceded you as the occupant of this cell. As for the sculpture, you may call it his divine pastime, for he wished to reproduce here the sacred image he saw mirrored within his own heart. But he was not a sculptor and he had many other duties. This was merely his extravagance of love, and his life called him on before he could finish it."

"Maybe I could finish it then, Guruji," Hiranyamaya said under his breath.

"Yes — if you can feel and see in your heart the same love and the same image. It lingers about this cell like the ghost of a heavenly dove. So you will first have to receive it within your own being before you will be able to complete the same statue."

Hiranyamaya said nothing but looked up at his master with an expression of wonder. His gaze entered into the older man's eyes, sank through his being to its blazing white core and united with it in a nameless happiness. At that moment a

bond was fused between them so intense and integral in its power that it bore the Great One's indissoluble seal and fiery sanction, and the two trembled with the impact of their souls' God-granted union.

Behind them as they stood in the boy's newly allotted cell, the sun was setting rapidly, the great valley before the cliff was darkening, and faint rustlings and footfalls could be heard in the gallery. Recognizing the familiar signs, Shukratma placed his arm on Hiranyamaya's shoulder and led him outside.

"It is time to prepare for the evening meditation," he said softly. In the gallery they found half a dozen or more sadhaks performing their appointed duties. One placed fresh water in earthen containers outside each cell. Another swept the gallery floor, while several more seemed to be providing for the evening meal by carrying bundles of faggots up a rock-cut stairway to other chambers on a level above.

Shukratma seated himself on a deer skin outside the door of his cell, and motioned Hiranyamaya to spread a second beside him and take his place upon it. Meanwhile the others too, having completed their chores, came one by one to seat themselves before their respective cells. At last all was silent stillness. The entire valley lay flushed and motionless beneath the slanting red rays of the setting sun. The figures of the men seated in their asanas themselves looked like ancient statues carved from the living rock, only momentarily picked out by the roseate light from their background. With the stage set in this manner, the sound began. It welled from the throat of one at the farthest verge of the rock gallery and the notes of the evening raga rose from him like the water of some sacred river bubbling forth from its icy Himalayan source at the feet of the gods. The river of sound poured out its ecstasy and filled the air with its sublime, elemental passion, calling upon the Divine Presence to renew his grace in the sacred valley. It cried out to the sky, to the sun, the moon and all the heavenly bodies to witness the divine drama of the setting sun and assist at the installation of a divine guardianship for the coming night. It sang of the sheer joy of being and living, and at its crescendo — of that matchless delight that comes only in the divine's embrace. Transfixed, the boy listened to every bewitching note and remembered that only in his dreams had he heard such music or felt such rapture. As the sun finally sank beneath the horizon, the raga also came to its natural and harmonious end. Still none moved till all traces of the sinking sun had vanished and the blue-grey of night gave its cold and ghostly aspect to the valley and its massive rock face. A chill breeze sprang up and even the remaining warmth of day was chased away. But it was not before the evening star had appeared above the spikes of a newborn moon that the rishi and his sadhaks rose, rolled up their skins, and lit their evening tapers. The little community then filed up the stairs to a small hall, also rock-cut, ate a simple meal on floor mats, and returned for the night's rest to the cells below. Hiranyamaya, thoroughly exhausted as he was from the day's exertions, hardly knew where he went or what he ate. Nor fortunately did he notice the hardness of the stone upon which he was made to lie, for almost instantaneously he fell into a profound and dreamless sleep.



From the next morning, his training began. It was a training that resembled that of no school, nor seemed to bear any known precedent, for it was bookless and even virtually wordless. To begin with, his schooling consisted above all else of an instilling of concentration and perpetual awareness. The child was taught to be ceaselessly aware of the great and universal divine presence. He learned to feel it rustle down upon him from every tree, stand immobile before him in the soaring rock face, and cry to him from the whistlings of hawks and eagles as they wheeled beneath the clouds. As his concentration grew more constant and effortless, and the unused channels of his memory re-opened, he recalled that, lives ago, even the vision of a Greek God had brought him a similar awareness in embryo. But then he had inwardly been the merest infant living upon its spontaneous and instinctual reactions. Now, within himself, he was a growing man, and what he had done or what had come upon him before by unconscious instinct he must now instill in himself as a firm, unshakable, consciously acquired knowledge. He remembered too his most recently re-lived existence when he had struggled, so often with futility, against the human encrustation that would grow time and again over the light of his being. How his godly mother had sought to protect him against these accretions. How she had warred against the mists that would invade his mind, born as he was in a human body. Such were the struggles of a mother to nurture her growing son. But now? True, her hand still rested on his shoulder, and if he placed his own hand upon the spot, he could even feel her invisible fingers. But she had sent him here to acquire the knowledge of a man, as a full-grown man and not a child must know it, and in his concentration he had already mounted guard upon his human self while giving himself to the divine presence that seemed to hang so much more tangibly about the valley than elsewhere.

As the youngest member of Shukratma's community, he was deputed from that first day to be a gatherer of wood. In the beginning the guru himself accompanied his charge on his daily forays, acquainting him with all the nooks and crannies, pathways and streams of the valley. He also showed him a circuitous route by which he could come and go from the gallery easily with a bundle of wood or other load, while traversing with him as many times as necessary the most direct way up the rock face that they had first taken, so that he would be able to find all the foot-and hand-holds even on the darkest night.

Hiranyamaya learned quickly, and within a fortnight was familiar enough with his new surroundings to go out unaccompanied. It was then that his training began to bear leaf and fruit at once, for in absolute solitude both guru and sadhak found their perfect medium.

During his daily wanderings the boy found that Shukratma's invisible presence and guidance left him not for a moment, until he neither thought nor felt anything that was not channelled through him by his guru. With each month that passed his inner submission became more and more complete, till he was as free, as transparent of personal impulse as a sheet of unflawed glass. Then ever so gradually, Shukratma

began to infuse his pupil's body and being with light, that was a fusion of luminosity and knowledge, joy and concentration at once.

Years slipped by in the same unbroken physical regimen of the hermit community, until Hiranyamaya grew into a man as solid and powerful as the bulwarks of rock amongst which he lived; and the light within him became so entrenched that he became an unshakable bastion of a godly essence. No ripple disturbed the perfection of his inward calm. No earth-born tremor made turbid the limpid waters of his inner seas. No rakshasa dared pass before the radiating brilliance of his gaze. Shukratma was highly pleased with his precocious pupil, for many others of his group had not arrived at a fraction of the young one's achievement, though hoary with age and worn with a half century of effort. Yet the guru knew that there was no cause for surprise, for had not Hiranyamaya come to him from Silent Daughter herself? Few were the men that came to life escorted by a god or goddess as favoured by the Great One as she, or as lovingly reared by one so noble. Hiranyamaya's eminence, then, was only natural, for the wet clay of his plasticity having been rendered into the hands of a master sculptor, the results were bound to be quick and sure. Yet in accordance with the discipline of the community, the young man was given no outward recognition or special favour and remained, even in his mature years, a gatherer of wood for the common kitchen. Now as before, Shukratma barely ever spoke to him directly, but their inner exchange and communication was all but endless; and as Silent Daughter's son entered his twenty-fifth year, a new phase opened before him.

In a protracted vision his guru came to him with a new turn of thought and possibility, and though the content of his message was not conveyed in words, it might have been expressed thus:

"Child, so far you have followed me without question. You have neither dreamt nor toyed with past or future, but lived for the reality which welled from you with each moment of the breathing present. Such an immediate reality of consciousness I expected from you and such have you achieved. Now we can safely open the flood-gates of time and learn towards what far end you march. Some are there here who seek no further destiny than divine union and escape from all manifested life. But you are not marked out to be one of these. Remember first that you are living this life for the second time, thereby to erase all errors and restore forgotten perfections once known and then allowed to lapse. Far ahead of this moment your being awaits its re-growth through time that it may achieve some future, yet unheard-of conquest, and your divine mother goddess yearns to lead you there. Yet much knowledge must you glean before you may return to her side and continue on your way. Labyrinthine are the ways of the world and treacherous its multitudinous byways. Loss, destruction, and despair come in many irrefutable guises, and on this path which you have traversed before, you had unwittingly fallen beneath their relentless blows. The god in you had shrunk to a babe-like helplessness delivered as it was to the Lord of Darkness by the same human weakness in you that daily overwhelms this troubled race. And the prime instrument of this weakness was forgetfulness — that abysmal

forgetfulness that robs one of one's soul's awareness. So the exercise now must be to remember, remember what it is in you that truly lives and acts and feels and knows — and that carries you forward when all else within and about you withers and drops away....

“Reflect then, see what comes to you upon the wings of the gods, and hold it within you as your lasting treasure, your chariot and your raiment for your eternal journey.”

The vision and its message which had come to the young sadhak during the meditation at sunrise passed and he prepared to take to the mountain paths for his daily work. But the rishi's communication clung to him and he departed as one still caught in some inspired trance. In the forest it seemed that the firewood came to him almost of its own accord. At every step he took he found a piece exactly to his liking — dry, brittle, and straight, until within half the allotted time, he had collected a bundle so great that he wondered if he could lift such a load up the steep ascent to the gallery. But exactly when it seemed to him that he had gathered more than enough, he felt himself engulfed in a rush of perfumed air. A delicate but unseen hand slipped into his and led him breathless with intoxication to a small pool fed by the purest of mountain springs, and pressed him to sit there with the firewood by his side.

As soon as he had settled down on the spongy moss, she appeared, light and airy as a silken veil, and aglow with the beauty of a flowering Himalayan rhododendron. As she came, he saw the dim figure of Shukratma behind her guiding her forward, and he recognized that it was his rare privilege to have an audience with a goddess brought to him by his guru. Bowing to the ground, he paid homage to the divine personage, and she greeted him in turn with a smile that showered down upon him like a rain of rose buds.

“I am Love,” she said standing gravely before him. “And I have come to you that you may never forget me. Keep always with you the boon of my grace, and the passion of my remembrance, but remember another thing also: the world has made much sport of my emanations, for though sacred at their source, they turn to instruments of peril and immeasurable pain when coupled with greed or a small man's too human need. Love, Golden One, was meant for the wide sky and the creation it holds, undivided by human mind or heart, but it was meant above all for the Single Presence — the Great One's Being — that is the soul and essence of all created life. From him all love flows forth, and to him alone returns, though at the lower reaches of the great river its tributaries and rivulets are besmirched with the blood of human anguish. Beware, then, brave soul, of those desperate shores — a true remembrance shall be your safeguard. The day will come when you will re-enter the world of men and like an ant among ants you will seek in the milling crowd and find that you can know nothing, discover nothing of reality as you flounder there. Then it is that you must remember you inhabited a mountain once, not as a tiny sightless thing but as a budding god and that you had at that blessed moment seen and learnt all the knowledge of which you now have such desperate need. Realizing this you will find that

the knowledge will return to you, for it is a knowledge that knows no erasure. Like the Divine One's light, when it comes it lives forever, however deep, however concealed the caverns of refuge it finds when driven from the waking consciousness.

"Follow now with me the visions I unfold and try to understand their import: The brilliant trappings you behold are those of a king who lives on the plains that stretch away from the foothills of these mountains. Vast is his domain and immense his riches. See the procession in which his elephants are draped in gold, and the jewelled chariots and horses of his nobles and kinsmen follow in dazzling array. But see too that he is due to die, for the princess that he goes to wed shall kill him in my name, and following that, she too shall die in the agony of a traitor's death, with vengeance and revenge, betrayal and punishment following their stark and dreadful course...and for what, my child? For love, that would, like a savage beast, devour the human heart as it pulses in a still living human breast. Love of family, love of child, love of parent or paramour, love of home and wealth and kingship; love of pleasure, ease and luxury — until my name is blackened in human eyes and I appear on earth as a sorceress that eats her helpless brood and grows sated with its torment.

"But it is not so, dear child. It is only the veil of the dark and separative powers that so defile my name and form that I am rendered into a demon before humanity, a despoiler of youth and beauty, a ravager of king and peasant alike, and as great a leveller to folly and pain as the Lord of Death himself. In truth, I am none of these, but the truth of what I am is difficult to know, and still more difficult to preserve against the Adversary that constantly seeks to fragment and destroy it. Nor are the broken pieces of any value, for love is a treasure that is of unalloyed gold only when whole — in pieces it becomes the cheapest tinsel. I give it to you then as my single boon, and I beg you to receive and keep it integrally with your whole being."

She made no further movement but looked intently into his eyes. He too remained immobile and received her gaze in the silent inner stillness he had taken so many years to acquire. The goddess's gift came upon him slowly, welling up, so it seemed, from the four corners of the earth. It vibrated and quivered through his nerves in millions upon millions of minute currents that each expressed its own unique passion for what sustained it and made it live. Then gradually the multitudinous currents seemed to merge, each voice, each infinitesimal vibration mingling into a vast symphonic whole in which the universe throbbed as to the beating of a gigantic and ecstatic heart. Within that heart all creation resolved its yearning, for it formed a vital core of the Divine One's being and from it its return flowed all the compassion and comfort, all the healing and wide splendour of self-giving the worlds had ever known. Still more astonishing to the young sadhak as the vision poured down upon him was the image that next appeared, for he saw that out of the same sublime and universal heart a thread of its own substance attached it to each created thing and an envelope of its essence surrounded each living being, so that no creature lived that did not walk and move in an indestructible aura of divine love. No hurt could ever be inflicted that the divine love was not instantly there to heal and protect with its

unseen parental passion of concern, no journey ever embarked upon without the eternally faithful but unseen hands to support and protect the traveller, no death ever met with in which the divine arms were not ready to snatch up the precious burden of an orphaned soul.

The vision passed but the tears that had sprung to Hiranyamaya's eyes flowed on. Bending forward he buried his face in the soft moss and poured out his own heart filled to overflowing upon the fragrant earth. Still the goddess did not move away, but leant forward and gently touched his head.

"My blessings, sweet child," she murmured. "Hardship still lies before you, and your way is long, but if you do not forget what you have seen today, it shall act as a shield before you in life's cruel battle, and it shall keep your soul as unsullied as the mountain spring by which you sit."

Her hand continued to linger on his hair but then slowly she began to draw it away, and still more slowly, fade from his vision.

*(To be continued)*

BINA BRAGG

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# THE SYSTEM OF SIX

## FROM THE GEOMETRIC WORK OF DENIS ROBERT

THE objective of this essay is to examine the possibilities and implications of a numerical system with a unit value of six. This brief examination will be made from information gathered from three general areas:

1. Geometric speculation
2. Natural phenomena
3. Symbolic meaning and interpretation of number.

There will be a general commentary followed by additional notes associated with each of the diagrams. The overall persuasion will be towards the advantages, both practical and theoretical, of a numerical structure of six, particularly at this time in our history and evolution

We begin with an *a priori* acceptance of the theory that Geometry is the mother of number, and that geometry or form preceded number or multiplicity sequentially in the evolution of human thought. Geometry serves as a tool of the mind in its contemplations of the origin and organization of the universe. It is the representation of the matrix through which the One (unity) becomes the many (number).

“Geometry is one and eternal, a reflection out of the mind of God. That mankind shares in it is one of the reasons to call man an image of God.”

— Johannes Kepler (1571-1630)

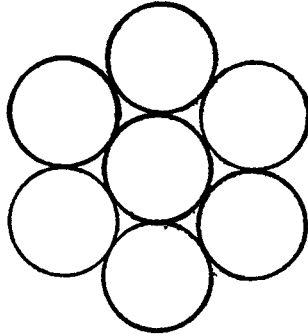
\*  
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The division of the circle into six equal parts generates the hexagon, a six-sided polygon with six 120 degree interior obtuse angles, and twelve 60 degree exterior acute angles.

The hexagon is unique among inscribed polygons in that *the side is exactly equal to the radius of the circle which contains it*. This significantly indicates that, of all the divisions of unity, six contains the most direct correspondence to the underlying unity (the circle). The six-division yields easily the division of the circle into twelve and also creates two opposing interlocking equilateral triangles, each of three 60 degree angles, and these two major triangles are easily diagonaled to divide the entire area of the circle into smaller equilateral triangles, all having a proportional relationship to the radius.

There are many other interrelationships of extraordinary harmony and symmetry with the six-division, some of which are included in the following diagrams.

Exactly six equal circles can be drawn around just touching the perimeter of a seventh equal circle. And with a three dimensional sphere, exactly twelve ( $2 \times 6$ ) equal circles will pack around the surface of a center equal thirteenth circle.



$$1 + 2 + 3 = 6$$

$$1 \times 2 \times 3 = 6$$

Most of the known systems of land and time measurement, both ancient and modern, except for the metric system, have a base factor of six: the mile, the acre, the foot, the inch and the equivalent measures in ancient Egypt as recorded in the Great Pyramid.<sup>1</sup>

Six has been uncovered as the basis of the Hindu method of calculating the tables of sines, cosines, tangents, co-tangents, and the orbits of the planetary bodies. Also six is the root base of their numerical calculations of the duration of the great ages, or *yugas*. In Hebrew mathematics six is also the coordinate factor in all measures of capacity and volume.

The Chaldean astronomers and undoubtedly their earlier predecessors calculated the measure of the universe through the factor of six. In mathematical remains and texts found in India, China, Mexico, British Isles, Egypt and the Middle East, the factor of six is the basis of measure for all the major dimensions of the solar system, the diameters of and distances between the spheres.<sup>2</sup>

The ancient mathematicians and geometers derived from Nature the power and prevalence of six and its consistent and particular role in natural phenomena:—

60 seconds — one minute

60 minutes — one hour

24 hours ( $6 \times 4$ ) — one day

30 days ( $6 \times 5$ ) — one month

12 months ( $6 \times 2$ ) — one year

360 days — one year\*

12 signs of the zodiac

360 degrees in a circle

the ideal height of man is 6 feet

diameter of the sun = 864,000 miles ( $12 \times 12 \times 6000$ )

diameter of the moon = 2160 miles ( $6 \times 6 \times 60$ )

diameter of the earth = 7920 miles ( $12 \times 660$ )

mean circumference of the earth = 24,883.2 miles ( $12 \times 12 \times 12 \times 12 \times 1.2$ )

speed of the earth around the sun = 66,600 mph

distance between the earth and the moon = 237,600 miles ( $6 \times 60 \times 660$  or 60 times the earth's radius)<sup>3</sup>

The flowers of the lily family and many other varieties have six petals. The rare and beautiful inanimate forms in nature such as the snowflake and other crystals are often rendered in six. The bee, which represents the highest instinct in social organization, builds his hives in hexagon modules.

Carbon, the essential and most versatile element of living matter, has an atomic weight of 12. Glucose, the source of energy in the human digestive system, has atomic numbers of  $C_6H_{12}O_6$ . The number of chromosomes found in the genetic determining human sex cell is 23 ( $2 \times 3 = 6$ ). There are six major colors in the spectrum.

St. Augustine writes of the number six: "In this number does God make perfect all his works."

Three is the trinity of Creative Power, and six is the number by which, it is said, the universe was made and by which it is measured. The Upanishads named this Trinity *Satchidananda*, of which one could designate six as the power of *Chit*, conscious force. *Six is then the presence of the Absolute, veiled yet inherent in the transitory field of matter and the indication of the potential perfectibility of the material phenomena.*

The Greek word for "cosmic order" has the Cabalistic numerical value of 600. The prominent esoteric numbers which have been built into temples and cathedrals throughout history are multiples of six and nine. "Nine is the trinity of trinities, the number of finality and of judgement and the fulfillment of prophesy". Nine and six are closely related, their product being 54, the Cabalistic number of Judgement. The shapes of the numerals 6 and 9 are exactly the same, indicating ascending and descending aspects of the same principle or origin.

\* 365 25 days per year is the actual, mechanical turning of the earth in time. There is an esoteric conjecture that the earth, in a higher cycle in evolution, revolved at exactly 360 days per year, and now, during this descending passage, the earth attracts less cosmic energy and has thus slowed down to its present rate. M. Eliade has a theory in his book *The Myth of the Eternal Return* which states that the ancient "primitive" societies allowed a certain period each year which existed outside their work, life patterns and calendar. These days were filled completely with ritual celebrations symbolic of the return to the original primal chaos out of which the world arose. To have each year a period free of the structure of time would allow a more evolved society to offer collectively a period of devotion in recognition of the Timeless and the Absolute. This is an interesting consideration towards a new calendar structure, allowing for a timed year of 360 days, 12 months of exactly 30 days.



Let us, at this point, postulate one of the major themes of this essay: that as we enter the 9th manifestation, the number field of the Divine Transcendent Mother, six, which is the involved aspect of the Mother could be the most effective and efficient tool to bring the qualities of this Transcendent Nine down into representation on the structural material plane. The product of 9 (Transcendent Mother, Ishwara Shakti) and 4 (material manifestation) is 36 or  $6^2$ . Numerologically 36 is absorbed and unified into 9 ( $3+6$ ), but it divides and manifests through a factor of six. Six divided by nine equals .666 .... The unit division at six in no way eliminates the subsequent number field, 7, 8, 9 etc., but only reappropriates the interval regarding number as it works in matter.

The Zodiacal sign of the Mother is Cancer, symbol 69. The interrelationship of six and nine in the principle of the universal Mother is indisputable. When this power descends it is six, when it ascends it is nine. It is the same power, the lower, six, being the mirror image reflection of the higher principle nine which sustains it.

The sixth sign of the Zodiac is Virgo, the Virgin Mother, the purified earth principle. Virgo is that which is barren to animal or biological procreation, but *is* procreative to the Spiritual birth, the Son of Man, the transformed humanity, the Christos. This is represented by the sign Pisces, which is complementary to Virgo in the circle of the Zodiac. The Christ principle evolves from its individual expression in Pisces to a collective expression in humanity in the sign Aquarius. (See p. 565)

In several places we referred to the masculine or seed derivation of the number six. This in no way contradicts its relationship to six in the maternal context, for as Sri Aurobindo points out; in *manifestation*, everything, even the rational, masculine spirit, exists only as an aspect of and through the sanction of the universal maternal (mater-ial) law or principle.

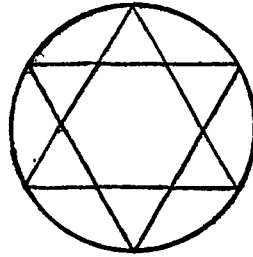
666 is the symbolic number of the pure creative universal force. The "Yang" energy in Far-Eastern cosmologies. In ancient Greece six is the number of the elemental fire, and the equilateral triangle generated by the hexagon is the symbol for fire. Six is the solar number, *Ra* in Egyptian concepts, the symbol of absolute, positive radiant energy. Six can be related to the coiled serpent form of energy called Kundalini in Tantric Yoga. It is also the number symbol form of the dynamic and terrible procreative Dragon force depicted in the *I Ching*. The form of six is like the seed or sperm form in its derivation, representing then the electric spiritual energy which is implanted in matter.

We are seeing that numerical structure represents two other areas of knowledge besides its use in quantitative calculation. They are

1. *Symbolic content* and its related offspring of language and the interrelationships of archetypes (mythos or astrology)
2. *Form*, the geometric patterns and designs of universal law (logos).

Geometry, with its exact, indisputable diagrammatic coincidence of lines and points, and *Mythos*, with its variety and multiple implications and levels and interpretations, complete the circle of human conceptualization (objective and subjective).

The diagonal fulfillment of the six divisions of the circle is the formation of opposing interlocking equilateral triangles, as previously mentioned.



Symbolically this figure has had a vital significance in a variety of civilizations. One of the most common of its remaining names is "the Seal of Solomon," and it is held in the highest regard in the teachings of Hermetic traditions.

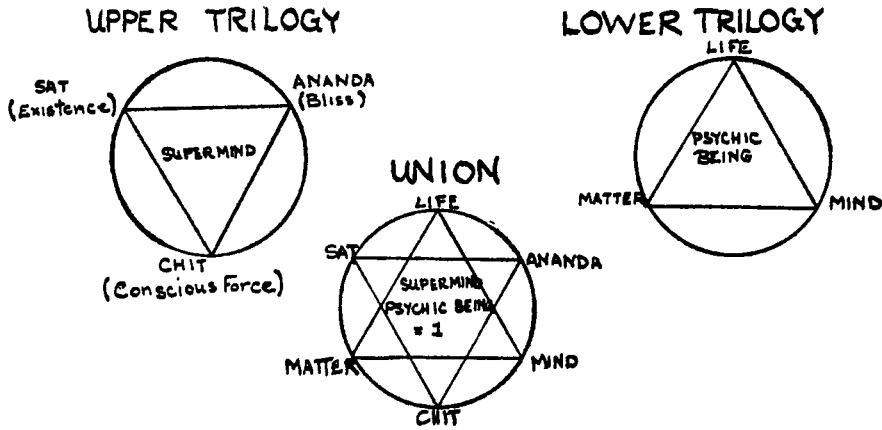


Again in the Far-Eastern symbology this form was used to designate the Yin/Yang structure of the dynamic opposition of natural forces. In the Alchemical teaching this same symbol represents essence and substance, forma and materia, spirit and soul, sulphur and quicksilver, the volatile and the stable, or spiritual power and bodily existence.

Sri Aurobindo's Symbol is also this configuration and an accurate representation of his vision of the ascending and descending forces of evolution. Diagrammatically it summarizes the merger of the upper and lower trilogies of existence, the process of which Sri Aurobindo has revealed as the ultimate intention of the Universe. The personal symbol of Sri Aurobindo was originally these equilateral triangles also, but it underwent some modification which will be discussed with a diagram. (see p. 565)

Briefly and perhaps inadequately, the relevancy of a numerical system based on six will be related to the present era and the evolutionary transition which is occurring. In doing so several debatable premises will be put forth without supporting material proofs or development. The reader may, if interested, verify or disprove these ideas through his own research.

We are entering a new astrological age as the sun begins its passage through the Zodiacal sign of Aquarius. The time period for the sun's path to traverse a Zodiacal sign is 2160 years ( $6 \times 360$ ). There is a theory with adequate historical support that at the commencement of each of these new ages, man, through one or more of the existing civilizations, constructs a Temple or a complete city around that



Temple which is to act as a nucleus or center for the purpose of receiving the energies and cosmic influences of the new celestial situation. The Great Pyramid of Egypt, the Aztec pyramid in Mexico, Stonehenge and the Cathedral of Glastonbury, England, Solomon's Temple, the New Jerusalem of St. John, the Holy City of Plato, and Auroville of Mother and Sri Aurobindo are all actual and envisioned examples of this evolutionary function of the "City of Revelation." From this viewpoint the stars measure the rhythms of cosmic forces and transmit these influences through energy fields which on earth become active in the mind of man. Cosmos, Temple and Man are then identical reflections and instrumentations of a unified universal process.

The Cosmic Temple which was constructed from the highest knowledge of each period of the interrelationship of universal proportion and measure becomes the equilibrator whose function is to reconcile all diverse, contradictory and progressing aspects of the spiritual essences behind the natural evolution.

In the words of the Pythagorean teaching,

"Each of the heavenly bodies resonates at a certain pitch and the prevailing celestial harmony varies according to the relative intervals between the planets. The sound of this resounds continually in our ears imperceptibly because we have never experienced its absence."

The sound of time, however, is readable through the language of number and Geometry and has a considerable influence on human behaviour and development.

The work of maintaining the eternal knowledge of the laws and measures of the structure of the solar system in our universe has belonged to that line known as the gnostic tradition. And the emergence of this consciousness recurs throughout history as the necessity arises, to construct the receiving vessel (the Temple City) which can bring the vibratory field of earth into a new, sustained conciliation with that of the heavens.

We stand now at what is *not* a typical astrological transition, for, as Patrizia Norelli-Bachelet has uncovered, the cycles of the ages do not only circle, but they

spiral, and the spiral after every full procession through all twelve signs of the Zodiac, 25,920 years ( $6 \times 4320$ ), expands a groove and shifts an entire dimension. In this cyclic unwinding of the ages, according to Patrizia, at the present time we are leaving the area number 8 in the quartering of the spirals and entering the 9th segment, which is also a dimensional expansion (the 4th dimension). The numeric vibrations, 9, 5, 1, dominate this quarter. They are the number values of the three fire signs, Sagittarius, Leo and Aries, (six being the number of fire). We will discuss the significance of these numbers later, noting that we have already seen some of the relationships of both one (unity) and nine with the number six. The diagram and complete explanation can be found in *Mother India*, April 24, 1973.

Since this transition is a change in the dimensions of consciousness we cannot rely solely on the reawakening knowledge of the past to supply us with keys to cope with the present upheaval of change. This will be a change of a different and more profound order, and the dominance of the number nine (the number of the Divine Mother) indicates Her active presence in administering to the death and rebirth of a new world of consciousness.

Nevertheless to be aware of how this period is essentially *similar* to others of the past contributes a great deal to understanding how it is *different*.

To dismiss the entirety of the past by grasping a few generalities of its symbolic content is an inadequate solution. The progressive evolutionary integration of mind with its own higher principle will yield a progression of new interrelationships with the trinity of time: past, present and future. The eternal present, the proverbial "now" (*nunc stans*) towards which our consciousness so often yearns, need not only be interpreted as a still, timeless void, but in manifested existence it can also be seen as a transparent lens or membrane which focuses and draws up all the knowledge which has preceded, in *depth*, in *detail* and in *essence*, and simultaneously projects that knowledge towards the frequencies and forms of the future.

Auroville is beginning the task towards which the entirety of the race has consciously or unconsciously striven: that is the physical manifestation of the Circle (unity). In contemplating the circle we see immediately that it conveys two opposing qualities. One is enclosure and exclusivity, the other is encompassing and all-inclusive. The goal of universality which is before Auroville indicates that the circular characteristic which is necessary is one of encompassment, open and responsive to the world, its influences and progressions. In this attempt to form the living seed of the new world, carefully we must avoid devaluating the significance of the past in order to emphasize the importance of our present endeavour. Also we must avoid cementing the vast potentials of the future to the limits and rigidities of our present state of consciousness.

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

The temple which we are building to the Mother at this time is not geometrically a sphere. The sphere has no variation, it is either perfect or it is not a sphere: it is One. What we are building and appropriately so is the egg-shape or the womb, indicating that the new level of consciousness is, and may continue to be for some time, in a process of formation and gestation. When the Matrimandir is built, the birth of the physical expression of this new consciousness, in us, will more rapidly proceed.

If, as we assume, the mental consciousness is undergoing a fundamental change, then one of the first places that change will measurably manifest will be in man's system of number, for number is the most objective externalization of the mental processes, and number will be a tool through which change is inscribed by man into other parts of his own being, and into his environment and structures. It is on this premise that the base of six, with its power of integration with unity, its simplicity and symmetry, its symbolic content and its relation to form, quality and perfectibility and its elimination of quantitative irrational numbers become worthy of consideration and contemplation.

“Thou makest all things in number, weight and measure.”

It can be seen in this system ( see p. 568 ) that the forms of the numbers relate directly to their significance in the order of creation; the number's shape, in other words, allows you to know what the number means. For the highest function of number is not the denotation of quantity, but rather its value lies in an integral correspondence with the laws of Nature, and it is that which gives to number the character of universality. The circle (o) is the number *one* or *unity*. The two is the *line* (1), the act of division and duality. The six is the one (○) and a dot, placed inside for symbolic reasons (⊙) but functionally clearer if placed after the circle. This is the same structure as in the system of ten, which is numerically written 1 plus the zero or *cipher* which indicates the completion of a unit. So in the base of six, six is numerically written one (o) plus the zero, which in this system is a dot. Twelve, which occupies the same position as twenty in the table of ten, is written numerically as two (1) plus the zero. Seven (oo) occupies the same position as eleven in the ten table while thirty-six occupies the same as one hundred. (⊙) is the symbol of the sun (Ra) in Egyptian symbolism. The names of the numbers are the names of the Gods and powers of the spirit, also from Egyptian cosmologies. “To know an entity's real name is to know its powers; to pronounce it exactly is to free its energy.”<sup>4</sup> By observing this table of names and numbers, the close symmetrical interrelationship of the word forms with the number forms can be discovered and this allows for an almost immediate memorization of the entire system.

It is a commonly accepted theory that the earliest concept of counting developed through the utilization of the fingers — in fact the fingers and numbers share in common the word “digits”. It is thought that from ten fingers came ten numbers. If however we observe the fingers with more than a flatly quantitative aim, we will see

○ <sup>1</sup> AR	∩ <sup>2</sup> AB	∧ <sup>3</sup> AS	⊕ <sup>4</sup> AT	λ <sup>5</sup> AM	⊙ <sup>6</sup> RA	
○○ <sup>7</sup> RAR	∩∩ <sup>8</sup> RAB	∧∧ <sup>9</sup> RAS	⊕⊕ <sup>10</sup> RAT	λλ <sup>11</sup> RAM	∩· <sup>12</sup> BA	100's RE = ○· = ○ <sup>+</sup>
∩○ <sup>13</sup> BAR	∩∩ <sup>14</sup> BAB	∧∧ <sup>15</sup> BAS	⊕⊕ <sup>16</sup> BAT	λλ <sup>17</sup> BAM	∧· <sup>18</sup> SA	1,000's RY = ○·· = ○ <sup>+</sup>
∧○ <sup>19</sup> SAR	∧∩ <sup>20</sup> SAB	∧∧ <sup>21</sup> SAS	⊕⊕ <sup>22</sup> SAT	λλ <sup>23</sup> SAM	⊕· <sup>24</sup> TA	10,000's RO = ○··· = ○ <sup>+</sup>
⊕○ <sup>25</sup> TAR	⊕∩ <sup>26</sup> TAB	⊕∧ <sup>27</sup> TAS	⊕⊕ <sup>28</sup> TAT	λλ <sup>29</sup> TAM	∧· <sup>30</sup> MA	100,000's RU = ○···· = ○ <sup>+</sup>
∧○ <sup>31</sup> MAR	∧∩ <sup>32</sup> MAB	∧∧ <sup>33</sup> MAS	⊕⊕ <sup>34</sup> MAT	λλ <sup>35</sup> MAM	⊙· <sup>36</sup> RE	1,000,000's RAI = ○····· = ○ <sup>+</sup>

6 or one unit =

12 or two units of 6 =

18 or three units of 6 =

24 or four units of 6 =

30 or five units of 6 =

\* Left hand carries the numbers  
 - Right hand carries the units  
 - The closed fist is the cipher  
 All numbers 1-36 can be hand-signaled in this method

Table 1 — The Table of Numbers From 1-36

- 1 = ○ Unity
- 2 = ∩ Duality
- 3 = ∧ Creativity; Prakriti, the Universal Mother
- 4 = ⊕ Manifestation; earth, air, fire, water, etc.
- 5 = λ Man; conscious life, mental being
- 6 = ⊙ Perfection; the Absolute or Eternal in manifestation

that after five digits of one hand we begin a qualitative repetition — so it is here, after five, that the *unit* should be injected, and the five fingers of the second hand used to record the number of units, as shown in the diagram. The closed fist is the single cipher. The cipher or zero is a concept which was lost for centuries in the base of ten until it was discovered by Fibonacci in India and introduced into the European numerical system. But in the base of six the *cipher* system is integral and inseparable even from the finger method of tabulation.

MULTIPLICATION

$\bigcirc \times \bigcirc = \bigcirc$ $\bigcirc \times \bigcirc = \bigcirc$ $\wedge \times \bigcirc = \wedge$ $\dagger \times \bigcirc = \dagger$ $\lambda \times \bigcirc = \lambda$ $\bigcirc \times \bigcirc = \bigcirc$	$\bigcirc \times \bigcirc = \bigcirc$ $\bigcirc \times \bigcirc = \bigcirc$ $\wedge \times \bigcirc = \wedge$ $\dagger \times \bigcirc = \dagger$ $\lambda \times \bigcirc = \lambda$ $\bigcirc \times \bigcirc = \bigcirc$	$\bigcirc \times \wedge = \wedge$ $\bigcirc \times \dagger = \dagger$ $\bigcirc \times \lambda = \lambda$ $\bigcirc \times \bigcirc = \bigcirc$ $\bigcirc \times \bigcirc = \bigcirc$
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FRACTIONS + DECIMALS

$\frac{\bigcirc}{\bigcirc} = ,\bigcirc$      $\frac{\wedge}{\bigcirc} = ,\wedge$     numbers less than six, when divided by six equal themselves with a shift of one decimal point just as  $5 \div 10 = .5$  in base of ten.

$\frac{\bigcirc}{\lambda} = ,\bigcirc\bigcirc\bigcirc$      $\frac{\wedge}{\lambda} = ,\wedge\wedge\wedge$     numbers divided by five yield decimals of continuous repetition of the numerator.

other interesting fractional results:

$\frac{\bigcirc}{\dagger} = ,\bigcirc\wedge$      $\frac{\wedge}{\dagger} = ,\dagger\wedge$      $\frac{\bigcirc}{\lambda} = ,\bigcirc$      $\frac{\dagger}{\lambda} = ,\wedge$      $\frac{\lambda}{\lambda} = ,\dagger$

Table 2 — Multiplication, Fractions

The symmetry and harmony of this system continue and increase in the tables of multiplication and division. One can, by studying the tables and examples, gain the

facility to compute on the six base. The simplicity of the system is obvious and the only difficulty is to free the mind from the deeply ingrained habit of ten units. But to do so is to gain a flexibility of the mind on a very fundamental level.

## DI VISION

$$\begin{aligned}
 0+ \div 0 &= 0+ = 1 \times 1 \times \wedge \times \wedge \\
 0+ \div 1 &= \wedge = 1 \times \wedge \times \wedge \\
 0+ \div \wedge &= \wedge 1 = 1 \times 1 \times \wedge \\
 0+ \div + &= 1 \wedge = \wedge \times \wedge \\
 0+ \div \odot &= 0+ = 1 \times \wedge \\
 60^\circ &= \oplus = 0+ \times \odot = 0+ \dots = 360^\circ \\
 72^\circ &= \otimes = 1 \cdot \times \wedge = 0+ \dots = 360^\circ \\
 90^\circ &= \oplus = 1 \wedge \times + = 0+ \dots = 360^\circ \\
 120^\circ &= \ominus = \wedge 1 \cdot \times \wedge = 0+ \dots = 360^\circ \\
 180^\circ &= \omin� = \wedge \cdot \times 1 = 0+ \dots = 360^\circ
 \end{aligned}$$

## INTERPRETATION of NUMBER

1 = 0 = Unity	7 = 00 = reflection, representation
2 = 1 = Duality	8 = 01 = completion, crystallization
3 = $\wedge$ = Creativity	*9 = 0 $\wedge$ = rebirth, transformation
4 = + = Manifestation	10 = 0+ = material perfectability
5 = $\wedge$ = Man	11 = 0 $\wedge$ = spiritual perfectability
6 = 0 = Perfection	12 = 1 \cdot = universal perfectability

\* 9 = the transcendental principle of the creative trilogy (DIVINE MOTHER) thru the working powers of 6 the 9 principle may be most readily involved and inscribed in matter

Table 3 — Division; Numerical Meanings

Table three shows some of the symmetries in the division of sixty (0+) by each of the first six digits and in the major divisions of the degrees of the circle.

With the numerical cosmology shown in the second part of table three we can theorize on the reason for the adoption of six in the place of the ten system. At this moment in evolution, which requires a radical transformation of human consciousness in order that mankind may continue to be the vehicle through which the material universe will transmute progressively towards its spiritual origins, the number which



manifests the perfecting principle would be activated and dominate in the mental circuitry. Ten is the number of the passing age. It is the number of the vast quantitative expansion of the mental into the material creation. Ten is five plus five. Five is the number of man (which we will discuss more with the figure of the pentagon). As Sri Aurobindo says in the *Hour of God*,

“There are other moments when the spirit retires and men are left to act in the strength or the weakness of their own egoism.”

Five plus five then is man increased through his own powers and devices (the rational, analytic mind) Six is of the trilogy of the eternal 3, 6, 9 and the importance of increasing the contact and receptivity of man (five) with the active divine principle (six) is a present necessity and goal.

With six as the unit completion, the mystery of seven becomes clarified. Seven is an inert field (“and on the seventh day he rested” — Genesis). It is impossible to inscribe a seven sided figure in a circle. Seven forms no harmonic progression. It is very rarely seen in the growth and forms of nature. While the Semitic people consider it a sacred number, the Babylonians considered it to be demonic because of its lack of workability. In the table of six, seven is the beginning of the second level of numbers following the expression of the six primary powers of creation. It is reflective, it is the lunar number ( $4 \times 7 = 28$ ) a reflecting on the six essential powers which built up the universe.

As we conclude this first chapter it may be helpful to restate that this is a *geometric* discourse and all symbolic allocations, interpretations and speculations are made from the level of this particular discipline, which we may call the “geometric universe”. Geometry begins with the examination, measurement and manipulation of *simple, two dimensional* areas, and through this specific limitation it becomes an activity analogous to the capacity and limitations of the rational, measuring level of mind. All strata above or below this level of mind it does not deal with nor attempt to directly comprehend. Symbolic phenomena such as the zero or the void or the primal chaos or even the point and the line lie outside the geometric zone of contemplation. These more intangible or subjective qualities enter indirectly into Geometry as reflective theorizing.

Hence ancient Geometry knows where it begins, and that is with the tangible formality of the circle and the square (simple and two dimensional) and it continues with rectangles, triangles and other regular polygons. The symbolic significances which we have used here, as for instance the Circle being Unity or the Unmanifest or Spirit, are definitions within the format of Geometry, and based only in terms relative to other geometric phenomena, such as the square or the rectangle, which in a scalar universe can at once be numerically measured.

We do this in full recognition that from a level of contemplation which includes intuitional and more subtle subjective mind qualities, as with the study of myth,

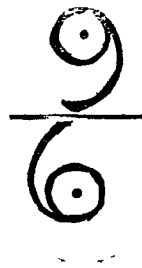
symbol and archetype through the celestial science of Astrology, that the Circle might have a very different connotation. But as we develop the capacity of thinking in circular, simultaneous levels (the spiral) we find that these variances in interpretation are not contradictory but due only to a shift in level of observation.

From the level which precedes or encompasses the tangible delineation of matter (Astrology), the Circle would be seen as the carrier of all manifestation, while at the same time, from a level restricted in contemplation, subsequent to and within the laws of formal structuring, the Circle is seen as the representation of Unity or the unmanifest. For the Circle, in truth, is both: it is the Unity containing all of the Multiplicity. These relative shifts of meaning actually assist in clarifying the fact that seemingly oppositional functions of the universe are in truth complementary, and the universal principles or laws change in interpretation through the viewpoints of the consciousness relative to them.

The same explanation is to be applied to other symbolic allocations throughout this essay, and none are meant to stand as fixed meanings but rather one way of formulating and thinking about number through the lens of Geometry. The number one from inside the context of the measuring capacity is seen as a Unity synonymous with a tangible, undivided wholeness. The number one would have a different significance when viewed outside of the particularization of formal structure. The precision which we gradually obtain in situating the varied functions of mind and allow to each its proper boundaries of activity is basic to the purification of mentality.

For just as the esoteric vision is able to perceive relationships from what is above to what is below, so the involved rational scientific capacity of mind must work at perceiving relationships from below to what is above.

ROBERT LAWLOR



#### NOTES, PART I

1. Skinner, J. Ralston — *The Source of Measure*, p. 75-76.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 58 and Michell, John — *City of Revelation*, pp. 56 and 111.
3. *Ibid.*, Michell, p. 36.
4. Schwaller de Lubicz, Isha — *Her-Bak, Egyptian Imnate*, p. 54.

## “LIFE CAN BE BEAUTIFUL”

(Continued from the issue of June 1973)

### SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF EDUCATION: EXPERIMENTS IN NEW EDUCATION

“THE standard of the Ashram education is definitely higher than in other universities. I must admit the system followed here is not a failure.”

“What prompts you to say so? Can you base your statement upon specific instances?”

He did not have to pause to search his mind for the answer; here is his estimate:

“On my first arrival in 1967 I was invited to give a lecture and it was held in the Ashram library. After I had finished, I invited questions. That is our usual yardstick with which we judge the merit of the students. The intelligent questions that were put to me made me feel that the system of education followed here was not a failure. There was an ideal and everybody tried to live it. And there is character. If there is no element of inquisitiveness in the students, as is the case in our institutions, we call them ‘dull.’”

He is a triple M.A. Sri Aurobindo’s *Savitri* was his first love. He feels very much that Sri Aurobindo’s contribution to literature, philosophy, poetry, art, science, sociology and even economics is very great — Sri Aurobindo has shown how one can reach perfect perfection — yet he is not so widely quoted as Heidegger<sup>1</sup> and other weighty thinkers of the West. “Sri Aurobindo is still confined to a group or a class of followers. Is it because no effort is made to represent his unique contribution before the world in educational journals and research papers as is commonly done by educational centres?”

Talking with this triple M. A. is a pleasure. Whenever he rises to speak about Sri Aurobindo he starts with an invocation.

The story goes that when the sun was about to set it became rather sad: “On my departure the earth will be swallowed by the mouth of darkness. Is there no one to represent me?”

“I shall keep the fire burning, however dense the darkness,” rose the feeble voice of an aspiring flame.

My friend would begin: “Whatever I am going to speak will be the thoughts of Sri Aurobindo put into my mouth.” Then he would give his talk and keep the audience spellbound for at least two hours.

<sup>1</sup> In 1972 Rhoda P. Le Cocq of California Institute of Asian Studies, San Francisco, obtained her Ph. D. on a comparative study of Sri Aurobindo and Heidegger. Her thesis has come out in book-form under the title of *Two Radical Thinkers: Heidegger and Sri Aurobindo*.

Amidst 2400 students in his college he is the one who commands most respect. Why?

Because of his love for children and his force of character. Money could not lure him, worldly attractions could not deviate him from the vow of celibacy. There are ninety students in his class. He is thinking of starting a primary school where education will be free.

Experts tell us that education is a powerful instrument to bring about social changes. National reconstruction<sup>1</sup> depends upon the quality of the students. The destiny of the country is shaped in classrooms.

What tomorrow needs is not masses of intellectuals but masses of men educated to serve a high cause.

Our professor holds that the start must be made from the primary stage. That is the only way to bring up a new generation.

In the modern world sex is the greatest pleasure. If we intend to bring up a new generation it must be brought up in a new environment. The first thing an Ashram of yoga in ancient times taught was the practice of *Brahmacharya*. The students' day dawned with the recitation of the Veda. Today our day begins with tea and newspapers. To breathe fresh air into the old order, life must undergo a radical change.

"Without the introduction of yoga and philosophy, life will ever remain under the siege of the roaring forces of Darkness," the professor said and added with emphasis, "men of character and vision must be installed in every branch of life, even in Parliament and the Cabinet. Only a man of vision and intuitive power can give a flawless decision. Then will India's soul find a free and full play and India's voice will be heard.

"India is bound to remain impotent," he went on, "as long as its educational pattern remains an imitation of the Western system."

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In the course of a formal talk regarding the Free Progress System, a Doctor of Science in Physics from the Sorbonne, Professor Gabriel Monod-Herzen, observed:

"Ten years' experience confirms that the system followed in the Ashram's educational institution constitutes real education. This is the only way that might lead to spiritual evolution."

<sup>1</sup> The revolution that is seen in China today is said to be largely due to the fervour and the spirit of dedication on the part of the teachers to the cause of the country, giving the younger generation a new outlook on life.

"In education, particularly in the education of the small children the aim (is) . . . to commit the nation's children to serve the public good. Education for the young child mirrors this new philosophy.

"How do they come to feel that no sacrifice, not even death, is too great to serve the people?"

"The most important and imperative ingredient in the educational revolution is unquestionably the fervour, devotion and enthusiasm of the teachers; their rapport with the children and command over their material is truly extraordinary." (*China's Revolution in Education* by Ruth Sidel)

"To what end?" I asked querulously "What signs are there of any psychic education?"

He cut me down to size. "It is not within the power of the teacher to impart psychic education to pupils. That is not within his domain. The teacher's job is to prepare the ground — paving the way for inner development. He who imparts psychic education is a guru. We are not gurus but disciples."

Gabriel was so impressed by the Free Progress System of Education here that he has written a book *L'École de Libre Progrès* in collaboration with Jacqueline Benezec in French, which was published in Paris in 1972. The English version of a few passages may be cited:

"...it is not only a question of freedom but of free *progress*, this word understood in the sense we have mentioned: the flowering of the highest aspirations, which demands mastery over the others, not to condemn or repress them but to transform them in the service of the former; and ten years of experience show this is not only possible but represents the sole complete and natural means of evolution for the child, and even of man."

"One can understand how the idea itself of morals takes on a new meaning in the Ashram. It is no longer an obligation imposed by exterior considerations: it is an inner need, a necessity along the way one travels towards his goal. And this need is part of an ensemble of new habits which one has acquired as something not added to a past but arising as a long ignored power; the change of 'conduct' is a liberation from the past, a step towards happiness."<sup>1</sup>

Gabriel's connection with the Ashram begins from 1935. Reminiscing about his contact he disclosed:

"I sought Sri Aurobindo's permission to write about him and his work and he gave it. I started sending the manuscript chapter by chapter through Nirod. It was read out to him and he made the necessary corrections." This is the only book on Sri Aurobindo in French authenticated by him.

Gabriel further revealed to me that Sri Aurobindo gave some idea of his conception of education to Maurice Schumann who was once an Education Minister in France. Monsieur Schumann came in 1949, as a leader of the French Government's Cultural Mission. He personally conveyed to Sri Aurobindo the French Government's appreciation of his attitude towards the War. Sri Aurobindo told him of his idea to build an Educational Centre in the Colonial Gardens. As Sri Aurobindo left his body a year later, nothing could be done in this respect. Gabriel was asked by our students what had been Sri Aurobindo's special contribution to knowledge, distinguishing him from other teachers. The reply was:

"...his openness to all opinions, his capacity to understand them and to inject

<sup>1</sup> A striking instance of environment

Two little ones were engaged in a childish combat in Auro school. An Italian girl of tender age comes and takes away the Mother's photo saying, "The Mother cannot remain where there is quarrelling."

a new element.... Sri Aurobindo never depreciated the past in order to give value to the future." Gabriel emphasised the point: "...That which Sri Aurobindo announces and describes is not a theory which pleases him or which is to him personal; it is the truth he has experienced. This is precisely the scientific attitude and Sri Aurobindo knew this, since he himself said that his room was his laboratory. There he tried everything, and verified it before offering it to us."

*(To be continued)*

NARAYAN PRASAD

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# Students' Section

## EYE EDUCATION

### FAVOURABLE CONDITIONS

THE vision of the human eye is modified in many ways when the conditions are unfavourable to good sight. Unfavourable conditions may prevail when the light is not agreeable to the patient. Some patients require a very bright light and others get along much better in a poor light. Many cases are hypersensitive to light and suffer from an intolerance for light, which has been called photophobia.

While intolerance of light may be manifest in most cases from some diseases of the eyes, there are many cases in which the eye is apparently healthy and in which photophobia may be extreme. (The cure for this condition is to have the patient sit in the sun with his eyes closed allowing the sun to shine on his closed eyelids as he moves his head from side to side.)

There are patients with good sight whose vision is materially improved when used in a bright light, as well as those with good sight whose vision improves when the eyes are used in a dim light. The patient should practise with the Snellen Test Card in a bright as well as in a dim light to accustom his eyes to all conditions.

The ability to perceive haloes, or an increased whiteness, around letters or inside letters is a favourable condition. By using a card having a hole in it, it is possible for many patients to see an increased whiteness around a letter or inside it. This improves their vision for the letter. When a card with a hole is not used, one may be able to imagine a white halo around the inner or outer edge of the black part of the letter "O". When the card covers the black part of the letter "O", for instance, the white centre becomes of the same whiteness as the rest of the white page, which proves that it is the contrast between the black and the white which enables one to imagine the white haloes.

DR. R. S. AGARWAL

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