

MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

SPECIAL NUMBER

AUGUST 15, 1974

SRI AUROBINDO'S BIRTHDAY

Price : Rs. 1-50

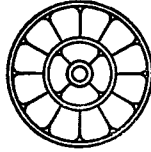
Posting Date for MOTHER INDIA :
26th to 28th of the preceding month.

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

All correspondence to be addressed to:
MOTHER INDIA, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry-605002, India
Editor's Phone: 782

Publishers : Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust.

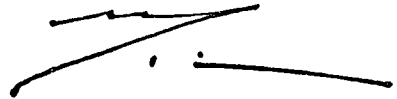


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

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. XXVI

No. 8

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail."

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Editor: K. D. SETHNA

Managing Editor: K. R. PODDAR

Published by: P. COUNUMA

SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM TRUST, PONDICHERRY-605002

Printed by: AMIYO RANJAN GANGULI

at Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, Pondicherry-605002

PRINTED IN INDIA

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

SRI AUROBINDO

ONE soul's ambition lifted up the race,
A Power worked, but none knew whence it came.
The universal strengths were linked with his;
Filling earth's smallness with their boundless breadths,
He drew the energies that transmute an age.

Savitri, Book One, Canto Three

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SRI AUROBINDO'S BIRTH

SOME WORDS OF THE MOTHER

TILL the birth of Sri Aurobindo, religions and spiritualities were always centred on past figures, and they were showing as "the goal" the negation of life upon earth. So you had a choice between two alternatives: either

— a life *in* this world with its round of petty pleasures and pains, joys and sufferings, threatened by hell if you were not behaving properly,

or

— an escape *into* another world, heaven or paradise.

Between these two there is nothing much to choose.

Sri Aurobindo has told us that this was a fundamental mistake which accounts for the weakness and degradation of India. It was sufficient to sap all energy out of the country.

True, India is the only place in the world which is still aware that something else than matter exists. The other countries have quite forgotten it: Europe, America and elsewhere.... That is why she still has a message to preserve and deliver to the world. But at present she is splashing and floundering in the muddle.

Sri Aurobindo has shown that the truth does not lie in running away from earthly life but in remaining *in* it, to *transform* it, *divinise* it so that the Divine can manifest **HERE**, in this **PHYSICAL WORLD**.

31.3.1967

THE WORK OF BRINGING DOWN THE SUPRAMENTAL

FROM A TALK OF THE MOTHER IN 1931

THE consciousness is like a ladder: at each great epoch there has been one great being capable of adding one more step to the ladder and reaching a place where the ordinary consciousness had never been. It is possible to attain a high level and get completely out of the material consciousness; but then one does not retain the ladder, whereas the great achievement of the great epochs of the universe has been the capacity to add one more step to the ladder without losing contact with the material, the capacity to reach the Highest and at the same time connect the top with the bottom instead of letting a kind of emptiness cut off all connection between the different planes. To go up and down and join the top to the bottom is the whole secret of realisation, and that is the work of the Avatar. Each time he adds one more step to the ladder there is a new creation upon earth....

The step which is being added now Sri Aurobindo has called the Supramental; as a result of it, the consciousness will be able to enter the supramental world and yet retain its personal form, its individualisation and then come down to establish here a new creation. Certainly this is not the last, for there are farther ranges of being; but now we are at work to bring down the supramental, to effect a reorganisation of the world, to bring the world back to the true divine order. It is essentially a creation of order, a putting of everything in its true place; and the chief spirit or force, the Shakti active at present is Mahasaraswati, the Goddess of perfect organisation.

The work of achieving a continuity which permits one to go up and down and bring into the material what is above, is done inside the consciousness. He who is meant to do it, the Avatar, even if he were shut up in a prison and saw nobody and never moved out, still would he do the work, because it is a work in the consciousness, a work of connection between the Supermind and the material being. He does not need to be recognised, he need have no outward power in order to be able to establish this conscious connection. Once, however, the connection is made, it must have its effect in the outward world in the form of a new creation, beginning with a model town and ending with a perfect world.

AUGUST 15, 1923

SOME NOTES BY A. B. PURANI

SRI Aurobindo came out at 6 o'clock in the evening.

DISCIPLE: May we know something about the present state of your Sadhana?

SRI AUROBINDO (*in a clear but low voice*): I cannot call it a state or a condition. It is, rather, a complex movement. I am at present engaged in bringing the Supermind into the physical consciousness, down even to the sub-material. The physical is by nature inert and does not want to be rendered conscient. It offers much greater resistance as it is unwilling to change.

One feels as if "digging the earth", as the Veda says. It is literally digging from Supermind above to Supermind below. The being has become conscious and there is constant movement up and down. The Veda calls it "the two ends" — the head and the tail of the dragon completing and compassing the consciousness. I find that so long as Matter is not supramentalised the mental and the vital also cannot be fully supramentalised. The physical is therefore to be accepted and transformed. It is this birth after birth on every plane that makes the process complex. I am trying to bring the highest layer of the Supermind into the physical consciousness.

There are three layers of the Supermind corresponding to the three activities of the Intuitive Mind. First is what I call the Interpretative Supermind. I call it interpretative because what is a possibility on the mental plane becomes a potentiality on the supramental plane. The Interpretative Supermind puts all the potentialities before you. It shows the root cause of events that may come true on the physical plane. When Intuition is changed into its supramental value, it becomes Interpretative Supermind.

Next comes what I call the Representative Supermind. It represents the actual movements of the potentialities and shows what is in operation. When Inspiration is changed into its supramental value then it becomes this Representative Supermind. This is not the highest Supermind. You know certain potentialities working and in many cases you can say what would happen, or how a certain thing happened or can happen. But there may be no certainty. Finally there is the Imperative Supermind which corresponds to Revelation. It is always true as nothing can stand against it. It is Knowledge fulfilling itself by its own inherent power.

I have to distinguish between all these and try to bring down the Imperative Supermind into the physical. Thus, there is a constant movement up and down. The whole being is now made conscious but what is required is that no force should be able to attack the physical. Then the second thing is to apply the Imperative Supermind to things within and, thirdly, to apply it to things outside. At present, by the supramental power any force that attacks the body can be thrown aside. But when the process is complete no conscious hostile force will be able to attack the body at

all. In all this I am following a certain programme that was laid down for me when I came to Pondicherry.

DISCIPLE: The question, then, is of physical immortality.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, — in case the physical is rendered immune the casting away or retaining of the body would be voluntary. One would be free to throw it away, — it would be, really, dull and monotonous to be forced to keep the same body through all eternity.

DISCIPLE: Is it possible to illustrate the difference between what one attains in the Mind and what is attained in the Supermind?

SRI AUROBINDO: I can give one instance: The mental *samatā* — equality — I attained was not disturbed for months by anything. It was the *samatā* of the Shankarite outlook. But true spiritual *samatā* comes when the Imperative Supermind descends: the self-certainty of the Power brings the true divine *samatā*.

Formerly there was some difficulty in differentiating between will of knowledge and knowledge-will — say, between force and self-effectuating knowledge. Now it is not there.

DISCIPLE: When will this work be finished?

SRI AUROBINDO: There can be no definite time-limit.

DISCIPLE: What was the nature of the attack you last had?

SRI AUROBINDO: Whenever I am about to finish a stage in Sadhana the conscious hostile forces come and first raise up something in the being and show it to me, saying: "Look here, this you have not conquered." They can also attack.

DISCIPLE: Is this idea of the Supermind present in the Veda?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, it is very clear, though the emphasis of the Vedic Rishis is more on going above — ascending — than on the return movement of conquering and transforming the lower nature.

DISCIPLE: Can one say that the idea of conquest of the physical is also there?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, the idea is definite.

DISCIPLE: Do you know of any man who has brought down the Supermind to the physical plane?

SRI AUROBINDO: No, I don't.

DISCIPLE: Is there any stress in the Gita on bringing the Supermind down?

SRI AUROBINDO: No. Its insistence is on Karma, on action, not so much on the Supermind. Besides, many other things are there in the Gita.

SRI AUROBINDO ON THE *ARYA*

FROM TWO LETTERS TO MOTILAL ROY IN 1918

THE *Arya* presents a new philosophy, a new method of Yoga and everything that is new takes time to get a hearing. Of course, in reality it is only the old brought back again, but so old that it has been forgotten. It is only those who practise and experience that can at first understand it. In a way, this is good, because it is meant to change the life of people and not merely to satisfy the intellect. In France it has been very much appreciated by those who are seeking the truth, because these people are not shut up in old and received ideas, they are on the look-out for something which will change the inner and outer life. When the same state of mind can be brought about here, the *Arya* will begin to be appreciated. At present, Bengal only understands and appreciates politics and asceticism. The central ideas of the *Arya* are Greek to it.

...My present teaching is that the world is preparing for a new progress, a new evolution. Whatever race, whatever country seizes on the lines of that new revolution and fulfils it, will be the leader of humanity. In the *Arya* I state the thought upon which this new evolution will be based as I see it, and the method of Yoga by which it can be accomplished. Of course, I cannot speak plainly yet my whole message, for obvious reasons; I have to put it in a severe, colourless fashion which cannot be pleasing to the emotional and excitement-seeking Bengali mind. But the message is there, for those who care to understand. It has really three parts (1) for each man as an individual to change himself into the future type of divine humanity, the men of the Satyayuga which is striving to be born, (2) to evolve a race of such men to lead humanity and (3) to call humanity to the path under the lead of these pioneers and this chosen race. India and especially Bengal have the best chance and the best right to create that race and become the leaders of the future, — to do in the right way what Germany thought of doing in the wrong way. But first they must learn to think, to cast away old ideas and turn their faces resolutely to the future. But they cannot do this, if they merely copy European politics or go on eternally reproducing Buddhist asceticism.

A STATEMENT BY SRI AUROBINDO ON THE ASHRAM AND POLITICS

SRI Aurobindo has always maintained the Ashram as an institution for spiritual seekers without any connection with politics. Individual members might have their political opinions but were not authorised to carry on any kind of political propaganda. Whatever political pronouncements Sri Aurobindo has made were in his personal capacity and not as spiritual head of the Ashram.

A LETTER TO SRI AUROBINDO FROM INDIAN STUDENTS IN JAPAN DURING HIS POLITICAL CAREER

“India House”,

Kyoto,

24-IX-'07

Dear Sir,

We read with deep regret that you have been in some trouble in connection with your progressive paper “Bande Mataram”. Our regard for your high abilities and sincere patriotism cannot be well expressed in a letter like this. Suffice it to say that we look upon men like you as our true leaders — leaders who are bound to be the Guides of the present progressive generation of India. Your writings, which are fully “National” have been always appreciated by young men who, in their turn, are also becoming “National” in spirit by and by. We sympathize with you from our very heart in your present troubles and hope you will go through these trying “ordeals” calmly, believing in Him who will crown our efforts with complete success at not a very remote date.

We remain,

Sir,

Yours Brotherly
Indian Students.

GABRIELA MISTRAL, CHILEAN POET AND NOBEL PRIZE-WINNER, ON SRI AUROBINDO

AUGUST 1949

ONLY rarely do we South Americans come in contact with remote literature. It is perhaps one of the paradoxes of the world that semi-Asiatic people such as we are should harbour such fabulous ignorance about the Indo-European and Oriental portions of the globe and fail to recognize our Mongolian and Polynesian strains, while at the same time feeling a kinship to this or that part of Europe.

Because of this anomalous situation the vast culture of Asia has reached our shores only in the form of three guests: the works of Tagore, one book of Gandhi, and a few emasculated fragments of the Mahabarata and the Ramayana. Even the rare Oriental book which does arrive, usually in a twice-removed translation, labours under several severe handicaps in trying to reach our people; these religious texts are abstruse and our ordinary reader is an easy-going fellow who much prefers uncomplicated literature which he can race through with little effort. The Oriental texts on the contrary are veritable mountains, not easily scaled and their steep sides offer little rest to the weary climber; they require in fact heroic efforts from the reader, like those which must be made by one who aspires to plumb the depth of the sea or scale our high Andes, which present obstacles second only to the Himalayas.

Thus the discovery of Sri Aurobindo came to me late and in a mutilated form. On the shop-counter of a French book-stall I unexpectedly came across a copy of *The Mother* and found myself in contact with one of those pieces which are so intense and beautiful that they captivate at once even though they are mere fragments of something far greater. I sought for more by the unknown author and I was told of *The Synthesis of Yoga*. Unfortunately I did not find then his central work *The Life Divine* and I have remained until today thirsting for it. (I remember smiling at a photograph of the Hindu sage whose features seemed to me so much like those of my South Pacific peoples: those indigenous features which recur everywhere between Peru and Mexico.) I read these books knowing almost nothing about the author: his strange Indo-European background, his high rank in Oriental literature and his wide influence on Indian political life.

To give an opinion on a writer read in double translation is a painful ordeal. Honesty and diffidence would normally require one to abstain from comment under such circumstances and therefore I write this appraisal with shy misgiving. I can only hope to offer my South America, my beloved Chile, some glimmering participation in this great day of jubilation. For the man who is now retired in his Ashram belongs to that order of human beings who are universal because of the breadth of their message and who, like gushing fountains, bring refreshment and solace to the human race.

It is probable that if the extinct League of Nations and the United Nations of today had in their midst more true apostles and fewer tricky politicians, their debates would be attended with more Divine Grace for the good of humanity. Even in Greek mythology Mercury—Commerce—followed rather than preceded Apollo, the enchanter of man. We must eliminate from the Conclave of Nations all this name-calling and speech-making entirely empty of any sincere desire for Spiritual Unity. The word “world-wide” recurs in these debates only because our delegates are descendants of men of a high spiritual order. On the other hand, this term has never lost its true meaning in that Asia scorned by Europe which has become the victim of a great amnesia. To have forgotten one’s mother is perhaps the greatest amnesia and the Orient is the mother of Europe in every sense, for it is to the Orient that European culture owes its birth and sustenance. If the word “unity” is repeated by a faithful Asia day after day, it is simply because it is the first letter in their moral alphabet. It is repeated in the morning prayers and in the evening hymns of the faithful. The devotees of Asia have always striven to encompass in their faith the entire human race. Nothing is cut off or excluded by frightening chasms. There is no attempt to evaluate nations by economic standards. The same cannot be said of our own preachers whose sphere is usually bounded by their own coastlines or by the white-washed marker-stones of frontiers whose origin is political and therefore false. No learned man today need remain in absolute ignorance of the two religions which encompass millions of Asiatics. A sincere attempt to approach Buddhism — to mention only one of the more profound Oriental creeds — would free us from the error of making infantile mockery of a great religion, which was surely the forerunner of Christianity and the prologue to the “Great Event”. This sea of prose of Sri Aurobindo turns out to be a Mediterranean smooth and buoyant like that which bore the galleons of old.

Six foreign languages have given the Master of Pondicherry a gift of ordination, a clarity free from gaudiness, and a charm which borders on the magical. These are three attributes which are rarely found together in the exegete, even less in the seer. Some fall into the sin of obscurity, others suffer from a doctrinarian fever, a grave thing which leads us astray, seizing us in the grip of religious controversies. Moreover, apostles and exegetes usually lack the beauty of expression though the substance they seek to expound may come from the world of the Divine and be more precious than gold or rare spices.

Mysticism has been declared by many as a dangerous zone. It is said to be fallow and even disreputable. In the two branches of Christianity, Catholic and Protestant, it is viewed with suspicion as a malarial marsh covered with unhealthy mists. In spite of the glorious names of our saints and devotees, from St. John the Evangelist to Ruysbroek and Spain’s contingent of enlightened souls, the majority of ordinary Christians as well as the spiritual *petit bourgeoisie* of the Christian hierarchy still seem altogether afraid to approach the great zone of fire.

Sri Aurobindo, the Master, highest of mystics, happily presents the rare phenomenon of an exposition clear as a beautiful diamond, without the danger of

confounding the layman. This is possible only because Sri Aurobindo is a unique synthesis of a scholar, a theologian and one who is enlightened.

These are indeed "glad tidings" that come to us: to know that there is a place in the world where culture has reached its tone of dignity by uniting in one man a supernatural life with a consummate literary style, thus making use of his beautifully austere and classical prose to serve as the handmaid of the Spirit. One finds here texts which do not belabour with the anxious stutterings so common to saintly souls whose poor expression often dissuades even the most zealous readers. We have before us a prose which approximates to that of the great Eckhart, German classicist and fountain-head of European mysticism.

This treatise is a gift which reaches us at a time when we are besieged by a stormy materialism, in which we have been living since the surge of French and English rationalism destroyed the tenets of Universal Christianity. I should like to know if the ordination which gives an inner discipline of the spiritual type and the perfect agreement between a spiritual doctrine and a way of life are always necessarily reflective in human writing of the highest order. The extraordinary case of Sri Aurobindo the writer surely seems to give great validity to such a theory.

Another absorbing fact which provokes our unworthy comment: the honeyed superabundances of rhyme and rhythm are often damaging to the poet who also writes prose, because his fantasy nearly always obstructs or submerges the necessary realism which people demand from the prose writer.

This was rather the case with Tagore. In him we had, above all, a poet, and when he was obliged to lecture to his devoted people the constrained prose-writer often permitted the spirit of poetry to overcome and fling to the ground the rationality of its half-sister prose.

In reading Sri Aurobindo, one notes that in his religious teaching he only allows a few glimmers of the great frenzy which is poetry to enter into his text and co-operate in the didactic literature without interfering with or detracting from it.

Magnificent grace for a people is a child who brings such a wealth of endowments into the world, and who has pressed all of them into the service of his race. The gift of Civil Leadership, the gift of Spiritual Guidance, the gift of Beautiful Expression: this is the trinity, the three lances of light with which Sri Aurobindo has reached the great number of Indians, that is to say, the masses of his countrymen.

That which we celebrate today is 77 years of his terrestrial journey and divine experience, 77 years of the most curious politic, the "Politic of God" as St. Augustine might have called it, the most pungent politic of our human epoch.

May Sri Aurobindo live on through the hour of darkness through which we are now passing, in which the signs are stormy and our way seems already lost, because the rudder dances about in the hands of the nations' leaders.

The man whose people, with garlands in their hands, go to seek guidance in his Ashram today, comes out once more to see the faces of his children, the congregation of his faithful.

May the one and only God, the divine Trinity worshipped in diverse modes by Christians and non-Christians alike, augment in the man of sanctity and gracious action his grace, his life, his illumination and his years.

Gabriela Mistral

(Translated by Norman C. Dowsett from the Spanish)

SRI AUROBINDO

Sapphics

FACE of Godhead, beautiful sign of Spirit,
Source and centre, hub of the wheel of being;
Friend and Father, Teacher and Guide and Lover:
Sri Aurobindo.

Bournless God-mind showing our destined greatness;
Titan Will delivering what thou showest,
Will that stoops down, aiding our petty weakness:
Sri Aurobindo.

Voice that sings sweet songs of the life supernal,
Filled to overflowing with force, whose rhythms
Rend the Veil, revealing the naked Wonder:
Sri Aurobindo.

Hero-warrior fighting to found the future,
Splendid Stallion galloping forth to battle,
Tireless Draft-horse drawing the ancient burden:
Sri Aurobindo.

Lord, to thee we offer ourselves completely;
Lay down life, mind, body to be transfigured
May we chant forever thy Name, the Mantra:
Sri Aurobindo.

Peter Heehs

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(Continued from the joint issue of June-July 1974)

(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 as part of a book.)

DECEMBER 26, 1956

“Not to go on for ever repeating what man has already done is our work, but to arrive at new realisations and undreamed-of masteries. Time and soul and world are given us for our field, vision and hope and creative imagination stand for our prompters, will and thought and labour are our all-effective instruments.

“What is there new that we have yet to accomplish? Love, for as yet we have only accomplished hatred and self-pleasing; Knowledge, for as yet we have only accomplished error and perception and conceiving; Bliss, for as yet we have only accomplished pleasure and pain and indifference; Power, for as yet we have only accomplished weakness and effort and a defeated victory; Life, for as yet we have only accomplished birth and growth and dying; Unity, for as yet we have only accomplished war and association.

“In a word, godhead; to remake ourselves in the divine image.”

(Sri Aurobindo, *Thoughts and Glimpses*)

Have we only accomplished “weakness and effort and a defeated victory”?

TILL today all the victories which have been won have reactions that are finally defeats. There is never anything definitive and complete. Every time one has the feeling of having gained a victory, one finds out that this victory was incomplete, partial, fugitive. This is a fact one can always observe if one looks carefully at oneself. Not that things are necessarily what they were before, no, something has changed, but everything has not changed and not completely changed.

This is quite visible, very noticeable about conquests in the physical, conquests over the body. Through a very assiduous labour one succeeds in overcoming a weakness, a limitation, a wrong habit, and one believes this is a definitive victory;

but after some time or at times immediately one finds that nothing is completely done, nothing is definitive, that what one thought to have accomplished is to be done again. For it is only a total change of consciousness and the intervention of a new force, a reversal of consciousness that can make the victory complete.

In the old Chaldean tradition, very often the young novices were given an image when they were invested with the white robe; they were told: "Do not try to remove the stains one by one, the whole robe must be purified at one time". Do not try to mend your faults one by one, to overcome your weaknesses one by one, that does not take you very far. It is the entire consciousness which must be changed, it is a reversal of consciousness which must be achieved, it is a springing up from the state in which one is to a higher state whence one dominates all the weaknesses one wants to heal, and whence one has a full vision of the work to be accomplished.

I believe Sri Aurobindo has said this: things are such that it may be said that nothing is done until everything is done. One step ahead is not enough, a total conversion is necessary.

How many times have I heard those who have made an effort say: "I try, but what's the use of my trying? Every time I think I have gained something, I find that I must begin yet once again." This happens because they try to go forward whilst remaining where they are, they try to progress without changing their consciousness. It is the entire point of view which must be shifted, the whole consciousness must get out of the rut in which it lies and climb up and see things from up above. It is only thus that victories will not be changed into defeats.

Anything else? No, nothing more?

Mother, how to change one's consciousness?

Naturally, there are many ways, but each person must do it by the means accessible to him; and the indication of the way generally comes spontaneously, through something like an unexpected experience. And for each one, it appears a little differently.

For instance, one may be in the ordinary consciousness, extending on the surface, horizontally, and working on a plane which is simultaneously the surface of things and has a contact with the superficial outer side of things, people, circumstances; and then, suddenly, for some reason or other (I said for each one it is different) there is a shifting upwards, and instead of seeing things horizontally, being at the same level as they, suddenly one dominates them and sees them from above, in their totality, instead of looking at a small number of things immediately close by; it is as though something were drawing you above and making you see as from a mountain-top or an aeroplane. And instead of seeing each detail and seeing it on its own level, one sees the whole ensemble as one unity, and from far above.

There are many ways of having this experience, but generally it comes to you as by chance, one fine day.

Or perhaps, one may have an experience which is almost its very opposite but which comes to the same thing. Suddenly one plunges into a depth, one moves away from the thing perceived, it seems distant, superficial, unimportant; one enters an inner silence or inner calm or an inward vision of things, a profound feeling, a closer perception of circumstances and things, in which all values change. And one becomes aware of a sort of unity, a deep identity which is one despite the diverse appearances.

Or still, quite suddenly again, the sense of limitation disappears and one enters the perception of a kind of indefinite duration beginningless and endless, of something which has always been and will always be.

These experiences come to you suddenly in a flash, just for a second, a moment in your life, you don't know why or how.... There are other means, other experiences — they are innumerable, they vary according to people; but with this, this one minute, one second of such existence, one catches the tail of the thing. So one must remember that, try to relive it, go to the depth of the experience, recall it, aspire, concentrate. This is the starting-point, the end of the ball of thread, the clew. For all those who are destined to find their inner being, the truth of their being, there is always at least one moment in life when they were no longer the same, perhaps just like a lightning-flash — but that is enough. It indicates the road one should take, it is the door that opens on this path. And so you must pass through the door, and with perseverance and a steadfastness that stands all tests seek to renew that state which will lead you to something more real and more total.

You have always been given many ways, but a way you have been taught, a way about which you have read in books or heard from a teacher, does not have the effective value of a spontaneous experience which comes without any apparent reason, and which, quite simply, is the blossoming of the soul-awakening, a second of contact with one's psychic being which shows you the best way for you, the one most within your reach, which you will have to follow thereafter with perseverance to reach your goal — a second which shows you how to start, the beginning ... Some have this in dreams during the night; some have it at any odd time: something one sees which awakens in one this new consciousness, something one hears, a beautiful landscape, beautiful music, or just simply a few words one reads, or just the intensity of concentration in some effort — anything at all, there are a thousand reasons and thousands of ways of having it. But, I repeat this, all those destined to realise, have had this at least once in their life. It may be very fleeting, it may have come when they were very young, but always at least once in one's life one has the experience of what true consciousness is. Well, that is the best indication of the path to be followed.

One may seek within oneself, one may remember, may observe; one must notice what is going on, one must pay attention, that's all. Sometimes, when one sees a generous act, hears something exceptional, when one witnesses heroism or generosity or soul-splendour, meets someone who shows a special talent or acts in an exceptional and beautiful way, there is a kind of enthusiasm or admiration or gratitude which awakens suddenly in the being and opens the door to a state, a new state of conscious-

ness, a light, a warmth, a joy one did not know before. That too is a way of catching the guiding thread. There are a thousand ways, one must only be awake and watch.

First of all, one must feel the necessity for this change of consciousness, accept the idea that this is it, the road which must lead to the goal; and once one admits the principle, one must observe. And one shall find, one does find. And once you have found it, you must start walking without any hesitation.

Essentially, the starting-point is to observe oneself, not to live in a continuous nonchalance, a continuous *laissez-faire*; one must be attentive.

Is that all?

(Silence)

Here is a question I have been asked (it seems many people are asking this among themselves!). I am going to read to you what is written, then I shall speak to you afterwards. It has such a convincing air, this question!

In what sense must we understand "not to have preferences"? Shouldn't we prefer order to disorder, cleanliness to dirt, etc.? Not having preferences — does it mean treating everybody in the same way?

Now, here is my answer: this is playing with words! What you call preference, I call choice. One must be in a perpetual state of choosing; at every minute of your life you must make a choice between what pulls you down and what draws you up, between what makes you progress and what makes you go back; but this I do not call having preferences, I call this making a choice — making a choice, choosing. At every minute one has to choose, this is indispensable, and infinitely more so than choosing once for all between cleanliness and dirt, whether moral or physical. The choice: at every second the choice is before you, and you may go a step down or climb a step up, take a step backwards or a step forward; and this state of choice must be constant, perpetual, you must never fall asleep. But this is not what I call having preferences. Preferences — that's exactly not choosing. There is something for which you have sympathy or antipathy, repulsion or attraction, and blindly, without any reason, you get attached to this thing; or again, when you have a problem to solve, you would prefer the solution of this problem or this difficulty to be of one particular kind or another. But that is not at all choosing — don't you see, there's no question of the most true thing, it is a matter of having a preference. For me the meaning of the word is very clear: a preference is a blind thing, an impulse, an attachment, an unconscious movement, and it is usually terribly obstinate.

You are placed in the presence of certain circumstances; one thing or another may happen, and you yourself have an aspiration, you ask to be guided, but within you there is something which prefers the answer to be of a certain kind, the indication to be a particular one, or the event to come about in this special way rather than that; but all that is not a question of choice, it is a preference. And when the answer

to your aspiration or prayer is not in accordance with your desire, this preference makes you feel unhappy, you find it difficult to accept the answer, you must fight to accept it. Whilst if you had no preferences, whatever may be the answer to your aspiration, the moment it comes, joyfully, spontaneously you cling to it with a sincere élan. Otherwise you are compelled to make an effort to accept what comes, the decision which comes in answer to your aspiration. The choice is there every minute; every minute you are put before a choice: the choice to climb up or to go down, the choice to progress or go back. But this choice does not imply that you prefer things to be like this or like that; it is a fact of every moment, an *attitude* you take.

Choice means a decision and action. Preference is desire. A choice is made and *ought* to be made, and if it is truly a choice, it is made without caring for the consequences, without expecting any result. You choose; you choose according to your inner truth, your highest consciousness; whatever happens does not touch you, you have made your choice, the true choice, and what comes about is not your concern. Whilst, on the contrary, if you have preferences, you will choose through preference one way or another, your preference will deform your choice: it will be calculation, bargaining, you will act with the idea that a particular thing must happen because it is that which you prefer and not because that is the truth, the right thing to do. Preference is tied up to the results, acts with a view to the result, wishes that things may be of a particular kind and acts to bring about its wish; and then that opens the door to all sorts of things. Choice is independent of the result. And certainly, every minute one can choose, one is put before the necessity of choosing at every second. And indeed you do not really choose well, in all sincerity, unless it is the truth of the choice which interests you, and not the result of your choice. If you choose with the result in view, that falsifies your choice.

So I say it is playing with words, it is mixing up two different things; and then you ask questions which seem insoluble, for it is a mixture. There is a confusion in the question.

As for treating everybody in the same way, it is a still worse confusion! It is the kind of confusion one makes when saying that the Divine must treat everybody in the same way. So it would not be worth the trouble to have diversity in the world, not worth the trouble of not having two identical individuals; for this contradicts the very principle of diversity.

You may — or you ought to if you don't — aspire to have the same deep attitude of understanding, unity, love, perfect compassion for all that is in the universe; but this very attitude will be applied in each case in a different way, according to the truth of that case and its necessity. What could be called the motive or rather the origin of the action is the same, but the action may even be totally and diametrically opposite in accordance with the cases and the deeper truth of each case. But just for that, one must have the highest attitude, the most profound, the most essentially true, that which is free from all outer contingencies. Then one can see at every minute not only the essential truth but also the truth of the action; and in each case it is different.

And yet, what we may call “sentiment” (though this is an inadequate word) or the state of consciousness in which one acts, is essentially the same.

But this cannot be understood unless one enters the essential depth of things and sees them from the highest summits. And then it is like a centre of light and consciousness high enough or deep enough to be able to see all things at the same time, not only in their essence but in their manifestation; and though the centre of consciousness is one, the action will be as diverse as the manifestation is diverse: it is the realisation of the divine Truth in its manifestation. Otherwise it would be suppressing all the diversity of the world and bringing it back to the essential unmanifest Oneness, for it is only in the non-manifestation that the One is manifested by the One. But as soon as one enters the manifestation, the One manifests as the multiplicity, and multiplicity implies a multitude of actions and ways.

So, to sum up: the choice must be made without caring for the consequences, and the action must be performed in accordance with the truth of the multiplicity in the manifestation.

Voulà.

SEEKING YOU, LORD...

WAKING at midnight, I went wandering
Seeking you, Lord, unconsciously.
And coming to an open space
Of wide fields spread treeless to the sea
Beneath a vast star-filled sky,
I saw you, distant, flashing light
From cloud to high-piled cloud
And heard through a breathless calm of air
The distant music of your voice.

My soul was filled with wonder and delight
And called you near — ‘Do not pass by,
But visit now this body’s house,
My tiny playfield, with your joyous game.’
But as you nearer came, and with your clouds
Now nearly covered half the sky
The lightning’s flashes blinded me
And at the thunder’s laugh the dark earth trembled.
Some littleness within me seeking shelter
Turned; sought trees and walls,
Slowly at first, but with growing urgency,
Until, cowering inside my little ego’s house
I felt approaching through the waiting air
The first enormous passage of your quickening breath,
And panic in the body’s bowels woke.

But through it all my soul still laughed
And danced with you from cloud to cloud
Exulting in the glory of the play.

Until at last, in pity, or in mirth,
With vast incomprehensible change of divine mood,
You calmed the storm, and went your way,
The play dissolved
In tears of mercy raining down.

“I cherish God the Fire, not God the Dream.”

SAVITRI

Images for a Film Script of Our Time

“THE IMMORTAL FIRE”

Adapted from Sri Aurobindo’s translation of KATHA UPANISHAD with additional text from HYMNS TO THE MYSTIC FIRE and SAVITRI

(Continued from the joint issue of June-July 1974)

CAMERA’S EYE sees NACHIKETAS rising from the trance-state. As if lifted by an unseen Power, he sits up from the stone-ledge to find classically-robed ATTENDANTS bringing him, with formal movements and gracious gestures, fresh white garments and lustral waters. DANCING THE GUEST-RITE, they bathe and dress him.

A gust of icy WIND suddenly blows down from the aperture above the staircase, whipping at the YOUTH’s garments and lustral waters as YAMA, LORD OF DEATH, slowly descends.

YAMA

(graciously)

Salutation to thee, O Brahmin.

The LORD OF DEATH encircles the YOUTH three times, to MUSIC OF DEATH’S KINGDOM.

YAMA

Because for three nights thou hast dwelt in my house fasting, a guest worthy of reverence — on me let there be the weal. Therefore three boons do thou choose, for each night a boon.

As the offer is chanted in Sanskrit (I. i.9), before the YOUNG MAN’s inner vision moves a scene in his FATHER’s house and private room....VAJASRAVASA ill and grieving over a photograph of Nachiketas, in which a radiant young girl his age is holding his hand.

NACHIKETAS’ VOICE

Tranquillised in his thought and serene of mind be the Gautama my father; let his passion over me pass away from him; assured in heart let him greet me — from

thy grasp delivered. This boon I choose, the first of three.

CAMERA'S EYE sees the curtain of VAJASRAVASA's room suddenly, unaccountably blown by a gust of WIND. VAJASRAVASA, looking up in surprise, sees the door of his room open of itself.

YAMA'S VOICE

Even as before, assured in heart and by me released shall he be, thy father; sweetly shall he sleep through the nights and his passion shall pass away from him, having seen thee from Death's jaws delivered.

VAJASRAVASA takes the photograph to the window. Its curtain is drawn back as by an unseen hand; a ray of sunlight illumines Nachiketas' face leaving the young girl's in shadow.

NACHIKETAS' VOICE

What shall be the way of my return, O Lord, from Death?

YAMA'S VOICE

As thou hast come to me: by mastery.

CAMERA'S EYE follows VAJASRAVASA hurrying in a fever of hope and incredulity to burst into his son's closed room, that of a university student. It is empty. He crosses to the neat and orderly desk, opening a note-book as if to find in it some clue to the mystery. — None. He picks up the photograph lying on the desk: of the same radiant young girl standing alone. His grief starting afresh, he replaces the photograph face up on the desk and hurries out.

CAMERA'S EYE peers through the doorway past the door left ajar by VAJASRAVASA in his haste of grief. It catches a glimpse of NACHIKETAS, a year younger, turning the photograph of the girl face downward, then sitting in meditation before the indistinguishable photograph of an Indian saint. FLUTING from the Kingdom of Death is heard.

YAMA'S VOICE

(Song of *The Wheel-less Chariot*)

O Child, see: the fiery chariot invisible thou hast fashioned with the mind.
By this thou hast mounted: wheel-less, one-poled, new;
see how it turns on all sides, excellently.

The INDIAN SAINT emerging from the photograph begins to revolve in a slow DANCE OF ECSTASY; the young NACHIKETAS tries to follow his steps. But faster and faster whirls the dervish until the black-and-white photograph of the

SAINT becomes a black-and-white film of a SPIRAL NEBULA scattering star-dust.

YAMA'S VOICE

O Child, see: the fiery chariot invisible, that given in due order for ascent of sacrifice — giving thyself unto the higher Powers — thou art restored unto thy rightful place above the Earth.

O Child, see: the fiery chariot invisible that thou hast urged from the enlightened ones above, to turn towards me; once thou hast gone up to the Father — see: the passage made by which thou shalt return to Earth.

(*Rig Veda X. 135*)

The white-robed NACHIKETAS, under the starry night-sky alone now with YAMA, bows to him in gratitude.

YAMA

The second boon?

NACHIKETAS

In heaven fear is not at all, in heaven, O Death, thou art not, nor old age and its terrors; crossing over hunger and thirst as over two rivers, leaving sorrow behind, the soul in that spacious world rejoices.

Therefore the heavenly Flame which thou, O Death, studieth, the immortal Fire for the crossing over, expound unto me, for I believe. They who win their world of heaven have immortality for their portion. This for the second boon I have chosen.

YAMA

Hearken to me and understand, O Nachiketas: I declare to thee that heavenly Flame, for I know it.

YAMA has taken the YOUNG MAN to a summit under the stars. EYE lifts up, wheeling into a distant CONSTELLATION.

YAMA'S VOICE

Know this to be the Infinite existence ... foundation of our being ... thing hidden in the secret cavern of the heart.

Looking down upon the pin-points of light below that are YAMA and NACHIKETAS, EYE sights a gathering of other POINTS OF LIGHT about the distant

figures of the Young Initiate and the Great Initiator. THE DANCING POINTS OF LIGHT create moving formations culminating in a CONSTELLATION OF A COSMIC BEING. The SANSKRIT CHANTING of I.i., Slokas 14 & 15 vibrates with the POINTS OF LIGHT.

NARRATOR'S VOICE

Of the Flame that is the world's beginning Death told to Nachiketas ...its origin... the Force Divine that has built up the worlds ...

In the rapt eyes of NACHIKETAS staring at the new constellation in the sky, its stars are seen reflected.

YAMA

That very Flame thou shalt see burning in the deep cavern of thy secret Soul.

With the same gesture as that of the RISHI in the beginning, YAMA draws his mantle over the YOUTH's head. Stars of the constellation thus veiled from CAMERA'S EYE are seen by it as shooting stars plunging into the dark surface of a well.

YAMA'S VOICE

Concentrate on the Divine in consecration absolute. In thy heart concentrate. Go in, and deep and far. All strings of consciousness roll up: plunge; and sink down ... A fire is burning there, in the deep quietude of the heart. It is the divinity in thee.

(Conversations)

NACHIKETAS' VOICE

There's only ... darkness ...

From the still water of the well emerge now one ... now several POINTS OF LIGHT. CAMERA'S EYE sees YAMA seated in Meditation Asana above the well summoning up the LIGHTS as he instructs the YOUNG MAN.

YAMA

Call back thy thoughts from speech to sit within/ In a deep room in meditation's house;/ For only there can dwell the soul's firm truth/ Imperishable, a tongue of sacrifice ... the witness fire/ From which the altars of the gods are lit.

(Leaning far down, LORD YAMA touches NACHIKETAS' head.)

Now shalt thou build thyself ... thy altar.

The LIGHTS are seen to be torches held by GYMNAST-RUNNERS OF THE DAY AND DUSK: THE MESSENGERS. Among the lights and shadows of the inner-core steel scaffolding, circular like the well — abstract projections of the Matri-mandir construction seen by EYE — the GYMNAST-MESSENGERS erect an inner ALTAR, building as they chant.

CHORUS OF MESSENGERS

(chanting)

*We are the messengers ... thy will towards light.
With aspiration's sun-dream head and star-carved limbs,
The Runners of the Day and Dusk
From the deep mansion of thy secret soul we come.*

*We are the messengers . . thy occult powers,
Thy will and all man's will towards light,
The fire-footed, sunlight-eyed,
From the deep mansion of thy secret soul we come.*

*We are the messengers, thy powers of will
In evil to light the deathless flame of good;
To hold the torch of knowledge on ignorant roads,
From the deep mansion of thy secret soul,
The birthplace of the Witness fire we come.*

The disciplined GYMNAST-MESSENGERS with their “star-carved limbs” having finished the luminous altar, the *Vedi* of “bricks of light and self-offering”, vanish. YAMA presides over the altar, as the RISHI at the beginning over the Fire Rite; but now he teaches NACHIKETAS how to invoke the Mystic Fire. The YOUNG MAN repeats after YAMA the instruction whispered into his ear.

SANSKRIT CHANTER'S VOICE

... And Nachiketas repeated it even as it was told. (In Sanskrit: I.i. 15)

Invocation to Agni: HYMN TO THE MYSTIC FIRE

O Agni: bearer of our offerings, close comrade in the secrecy,
Lord of the hero-energy, awake and found thy inspiration in us, O *Immortal Fire* !
O Agni: builder of the levels, we who would touch the truth
would kindle thee; burning thou reachest heaven, O Carrier, *Immortal Fire* !
O Agni: thou who art consciousness, Priest of our call,
make true our works; flame high our journey to the Truth, *Immortal Fire* !,
O Agni: Force Divine, build in us the formation of the godhead
for the advent of God in man, lift up this thought, *Immortal Fire* !

Out of the center of the *Vedi*, altar of self-offering, GOD AGNI leaps forth in response: *DANCE OF AGNI AND YOUTH: “THE FIRE OF NACHIKETAS.”* AGNI lifts NACHIKETAS, as Carrier, Guide, up spiralling levels until at the peak-level the two are seen as one FIRE — OF NACHIKETAS. And AGNI disappears from sight.

YAMA

(to NACHIKETAS, pleased)

Even by thy name shall this Fire be called — the Fire of Nachiketas!
And yet a farther boon today I give thee: this necklace also take unto thee, of many figures — Creative Nature under control of the soul that attains to the infinite existence.

Through the dazzling CRYSTALS on a fiery-golden thread of light which YAMA hangs about NACHIKETAS’ neck like a garland after showing him several in the palm of his hand, CAMERA’S EYE sees refracted a sun-burst of solar flames; a chemical explosion; a nuclear-rocket blast; a child’s dazzling smile; a flame-like flower.

NARRATOR’S VOICE

Behind the flame ... behind the solar fire ... the nuclear fire ... is spiritual fire —
the Splendour that has lit the suns.

SANSKRIT CHANTER’S VOICE

AUM: Whoso lights the three fires of Nachiketas and comes to union with the Three: AUM, and does the triple works, sacrifice of the lower existence to the divine on the three planes of consciousness, beyond birth and death he crosses; for he finds the God of our adoration, the Knower.... When so knowing he beholds the Flame of Nachiketas ... leaving sorrow behind him, he in heaven rejoices.
(I.1., 17 and 18, in Sanskrit)

NACHIKETAS’ head encircled by the blaze of CRYSTALS resembles the flamelike flower. Taking it from him, YAMA gives it to an ATTENDANT ... who becomes a bank of flowers on which the YOUTH leans.

YAMA

This is the heavenly Flame, O Nachiketas, which thou hast chosen for the second boon; of this Flame the peoples shall speak that it is thine indeed. A third boon choose, O Nachiketas.

NACHIKETAS

This debate there is over the man who has passed beyond and some say “he is

not" and some "he is", that taught by thee I would know, O Death. This is the third boon of my choosing.

CAMERA'S EYE catches the shadow that passes over YAMA's face like a hood; the resemblance to a Death-Head skull for the first time is seen.

YAMA

(darkening)

Even by the gods was this debated of old; for it is not easy of knowledge, since very subtle is the law of it. Another boon choose, O Nachiket; importune me not, nor urge me; this, this abandon.

YAMA's aspect and entire figure changes; he withdraws, retreating down a subterranean passage. For a moment startled, NACHIKETAS starts to follow him ... to find the passage opening up below him into a black cavernous void.

NACHIKETAS

(entreating)

Even by the gods was this debated, it is sure; but never shall I find a teacher like thee to tell of it, nor is there any other boon that is equal.

CAMERA'S EYE peering down the passage catches the flash of YAMA's mantle as he flings it outward like a magician and conjures up, as on a television screen, a luring montage of bright-coloured projections of contemporary life in a rich city of the East: a travelogue of ease, comfort, great wealth, luxurious pleasures moving upon the rock-walls of the passage.

YAMA'S VOICE

Choose sons and grandsons who shall live each a hundred years ...

NACHIKETAS' VOICE

Teach me the God-knowledge!

YAMA'S VOICE

Choose many cattle, elephants, gold and horses ...

NACHIKETAS' VOICE

Teach me the ordinance of the Yoga!

YAMA'S VOICE

Choose a mighty reach of earth and thyself live for as many years as thou listest .

NACHIKETAS’ VOICE

Teach me the Science of the Spirit before this body drops down!

YAMA’S VOICE

... Wealth and long living ... Fame ... Possessions ... Power ... Yea, all desires that are hard to win in the world of mortals, all demand at thy pleasure ...

NACHIKETAS’ VOICE

Teach me of That beyond Death and the Passing!

A surreal DANCE OF TEMPTATIONS from the subtle world of illusions enters the MONTAGE, with its subtly alluring MUSIC, its siren-song.

YAMA’S VOICE

Lo, these delectable women with their chariots and their bugles, whose like are not to be won by men, these I will give thee; live with them as thy handmaidens. But of Death and the Spirit question not, O Nachiketas.

NACHIKETAS’ VOICE

Until the morrow mortal man has these things, O Ender, and they wear away all this keenness and glory of his senses; nay, all life is even for a little. Thine are these chariots and thine the dancing of these women and their singing.

A mortal man ... when he has come into the presence of the ageless Immortals how can he delight in this overlong living?

O Death, declare to me even that which is in the Great Passage. Than this boon which enters in into the secret that is hidden from us, no other chooses Nachiketas.

Fired with determination to win the God-knowledge NACHIKETAS flails at the visions on the walls; with both arms he sweeps them away ... PROJECTIONS, DANCING, SIREN-SONG end suddenly in an austere silence. As suddenly there appears to CAMERA’S EYE a YOUNG STUDENT wearing dusty, travel-stained cotton slacks, scarf-turban, carrying a knapsack and mat, wiping off a rock-ledge and unrolling the mat upon it for his Teacher. It is NACHIKETAS cleaning the rock-wall and preparing a resting-place for YAMA ... who reappears in the robes of the RISHI, his face hooded. NACHIKETAS sits at his feet; the RISHI (YAMA) chants in Sanskrit I ii., Slokas 1 and 2.

RISHI (YAMA)

Thou, O Nachiketas, hast looked close at the objects of desire, at pleasant things and beautiful, and thou hast cast them from thee: thou hast not entered into the net of riches in which many men sink to perdition.

For far apart are these, opposite, divergent, the one that is known as the Ignorance, and the other the Knowledge. But Nachiketas I deem truly desirous of the Knowledge whom so many desirable things could not make to lust after them.

TWO TOURISTS loaded with cameras and expensive equipment, hot, weary and disgruntled, enter, look rapidly about, take a quick shot of the RISHI and YOUNG MAN, and stumble out.

1ST TOURIST

(Shaking his head disapprovingly at RISHI and YOUTH as he leaves)
Idlers!

RISHI (YAMA)

The childish wit bewildered and drunken with the illusion of riches cannot open its eyes to see the passage of heaven; for he that thinks this world is, and there is no other, comes again and again into Death's thralldom.

But of that One for whose sake thou hast followed me here — He is not easy to be heard of by many.

SEVERAL STUDENTS in contemporary dress, drawn by NACHIKETAS' shining face and the radiance in which he sits with the RISHI in the cool recess of a street-temple, rock-walled, seat themselves around the TEACHER and his DISCIPLE.

RISHI (YAMA)

A miracle is the man that can speak of Him wisely or is skilful to win Him; and a miracle is the listener who can know Him even when taught of Him by the knower.

Yet unless told of Him by another thou canst not find thy way to Him; for He is subtler than subtlety and that which logic cannot reach.

This wisdom is not to be had by reasoning, O beloved Nachiketas ... the wisdom which thou hast got. Truly thou art steadfast in the Truth! Even such a questioner as thou art may I meet with always.

NACHIKETAS

I know of treasure that it is not for ever; for not by things unstable shall one attain That One which is stable. Therefore I heaped the fire of Nachiketas, by the sacrifice of momentary things to win the Eternal.

RISHI (YAMA)

Realising the God by attainment to Him through spiritual Yoga, even the Ancient of Days ... established in our secret being ... the wise man casts away from him joy and sorrow.

Frenzied SHOUTING — whether of joy or rage it is hard to distinguish — comes from the distance. The STUDENTS sitting around the RISHI and NACHIKETAS nudge one another as at an event expected by them. The RISHI turns grave and, drawing NACHIKETAS closer, speaks privately with him.

RISHI (YAMA)

When thou hast heard, when thou hast grasped, when thou hast forcefully separated that subtle Being from thy body and won Him, then thou hast delight, for thou hast got that which one can indeed delight in. Verily I deem of Nachiketas as a house wide open.

SEVERAL OTHER STUDENTS enter, running to their comrades seated near the RISHI, gesticulating wildly towards the distant street riot from which they have come, breaking the news in such a frenetic and garbled fashion it sounds like a "foreign" language — of joy and rage. CAMERA'S EYE observes NACHIKETAS regarding the scene with the calm eyes of his MASTER, who has turned to watch the STUDENTS responding with delight to news of the riot.

RISHI (YAMA)

But none who has not ceased from doing evil, who is not calm, or not concentrated in his being, or whose mind has not been tranquillised, can by wisdom attain to Him.

Linking arms the STUDENT COMRADES break into a whooping *DANCE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY FIRE*: a CHORUS OF YOUTH pawing the ground, tossing their manes like "wild horses" in "the cycle of phenomena".

RISHI (YAMA)

(quietly to NACHIKETAS)

Know the body for a chariot and the soul for the Master.... Wisdom for the charioteer, and the mind for the reins only ... the senses as the steeds ...

Now he that is without knowledge, with his mind ever unapplied, his senses are to him as wild horses and will not obey their driver of the chariot.

Without knowledge, unmindful and ever unclean, he reaches not that goal, but wanders in the cycle of phenomena.

TWO STUDENTS, shirts blood-stained, enter from the direction of the riot carrying a DEAD YOUTH. They break up the dance of their COMRADE STUDENTS who all, except ONE LINGERING near the RISHI, follow the DEAD YOUTH out.

RISHI (YAMA)

But he that has knowledge with his mind ever applied, his senses obey the driver.

... Mindful, pure always ... using the mind for reins and Wisdom for the driver, he reaches the highest goal of the journey. That goal is the Supreme, the secret Self in all existences . .

CAMERA'S EYE notes how, absorbed, the LINGERING STUDENT draws close to listen and responding the RISHI directs the instruction to him intently.

RISHI (YAMA)

Arise, awake, find out the great ones and learn of them! For sharp as a razor's edge, hard to traverse, difficult of going is that path, say the sages.

(Rising, the RISHI fixes the LINGERING STUDENT-SEEKER with a piercing gaze.)

May we have strength to kindle the Agni of Nachiketas! For the sacred Fire is a bridge : It is Brahman Supreme and imperishable; It is the far shore of security to those who would cross over.

If in this world of men and before thy body fall from thee, thou art able to apprehend It, then thou availeth for embodiment in the worlds that He created.

A mighty terror is He ... yea, a thunderbolt uplifted. Learn of Him: for who know Him are the Immortals.

Learn of that secret Self in all existences, learn of That which is eternal; for That having seen, from the mouth of Death there is deliverance.

The RISHI drops his hood, disclosing himself as DEATH. CAMERA'S EYE catches the stunned terror in the STUDENT-SEEKER's eyes as he backs away from DEATH and stumbling, sprawling, picks himself up to flee in fright.

NARRATOR'S VOICE

The sages to Him are as meat, the heroes food for His eating — and Death, Death himself an ingredient of His banquet!

A mighty terror is He ... yea, a thunderbolt uplifted. For fear of Him the Fire burns, for fear of Him the Sun gives heat, for fear of Him Death himself hastens in his courses!

Hooding himself again, the RISHI sways, intoning the Sanskrit Slokas II. iii. 2.-4. to himself Hesitantly NACHIKETAS approaches his MASTER to draw him out of himself.

NACHIKETAS

(hushed)

Tell me of That which thou seest elsewhere than in virtue, O Master, and

otherwhere than in unrighteousness, otherwhere than in this created and this uncreated, otherwhere than in that which has been and that which shall be. Tell of that Secret Self, O Master ... highest goal of the Journey ...

The RISHI slowly returns to himself, as from a distant journey inward. Looking about, he sees the STUDENT-SEEKER stealing back to listen from the shadows.

RISHI (YAMA)

(voice low, reverberant, as coming from a great distance)

OM is that goal, O Nachiketas. OM is the Word the inner Fire declares.

(The OM SOUND vibrates about him, envelops the YOUNG MEN)

This Syllable is the Brahman; this Syllable is the Most High.

NACHIKETAS and the STUDENT-SEEKER begin to hear the OM SOUND throbbing within themselves ... then vibrating as well from the very walls of the recessed inner courtyard. As if called by the OM SOUND, the OTHER STUDENTS, including the two with the blood-stained shirts and a YOUNG GIRL STUDENT, the one in Nachiketas' photograph, steal back to listen — a CHORUS OF YOUTH subdued and open. They sound the OM to themselves as the RISHI continues intoning It, swaying with It.

RISHI (YAMA)

This support is the best, this support is the highest ... OM OM
(Continuing in Sanskrit)

Knowing this support one grows great in the world of Brahman ... OM OM

As transported by the waves of the OM SOUND, the RISHI moves into the *DANCE OF THE WISE ONE* before the enthralled CHORUS OF YOUTH swaying, intoning with him.

YAMA'S VOICE

The Wise One is not born, neither does He die; He came not from anywhere, neither is He anyone: He is unborn, He is everlasting, He is ancient and sempiternal ... not slain in the slaying of the body.

CHORUS OF YOUTH

OM OM

YAMA'S VOICE

Finer than the fine, huger than the huge the Self hides in the secret heart of the

creature: when a man strips himself of will and is weaned from sorrow, then he beholds Him; purified from the mental elements he sees the greatness of the Self-being.

CHORUS OF YOUTH
OM OM

YAMA'S VOICE

Seated He journeys far off, lying down He goes everywhere.

Who other than I is fit to know God, even Him who is rapture and the transcendence of rapture? (CHORUS OF YOUTH: OM OM)

Realising the Bodiless One in bodies, the Established in things unsettled, the Great and Omnipresent Self, the wise soul grieves no longer.

(CHORUS OF YOUTH: OM OM)

And higher than this Great-Self is the Unmanifest, and higher than the Unmanifest is the Purusha. Than the Purusha there is none higher: He is the culmination, He is the highest goal of the journey.

(CHORUS OF YOUTH: OM OM)

He is the secret Self in all existences and does not manifest Himself to the vision: yet is He seen by the seers of the subtle, by a subtle and perfect understanding.

And That having seen ... from the mouth of Death there is deliverance.

The RISHI has come to the end of his tranced DANCE OF THE WISE ONE. As he stands rapt, immobile, the CHORUS OF YOUTH saluting with reverence sit at his feet

CHORUS OF YOUTH

We too seek that Master, Him they call the Bright One.

As the YOUNG PEOPLE wait in hushed expectancy before the RISHI, dusk gathers; NACHIKETAS looking up sees something that arrests his attention. CAMERA'S EYE follows his to a distant hill on which a FIGURE IN SILHOUETTE carrying a kerosene lantern beckons to him urgently. Then strangely, out of the swinging lamp, its FLAME "no larger than the finger of a man" leaps to earth. Closing his eyes, NACHIKETAS sees within ... the same FLAME swaying, urgently beckoning ... and hears within a VOICE speaking with YAMA's ... then in a SECRET WHISPER ... the danced CALL to resume the JOURNEY.

YAMA'S VOICE

A wise man, desiring immortality, turns his eyes inward and sees the Self within

him ... the omnipresent Self by whom one beholds both to the end of dream and to the end of waking ...

SECRET WHISPER OF IMMORTALITY

This is That thou seekest.

YAMA'S VOICE

Deep in the heart of creatures He stands by the mingling of the elements.

SECRET WHISPER

This is That thou seekest.

YAMA'S VOICE

So Aditi, Mother of the Powers ... born through the Prana ... deep in the heart of things she has entered, there she is seated.

SECRET WHISPER

This is That thou seekest.

YAMA'S VOICE

So the Master of Knowledge, concealed in the tinders ... Agni One Fire has entered into the world ... one Spirit within all creatures The Purusha within us ... like a blazing fire without smoke ... Lord of what was and what shall be The One Consciousness in many beings.

SECRET WHISPER

This is That thou seekest.

NACHIKETAS rises from the circle of YOUTH meditating with the RISHI to see the thumb-like FLAME — GOD AGNI — leap to the horizon and, beckoning, disappear over the hill. Quietly slipping away the YOUNG MAN follows the “light of three-fold brightness” (MAITRI UPANISHAD), in size “like the point of an awl” (SHWETASHWATARA UPANISHAD), to see IT again on the darkening plain turn to him, beckon, then dart on ahead. Now swiftly following the FLAME, NACHIKETAS sees it like the arc of a meteor flash up over the scaffolding-towers of the Matrimandir construction which looms before him, as if to show the direction of the ascent. The soft night darkness lit by tower watch-lamps over the construction has become an inner sky of delicate tracings of fire — photon and electron-images, their vibrations visible in a microcosmic inner-stellar space.

YAMA'S VOICE

What is in this world, is also in the other, and what is in the other, that again is in this.

For all that is bright is but the shadow of His brightness and by His shining all this shines.

As NACHIKETAS ascends the scaffolding tower, the YOUNG GIRL, who aware of his leaving has followed him, seeks to reach him across the excavation and through the maze of the Matrimandir inner construction ... her swaying movements and gestures of entreaty a DANCE OF MEMORIES to the FLUTING OF DEATH. Turning back, CAMERA'S EYE looks with NACHIKETAS' earnestness trying to read in her eyes whether she too sees the FLAME and hears the inner VOICE.

YAMA'S VOICE

When one has grasped Him as the "Is", then the essential of God dawns upon a man When every desire that finds lodging in his heart has been loosened from its moorings, then this mortal puts on immortality: even here he tastes God, in this human body.

In her DANCE OF MEMORIES, the YOUNG GIRL catches NACHIKETAS' hand to her breast, covering it with kisses. CAMERA'S EYE looking into hers sees the sparkle of tears.

YAMA'S VOICE

Yea, when all the strings of the heart are rent asunder, even here, in this human birth, then the mortal becomes immortal.

The sparkling tears become stars ... a starry path. FLAME AGNI urging the YOUTH upward disappears in a smile of stars. Disengaging his hand NACHIKETAS turns and hastens towards the smile.

YAMA'S VOICE

And to the heart and the mind and the Super-Mind He is manifest.
Who know Him are the immortals.

Climbing to the stars NCHIKETAS finds himself enwrapped in a huge dark fold as of a sudden VOID in the night-sky: the RISHI's mantle becomes DEATH's cloak and the smile a DEATH'S HEAD GRIN. Like a vast FORM OF THE VOID, the cloaked YAMA clasps NACHIKETAS to him, revolving him slowly in the last DANCE OF DEATH. Only the MORNING STAR and its COMPANION STAR are visible.

YAMA'S VOICE

O Gautama ... now I will tell thee what becomes of the soul when one dies. Some enter a womb to the embodying of the Spirit, and others follow after the Immovable: according to their deeds is their goal, and after the measure of their revealed knowledge. But the Immovable, the Unmanifested, the Purusha pervades all. Who know Him are the immortals.

The SHADOW-OUTLINE OF NACHIKETAS is seen between the STARS and through the mantle of VOID in DEATH's embrace: their single FIGURE OF UNION the center of a SPIRAL NEBULA.

YAMA

*O human claimant to immortality,
Reveal thy power, lay bare thy spirit's force.
Let deathless eyes look into the eyes of Death.*

CAMERA'S EYE looking with NACHIKETAS' into DEATH's socketed skull sees the DEATH'S HEAD GRIN like the sparkle of tears become the starry path ... now spiralling, a Nebula of morning. Turning to look for his beloved Master, dazzled and amazed the YOUTH finds himself in a living surge of fiery golden light.

NARRATOR'S VOICE

*The dire universal shadow disappeared
Vanishing into the void from which it came
A secret splendour rose revealed to sight
Where once the vast embodied Void had stood.*

Seeking its source NACHIKETAS moves as through a smiling warm golden Presence touching everything to life, transforming what it touches to unearthly beauty The core of Matrimandir, its construction maze of tubular scaffolding, becomes a dance of solar fire, dawn in the East an opening into ascending worlds of splendour.

NARRATOR'S VOICE

*As one drowned in a sea of splendour and bliss
Mute in the maze of the surprising worlds,
Turning (he) saw their living knot and source ...
And knew him for the same who snares our lives.*

The spreading plain beneath the scaffolding-towers becomes the SPIRAL NEBULA ... but scattering the golden light like stars of day ... the dream of the Future City drafted in lines of light, with the CRYSTALS OF NACHIKETAS' NECKLACE, Yama's gift, sparkling over the fire-gold earth.

YAMA'S VOICE

*Ascend, O soul, into thy timeless self;
Then do thy task, knowing and seeing all ...
An instrument and partner of God's Force ...
Choose destiny's curve and stamp His will on Time.*

CAMERA'S EYE follows the YOUNG MAN moving in a golden ecstasy across the plain transfigured like the construction and the Banyan Tree, the buildings and small thatched huts he passes by — under the glowing golden light that he sees everywhere. VILLAGERS and YOUNG INTERNATIONALS cycle past down paths of golden dust — FIGURES OF FIERY GOLDEN LIGHT flashing by. All have become waves of the sea of splendour and bliss

YAMA'S VOICE

(with love)

O beloved Nachiketas!
Transform earth's death into immortal life!
For truth and knowledge are an idle gleam
If knowledge brings not power to change the world.

NARRATOR'S VOICE

Thus did Nachiketas with Death for his teacher win the God-knowledge.

NACHIKETAS has reached the Bharat Nivas construction site, and seeing the most ordinary sand-pile and rock-heap he passes transformed into gold and sparkling jewels, he is no longer amazed to find his TEACHER a golden-faced Vedic RISHI in a pillared section of the now deserted assembly hall ... which has become a place of columns of burning splendour And, seated humbly before the RISHI, is a figure familiar but much altered ... bowed, aged, grown small and thin ... yet touched too with the transfiguring golden light. Yes; it is VAJASRAVASA ... waiting for the golden ANCIENT ONE to come out of trance.

NARRATOR'S VOICE

He learned likewise the whole ordinance of Yoga:
Thereafter he obtained God and became void of death.
So shall another be who comes to the Science of the Spirit.

CAMERA'S EYE witnessing the reunion of FATHER and SON sees — with NACHIKETAS' wonder and tenderness — that his father has become his child ... small, weeping, tremulous And for a moment the Father's tearful smile of joy is a child's, shining with the golden God-light. As the new young father embraces the new-born aged child, VOICES OF YOUTH are heard approaching to learn of their ancient Teacher, the Vedic RISHI, CHANTING in Sanskrit ... the great arriving

voice of OM. Its reverberations mingle with the SOUNDS OF WORK beginning in a nearby Pavilion of the Bharat Nivas: a concreting is in progress ...

NARRATOR'S VOICE

A movement is abroad, a cry, a word
Beginningless in its vast discovery,
Momentless in its unthinkable return:
The Fire of Transformation the Immortal Fire.

CHORUS OF YOUTH

OM OM OM

(Concluded)

SEYRIL, *Peace*, AUROVILLE

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STRAY THOUGHTS

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

(Continued from the joint issue of June-July 1974)

ONE set of the Bengal Intelligence Branch covered Sri Aurobindo for seditious material in speeches and writings. The search of the *Karmayogin* Press and a warrant of arrest against him were the result in Case No 1936 of 1910 — *EMPEROR vs. (1) ARABINDA GHOSE (2) MANMOHAN GHOSE*. He had, however, left for Chandernagore on about 21 February 1910. (On 18/6/1910, the printer Manmohan was sentenced to six months. The High Court appeal was filed on 18/8/1910 and the High Court took it up as Appeal No. 744 of 7th November 1910, quashing the sentence.)

Another set of Bengal Intelligence staff went on with follow-up inquiries as regards Charu Chandra Dutt with a possible link with Sri Aurobindo. In confidential File No. 265 on "Mr. C. C. Dutt, ICS", it is seen that there were enough grounds to suspect that Charu Chandra Dutt had been "deeply involved" in the conspiracy. In fact, he is reported to have accompanied PROFULLA CHAKI to Darjeeling in 1907 so as to plan a bomb-throw at Sir Andrew Frazer, the then Lieutenant Governor of Bengal. Diligent enquiries failed, in 1909, to secure any evidence. But to find out if anyone in the Andamans would come forward to give evidence in open court, Government ultimately sent Denham, the Special Assistant to the then IG MORSHEAD to Port Blair. Here are some details of notes on Charu Chandra Dutt:

(a) *Contact with Barin Established.*

(Barin writes to Nirode Chandra Mullick, brother of Subodh Chandra Mullick, who was C. C. Dutt's brother-in-law:)

"Dear Nirode Babu,

Subodh Babu has told me to take Rs. 500/- from you for our Yugantar Press. Can I trouble you for it now? Please let me know when Mr. Charu Dutt is expected."

- (b) In the confession of Narendranath Gossain (not corroborated).
- (c) Three of the accused in the case implicated Mr. Charu Chandra Dutt in "extra-judicial" statements as "a leading member of the Society".
- (d) From IG Police, Bengal (Hon'ble L. F. MORSHEAD) to IG Police,

Bombay, No. 4378 SD of 31/5/1910, "Strictly Confidential":

"Had long conversation with Barindra in presence of and aided by Denham and Shamsul Alam. Barin will never say anything against anyone so as to incriminate him except those already and strongly incriminated."

Bengal Government, however, hoped that two others might respond suitably. They felt "we cannot afford to throw away any chance". Denham was sent to the Andamans to visit the prisoners to see if anyone would now come forward, but Denham was not to hold out any inducements. It was "out of the question to make terms with any of these arch offenders".

Denham, then Special Assistant to DIG, IB, Bengal, left Calcutta by steamer on 11th June 1910. His report on return, dated 22/7/1910, gives the following:

- (a) BARIN: — "Charu Dutt never tried to conceal his ideas on political subjects ... used to give small sums of money on various occasions."
- (b) ABINASH BHATTACHARYA: — "Denied any clear recollection of who the different people were who used to visit Aurobindo Ghose."
- (c) UPEN: — "When C. C. Dutt was in Calcutta he was a very active member of the organisation. When asked *how active*, replied enquire in Thana, Ahmedabad, Darjeeling. Refused to give evidence."

Government was "morally certain" but could not prove anything. On 22/7/1910, the Chief Secretary, Bengal, advised his counterpart in Bombay: "Mr. Denham has learnt nothing in Port Blair. No one would say anything openly against Mr. Dutt. In the meantime Mr. C. C. Dutt was on leave for two years following a Departmental Enquiry held by the Hon' ble Mr. Jenkins, CSI, of the Council in Bombay on alleged complicity in the Alipore Case. Mr. Dutt had given a statement to him on 11/8/1908, only admitting knowing Barin when he was in Thana. His leave was to expire on 9/9/1910. On 24/6/1909 advised by his father Mr. Dutt asked for permission to go to England for completing his terms at Gray's Inn for a transfer to the Judicial side of ICS. Bengal advised Bombay on 26/6/1909, 'there is no objection on the part of Government of Bengal as considered by His Honour the Lieutenant Governor'."

By the time Denham went to Port Blair (11/6/1910), Sri Aurobindo was already in Pondicherry (4/4/1910). The last efforts to have him involved in criminal cases also failed. In the *Karmayogin* case, the article he had written was held by the High Court to be not seditious. In the other possible conspiracy case, none would come forward and his faithful attendant Abinash even in the Andamans "had no clear recollection of anyone visiting Shri Arabindo." Thus, a possible link through Mr. Charu Dutt ICS involving both of them in a conspiracy, a new case, also had no chance of being proved in a Court of Law.

The Bengal Establishment had lost to Sri Aurobindo.

Something about life in Jail in the Andamans as reported by Denham may be of interest:

“I noticed Ganesh Damodar Sarvarkar of Nasik notoriety. Hem Das knew him. I told the Jail Superintendent so that they do not see each other ...

Cells of the Alipore case prisoners are in the same big wing of the prison. The Wardens are Madrassis and Burmans. The cells are never contiguous. The intervening cells are occupied by illiterate persons who have no knowledge of English, Bengali or Hindi. Good arrangement.”

Here is also an extract of a report by Mr. F. C. Daly, Deputy Inspector General of Police, Intelligence Branch, Bengal, to the Chief Secretary for Information of the Lt. Governor Sir Edward Baker, dated 21st July 1909 — as the police observed Sri Aurobindo's activities and associates from the date of his acquittal 6th May 1909 to the end of July 1909 :

Release and After

On his release from the dock at Alipore on the 6th May Arabindo was taken by several pleaders to the Bar Library. He was treated with great respect, one of the two pleaders going so far as to touch his forehead with the dust from his feet. From the Bar Library he went with the other acquitted prisoners to the house of his Counsel Mr. C. R. Das, and then to No. 6, College Square, the house of Babu Kristo Kumar Mitter, deportee, whose family are still residing there and there he has been living since his release.

He has not been away from Calcutta at all except to Uttarpara on the 30th May and to attend the Jhalakoti conference in June. He delivered a speech in Khulna on his way back from Jhalakoti.

The Jhalakoti and the Khulna speeches are given in this set (complete set of speeches till date) as reported from the Eastern Bengal Abstract.

On his release he was requested by Surendranath Bannerji to write for *The Bengalee*, but he declined, saying his views and *The Bengalee's* were as wide apart as the Poles.

Karmayogin — History

An admirer of Arabindo's (name not known but possibly Misri Babu of Uttarpara) is said to have given him Rs. 500/-, requesting him to employ it as best he could in the service of the Motherland.

He made this money over to Girija Sunder Chakravarty, brother of Shyam-sundar Chakravarty, deportee, and it was then definitely settled that they would start the paper *Karmayogin*.

Arabindo, though undoubtedly the guiding spirit in the *Karmayogin*, is

advertised only as a contributor. Other contributors are Hemendra Kumar Ghose, Zemindar of Chowgacha, Jessor, Kristo Proshad Ghose, formerly of the *Bande Mataram* staff, Bhola Das, brother of Mr. C. R. Das. The printer is Manmohan Ghose, who was formerly printer of *Navashakti* and was sentenced to 6 months' rigorous imprisonment in February or March 1908 under Section 124A, and has recently purchased and re-entered the Sri Narayan Press expressly for the printing of the *Karmayogin*.

The following contributed towards the purchase of the press — Jagat Kishore Acharya, Brajendra Kishore Acharya, Bhupati Bose, Rurhi Mull Goenka, Karoonamani Sen of Hindustan Cooperative Bank, Rajkumar Sen of Das Asram Medical Hall and Hemendra Prasad Ghose.

Seven hundred subscribers have already been registered but the third issue is said to have been of 2000 copies, all of which sold.

A Bengali version of the *Karmayogin* will be issued shortly, edited by Amarendranath Chatterji, the right hand man of Misri Babu, and will probably be printed at the old Karmayogin Press at Howrah.

His present occupation and associates

Arabindo spends most of his day in study of religious books and in writing. He is said to be accessible to almost anyone, known or unknown, who goes to call on him. His principal associates whom he visits and is visited by are : — Babu Ramananda Chatterji, Gisapati Kabyatirtha, Lalit Mohan Das, Prasanna Kumar Bose, Jitendra Nath Bannerji, Gyan Chandra Roy, C. R. Das Bar at Law, S. N. Halder Bar at Law and P. Mitter.

(Note: Appeal in High Court against Barin's death sentence was then in progress.)

Assessment

His influence among the upper classes and educated men has been considerably diminished by his foolish assumption of the role of a divinely inspired being under the special protection of God, though the pose seems to have made a considerable impression on immature minds. Level-minded men look upon him with a feeling of pity rather than admiration, regarding him as a once-splendid intellect now almost deranged.

Several of his friends are trying to induce him to give up politics and tend to his health. A few days ago he was heard to say that he would do so after the 27th of September 1909. The reference to this date is not understood and further enquiries are being made.

The following are the dates of his fixtures for the near future:

Beadon Square 24th July
Faridpur 25th July

Harish Mukerji Park
 (Bhowanipur) 1st August
 College Square and
 Greer Park 7th August

to be followed by Surma Valley Conference in Cachher, and Noakhali Conference (exact date not known).

He has not done anything since his release to collect any boys round him. He is of course very interested in Barin's fate, and is giving much attention to the case.

(Note: Appeal then being heard at High Court).

F. C. Daly
 21/7/1909."

To conclude:

(a) There was a deliberate choice in 1906 by Sri Aurobindo in selecting Bengal for his centre of activity on sound political and strategic grounds.

(b) Two journals came out — the *Yugantar* in Bengali for the Bengali speaking and reading public, and the *Bande Mataram*, an English daily, possibly because a large section of the educated population in Bengal Presidency then (including Bihar and Orissa) was not Bengali "reading" public. The *Yugantar* had the style of Bankim Chandra. The *Bande Mataram* was a paper of Dignity and Defiance; we may note that schoolboys used to be fined if they uttered the words "Bande Mataram".

(c) A beginning was made for a school for training leaders or "Officers" in Irregular Warfare based on sound Military and Political Manuals, the first of its kind in the Indian languages.

(d) A group of high-spirited young men was recruited. They were hardy, pledged to secrecy and willing to take risks. Their motivation was the highest, one of self-fulfilment based on patriotism, love for the Motherland, and a hatred of the Government then in power.

(e) There was a daring leader in Barin, singularly brave, straightforward, hard-working, with exceptional qualities of leadership.

(f) There was lacking, however, the professional experience; there was impatience. Thus the plan which was very sound in theory, but which needed time, five to ten years to become a real threat to Government, did not succeed. The activity folded up with remarkable discipline.

(g) That Sri Aurobindo was not convicted in either the *Bande Mataram* Case or the Alipore Bomb Case can only be ascribed to the Higher Power acting through many, particularly through the over-confident Norton, the excellently disciplined and loyal, though young, accused, Mr. C. R. Das and Judge Beachcroft.

(h) That after so thorough a preparation, NO appeal against his acquittal was

filed seems also a miracle. The unexpected clash between Norton and the Chief Justice, *plus* the cautious and sympathetic approach of Judicial Officers, in particular Mr. Chapman, as well as the pragmatic approach of the Governor, all severally contributed to this divine action.

(i) That he was not prosecuted for making seditious speeches, again, was because of the inefficiency of Police shorthand writers, no two of whom could be used for corroborating each other. Probably Sri Aurobindo's accent in English was responsible for this.

(j) That he was not deported in 1909 was because of the bureaucratic "in-fighting". Bengal Government had its little revenge upon Indian Government by asserting for the time being its own local judgment.

A period ends—the Master in action, using and perfecting the "Material Envelope" for the start of his life and mission in Pondicherry, having completed his self-imposed task in Bengal and rejuvenating the body politic in India.

(Concluded)

LT. COL. G. L. BHATTACHARYA

THE INDIAN YUGAS

(This contribution, which is a part of the author's forthcoming book, THE GNOSTIC CIRCLE, A Synthesis in the Harmonies of the Cosmos, is a further elaboration and a deeper and wider interpretation of the theme which she treated in the article, "The Mysterious Yugas", published in our issue of December 5, 1972).

INDIAN scriptures state that the Kaliyuga began with the death of Sri Krishna. This is true to an extent, but first of all it is necessary to understand that the figures of the Yugas (Ages) are not in actual fact *years*, as is commonly believed, but refer rather to *seconds of degrees* of celestial longitude.

They are as follows:

SATYA YUGA	— 1,728,000
TRETA YUGA	— 1,296,000
DWAPARA YUGA	— 864,000
KALI YUGA	— 432,000

432,000 would be four zodiacal signs converted into seconds of degrees. The seconds of one sign are 108,000, and 4 times this is 432,000. If then the Kaliyuga is to last 432,000 seconds of longitude after Sri Krishna's death, this would take us through four signs or, presuming that he was born in the age of Taurus, up to the Age of Capricorn, the traditional sign of the Golden Age, the Satyayuga of the Hindus. In this case we can agree with the scriptures regarding the period of the Kaliyuga. It is by no means 432,000 years that the age of Darkness is to last, but simply four signs in the precession of the equinoxes. The so-called Kaliyuga is a time when a powerful churning takes place, when all forces come together and strongly vie with one other, seeking to establish their individual supremacy on the whole of the evolution, which is nevertheless destined to progress toward a unity of being and a harmonisation of forces. The work of the times is particularly characterised by the rift between science and spirituality. Science might appear to be the major obstacle in the development of the Spirit and the obvious cause (or effect) of the dawn of a Kaliyuga, when mankind turns toward all the aspects of material life and concentrates its energies on them, to the exclusion of a refinement of its finer substances. But, as we have stated elsewhere, this is only the first and necessary step, leading to a final fusion which will be the foundation of the Age of Truth, the Satyayuga.

There are many interesting facts to be noted regarding the so-called Kaliyuga. In the first place, the word *kali* is derived from the Sanskrit root *kāla*, to *measure*, the stem of our English word *calculate*. It is connected to the Goddess Kali in that she is the power of the Time-Spirit, Kala. So we can say that Kaliyuga means both time-

measure and the goddess Kali, both in essence being the same. "Black", which is another meaning attributed to *kali*, is also appropriate, for truly the times are a darkening of the Light.

However, let us go more deeply into the study of the Yugas and try to unravel the real meaning, which will then show the student how in fact the Yugas are equal to our Map of the 12 Manifestations,¹ how they are connected to Greek and other ancient traditions, and how they are the same revelation and prophecy as of the Giza Sphinx. In this manner we shall see that the Knowledge is truly One.

We have stated that Kaliyuga is only the measurement of Time. For this reason, therefore, the count does not actually begin with Kaliyuga, 432,000 seconds of degrees of longitude — equivalent to four signs of the Zodiac; Kaliyuga is simply our key of measurement. We can understand how this figure would be the key to the measure of Time since it is also *the radius of the Sun*. The Sun's radius is the key of Truth in that it unites the outer circle of the disk (the Multiple) with the inner central core (the One). We could call this: "The Measure of Unity." It is precisely the Sun's symbol, the point within the circle, that contains the Knowledge, as we have explained elsewhere in the text, and this corresponds as well to the orb's physical characteristics, thus showing the harmony between space and time and the evolutionary cycles of man on Earth which are determined by the unfolding and perfecting of consciousness.

In Auroville, India, a monument is being constructed which precisely captures this Knowledge, the *Matrimandir* (Temple of the Mother). It is the very symbol of the Sun, a golden sphere with a central crystal that will capture the actual rays of the Sun. The *Rig-veda* also appears to contain the same key to the measurement of Time based on the Sun of Truth because it is said to have 432,000 syllables.

In the December 1972 issue of *Mother India*, the article entitled "The Mysterious Yugas" marked the beginning of our attempt to decipher the secret of the Yugas. In that article certain essentials were brought forth which are still valid, but the fuller understanding had not yet come. It had been seen that the figures for the Yugas were seconds of degrees of longitude which were then to be converted into years by means of the precession of the equinoxes, and that at present we are, in fact, in the Satya-yuga. But at that time there was too great a timidity to follow the movement through to its conclusion and be audacious enough to entirely re-arrange the count, based on the development of the numbers from 2 to 3 to 4, in this way moving from Dwapara to Treta to Satya. It was stated in the article that all the four Yugas would give us three rounds of the Zodiac plus one third, and the one third made the design imperfect. Kaliyuga is only the key. In effect it does not exist, or, as was stated in the article: "We are always in a Kaliyuga." The very fact that the word is also taken to mean *black* is another important key, because men have been under the yoke of illusion for thousands of years, since the death of Sri Krishna, whose name also means *black*, believing that they were in the Dark Age. In truth, mankind is in the "dark" simply

¹ See "Symbols and the Question of Unity", Part II, *Mother India*, April 24, 1973 or the book under the same title (Servive Publisher, Wassenaar, Holland), pp 33-44.

by not realising that there is no such thing as a Kaliyuga, and that in effect the Age of Darkness is only determined by an ignorance of Truth, which can come about in any Age. Man has believed himself to be in an Age of Darkness, which is only the illusion of Time, and consequently Time is illusion only in so far as vision is fragmentary. When one breaks through to a full vision of Truth, Time then is the key and saviour, not the bondage.

The Kaliyuga exists whenever man has lost the Knowledge; then he becomes lost within the measure of Time, Kali, and cannot see beyond. He has divided time — past, present and future — and lost the vision of Unity whereby he is able to follow the real movement of the Ages. The man of ignorance is always bound by Kali to the wheel of life and death, and can never realise himself within the Age of Truth, while the Gnostic Being has the key of knowledge, the light of Immortality.

In a rather precise manner we can examine certain interesting facts of the Yugas, and show very accurately how we are in the Satyayuga, the Age of Truth, and have been for over 10,000 years.

Since Kaliyuga is only the measurement, we begin the count of the Yugas with Dwapara, two times Kali, 864,000; after this we pass into Treta, three measures of Time, then Satya, four measures. There are then the numbers 4, 3 and 2, which are the very digits of the *kali* measurement: 432,000. They are, as well, the most important numbers in the structure of symbols: 2 equals the Line, 3 equals the Triangle, and 4 equals the Square. With these it is possible to construct the Zodiac because 2, or the Line, is the division of Feminine and Masculine signs, 3, the Triangle, represents the energy flows of Creation, Preservation and Destruction (Cardinal, Fixed and Mutable), and 4, or the Square, is the division of the Elements, Fire, Earth, Air and Water. Therefore these numbers, 4-3-2, are the basic numbers of the Zodiac, as well as the measure of Time, and the Zodiac is in effect the Great Timepiece; 4-3-2 equal 9, the number that absorbs all the others.

This discovery brings to mind the Sphinx of Thebes, the Maiden with the body of a Lion, and the Riddle she gave Oedipus to solve, based on these very numbers, 4, 3, 2. The symbol of the Sphinx has long contained for man the key to the mystery of his evolution on Earth.

Following the precession of the equinoxes in the manner of the Indian Yugas, the count begins at 0° Aries, the perpetual starting-point in the Zodiac, with the Dwaparayuga, and moves through 8 signs (864,000 seconds of celestial longitude); by proceeding backwards, as the precession of the Ages moves, this brings us to 0° Leo. It must be pointed out that Leo is ruled by the Sun and that the figure for the Dwaparayuga, 864,000, is in terms of miles, precisely *the diameter of the Sun*. 2,160 miles is the diameter of the Moon, and it takes 2,160 years to move through one sign of the Zodiac. The student can understand therefore that with regard to the Earth the Sun's diameter is translated into *seconds*, while the Moon's diameter is *years*, which is the proportional difference in the experience of time between one body and the other, due to the differ-

ence in densification of the two bodies: the finer the substance, the greater is the acceleration of Time.¹

Dwaparayuga brings us through 864,000 seconds or 8 zodiacal signs, up to O° Leo. The next Yuga is Treta, 1,296,000 seconds, or 12 signs which, from where we find ourselves at the end of the Dwaparayuga, O° Leo, would simply take us through one complete round of the Zodiac, back once again to O° Leo. Here then begins the last of the Yugas, Satyayuga, 1,728,000 seconds of longitude, or passage through 16 signs of the Zodiac; from O° Leo this would be one complete round plus 4 more signs, ending up at the starting-point, O° Aries, a perfect design of the unfoldment of Time. In this manner 36 signs are traversed, the very same as in the Map of the 12 Manifestations, or passage through three complete Rounds of the Zodiac. To render the process clear, here is a list of the Ages and their equivalents in signs and time:

Dwaparayuga	864,000"	=	8 signs	=	17,280 years
Tretayuga	1,296,000"	=	12 signs	=	25,920 years
Satyayuga	1,728,000"	=	16 signs	=	34,560 years
			<u>36</u>		<u>77,760</u>

In this revelation the most important discovery is that it clarifies the riddle of the Giza Sphinx. As can be seen, the count of the Yugas hinges on the O° Leo point, and consequently on O° Aquarius as well, since the equinoctial axis cuts through the Zodiac from one sign to its opposite. This is precisely the Giza Sphinx: a Man (Aquarius) with the body of a Lion (Leo). And this marvellous monument has silently been revealing to mankind throughout the millennia the precious knowledge of the Satyayuga, the Age of Truth which would begin when the precession of the equinox had passed for the last time over the O° Leo point in our Great Circle of 77,760 years. This occurred 8,640 years before the beginning of our 9th Manifestation, the time in years of the seconds of the Kaliyuga, numbers that once again recall the diameter of the Sun, ruler of Leo. Thus, from that point to our times, the era of Kalki, there is one measure of time, or a "Kaliyuga". Our 9th Manifestation is the epoch of the unveiling of Truth.

¹ One Age (one sign) of the Sun, based on its diameter, is equivalent to 8 Ages (8 signs) of the Moon, based on its diameter, together equalling 9. Drawing another diameter on the faces of these bodies produces the most important symbol employed in deciphering time by means of the circle. In this way the Sun yields 16 Ages (the Satyayuga), 34,560 years, and the Moon 2 Ages, 4,320 years, in all 18 Ages. 18 years is the *Saros Cycle* the amount of time it takes for the Sun, Moon and Earth to return to approximately the same position with respect to one another. Rahu and Ketu are significantly involved with the number 18 since it takes 18 years for these Lunar Nodes to make one complete revolution of the Zodiac. For example, 1974 is the 18th year after the Supramental Manifestation of 1956, thus Sun, Moon and Earth are now returning to the same position with respect to one another that they occupied then, and the Lunar Nodes (Rahu and Ketu) therefore have made one complete revolution. The Nodes represent the soul of the Earth.

For this reason the number 18 has played such an important role in Indian mythology, particularly in the life of Sri Krishna; *vide* the *Mahabharata* and the *Bhagavad Gita*.

In this way an accurate connection has been made between the knowledge of pre-historic Egypt, historic Greece, and India of our 9th Manifestation. Above all, the student can contemplate on the magnificence of the Sphinx and the Great Pyramid, monuments which the sages of old left for the coming races, wherein the knowledge of humanity's destiny would be contained and preserved, and whereby man would be able to follow the course of his progress and understand that the cosmos of which he is a part is a perfection, and that he is destined to become a vivid embodiment of that Perfection. The manner in which they have preserved the knowledge is the simplest of all, a mere triangular form which would reveal the way the circle is divided in order to understand Time — four sections of three — and the sublime symbol of the Sphinx which is the message of the Age of Truth. The Sphinx was built precisely at the time the precession was passing over or within the vicinity of 0° Leo, carrying humanity into the Satyayuga, some 10,800 years ago.¹

It is perhaps difficult for us to truly accept this, because man cannot believe that the Satyayuga can bring with it such darkness, for the times appear to be darker than ever before and humanity seems to be sinking ever lower into the black hole of materialism. But the Truth has first to be lost, so that the depths of Matter can be explored and redeemed, so that the light of Spirit can truly render the very cells of the human body a luminous tabernacle of Light. The plunge into darkness is only so that the depths may receive the light of Truth. For such an accomplishment to take place a great many years are needed. Observation of the list of the Yugas shows that the development augments, so that the Satyayuga is double the years of the Dwapara. Of all the Ages it is the longest, because of all the Ages its task is the most intricate and laborious. Man has a rather sentimental notion of what the Satyayuga is. In his reveries he imagines, perhaps, an idyllic pastoral Elysium on Earth. This may be, but first a very long, difficult and seemingly dark period must ensue.

In order for humanity to know and understand this process and not be lost in despair, when the moment is blackest, the Supreme has left us the Sphinx, the Pyramid, the Zodiac, and all the other keys of Knowledge, at the dawn of the Satyayuga, the time of the incarnation of Rama. The 9th Manifestation is the period of Kalki, the unmasking of the illusion in which man has been living since the death of Sri Krishna, the 8th Avatar, the Incarnation of the 8th Manifestation which was the reign of Scorpio, the sign of Death. This order Kalki comes to re-establish, and to awaken man from his slumber in illusion to the reality of the Satyayuga.

It is true that the Dark Age began with the death of Sri Krishna, because it was just at that time that the knowledge of the Zodiac was lost and man could not insert himself into the pattern of evolution in the correct manner. He could not make sense out of the cosmic harmonies and thus they appeared to him imperfect, a part of the Ignorance; and the way was then prepared for the spiritual movement which was to

¹ 10,800, the number of stanzas of the *Rig-Veda*, which, by its 432,000 syllables and these 10,800 stanzas, can be seen to be an accurate time-piece in itself, indicating when the Age of Truth would begin to reveal itself.

pull him away from the Cosmos and make him seek to satisfy his quest for Truth in an isolated experience and realisation of the Transcendent Divine, calling the Cosmos "Ignorance" and "Illusion". The Illusion was certainly there, but it had not much to do with the Cosmos: it was man's illusion regarding Time, the loss of the key of Truth. *Kalyuga* has since then become synonymous with darkness, ignorance and illusion, and the difficult part in the matter is that we are *forever* in a Kaliyuga, because we are forever in the measurement of Time. If we are in manifestation we are immediately thrust into the Wheel of Time; from this Wheel we can never escape, though we may believe ourselves to have become free of its bondage through various spiritual disciplines and realisations. The freedom we seek is an illusory freedom, if we intend it to carry us beyond the Wheel. We can in no way disengage ourselves from Manifestation, and even our experience of the Static Brahman is from and within this realm of Time. Back into the body we must come, no matter to what planes we soar in meditation and trance, or, even if we are absorbed into a subtler plane, our being in time does not change, only our perception and experience of it changes. If we merge into the so-called Void without taking birth and a body on this planet, can we truly say that we are out of the Manifestation? Or is it not that we have simply dissolved the instrument of perception of individuality and have moved into the Consciousness of the Great Being, — to us, at this point on Earth, "unmanifest"? Can we not say, in truth, that there is really no difference between the Manifest and the Unmanifest, and that it is simply our faculty of perception that makes the division? — that, in fact, Brahman and Shakti are One?

Our problem arises with *language*, with the expression of *That*.¹ But it is not by the spoken word that the division truly begins: it is the moment the *faculty* appears which is capable of the perception of division, of isolation, through the word. In our limited earth-consciousness we can say that something does not exist until it is named, though we name it "the Nameless". It is Mind which labels, and which therefore divides, and because we are in the sphere of Mind as yet, we cannot know that Brahman and Shakti are One and simultaneously exist within the Eternal; nor can we perceive that what we call the Absolute or the Unmanifest is only that which is not perceivable by Mind and which we must therefore call "the Nameless".

Our whole understanding of the Void, the Manifest, the Unmanifest, and so forth, will be radically changed with the dawn of the Truth-Consciousness in this Satyayuga: we shall come to say paradoxically, "All is only Matter, yet all is only

¹ Speech, leading to the word which divides and gives independent existence to a phenomenon, is very closely allied to Matter, or, let us say, its process and finality are the same. Consequently, in the Zodiac the sign of Matter, Taurus, is also the sign governing the organs of speech. It rules the throat, the larynx, and is the sign of "the Voice". Taurus is then followed by Gemini, the sign of Mind, and so the process is completed by the introduction of the instrument of perception and the word or language itself. The very structure of language gives us an understanding of the process of creation and manifestation. Speech may limit and divide, but at the same time it renders a phenomenon *sohd*, fully in existence, equipped with its "body". In the same way, Matter is the solid body of Spirit. The first three signs of the Zodiac, Aries, Taurus and Gemini, are the trinity. *Speaker*, *Voice* and *the Word*, the creative process of all manifested things

Spirit — there is nothing but the unmanifested Manifest, and the manifested Un-manifest.”

If we do not see this truth, we are ever bound by Time and live in the Age of Darkness, for since we are always in a Kaliyuga, it is only by having the true key of Time that we can fully escape from the Ignorance. The Satyayuga can only take shape once the Gnostic Being has revealed man's right relation to time and the Cosmos. The Cosmos is a perfection. Through this brief study of the Yugas the student has been able to share in the experience of this perfection. We must only lift our heads and break through the veils of Maya. Time (Kala) is at once the bondage and the liberation. Therefore it is said in the “Chandi”: “Worshipping the 18, 8 and 10, Kala (Time) and Death are mitigated” 18, 8 and 10 are the numbers of arms of the goddesses that are worshipped, and $18 + 8 + 10 = 36$, the signs of the true count of the Yugas, the signs of the *12 Manifestations*.

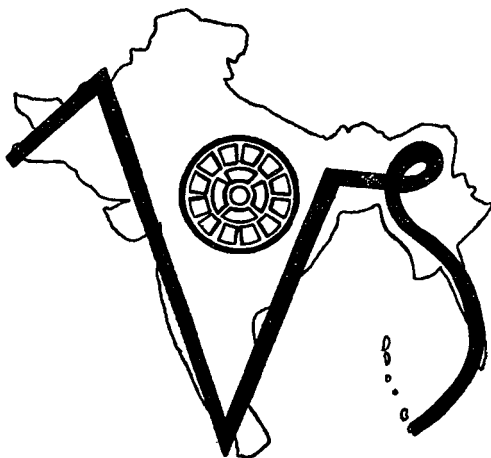
Throughout we have spoken of Capricorn as the Divine Mother's Victory, the Victory over Death, the divinisation of Matter, as well as the symbolic sign of the Satyayuga. It rules India. It is India's land itself, precisely *Mother India*. There is no better way to show this than by its symbol; for, as a very perceptive student has recently pointed out, the shape of India is the very shape of the symbol of Capricorn. But the vision is incomplete if one does not take the true map of India, as Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have stressed, the map of a united India, its spiritual integrated power. On 29.7.1964, when the Mother was questioned about this map, with her symbol placed at its centre, she declared:¹

“The map was made after the partition.

It is the map of the true India in spite of all passing appearances — and this will always remain the map of the true India, no matter what people may think of it.”

With the symbol of Capricorn superimposed, the map stands thus:

This is deeply significant because the symbol of Capricorn, which in occult circles has always been called the “Name of God” and which when deciphered would mean the beginning of the Golden Age, represents the triune Manifestation, the Divine Trinity incarnate and the completion



¹ See *Mother India*, August 15, 1964, p. 5, where the original French in her own hand appears along with the English translation.

of the three energies, the three gunas; because of this it governs the Age of Truth. In the Zodiac the three energies fall in the order — Rajas, Sattwa, Tamas — because they correspond to the progression of the energy flows of Cardinal, Fixed and Mutable qualities. Thus Rajas is Cardinal or Creation (Brahma), Sattwa is Fixed or Preservation (Vishnu), and Tamas is Mutable or Destruction (Shiva). In the symbol of Capricorn these three forces are seen as well. The first guna, Rajas, would correspond to the first ascending line, the peak. It is in fact representative of the top of the mountain and as we can see on the map it dominates the region of the Himalayas. The middle portion is Sattwa, the apex of the descending triangle, the plunge into the abyss, the light that illumines the depths of Matter. For this reason the Avatars appear under this guna. In the map it is the descent from the lofty Himalayas on to the even plains. The last, Tamas, is the portion which is captured in the symbol by the tail that swings back upon itself. It represents the Transformation, the dissolution which brings about a new Birth. In the ideal sense it is the perfect surrender, the *action-in-non-action*. The three phases of the symbol then represent Heaven and Earth and their Union.

India as she is now is formed only of one portion, the central Sattwic; on either side of her there is a cutting away of her original components: thus two portions of her are lacking. The addition of these two can alone bring about the full and complete manifestation. Their lack is the result or outcome of the nation's years of depleted spiritual energy. The full nation, or the full symbol, is truncated. The sattwic heart is left intact but without the power to bring forth the central Fire and stamp it upon the outer creation. It is as if the arms of Durga were cut off, for she is Capricorn, she is Mother India.

So the Satyayuga comes forth when India — however that may happen — is really united in this symbol which the Supreme disclosed thousands of years ago. The nation shall not fully rise, Truth shall not reveal its face, the Earth shall not be divinised until this symbol is made complete.

The occult meaning of the sign, the divinisation of Matter, is reflected in the symbol by the V. From the heights Durga plunges into the depths of Matter to bring there the light of Truth. It is there that her Victory is achieved and the transformation takes place. On the map the location of this critical activity is the South, where the work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother — the transformation of Matter in its most profound and complete sense — has begun and the message of the Satyayuga has been revealed — where the Dark and the Light shall become One.

The Satyayuga is made up of four measures of time: 4 is the number of the Square, the Square is the symbol Sri Aurobindo has given to Supermind, the Truth-Consciousness and, as we have shown in this brief study, the figures of the Yugas are taken directly from the Sun, which also is Sri Aurobindo's symbol of Supermind. It will take 4 Kaliyugas to firmly establish the 4 "feet of the Cow" in the Earth, to render Matter perfect and an image of the Lord. It is time that a more accurate understanding of the Yugas comes to the Indian nation, for the good of the nation itself,

and for the destiny of the Earth.

In conclusion, we can say that *we are in the Kaliyuga within the Satyayuga* — for we have not yet become living embodiments of Truth.

PATRIZIA NORELLI-BACHELET

PROMISE

I AM a child, kissed by the sun,
Reaching for roses till dawn is done,
Laughing and loving and leaving behind
All that I've lost, all that I find.

For the dawn's never done and the day never dies.
We spin round the sun, we laugh 'neath the skies.
I shall go on laughing and opening my eyes,
Laughing and loving and opening my eyes.

NANCY

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-July, 1974)

6 (Contd.)

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

(i)

OUT of all of Teilhard's writings, perhaps the ones that most lucidly and decisively catch up the modern religious intuition into a light at the same time revealing to it its own depths and laying bare Teilhardism in a basic form are made up of the essay he wrote in March 1937 while crossing the Pacific — *The Phenomenon of Spirituality* — and a few passages from two other essays — *The Spirit of the Earth* (March 1931) and *Human Energy* (October 1937) — which are relevant to some issues arising in the first-named piece but not wholly solved there.¹

This piece is so forthright in its general thesis that not much ambivalence and self-contradiction, not much of the pull-devil-pull-baker double-mindedness recurring in Teilhard's works is possible to it. We can easily take the few hurdles he sets up here and there, and reach in a remarkably easy canter our goal: his fundamental vision of World and God.

His general thesis is the most terrific of his startlers for traditional Christian thought:

“For some, heirs to almost all the spiritualist philosophies of former times, the spirit is something so special and so high that it could not possibly be confused with earthly and material forces which it animates. Incomprehensibly associated with them, it impregnates them but does not mix with them. There is a world of souls and a world of bodies. Spirit is a ‘meta-phenomenon’.

“For others, on the contrary, more or less belated representatives of nineteenth-century thought, spirit seems something so small and frail that it becomes accidental and secondary. In face of the vast material energies to which it adds absolutely nothing that can be weighed or measured, the ‘fact of consciousness’ can be regarded as negligible. It is an ‘epi-phenomenon’.

¹ All the three essays are in the collection entitled *Human Energy* (Collins, London, 1969).

"I propose in these pages to develop a third viewpoint towards which a new physical science and a new philosophy seem to be converging at the present day: that is to say that spirit is neither super-imposed nor accessory to the cosmos, but that it quite simply represents the higher state assumed in and around us by the primal and indefinable thing that we call, for want of a better name, the 'stuff of the universe'. Nothing more; and also nothing less. Spirit is neither a meta- nor an epi-phenomenon; it is *the* phenomenon."¹

Let us briefly take stock of the implications here. First, of the word "phenomenon". Its bearing emerges from the opening passage of the essay: "Around us, bodies present various qualities: they are warm, coloured, electrified, heavy. But also in certain cases they are living, conscious. Beside the phenomena of heat, light and the rest studied by physics, there is, just as real and *natural*, the *phenomenon of spirituality*."²

"Bodies" and the "various qualities" which they "present" to us — bodies presenting themselves with certain behaviours as part of the world we commonly consider "real and *natural*", the world of nature which modernism is most preoccupied with and which is the object of scientific observation and the subject of scientific thinking or "natural philosophy" — these constitute "phenomena". When we try to reduce the "real and *natural*" to its ultimate form, we arrive at "the primal and indefinable thing" which Teilhard dubs "the stuff of the universe". This stuff manifests itself to us phenomenally. According to Teilhard, its manifestation is all in the direction of evolving a "higher state" of itself from a lower one. That state is "spirit". And as to defining "spirit", Teilhard equates it with "the fact of consciousness" which he finds the epiphenomenalists neglecting. He also says at almost the beginning of his essay: "We are coincidental with it. We feel it from within. It is the very thread of which the other phenomena are woven for us. It is the thing we know best in the world since we are itself, and it is for us everything."³ In other words, spirit is consciousness in the condition in which we know it in ourselves. And, for Teilhard, the achievement of this condition by the mysterious *weltstoff*, world-stuff, is the one single overall phenomenon with its roots in the whole past of the universe and its branches, so to speak, thrusting towards the whole future. Hence the universe may be defined as spirit in the making.

Teilhard fully bears us out in this reading. "What are the dimensions of the magnitude that we call 'spirit', *if we take it as a whole*? I am going to show that, rightly regarded, they are the dimensions of the universe itself?"⁴ Teilhard starts with human beings and says: "If we wish to discern the phenomenon of spirit in its entirety, we must educate our eyes to perceiving collective realities.... Like drops of water scattered in the sand and subjected to the same pressure, that of the layer to which they belong; like electrical charges distributed along a single conductor and subjected to the same potential; so conscious beings are in truth only different local manifestations of a mass which contains them all. To the extent that it is subject to

¹ Pp. 93-4² P. 93.³ *Ibid.*⁴ Pp. 94-5

experiment, the phenomenon of spirit is not a divided mass; it displays a general manner of being, a collective state peculiar to our world. In other words, scientifically speaking, there are no *spirits* in nature. But there is a *spirit*, physically defined by a certain tension of consciousness on the surface of the earth. This animated covering of our planet may with advantage be called the biosphere — or more precisely (if we are only considering its thinking fringe) the noosphere.”¹

So much for the spirit’s present. When we look into the past, we can follow the spirit’s traces “with certainty backwards as far as the eye can reach, in the wake of the movement that is drawing us forward. It is as if no planet can reach a certain stage in its sidereal evolution without breaking into life. But this is not all. The consciousness that we see filling the avenues of the past, does not flow simply like a river which carries an unchanging water past ever changing banks. It transforms itself in the course of its journey; it evolves; life has a movement of *its own*.”² This evolutionary movement starts with “a swarm of living particles that are hardly separate from molecular energies”.³ Then, “step by step, with a growth in complexity, consciousness increases its powers”⁴ of “interiorization”. Teilhard sums up: “Taken as a whole, in its temporal and spatial totality, life represents the goal of a *transformation* of great breadth, in the course of which what we call ‘matter’ (in the most comprehensive sense of the word), turns about, furls in on itself, *interiorizes*, the operation covering, so far as we are concerned, the whole history of the earth. The phenomenon of spirit is not therefore a sort of brief flash in the night; it reveals a gradual and systematic passage from the unconscious to the conscious, and from the conscious to the self-conscious. It is a cosmic *change of state*.”⁵

Here Teilhard makes a very pregnant pronouncement: “This irrefutably explains the links and also the contradictions between spirit and matter. And in a sense they are both fundamentally the same thing, as the neo-materialists allege; but between them lies also a point of deflection which makes them in some way the opposite of one another, as the ancient spiritualists maintained. All antinomy between souls and bodies disappears in the hypothesis of a movement that has reached its ‘critical point’.”⁶

N. M. Wildiers, the Churchman-editor of Teilhard’s book, makes a footnote to the words “same thing”: “‘From a purely scientific and experimental standpoint’, as is said in the preceding paragraph.” In picking out just one part of the pronouncement, Wildiers has voiced a special warning, as much as to say: “The sameness posited is on a superficial impression, valid only for pragmatic purposes. It cannot be posited on a true envisagement of things. The true envisagement will show ‘a point of deflection’ which makes spirit and matter ‘the opposites of one another’.”

But Wildiers forgets that if Teilhard’s first declaration is to be considered in a certain limited context, the second is equally so to be considered — and it has the qualifying words “in some way”, matching those in the first: “in a sense.” What Teilhard intends is that neither declaration holds *in toto*. Such an intention should be

¹ P. 95.² P. 96³ *Ibid.*⁴ Pp. 96-7⁵ P. 97.

obvious, for surely he cannot be grouped with either the neo-materialists or the ancient spiritualists. The view he himself embraces is in the sentence where he talks of all antinomy between souls and bodies disappearing. The precise drift here is best approached by our harking back to "the preceding paragraph" where the "stand point" which Wildiers reminds us of is mentioned. There we read: "... from a purely scientific and empirical standpoint, the true name for 'spirit' is 'spiritualization'."¹ And this is followed by the sentence already quoted, containing the expression: "what we call 'matter'." The purport which emerges from both the paragraphs taken together may be expressed thus:

There is no "matter" as a real opposite of "spirit". It is merely the farther end of a process of "spiritualization" — the end at which the *weltstoff* looks as if it were the opposite of spirit but in truth is just the hidden form of spirit, a covered-up starting-point of "spiritualization". The hidden form has led to spirit along a rising evolutionary line, but round about the spiritualizing process of evolution the hidden form persists and continues and still appears as the spirit's opposite and gives the ancient spiritualists their cue. Similarly, the neo-materialists get their cue from the fact that spirit seems to be a development of matter: they make matter the fundamental reality. Teilhard does not agree with them and Wildiers's footnote-warning is unnecessary. How could Teilhard ever be at one with the neo-materialists? But, while he is utterly against the ancient spiritualists who deemed spirit a "meta-phenomenon", he has a point of contact with the neo-materialists. For, although he can never subscribe to their view of spirit as an "epi-phenomenon", he concurs with them that matter seems to develop spirit, and that is why, along with the qualified tone of "in a sense", he has here the unqualified "fundamentally" which he does not use when, in referring to the other party, he echoes the earlier qualified tone by now saying "in some way". What he implies by his "fundamentally" is that, while the neo-materialists are wrong, they are wrong not quite in their fundamental but in their taking hold of the stick by the wrong end: matter seems to develop spirit not because matter as such is fundamental but because spirit is fundamental and matter is the deep disguise it has worn: matter is reality's fundamental mask rather than face. And because spirit is the fundamental face it is termed by Teilhard "*the* phenomenon". He concedes only a degree of truth to the ancient spiritualists on the one side and to the neo-materialists on the other. His own position, which is hinted at in his "fundamentally", does not come before he talks of "a movement that has reached its 'critical point' ". On the strength of the hypothesis of such a movement he declares: "All antinomy between souls and bodies disappears." So the central operative Teilhardian term is "critical point".

What is that point? It is simply the point at which, time and again, there occurs what Teilhard has already named "a transformation" or, more frequently, "a change of state". Immediately after mentioning "critical point", he writes: "And the horizon is then swept clear for new perspectives. Recognition that the phenomenon of spirit

¹ P. 96.

is a *change of state* greatly simplifies our views of the universe. But this discovery has another advantage: it lights the forward march of the world around us."¹ The concept of "critical point" does for us exactly the same opening up of vistas ahead as is done by the concept of "change of state". The two concepts are identical. Hence basic Teilhardism is: "Fundamentally the *weltstoff* is secret spirit appearing in a first phase as matter and evolutionarily disclosing its real nature by means of critical points or changes of state, by which a growth in complexity is accompanied by a greater 'interiorization', until 'self-conscious' man is produced, the acme of 'interiorization' in an individual form looking forward to a further progress."

Teilhard himself, towards the conclusion of his essay, provides us with a clear-cut formulation of his basic vision: "To situate the stuff of the universe in consciousness, and to see in the development of this same consciousness the essential fact of nature, seems the only way not only of satisfactorily explaining the present and past aspects of the world around us, but also of organizing the hesitant energies of the earth in view of a possible future."²

We have yet to see the shape of the Teilhardian future. But, before we do so, we must mark some momentous issues arising from Teilhard's text.

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When we describe the process of spiritualization as "a cosmic change of state", "a gradual and systematic passage" running from the very dawn of the world, we are throwing into relief the chief intrinsic characteristic of matter in its universal existence: "being or not being interiorized."³ "In other words, matter undergoes animation ... simply because it is matter" and "no external cause seems experimentally assignable for the transformation's occurrence".⁴ "We are in the presence of a kind of autonomous process and inner spontaneity . . ."⁵ But Teilhard at once continues that what we are here in the presence of is "comparable alone in its universality to the mysterious dissipation of energy recognized in the cosmos by modern physics". The two movements are sheer contraries — on the one hand the building up of organisation and complexity, with their accompanying "interiorization", and on the other the breakdown of ordered energy to an unutilisable dead-level. They show themselves as symmetrical counter-currents of the universe: the universe is undergoing ever more concentration of interiority and pointing through the stage of individual human thought to something beyond it, while simultaneously it is undergoing ever more disintegration into amorphous non-workable heat. What shall we say about this duality of cosmic movements? Do we not have two fundamentals instead of one, a trend of matter against a trend of spirit?

Teilhard's answer is certainly contained in this essay but not quite directly set forth. Its initial statement has a curious blend of slight hesitation and overemphatic assertion and neither element is exactly argued out. Thus we read about "the pheno-

¹ P. 97.

² P. 110.

³ P. 97.

⁴ *Ibid*

⁵ *Ibid*

menon of spirit": " ... since, very probably, these two contrary movements ... are merely the opposite poles of a single cosmic event of which the positive or synthesizing term is the most significant, it is finally *the* outstanding cosmic movement, the movement on which everything depends and which nothing explains...."¹

As we proceed in the essay, more light can be thrown on the statement by picking out phrases here and there. We are told: "Matter is habitually regarded as inanimate, and this is the source of all our difficulties in understanding it."² Then there is the suggestion about matter: "it may simply correspond (to the extent that it exists) to a state of consciousness so extended and fragmentated that its elements are only visible to us in their statistical properties, that is to say in the form of inflexible, completely 'dis-animated' laws. From this viewpoint, material determinisms cease to provide the skeleton of the world; they are only a secondary effect in the cosmos"³ Almost at the end of the essay we are told that the dualism between spirit and matter "is simply and harmoniously resolved ... in a world in which consciousness and its appearance are regarded as *the* phenomenon. Every thing then takes its natural place in a universe in process of changing its spiritual state. Beneath the superficial veil of mechanised processes thrown over it by the laws of great numbers, matter shows itself to be a swarming of elementary consciousness ready to enter into the higher combinations of the organic world. By this fact it ceases to be irreducible to life, the first appearance of which on earth simply corresponds to an emergence of the spontaneous individual into the field of our experience from the inorganic mass. And hominization merely marks a decisive and critical point in the gradual development of this change of state."⁴

All the ideas playing here obtain a more connected expression in the essay *Human Energy*. "For obvious reasons of intellectual and practical convenience, science has always tried, from its beginning, to explain the world (that is to say to give it a coherent total pattern) with matter as its starting point. Now in this effort of synthesis it has more and more palpably come up against an insurmountable obstacle: life ... The animals, and more especially man, in whom the phenomena of spontaneity and immanence definitely emerge, cannot possibly be integrated into a purely mechanistic natural system. But it would be impossible to leave them out of our picture; this omission would prove science bankrupt. How do we get out of the quandary? A single way out presents itself; to reverse direction Now our task is to rejoin and reconstitute matter by an opposite process, by coming down from spirit accepted as the primal substance of things. Let us assume as an axiom that only spontaneity and consciousness (masked though they may be by a state of extreme division and diffusion) exist at the beginning. Then the determinisms which we chose to consider as essential to the world would be no more than an inelastic veil cast over a mass of elementary freedoms by the play of great numbers. If we follow this line, the difficulties disappear; the road becomes level, and movement becomes possible between the two poles of the universe, the conscious and the unconscious. If the cosmos were

¹ P 98.² P. 101³ Pp 101-2.⁴ P 111

basically material, it would be physically incapable of containing man. Therefore, we may conclude ... that it is in its inner being made of *spiritual stuff*.”¹

Here we may remark that Teilhard goes beyond what Wildiers, in his Foreword to the volume including the three essays we have named, ascribes to him: “the theory of the dual character of the *Weltstoff*, ... the hypothesis that everything has a without and (virtually at least) a within, and that these two aspects of reality evolve throughout history towards an ever growing complexity/consciousness”² By the words “inner being” in his own passage, Teilhard does not mean just the “within” as a counterpart to the “without”. The “within” would always, in one degree or another, be “spiritual stuff”: it does not need to be so described. When Teilhard talks of “inner being” he is referring to the question: What “basically” is the cosmos? Is it material or spiritual? And Teilhard’s answer is that it is the latter. He wants “spirit accepted as the primal substance of things”. Wildiers’s formulation falls short of basic Teilhardism.

The falling short becomes even sharper when we cull passages from *The Spirit of the Earth* which is six years earlier than *The Phenomenon of Spirituality*. There Teilhard anticipates his later contraposition, in our universe, of simultaneously concentrating interiority and disintegrating energy. He says that once life has appeared and started its progressive evolution, “only one reality (in so far as it truly exists) remains to confront it, and can be compared to it in size and universality: this is entropy, that mysterious *involution* by which the world tends progressively to refurl on itself, in unorganized plurality and increasing probability, the layer of cosmic energy.”³ And then, before our enquiring minds, a final duel is fought between life (thought) and entropy (matter) for the domination of the universe. Are life and entropy the two opposite but equivalent facts of a single fundamental reality in eternal equipoise? Or radically has one of them the natural advantage of being more primal and durable than the other?”⁴ Then Teilhard argues that the acceptance of matter “as the primordial stuff” leads nowhere:

“Not only does matter, the symbol for multiplicity and transience, escape the direct grasp of thought, but more disadvantageously still, this same matter shows itself incapable by its very nature of giving rise to the world that surrounds us and gives us substance. It is radically impossible to conceive that ‘interiorized’ and spon-

¹ Pp. 119-20

² P. 11.

³ Elsewhere in Teilhard the term “involution” is used at times for the very reverse of entropy. the centring process of “radial energy”, the folding back of being on itself, its in-turning, which raises rather than lowers the organisational level. Teilhard has also the word “convolution” or “coiling” for this folding-back. It may be of interest to compare Teilhard and Sri Aurobindo here. Sri Aurobindo mostly uses “involution” to connote either the movement by which the plenitude of the transcendent Divine manifests an increasingly lesser degree of itself in a descending hierarchy of cosmic planes or else the total submergence of all the powers of the Spirit in a sort of zero-level called the Inconscient, from which all the powers gradually emerge, the process of emergence being designated an evolution from the involution. Instead of “involution” in the first sense Sri Aurobindo once speaks of “devolution”. At one place he also speaks of a highest involution of the Spirit — “Superconscience” — from which everything evolves downward just as from the lowest involution — “Inconscience” — everything evolves upward. (K.D.S.)

⁴ P. 22.

taneous elements could ever have developed from a universe presumed, in its initial state, to have consisted entirely of determinisms On the other hand, from a cosmos initially formed and made up of elementary 'freedoms', it is easy to deduce, by virtue of the effect of large numbers and habitual behaviour, all the appearances of exactitude upon which the mathematical physics of matter is founded. A universe whose primal stuff is matter is irremediably fixed and sterile; whereas a universe of 'spiritual' stuff has all the elasticity it would need to lend itself both to evolution (life) and to involution (entropy)

"No, the cosmos ... is *fundamentally and primarily living*, and its complete history is ultimately nothing but an immense psychic exercise; the slow but progressive attaining of a diffused consciousness — a gradual escape from 'material' conditions which, *secondarily*, veil it in an initial state of extreme plurality. From this point of view man is nothing but the point of emergence in nature, at which this deep cosmic evolution culminates and declares itself. From this point onwards man ceases to be a spark fallen by chance on earth and coming from another place. He is the flame of a general fermentation of the universe which breaks out suddenly on the earth. He is no longer a sterile enigma or discordant note in nature. He is the key of things and the final harmony. In him everything takes shape and is explained."¹

Far-reaching suggestions have been made in these passages. We begin with "a universe of 'spiritual' stuff", a cosmos "*fundamentally and primarily living*". A "diffused consciousness" is slowly attained as a release from "'material' conditions which ...veil it". Ultimately, in man there is a culmination and declaration of itself by cosmic evolution. What had been concealed and had remained undeclared — as if it had been a diffused rudiment — was that which has now culminated in an open glory. Also, if we make man our "key", we can open the lock put upon the nature of the real: that nature stands explained by man's nature and shows its true "shape". All this signifies that originally the evolutionary cosmos was, in secret, of the same order as the human consciousness.

Our conclusion is spotlighted by Teilhard himself some pages later: "Under penalty of being less evolved than the ends brought about by its own action *universal energy must be a thinking energy*."²

But this anthropocentric and anthropomorphic conclusion is not the end of the story. The above assertion by Teilhard is meant to have a deeper substance. According to him, "we are confronted with two theoretical possibilities: either from man onwards life comes to an absolute peak and scatters in a plurality of reflective consciousness, each of which is its own final reason; or beyond man (beyond the area of hominization), and despite the decisive and definitive value of 'personality', the unity of the evolutionary front remains intact and the value of the world continues to be built *ahead by a communal effort*...."³ Precious though it is, the human monad remains vitally subjected to the law that, before his coming, obliged units to preserve and promote the whole in preference to themselves.... Thus on the level of man ... the progressive

¹ Pp 22-24

² P 45

³ P.30.

advance of earthly life does not fragmentate. Unities of a new kind are formed, to act as more perfect constituents and intended for a superior organization. The general convergence which constitutes universal evolution, is not completed by hominization.... But ... we twentieth-century humans are indeed, scientifically speaking, nothing but the elements of a soul seeking itself through the cosmos ..."¹

If a greater than man the individual thinker is sure to emerge by the very drive of cosmic evolution — if that Soul of souls is the reality of the future and is even now seeking itself *via* evolution, then the evolutionary cosmos in its secret origin must be a concealed consciousness greater than the one we know of as man today. This consciousness can be said to be of the same order as ours in only the sense that it too is a power of "reflection" — the bending back in awareness upon the centre which is aware, what Teilhard often speaks of as the knowing that one knows. Characteristically, he calls the coming greater consciousness "co-reflective".

Here we may revert to *The Phenomenon of Spirituality*. If the beginning and the end, the Alpha and the Omega is a Super-consciousness, it goes without saying that the current of evolutionary life should be, on the whole, "irresistible (that is to say infallible)" and "irreversible" and "totalizing"². Considering the last property, "if we try to imagine the final condition towards which the spiritual transformation taking place is apparently guiding the world, we find ourselves impelled to express it in the form of a *monocentrism*: the All, becoming self-reflective upon a single consciousness."³ But now a problem presents itself. "We are moving towards a higher state of general consciousness, which is linked with a further synthesis of our particular consciousness. In man, by virtue of reflexion, a fragment of cosmic consciousness is definitely individualized. But how can we imagine that this portion once shaped can afterwards join other like fragments in the building of a super-consciousness? To become super-conscious, it must unite itself with others.... But precisely in order to give itself, must it not decentre, that is to say become less conscious of itself? ... The solution of this paradox is to be found by making a distinction between two entirely opposite sorts of union: union by dissolution and union by differentiation."⁴ In the former, according to Teilhard, the uniting parts break down into "an imagined homogeneous unconsciousness": in the latter "all the lower centres unite, but by inclusion in a more powerful centre"⁵ — "a supreme centre in which all the personal energy represented by human consciousness must be gathered and 'super-personalized'"⁶ — "a distinct and autonomous centre ... which is itself personal and radiates over the myriad of inferior personalities".⁷ As distinguished from union of "relaxation", "union of concentration (the *only* true union) does not destroy but emphasizes the elements it swallows. Reflective human units can therefore undergo this operation without being destroyed or distorted. Despite appearances, persons can still serve as elements of a further synthesis, *because the precise result of their union is to differentiate them.*"⁸

Teilhard is here in the domain of mysticism, and it is evident from his talk of

¹ Pp 30-1

² P 98

³ P. 100.

⁴ P. 102-3.

⁵ P. 104

⁶ P 103.

⁷ P 105.

⁸ P 104.

“an imagined homogeneous unconsciousness” that his understanding of this domain is imperfect. The closest he comes to the heart of the matter is when he says: “to complete ourselves, we must pass into a greater than ourselves” — and adds: “Survival and also ‘super-life’ await us in the direction of a growing consciousness and love of the universal.”¹ But surely we cannot pass into a greater than ourselves and, by that very act, complete ourselves unless the greater and ourselves are essentially one and therefore capable of either an utter fusion or a unity-in-diversity. In both cases, essential oneness has to be posited. And then the two sorts of union which Teilhard lists — that by “dissolution” and that by “differentiation” — wear a look other than the one he gives them. What seems dissolution is no “imagined homogeneous unconsciousness”: it is the transcendence of a smaller and lower selfhood by becoming a greater and higher selfhood. There is really no dissolution: there is an infinitisation of the essence by the breaking down of the boundary-lines developed within the essence, the removal of what the ancient Indian seers termed “name and form” whereby the infinite One took on the appearance or the play of manyness. When the “name and form” are gone, a liberation occurs of the self-limited into its own illimitableness. Ultimately, such liberation would tend to take the mystic out of the cosmic process, but not to dissolution: the end would be an extra-cosmic status, the unparticularised Unmanifest. On the other hand, union by differentiation implies merely that the multiple statuses assumed by the One remain in their general “name and form” while being freed from the ignorance attached to this condition. Aware of the One who has assumed this condition, the person is not bound any more to his own “name and form”: all other “names and forms” are his by empathy and intuition and he knows too that he is more than every “name and form”. There is in addition a consciousness of the Truth of namehood and formhood, so to speak: an Original Divine Super-Person, “Para Purusha” of the Upanishads, “Purushottama” of the Gita, is realised, who is Himself and yet All and with whom the various persons have a play of ideal relationship in love, knowledge and work, and through whom they are also ideally related and at play among themselves.

Teilhard does not understand that any sort of real union implies essential oneness. He speaks of “the unification without confusion of ... *unmixable* centres”.² Unmixable centres can collect and combine and be organised around a greater centre, and even have profound contacts of consciousness, but we shall have no more than a common-centred community: where will union in any true connotation come in? Conversely, “inclusion in a more powerful centre” would destroy the lower centres if they were not essentially one with it. Only when they are such can the lower find themselves “emphasized” while being “swallowed” — “emphasized” in the sense of getting intensified, deepened, sublimated, divinised, super-personalised by the experience that they are diversifications of the Being who serves centrally as their focal point.

But, whatever his intellectual blinkers, Teilhard instinctively drives towards

¹ P 105.

² P 105

such an experience as the authentic version of his "union of differentiation" on coming to the topic: "*God's Spiritual Function*."

Talking of the spirit's future, he writes: "Examined in its external development, the phenomenon of spirit appeared to us to depend on a common centre of total organization. Observed now in its internal functioning, it brings us — as was inevitable — face to face with this pole of attraction and total determination".¹ That means a movement inclining us "towards the future, in pursuit of a God".² Then Teilhard reaches his climax of inspiration in the essay:

"I think it necessary to state two conditions, cohering to the views developed in this essay, which the God we are seeking must satisfy, if He is to be capable of sustaining and directing the phenomenon of spirit.

"The first condition is that He shall combine in his singularity the evolutionary extension of all the fibres of the world in movement: a God of cosmic synthesis in whom we can be conscious of advancing and joining together by spiritual transformation of all the powers of matter.

"And the second condition is that this same God shall act in the course of this synthesis as a first nucleus of independent consciousness: a supremely personal God, from whom we are the more distinguishable the more we lose ourselves in Him.

"These two in no way contradictory conditions immediately result from the characteristics recognized above in the cosmic genesis of the spirit: a universal God to be realized by effort, and yet a personal God to be submitted to in love. If the world is really moving within consciousness, He is the indispensable 'mover' of all further progress of life.

"In short, humanity has reached the biological point where it must either lose all belief in the universe or quite resolutely worship it. This is where we must look for the origin of the present crisis in morality. But it is necessary also for the religions to change themselves in order to meet this new need. The time has passed in which God could simply impose Himself on us from without as master and owner of the estate. Henceforth the world will only kneel before the organic centre of its evolution.

"What we are all more or less lacking at this moment is a new definition of holiness."³

Evolution — and evolution alone — is the basis of Teilhardism. And it is a process with a centre to it. This centre is Teilhard's God. And the God-centre is organic to the process — that is to say, it is not extrinsic, posed side by side, acting from without as something or someone radically different: it is intrinsic and in-built, a master-function co-ordinating everything as if everything were a projection of its own being and found in that being the full evolutionary extension of all force and form, the very life of their life. Because of this centre the process is one developing whole: the centre is its seed-power, its growth-principle, its flower-and-fruit realiser. The process seems to radiate from the God-centre and to be held together by it and to culminate in it: the process is as if an emanation of it, a going out of it to come back to it while that, which

¹ P. 109

² *Ibid.*

³ Pp. 109-10.

the process goes out of and comes back to, remains complete in the midst of all this movement. Here we must take the organicity of action very literally, for, as we saw earlier, spirit in diverse phases is all that is. But to be the organic centre of the world's evolution implies for God both universal existence and personal existence. And in His universal existence He is a secret omnipresence as well as a manifest activity. Active, He is spirit manifesting at the same time as matter running in an ever increasingly complex mould for consciousness, for interiority, and as matter running down in an ever increasingly simplified and unusable form of energy. But the rising or evolutionary manifestation of universal spirit has the upper hand of the falling or involutionary manifestation and so, predominantly, the universe faced by twentieth-century man is matter under the transforming pressure of the truth of itself that is spirit — matter charged with God, transparent to God, bodying forth God. That is why present-day humanity, if it realises at all the value of the universe, must not do anything save “quite resolutely worship it”. The God of evolution, comprehended by the modern religious intuition, is to be loved as a Person but with a holiness which is best defined as love of Him for and through and across and in and even as the universe.

Teilhard's worship of the universe is no gross idolatry of matter, no “materialistic pantheism” bowing “before the god ‘energy’ ”.¹ Nor is it a pantheism excluding the Personal God. It is born of “a certain ‘cosmic sense’, by which each one of us tends to be habitually and practically conscious of his links with the universe in evolution”.² And Teilhard goes on to say: “In this active participation of our beings in a collective task (a task whose reality is visible at the end of every scientific avenue) the nebula of ancient pantheisms condenses and takes shape at the heart of the modern world.”³ The universe as spirit turned matter — spirit that is both Pantheos and Person — is what Teilhardism worships

There is nothing here to be shocked at. on the contrary, it is religion at its widest and deepest and highest. It is also a religion standing self-justified by its “new definition of holiness”. That the new definition assimilates a pantheist strain should not astonish us. Has not Teilhard rejected “the spiritualist philosophies of former times”, which made a stark dualism of spirit and matter, regarded the former as a “meta-phenomenon” and sought to look down upon and subdue the latter? Has not Teilhard appreciatively written: “Pantheistic aspirations towards a universal communion are as old in man as his ‘spiritualistic’ attempts to conquer matter” — and has he not added as a modernist: “But only lately, thanks to the precise data provided by science concerning the unity of matter and energy and the reality of a cosmogenesis, have these vague desires begun to take the rational form of definite intellectual discoveries. In every realm we are beginning habitually to live in the presence of the All and with some attention to it. Nothing seems to me more vital, from the point of view of human energy, than the spontaneous appearance and, eventually, the systematic cultivation of such a ‘cosmic sense’ ”?⁴ Even at the start of his writing career, Teilhard, as a

¹ P 45² P 158³ *Ibid*⁴ P 130

quotation by Emile Rideau¹ shows, recorded, with his whole self vibrant, "the fundamental, lived, incurable yearning for *total union* that gives life to all poetry, all pantheism, all holiness" (*Le lutte contre le multiple*, 1917, in *Écrits du temps de la guerre*, p. 118).

Teilhardian pantheism needs no such cautious deprecation as Wildiers makes in a footnote to the phrase about worshipping the universe: "The author was to explain later in the autobiographical pages entitled *Le cœur de la matière*, how the universe became adorable in his eyes in the person of the Son of God, who assimilated it totally to himself as a result of the Incarnation."² The footnote is absurd and impertinent as well as executive of a hysteron-proteron. *Le cœur de la matière* was written in 1950, *The Phenomenon of Spirituality* in 1937. Are we to believe that Teilhard left this earlier essay of his without its proper key for thirteen years? Opening the "Conclusion" of his essay, Teilhard recalls the mode of approach he proposed in his "Introduction": "As we said at the beginning, if the interpretation of the phenomenon of spirit here presented is correct, its truth can only be established by the greater coherence it establishes in our perspectives. To see more clearly into the past and foresee the future in better outline."³ What was said at the beginning reads: "... my only form of argument will be that universally employed by modern science, that and that alone: by which I mean the argument of 'coherence'. In a world whose single business seems to be to organize itself in relation to itself, that is by definition the more *true*, which better harmonizes in relation to ourselves a larger body of facts. If therefore I can succeed in showing that, regarded from the point of view I have chosen, the universe harmonizes better with our experience, thoughts and actions than the two contrary viewpoints, I shall have established in so far as is possible the truth of my thesis."⁴ Surely the essay is self-contained and neither presupposes nor requires "the Son of God" and his "Incarnation".

We do not have to deny the Christian side of Teilhard, which often busied itself with creating a Christianity to match his Evolutionism, even inclined at times to push the former into the forefront and repeatedly sought to water down what another essay in the same volume has called "my profound tendencies towards pantheism".⁵ But it is in his Evolutionism that we strike the Teilhardian bedrock, and this bedrock is built on Teilhard's modern religious intuition.

For, what exactly is the religious intuition Teilhard as a true modernist felt in his very blood and bones except the pantheist-tempered scientific neo-humanism whose growing conflict with the Catholic Church he⁶ has vividly sketched in the following passage? —

"During the first, and much the longest, phase, the hostility between experience and Revelation was seen almost entirely in local difficulties encountered by exegesis in

¹ *Teilhard de Chardin A Guide to His Thought* (Collins, London, 1967), pp 446-7, Note 83.

² P. 110. ³ *Ibid.* ⁴ P 94

⁵ *Sketch of a Personalistic Universe*, p 91.

⁶ *Science and Christ* (Collins, London, 1968), pp 187-8.

its attempt to reconcile Biblical statements with the results of observation: the immobility of the earth, for example, and the seven days of Creation. Gradually, however, with progress in physics and natural sciences, a much more general and much deeper schism ultimately became apparent. By force of circumstances (in view of the date of its birth) the best that Christian dogma could do, originally, was to express itself in the dimensions and to the requirements of a universe that in many respects was still the Alexandrine cosmos; a universe harmoniously revolving upon itself, limited and divisible in extension and duration, made up of objects more or less arbitrarily transposable in space and time. At the time we are speaking of, this view, under the effort of human thought, was beginning to change. Space was becoming limitless, Time was being converted into organic duration. And within this vitalised domain the elements of the world were developing so close an interrelationship that the appearance of any one of them was inconceivable except as a function of the global history of the whole system. In man's eyes a universe in *genesis* was irresistibly taking the place of the static universe of the theologians. Inevitably again, a specific form of mysticism was emerging from this new intuition: faith, amounting practically to worship, in the terrestrial and cosmic future of evolution. Thus, from beneath exegetical difficulties in matters of detail, a fundamental religious antinomy ended by coming to the surface: the conflict that was involved (though this was not clearly realised) in the Galileo controversy. With the universe rescued from immobility, a kind of divinity completely immanent in the world was progressively tending to take the place in man's consciousness of the transcendent Christian God."

Pointers to all the terms we have used are in the passage: "this new intuition" — "faith, amounting practically to worship, in the terrestrial and cosmic future of evolution". And in the phrase — "a kind of divinity completely immanent in the world" — we get "a specific form of mysticism" whose essence basic Teilhardism involves and whose expression it corrects. The correction may be said to lie in substituting "truly" for "completely". Complete immanence of the world's divinity would, as in the general modern trend noted by Teilhard, push out the transcendent God towards whom Christianity aspires; but if the immanence is merely what Christian theology gives to its God — that is, an immanence which has no ultimate oneness-of-being with the universe and represents only the ever present preservative action of the transcendent God in a universe created by Him as different from Himself — then it is not a true immanence such as the modern religious intuition feels. True immanence, in accord with this intuition, must imply that the divinity in the world is one-in-being with the world and that the latter has been put forth or exteriorised by the former and is the former itself in an evolutionary mode of spirit-matter. Unlike Christianised immanence, true immanence would permit — nay, demand — worship of the universe as a consequence of faith in evolution's terrestrial and cosmic future. But, unlike complete immanence, it would leave room for a transcendent God who is to be loved as a Supreme Person while through the immanent God we are one self with Him and with all.

Teilhard cannot lay claim to being a genuine modernist without subscribing to

true immanence. But his claim is also to look into the heart of modern Evolutionism and discern there the necessity of an already existent Perfect Pole of attraction, that is a Super-Person and by which alone evolution can pass from synthesis to greater synthesis and reach the human personal level where the persistent cry for a Super-Person is as much a natural fact as is "the fundamental, lived, incurable yearning for *total union*" that characterises pantheist mysticism and arises in a form most valid and justified against the background of the progressive infinite unity that is modern science's worshippable universe of inwardly impelled evolution.

Perhaps in the phrase, already quoted, which makes all individual human persons "nothing but the elements of a soul seeking itself through the cosmos"¹ we have the most felicitous summary suggestion of a Pantheos who is also a Super-Person, both aspects rendering worship-worthy the cosmos through which they are beckoning us to their single secrecy.

One may go on to say that a universe like Teilhard's must ultimately call, both naturally and supernaturally, for a Divine Incarnation such as Wildiers's footnote draws our attention to. Teilhard even prepares us for an incarnational corollary. But his preparing, we should mark, follows and does not precede the demonstration of his scientifico-religious thesis and is never said to underlie or explain it. Here also Wildiers's footnote puts the cart before the horse. Provided the horse is in its right place we may appropriately listen to Teilhard's indirect incarnational allusion:

"If it is true, as we have been led to imagine, that cosmic developments of consciousness depend on the existence of a higher and independent centre of personality, there must be a means without leaving the empirical field, of recognizing around us in the personalized zones of the universe, some psychic effect (radiation or attraction) specifically connected with the operation of this centre, and consequently revealing its positive existence.

"The definitive discovery of the phenomenon of spirit is bound up with the analysis (which science will one day finally undertake) of the 'mystical phenomenon', that is of the love of God."²

Yes, a "Son of God" may be expected in the Teilhardian universe where God is the Alpha and Omega of evolution. But this universe is not conceived on the strength of a religious dogma. Also, it has no connection with accepting Jesus Christ as the one and only Son of God. *The Phenomenon of Spirituality* is independent of Christianity and stands on its own legs. The verity it offers is born of a scientifico-religious insight. This insight, for all its wearing the hypothetical look proper to a confrontation in the field of science, is the core of Teilhard — Teilhard who, even in 1951, a year after *Le cœur de la matière*, declared during an interview: "I am neither a philosopher nor a theologian, but a student of the 'phenomenon', a physicist (natural philosopher) in the old Greek sense."³

(To be continued)

K. D. SETHNA

¹ P. 31

² P. 112

³ *Nouvelles Littéraires*, January 11, 1951.

SEVEN LIVES

A SAGA OF THE GODS AND THE GROWING SOUL

(Continued from the joint issue of June-July 1974)

CHAPTER VI

Part 6

At last even the last four days passed, the eve of the battle came, and nothing remained to prepare. The water tanks were down to their last foot of water. The granaries were empty. And the last firewood in the Fort had been collected in a great heap just beyond the inner moat. Each man, woman and child knew what was expected of him or her for not a soul in Deogarh had been left without instructions as to what to do right to the last moment, nor did any movements of dissent stir in any member.

On the last night, in the open space between the inner moat and the outer wall, King Shankaradev and Queen Kamal Rani presided over a great feast. The whole Fort shared in its last great celebration before its last great trial, and though there were ripples of gaiety, the suspended, sacred silence of those on the threshold of death hung inevitably over the gathering. The Dark Lord stood above it as the eternal, uninvited guest but kept his distance, for the white lion held him off with the massed power of his presence, his claws extended from their sheaths, and his lightning gaze never resting from its sentinel's watch. Kamal Rani too blazed at her old adversary and suitor with the white rage of her fire, and answered his taunts — for he could not bear to keep wholly silent — with the courage and high-spirited certainty of Pallas Athene herself. He spoke first, as usual, from the centre of his great outspreading cloak, his chill voice reverberating through the night.

“I see you have prepared a wonderful feast in my honour, my dearest love. But even though I was your chief guest, you neglected to invite me. It was churlish of you, beloved. Yet I have borne your little wound like a true lover and come without a formal invitation, for I see that I am the central actor, as always, in this play of yours.”

“Wrong, lightless one! None do you honour here. You are as unwanted as the lack of an invitation implies. But we will tolerate you as a hanger-on. That too, only because you hold the strings to the lives of our little animal bodies and must maintain your parasitic existence upon us by that slender means. But tonight or tomorrow, or any other time, you have no other hold and no other right. The soul and essence of man slips through your fingers as water through a net. Gloat over your petty spoils-to-be, then, as much as you like. None will disturb you as none disturbs your minion, the ever-patient vulture. But be warned and nurse no illusions — tomorrow upon the field and within the Fort you shall collect your fill of broken bodies, of bones and carrion that shall return to the dust of the earth, but all the rest that you crave

— the wealth and joy of life and immortal love — shall escape through the folds of your cloak like the wind through the bare branches of a tree.”

“Come, darling, why these harsh words? Do you not know that Kafur, my own adopted child, shall come for you and all that you possess tomorrow, your wealth, your beauty, and your brilliance? And that he shall possess you and raise you up to those pinnacles of earthly splendour which your loveliness deserves with my own sanctioning power behind him?”

“Be quiet, fool. I cannot allow any more of the night’s sweetness to pass in your inanities. Come tomorrow with your godson Kafur and see what happens. In the meantime, hold your peace.”

The Dark Lord was about to protest in his thin, insidious voice, when the white lion half rose and looked at the interloper with such furious menace that he retired and contented himself with taking the form of a nebulous, drifting shadow against the galaxies of the night.

The feast concluded in a strange, suspended tranquillity enforced by the ever-watchful leonine monarch within Shankaradev, and each man retired shrouded in his own thoughtfulness to pursue his last elusive hours of sleep. The night sped by, and the entire Fort pulled itself to its feet an hour before daybreak. The men fed and saddled their horses, dressed the elephants in their blankets of armour, and mustered with their swords, shields, and spears beneath the towering rock for the exodus from the main gate of the Fort. Meanwhile, their women and children bathed, clothed themselves in their finery, and gathered by the great pyre of wood before the inner moat

At the same time, in the quarters near the summit, the attendants were fastening on the King and on his lieutenants their finely wrought armour and their polished helmets. When the King’s party were fully accoutred they took up their swords and shields and bade farewell to their womenfolk.

For one final moment Kamal Rani met her Lord on the parapet. She wore no jewellery, and the shimmering white silk of her unadorned sari set off the translucent pallor of her face. Her brown eyes, which had grown enormous over the past month, were wide and no smile or word animated her still features. As she came towards him, he held out his arms to her. For that split second she ceased to be a goddess or a queen, and became once again a girl rushing to her lover for his last embrace with all the agony of a too-human heart. Once next to him, she clung to the hard contours of his armour crying with dry, desperate sobs that wrung themselves from her throat, until the white lion reached out and embraced her with his golden beatitude of peace and strength. The second of human weakness suddenly dissolved into the sea of divine fortitude, and as Kamal Rani drew her face back from her husband she smiled freely through the crystalline tears that had finally welled to her eyes and trickled down her cheeks.

“My purest love,” he whispered, bathing her in a look that with its compassion encompassed all human pain. “We are about to spill out our adoration on the plains

of Deogarh. May the sun be our witness, the earth the recipient of our hearts' blood and the Divine One the master of all our acts."

"Victory to my conquering Lord," she answered and bent down with slow ritual dignity to touch his feet where her tears fell in transparent drops upon his shoes. Raising her up he embraced her one last time, then murmured in her ear, "Think, beloved, we'll be together again in only a few hours. Watch the battle from here and when you see me fall, proceed with your own plan. There will be no danger before then because so long as I am alive to fight, no Turk can enter the precincts of the Fort. Only stand behind me with your heart's fire to the very end and death shall taste sweet."

Turning from her he made for the door at the head of the stairs, sword and shield in hand. He must have barely heard her as she called after him, "I am with you, my Lord, I am with you and Vir Bahadur ..."

Standing like a statue at the centre of the array of Deogarh's troops, the horse stood awaiting his master. His head was raised into the early morning breeze and his immaculately brushed mane and tail fluttered about him like heavy silk tassels. Even then as Shankaradev came and stood by his stirrup, the commander Vikram Singh entreated his King, "I beg you, Sire, take the elephant, on horseback you will be too vulnerable —"

"My dear friend and counsellor, is it not well known to all that we are going out there to die? Besides, it has been seen that the elephants are not proof against the Turkish archers. Let me fight at ground level with my men rather than be isolated upon what would soon become a moving pin cushion."

As the King vaulted into the saddle, the sun had just begun to climb over the horizon. About the regal, mounted figure, the Fort stood at taut attention, while high on the rock a white form waited at the edge of the parapet. All at once, Shankaradev raised his sword, the massed troops rent the air with a reverberating cry, and the great, metal-studded gates of the Fort swung slowly back on their iron hinges. Deogarh's portals to battle and freedom stood open for the first time in four months. Majestically, Vir Bahadur stepped forward and led the column of his master's army between the great bulwarks of the battlements and down the sloping ramp to the open plain. In the distance the smoke of the Turkish camp fires still rose and scudded off to one side with the wind, and masses of horsemen could be seen to be mustering like droves of black beetles before the outspread city of Turkish tents.

Beneath the bastions of Deogarh's walls, Shankaradev's army drew up in battle formation, with the King at the centre, and his forces stretching out on either side of him in a straight line to right and left, footmen, mounted nobles and officers, and the war elephants placed at regular intervals.

In the brilliance of the array and the blaze and panoply of colour it was truly an army of the sun — with the flash of gold, the shimmer of silver, the blinding brightness of polished brass and bronze, the banners and cloths of imperial red and sacred saffron, and the shining equine coats of white and chestnut, brown and black. Indeed the sun,

as his rays danced about the dazzling spectacle, seemed to revel in the martial display of his proud, unbending god-children.

By contrast, the approaching Turkish host appeared dull and dead as the God of Death himself. For they made much use of leather and chain mail; the rich adornments of civilization and the niceties of trappings wrought for beauty had not yet come to the hardy invaders from the North. Their bows and arrows bore no silver tips, their horses no silken underblankets, and their saddles and bridles no chasings of precious metals. With the monotonous grey-blackness of a dream they advanced, fanning out in a great crescent with their lightning-swift wings of light cavalry. The scorpion had already spread its pincers preparatory to gripping its prey.

The Turks were half way across the plain between their camp and the walls of the Fort when Shankaradev raised his great sword in the air and gave the command to charge. With one motion the extended line began to move forward, the mounted knights surging in front with the foot-soldiers following upon their heels. The elephants too, trumpeting in excitement, lunged forward and moved ahead with a gait incredibly fluid and graceful for such large beasts.

In a violent shock of collision the centres of both armies engaged one another like two opposing waves of the sea. Again and again Vir Bahadur reared screaming, his hooves lashing out before him while Shankaradev used his gold-hilted sword to the right and to the left. Like a broad arrow he and his lieutenants cut through the centre of the Turkish forces while somewhere to one side, an elephant wounded to the death, bellowed his last cry.

Far out to either side the mounted wings of the Turkish cavalry continued their encircling movement and inexorably began to exterminate the respective wings of Deogarh's forces. Beneath the moving clouds of arrows that never ceased to pour from Kafur's expert archers, Shankaradev's battle line slowly began to shrivel into itself, until the two wings had all but ceased to exist.

Now an enormous cumulus of black smoke reared up from behind the walls of the Fort. The fire from which it came crackled and roared so that it could be heard at a great distance, but no human sound could be discerned as the acrid smell of burning flesh and hair suddenly filled the air, for the women and children of the Fort gave themselves up to the flames silently.

On the battlefield, the arrow-like wedge Shankaradev had headed into the core of the Turkish forces came upon a clearing in the midst of the struggling men and horses. At the centre of the clearing stood Kafur — the heart of the scorpion itself. Instantly Vir Bahadur saw the open space and the man within it, he ceased to plunge and kick, and stood still, trembling in every limb. Shankaradev sat upon his mount like a man of stone. Only his voice stirred from him.

"Turk, I challenge you to come and fight in single combat like an honourable man."

"With pleasure, King of Jackals. But you must come forward into the centre alone, unless you are too afraid, so that I can deal with you better." Gesturing, he

laughed with a terrible obscenity the intent of which remained veiled for only a few seconds. Shankaradev urged Vir Bahadur into the open circle. In the next instant, Kafur wheeled his horse about, and was gone, while the rank and file of his men closed in about the solitary King like a pack of unleashed hunting dogs. One last time Vir Bahadur rose into the air. One last time his scream rose above the din of battle. And one last time as a dozen sword hilts buried themselves in his back, Shankaradev laid about him with his own weapon before going down like the last ray of the setting sun.

High in the Fort on her parapet, Kamal Rani knew that her time too had come. She had seen her Lord and his mount trampled into the dust of his own land. She had seen the sun for one miraculous instant fix like a torch on his polished helmet as it lay on the ground beside the body of the white horse and then the light had vanished as the men of the enemy army swarmed ant-like over both to wrangle over the spoils of death.

She turned and entered her room, deserted as it was, for she was the last living creature within the Fort. On the table was the goblet she had prepared with the potion mixed into one of the last cupfuls of pure water left in the Fort reservoirs. Quickly she took it up, turned to face the open doorway that looked out upon the sky white with the summer heat, and drained the great golden cup. Out of a corner of her eye she had caught the leering mask of the God of Death as he lurked in the furthestmost corner of the room, but she paid him no attention and it was upon the vastness of the Deccan sky that her eyes last rested before they closed and her body slipped to the carpeted floor. Then carefully she tore each godly vestige of herself out of her own corpse that nothing may be left upon which Kafur and his plunderers may feed, even on the subtle planes, and departed.

It took Kafur a bare hour more to reach the high chamber where all that remained was a white clad body and a vacant, breathless silence. Below, he had already come upon the smouldering heap of charred bodies within the fire whose flames still flickered on what remained of the central wood pile. All that survived of Deogarh and Shankaradev's treasure was its skeleton stripped of all flesh and all life. Already the wind seemed to blow about the rooms and stairways, pathways and open spaces as though through a ruin, and the Turks that teemed through every portion of it seemed but the insensate grave robbers of another age.

Kafur looked upon his lifeless spoils and felt the bitter poison of betrayal drip into his entrails. He wanted to roar like some wounded animal but the suspended vacuum in the Queen's death chamber choked off the sound. At last in the frustration of his disappointment he half lifted the corpse by its long black skein of hair, shook it and then laid it down again when it refused to come to life. Finally, like a petulant and thwarted child, he kicked the inanimate body that lay at his feet and that had once been the abode of a queen, and left the room to be looted by his men who clustered outside waiting to strip the royal apartments when their leader emerged, presumably having sated his own greed. But Kafur came out empty-handed with the darkness of the

Black Lord about him, crushed by an unnamable bitterness in the hour of his triumph, and robbed of the chimerical fruits the Nether Deity can only offer but never in fact materialize. In the same way, even the Dark One himself raged through the abandoned Fort, gathering his mangled and pitiful spoils, but seeing the white lion and the coveted goddess escape him totally, as did their joy, their splendour and their imperial sun-god aura of saffron, white and gold.

Yet paradoxically, all these did indeed remain, as everlasting mementoes of Shankaradev and his queen, but hidden, buried, and disguised so that no infidel would ever be able to discover or defile them. When Shankaradev's blood seeped into the soil of the plain, there it remained to fertilize all of the land with his presence and that of his dearly prized Vir Bahadur. Each rock of the Fort clutched within its unmoving core the essence of his love for Kamal Rani and hers for him, of the white lion's divine sagacity and the queen's deific inner fire. Each stone step and passageway spoke in its silent language of the devotion and fidelity of Deogarh's defenders, and the earth beside the inner moat cried noiselessly to heaven of the group sacrifice that had occurred upon it. In this way did Shankaradev, Kamal Rani and their people triumph forever at the height of their defeat, for in sincere faith they had done the Divine One's work and furthered the cause of the immortals in the still half-bestial world of men.

One day — only the Divine One knows when — even the darkened soul of Kafur would awaken and recall the moment when for the briefest flash of time he had seen a pure ray of the sun and coveted it with a longing that would end by consuming him totally. Only in that yet-unrealized future moment would Shankaradev's death and the deaths of all those that followed him be vindicated. Meanwhile, the Divine One would wait for the time with that infinity of his patience he always had at his command in his dealings with the lower worlds.

(To be continued)

BINA BRAGG

THE DARSHAN OF AUGUST 15, 1973 — AND AFTER

It was not certain till the 14th August 1973 whether there would be a Darshan at all. A wave of joy swept over all those present when a notice was put up on the board next morning. The time for the Darshan was 6.15 p.m. but from mid-day people began to occupy places from where they could have the Darshan to their satisfaction. I asked in astonishment a professor from Lucknow: "The Darshan is after 6. Why are you going at 2 p.m.?"

"What trouble people take to go to Badrinarayan to have the Darshan of the Divine in stone! Is the waiting for a few hours to have the Darshan of the living Divine too much?" he retorted in a dignified tone.

All of us had to be on our feet for lack of space on the road, facing the balcony, where the Mother usually appeared. One among the crowd, just in front of me, was an old lady who was not able to stand erect. I overheard her saying: "I could not even imagine it would ever be possible for me to remain standing for such a long time. Indeed one who had sent the call and had bade me come for the Darshan must have poured strength invisibly."

To resume. When in the train, a thought stole into the mind of the professor: "I shall be reaching the Ashram at midnight; what shall I do, where shall I go?" When he came out of the station, a rickshaw was there and no sooner did he knock at the door of an inmate than he was welcomed in.

Right from the moment he took the decision to have the Darshan he was confronted with baffling problems and each time a secret hand came to his rescue. The day he was to start, a court summons was served on him demanding immediate payment of security. His heart sank, for the money that was meant for the pilgrimage went to the court. But finally he got the money and a seat by chance in the last train. Hundreds of similar stories are there, but space is lacking.

Someone wrote from Ranchi to his friend here: "Dr. Lahiri dreamt that the Mother was entering the Samadhi of Sri Aurobindo."

Much more revealing are the dreams of a 13-year old girl who had never been to the Ashram. She had simply heard about the Darshan from people at Ratlam. Her mother had been aspiring for long to have it. A conference of the Sri Aurobindo Society was held on August 12 and, after that, people were getting ready for a journey to Pondicherry. The girl's mother took it as a God-sent opportunity and joined them.

The most interesting part of the girl's dreams begins now. On August 7, 1973 she dreamt that a very big crowd had gathered in the street. People were standing even on house-tops. All eyes were turned upward. She was one among the crowd. First, she saw the Mother coming out from a small room and then She walked up to the end of the balcony, stopping at the centre so that she could cast a glance on all those assembled. When the girl told this to her mother, the latter dismissed the vision as sheer imagination but she could not believe her eyes when later she saw the whole procedure enacted exactly as narrated by her daughter.

The other two visions are also impressive. While in her Puja room the girl saw herself turned into a baby in the lap of the Mother who was showering love on her.

The vision the girl had on August 13, 1973 corresponded to the period when the Mother used to come down to give blessings. The girl dreamt that many people were eagerly waiting for their turn to go to the Mother and she was one of them. The Mother appeared to her wonderfully beautiful and very young. She had black hair. Utterly bewildered the girl asked herself in her dream: "How is it that the Mother appeared so old, so different in her picture?" When the girl stood before the Mother, the Mother patted her on the back and put something in her hand.

Is this a glimpse of the New body of the Mother, of which Nolini and others speak?

While the girl was merged in the delightful dream, at 5.30 a.m., her mother woke her up in order to get ready for school. "What a pity! Why did you deprive me of the joy of such a blissful dream, mother?" the girl complained.

Another girl, a collegian of Saurashtra, on the eve of her visit to the Ashram for the August Darshan, was haunted by the thought of how boring her stay in the Ashram would be. How difficult it would be for her to pass the dull days there! When one month of stay passed unnoticed, she realised what charm there was in the Ashram atmosphere. Joy seemed to be scattered all around. And very loving in their nature she found the inmates of the Ashram. With whomsoever she happened to talk, in no time they became her friends. Everybody felt the working of a secret power. She could see the Mother's Grace active everywhere. As compared to the restless life in Bombay, all the activities of the Ashram moved most smoothly and gracefully. All this she wrote, on returning to her native place, to her maternal uncle — an old sadhaka of the Ashram. To quote further her own words:

"Just at 6 p.m., fifteen minutes before the Mother's appearance on the terrace, there happened to be a heavy shower. But none moved from their places. There was no stir. People felt inclined to take the rain as the blissful shower of the Mother's Love and Grace.

"With the appearance of the Mother, there came an inscrutable peace, and all seemed to be gripped by an unknown power. There reigned an absolute silence. The silence was so intense that one could never imagine 8000 people were packed together on the road.

"How momentous was that instant when we stood before the blazing gaze of the Mother's eyes! One look and we felt twice blessed. That timeless instant can never be forgotten. Many felt it was on them in particular that the gracious look was cast."

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X never expected that the Mother would leave Her body. So on hearing the news, he felt completely broken. His love and devotion for the Mother flowed in incessant

tears. All of a sudden there appeared the luminous figure of the Mother with Her right hand placed on his head. Within two days he was blessed with the vision of the Mother four times wiping out the very memory of Her passing.

Endless was the stream of people to pay their last homage to the Mother — not from the town alone but from remote villages, even from foreign lands. The stream lasted for 20 hours. Men and women, boys and girls, the rich and the poor — all took their places in the unending queue. No talk, no whisper, no rush to bypass others, no disorder of any kind! One holding a high post is said to have remarked: "The personality that could cast such an influence on so many must be the Divine!"

"The Mother has gone but She has not left us — it seems She is holding the whole Ashram from behind."

This view of a girl-teacher is shared by us all.

On March 16 (1974) I happened to meet a newly married couple. They had come to receive the Mother's blessings! The groom said: "People say 'the Presence of the Mother can be clearly felt in the Ashram', so my father has sent us to receive the Wedding Day Blessings. We were married on March 10." The groom disclosed. "Soon I shall leave for America for higher studies."

A sadhaka, on his birthday, saw the Mother in her usual chair receiving his offering as She used to do when in the body.

A question arose in the mind of someone: "Now in whose hand shall I put my offering?" No sooner did he place the offering on the Mother's samadhi than he felt the word "Blessings" being inscribed upon the top of his head.

As the Mother kept a careful watch on all the events of the Ashram, even when in seclusion, now it seems She knows all that goes on in us, even thoughts that cross our minds. By way of illustration let me cite one sign. In a moment of depression X thought of telling the authorities that he would like to be relieved of his heavy responsibilities. This was only in his mind. Next day with a heavy heart when he went to offer his Pranam at the Mother's Samadhi, someone seated as if in his heart spoke:

"Is this what you have learnt during so many years passed in the Ashram? Is this your sincerity? Don't you remember Sri Aurobindo's message: 'Always behave as if the Mother is looking at you?'"

This episode brings to mind the Mother's words:

"The Divine Will is not difficult to recognise. It is unmistakable. You can know it without being very far on the path. Only you must listen to its voice, the small voice that is there in the heart. Once you are accustomed to listen, if you do anything that is contrary to the Divine Will, you feel an uneasiness. If you persist in the wrong track, you get very much disturbed But if, when once you feel the least disturbance, you stop and ask of your inner self, 'What is the cause of this?', then you get the real answer and the whole thing becomes quite clear."

Innumerable stories will be told of the Mother's creative personality and multifarious activities. Let me put on record two.

When Nishikanta, who had come from Shantiniketan, sought the Mother's per-

mission to stay in the Ashram, he was told that it would be better if he returned to Shantiniketan. He might rise to eminence as a poet there. If he stayed here he would have to pass through terrible sufferings; and actually there was no end to suffering throughout his life in the Ashram. Despite all that he suffered he survived by the force of his will till Sri Aurobindo's Birth Centenary Year, 1972.

He was a poet of a very high order and his poems were greatly appreciated by Sri Aurobindo. Several times he reached the door of death but returned. Once in 1956 he fell very seriously ill. There was a terrible burning all over his body. He felt he was being burnt alive. There was nothing that could be done to save him, the doctors declared. The April Darshan was quite near. When the Mother was informed She said: "Something must be done to save him till the Darshan." Dr. Nirodbaran also resolved that his patient and friend should pull on till the Darshan. He approached the Mother with a prayer that Nishikanta might be blessed with the favour of the Mother's Darshan. He felt death could be held back till the day of Darshan.

On the Darshan day Nishikanta was brought on a stretcher to the Meditation Hall. As soon as the Mother was informed, She came down and stood by the stretcher. She fixed her gaze on his suffering body. In a dying state with a feeble voice he spoke in a prayerful tone: "May the Mother be pleased to give me the gracious touch of Her feet." By the very touch he became cool and calm. There remained no trace of burning and he survived till 1972 — 16 years more!

In a friendly chat with a sadhak who has been here from 1932 and who is very unassuming by nature, I came to know the following incident:

"My brother's wife was on her death-bed. The doctor said that her pulse was sinking and her end was a matter of an hour. My brother placed a packet of the Mother's Blessing flower on the chest of his wife and sat down beside her, giving himself up to prayer. To the wonder of all, the pulse grew strong and she recovered."

NARAYAN PRASAD

TEACHERS' TEACHING WORKSHOP

BASED ON SRI AUROBINDO'S AND THE MOTHER'S APPROACH

Organised by WORLD UNION INTERNATIONAL Pondicherry

SRI AUROBINDO, in his message of August 15, 1947, revealed the tasks India has been entrusted by the Divine. One of these tasks is to bring about world unity. As world unity is intimately dependent on education, dedicated teachers are offered an orientation and training workshop to help them assist their students to

contact their soul and organise their
educational development around it

become aware of the group consciousness
and hidden unity of their school class

become aware of the underlying unity
of their nation and the world.

The methods used in the workshop will be:

Socratic questioning role play discussion
group exercises in physical movement, meditation, and music
short lectures concentrated reading
observation of and participation in educational experiments.

Dr. Sitaram Jayaswal
Reader in Education
Lucknow University

and

Ronald Jorgensen
(educational consultant
formerly, New York City)
Sri Aurobindo Ashram

will be the leaders
of the workshop.

Those interested must be teaching elementary or secondary classes and have a good knowledge of English. They should be graduates in Arts or Science and be 30 years of age or below.

The workshop will run for a period of one week: 24-30 October 1974. Although all participants will have to meet their own travel expenses to and from Pondicherry, their room and board expenses during the workshop will be sustained by World Union.

Those who wish to participate may write within 30 days to

Ronald Jorgensen
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THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

TWENTY-NINTH SEMINAR

24th February 1974

SCIENCE, REASON AND YOGA

(Continued from the issue of June-July 1974)

SPEECH BY MINOTI MOHANTY

THERE is a remarkable dynamism in all the corners of the earth today; one does not have to make any special effort in order to become aware of it. If we try to find the cause of this universal dynamism we cannot fail to discover that it is the work of the intellect or reason — the genius of the brain. Yet it is interesting to note that in spite of the immense advance in knowledge made by centuries of intellectual endeavour there still remains much more to be known. For not only has the field of knowledge widened, but man has arrived at a stage where he is forced to realize the limitations of his intellectual reason. The adamant rationalist does not admit these limitations easily but the more awakened thinker pauses and asks: "Is there an end to the field of knowledge? Can there be a significance behind the existence of the universe and will man ever arrive at the truth of the purpose of his being?"

The history of the world will show us that man has always striven towards a better and a happier existence. Being predominantly physical and vital in the earlier stages of evolution, he believed that his happiness depended on material circumstances and therefore worked for their betterment. Since then he has continued to follow the same track and the increasing inquisitiveness of his brain due to the development of the rational mind, especially in the modern Western world, has assisted him to acquire more and more information about the material universe. In the course of this inquiry he has come across certain bewildering supra-physical phenomena that seem to be contrary to his materialistic doctrine.

But not so in all parts of the world! In the Asiatic countries, especially in India, people have always had a strong belief in supra-physical, occult and spiritual phenomena. This has always been the dominant trend in their temperament, thanks to the constant resurgence of saints and prophets. The wisdom of the ancient sages, derived from an impulse towards perfection, the search after pure Truth and unmixed Bliss, the sense of a secret immortality and the divination of Godhead, still dominates the Indian mind.

A similar belief prevailed in the West in the distant age of the Mysteries but it has long been forgotten. In the last century the European mind has even considered the development in the East, especially in the spiritual realm, as irrationality and pure nonsense, and even though circumstances force it to examine and recognise them, there is yet a tremendous resistance to it in the general European temperament.

In the East as well as in the West, there has been a continuous endeavour for the acquisition of increasing knowledge. Being dependent on reason only, the modern Western mind has never arrived at the ultimate Truth. The ancient Eastern mind was the seeing mind — the intuitive mind. The philosopher was the seer. The modern scientific mind is prone to discard all intuitive knowledge as irrational, but we may ask: in what way is it irrational? It is actually a direct knowledge belonging to a supra-rational order of existence to which the ordinary intellectual standards do not apply. All the ancient mystical and spiritual seekers were aware of this fact and so they tried to attain that knowledge in their own intuitive way. To such a science — for indeed it is scientific — they gave the name Yoga, the purpose of which was the realisation of union with the Divine and thereby of the true knowledge — the highest knowledge — *parāvidyā*.

But ordinarily what is meant by knowledge is an intellectual understanding of the facts of life, mind and matter and the laws that govern them. This knowledge is based on our fallible sense-perception and accepted mainly for its practical utility and efficiency because by knowing about the secrets of Nature we are better able to regulate our external life. Yogic knowledge transcends this striving: its aim is to know the Supreme, the Divine, the Infinite and the Absolute.

The great seers of India, who could identify themselves with the Cosmic Being and enter into the cosmic consciousness were possessors of this knowledge. After that stage they used to pass into the still higher world-transcending consciousness and experience the Supreme Brahman. But because of the suddenness of the experience and the unpreparedness of the mind lacking the experience of the intermediary transitions, they often felt a sense of unreality of the world. Thus there came a rejection of the universe and an abstention from worldly activities. We see this happening with the ascetics of India and in the theory of the cosmic illusion of the Buddhist philosophy. This view is diametrically opposite to that of the European materialistic philosophy, and neither gives us the true knowledge.

Yet it is important to note that from the standpoint of progressive evolution both have had their reason of existence. The rationalistic materialism has been of enormous value to human progress, for without it man, entering into the inner consciousness, is likely to fall a prey to the most perilous distortions and misleading imaginations, thus making any advancement in the path of true knowledge impossible. Moreover, the realization of something beyond matter comes from modern science itself pushing beyond the narrow limits within which it has till recently confined itself.

The problem has existed up to now because until recent times the rationalists and the scientists have championed matter as the sole reality and the ascetic spiritual

seers were equally vehement in their refusal of the material life and worldly existence. This was essentially a problem of harmony. A harmonious synthesis of both these perceptions without their negations would show us the truth in its totality.

The wonderful synthesizing answer is found in Sri Aurobindo's *The Life Divine*, where he first explains that life is a form of veiled consciousness and therefore there is an urge in Nature to manifest it. In the evolutionary process she has arrived at creating man. Then she must pass on to the superman or the gnostic being whose life would be a manifestation of God on earth. All forms of existence being the manifestation of God, we cannot reject worldly existence like the ascetics. This knowledge would make us experience the Brahman in the individual, as well as in the Universal. Each individual being with his physical, vital, mental and psychic forms is in his essential reality. He indeed, and the Universe too is the play and form and cosmic Self-expression of the same Brahman. All paradoxes cease to exist here. Here is a vision of the Absolute who is at once Purusha and Prakriti, the dynamic and the static, the One and the Many. These things are to the limited mind irreconcilable opposites. In order to understand and integrate them it must cease to reason and quieting itself try to make of itself a fit instrument for receiving the higher knowledge.

And then, says Sri Aurobindo: "The eternal paradox and eternal truth of a divine life in an animal body, an immortal aspiration or reality inhabiting a mortal tenement, a single and universal consciousness representing itself in limited minds and divided egos, a transcendent, indefinable, timeless and spaceless Being who alone renders time and space and cosmos possible, and in all these the higher truth realisable by the lower term, justify themselves to the deliberate reason as well as to the persistent instinct or intuition of mankind."¹

Later, Sri Aurobindo specifies his point by saying: "What is that work and result, if not a self-involution of Consciousness in form and a self-evolution out of form so as to actualise some mighty possibility in the universe which it has created? And what is its will in Man, if not a will to unending Life, to unbounded Knowledge, to unfettered Power? Science itself begins to dream of the physical conquest of death, expresses an insatiable thirst for knowledge, is working out something like a terrestrial omnipotence for humanity."² And this indeed is the work of the divine Will in man, the vast cosmic impulse which labours to fulfil the divine mission.

So we have a clear perception of the relation between reason, science and Yoga. We have studied their inherent truths and their limitations. We have seen Sri Aurobindo making a beautiful synthesis of them and the way to knowledge is clear and safe for the future generations. It is now for us to start moving towards its fulfilment and not retreat because it is as yet obscure in its outward workings or it is arduous or difficult to justify by tangible results. It is obvious that whatever be the circumstances, the work is bound to go on and the sooner we rise from this stage of ignorance and partial intelligence and become possessors of the self-luminous

¹ *The Life Divine* (American Edition, 1949), p. 6.

² *Ibid.*, p. 16.

Truth and the self-guiding Will, the better will it be for us and the human race. For this is certainly a stage which we are bound to enter for the realisation of the final purpose of the divinisation of mankind and the establishment upon earth of "The Life Divine."

In conclusion I would like to read a poem of Sri Aurobindo in which he points to this divine destiny of mankind and earth in most wonderful words:

EVOLUTION*

All is not finished in the Unseen's decree!
 A mind beyond our mind demands our ken;
 A life of unimagined harmony
 Awaits, concealed, the grasp of unborn men.

The crude beginnings of the lifeless earth
 And mindless stirrings of the plant and tree
 Prepared our thought, thought for a godlike birth
 Broadens the mould of our mortality.

A mind no human will or force could gain,
 A knowledge seated in eternity,
 A joy¹ beyond our struggle and our pain
 Is this earth-hampered creature's destiny.

O Thou who climbedst to mind from the dull stone,
 Turn to the miracled summits yet unwon.

SRI AUROBINDO

* *Collected Poems* (Centenary Edition), p 164.

¹ bliss

EYE EDUCATION

BLINKING AND WINKING

Look at the eyes of a tiny baby who has a natural impulse to blink, look at the eyes of a cow or a dog or an elephant, they all blink. The upper lid comes a little down and is again raised, it does not touch the lower lid in the action of blinking. Blinking is a continuous habit of good eyes. By blinking the eyes work under rest, the habit of staring is checked. While reading one should blink at each line. While seeing some distant object shift the sight from part to part and blink.

What is winking? In winking the upper lid touches the lower lid with a jerk. Look at those who have bad eyes. There is a tendency to stare. Blinking is absent or it is done at long intervals or the person winks instead of blinking. Winking is bad for the eyes. It is a sort of disease. Winking is conspicuous while blinking is not conspicuous.

Blinking helps to relieve the strain and to improve eyesight. Look at the Snellen test card placed at ten feet, read it without blinking and note down the result. Now read it while blinking gently at each letter and note down the result. You will observe that your vision gives a better record when you read the eye chart with blinking. Another thing: gaze at a letter of the chart or a figure of the calendar at ten feet; don't blink, observe that the letter begins to fade. Now look at it with gentle blinking and you can see it continuously without losing its clearness. So blinking is very essential for the preservation of good eyesight.

(To be continued)

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