

# MOTHER INDIA

## MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

MARCH 1976

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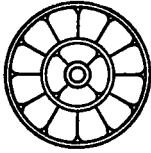
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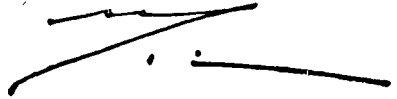


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



# MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XXVIII

No. 3

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

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## **WORDS OF THE MOTHER**

### **TO A VERY DIFFICULT YOUNGSTER**

LA discipline est indispensable pour être un homme.

Sans discipline on n'est qu'un animal.

Je te donne 15 jours pour prouver que vraiment tu veux changer et devenir discipliné.

Si tu deviens discipliné et obéissant je veux bien te donner une autre chance.

Mais n'essayes pas de tromper; au moindre signe d'insincérité je serai obligée de te renvoyer.

On commence à être un homme seulement quand on aspire à une vie plus haute et plus vraie et qu'on accepte une discipline de transformation.

Pour cela il faut commencer par maîtriser sa nature inférieure et ses désirs.

Discipline is indispensable in order to be a man.

Without discipline one is but an animal.

I give you 15 days to prove that truly you wish to change and become disciplined.

If you become disciplined and obedient I am willing to give you another chance.

But don't try to deceive; at the least sign of insincerity I shall be obliged to expel you.

One begins to be a man only when one aspires to a higher and truer life and accepts a discipline of transformation.

For that it is necessary to start by mastering one's lower nature and one's desires.

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## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(Continued from the issue of February 21, 1975)

*(This new series of answers by the Mother to questions put by the children of the Ashram appeared for the first time in the Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education but in a somewhat fragmentary incomplete form. The translation of the full text as it was taped, with here and there a few special additions or modifications made by the Mother at the time of its first publication as a book in French, came out in book-form in 1973. We are giving this translation here.)*

MARCH 6, 1957

MY eye won't allow me to read today.<sup>1</sup> But I have been asked a question on what I read to you last week. I am going to reply to it this evening. Pavitra, will you read, please?

*(Pavitra reads) What does this paragraph mean: "Freedom is the law of being in its illimitable unity, secret master of all Nature: servitude is the law of love in the being voluntarily giving itself to serve the play of its other selves in the multiplicity."*

*(Thoughts and Glimpes, The Centenary Edition, Vol. 16, p. 386)*

To a superficial glance these two things appear absolutely contradictory and incompatible. Outwardly one cannot conceive how one can be at once in liberty and servitude, but there is an attitude which reconciles the two and makes of them one of the happiest states of material existence.

Freedom is a sort of instinctive need, a necessity for the integral development of the being. In its essence it is a perfect realisation of the highest consciousness, it is the expression of Unity and of union with the Divine, it is the very sense of the Origin and the fulfilment. But because this Unity has manifested in the many (in the multiplicity), something had to serve as a link between the Origin and the manifestation, and the most perfect link one can conceive is love. And what is the first gesture of love? To give itself, to serve. What is its spontaneous, immediate, inevitable movement? To serve. To serve in a joyous, complete, total self-giving.

So, in their purity, in their truth, these two—freedom and service—far from being contradictory, are complementaries. It is in perfect union with the supreme Reality that perfect freedom is found, for all ignorance, all unconsciousness are bondages, make you powerless, limited, incapable. The least ignorance in oneself brings a limitation, one is no longer free. As long as there is an element of unconsciousness in the being, it is a limitation, a bondage. It is only in perfect union with

<sup>1</sup> On the 27th February there was only a reading followed by a meditation, no talk was given. Since the last "darshan" Mother had been having a slight haemorrhage in the left eye.

the supreme Reality that perfect freedom can exist. And how to realise this union if not through a spontaneous self-giving: the gift of love. And as I said, the first gesture, the first expression of love is service.

Thus the two are closely united in the Truth. But here on earth, in this world of ignorance and inconstancy, this service which ought to have been spontaneous, full of love, the very expression of love, has become an imposed thing, an inevitable necessity, done only for the maintenance of life, for the continuation of existence, and it has thus become something ugly, miserable—humiliating. What ought to have been a flowering, a joy, has become ugliness, fatigue, a sordid obligation. And this sense, this need of freedom has also been deformed and has become that kind of thirst for independence which leads straight to revolt, to separation, isolation, the very opposite of true freedom.

Independence!... I remember having heard an old occultist and sage give a beautiful reply to someone who said: "I want to be independent! I am an independent being! I exist only when I am independent!" And the other answered him with a smile: "Then that would mean that nobody will love you, because if someone loves you, you immediately become dependent on this love."

It is a beautiful reply, for it is indeed love which leads to Unity and it is Unity which is the true expression of freedom. And so those who in the name of their right to freedom claim independence turn their back completely upon this true freedom, for they deny love.

The deformation comes from the constraint.

One cannot love through compulsion, you cannot be compelled to love, it is no longer love then. Hence, as soon as compulsion intervenes, it becomes a falsehood. All the movements of the inner being must be spontaneous movements, with that spontaneity which comes from an inner harmony, an understanding—from a voluntary self-giving—from a turning back to the deeper truth, the reality of being, the source and the Goal.

---

## TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

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

JULY 8, 1940

*Evening*

S: Just now, is the stress of Yoga laid most on Karma, Sir?

SRI AUROBINDO: No stress is put on anything. If you mean that the sadhaks have to do more work now as the Mother had to dispense with many servants because of the war, it is true.

DR. RAO: Your patella should be moved by somebody to give it a greater range of flexion.

SRI AUROBINDO: I know. You have said it before.

DR. RAO: By passive movement the adhesions will break.

SRI AUROBINDO: Do you think so?

DR. RAO: Yes, Sir. You can guide Nirod to do it, if you can't do it yourself. It can be done for five minutes to start with, when the leg is in an extended position.

SRI AUROBINDO: Explain all that to Nirod.

N: It is not the explanation but the sanction that is required.

DR. RAO: Yes, you are right.

SRI AUROBINDO (*After a pause*): The Purusha is a *drashtā* and merely observes all that is done.

P: That means permission is given. You can do the flexing.

JULY 9, 1940

P: The German troops are being concentrated on the Franco-Spanish frontier. Hitler wants to march through Spain to Gibraltar.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, that may be his intention. I don't see then how the British can hold out against him.

N: Is Hitler working in collaboration with Franco?

SRI AUROBINDO: Of course.

N: Then Portugal also would be left out.

SRI AUROBINDO: No.



P: Hitler is trying to cut off supplies.

N: Not only that. If he gets Gibraltar, he blocks the Mediterranean gate.

SRI AUROBINDO: That must be his intention, as he can't invade England directly. With Spanish Morocco and Tangier on the other side, the route will be closed.

N: Won't that put the British in a bad plight?

SRI AUROBINDO: Not in a bad plight, but certainly in some difficulty.

P: Rumania has lined up with the Axis.

SRI AUROBINDO: It had already done that before.

P: Yes, but now it has openly declared it and cut off oil supply to England. Some Englishmen have left Rumania. The Nazis are glad of the new support. Obviously Germany is afraid of Russia. To turn to Indian affairs: the Congress has asked for a declaration of complete Independence in the future.

S: Yes, and a provisional National Government at the centre.

SRI AUROBINDO: On what lines? What about the defence?

S: Nothing of it perhaps. The details aren't out yet.

SRI AUROBINDO: In that case what remains of Independence?

N: They say that only with everything in their hands can they throw in their full weight for the defence of the country.

SRI AUROBINDO: Defence against whom?

P: Pétain has become a Führer.

S I AUROBINDO: Not yet; going to be.

P: He says that now is the last phase of the third Republic and the motto will be not Equality, Liberty and Fraternity but Work, Family and *Patrie*.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is the Fascist motto.

P: The priests are happy because Pétain is a Catholic.

SRI AUROBINDO: Oh yes, but our position will be bad. If a Catholic Government becomes the head, then our Ashram won't be allowed to exist.

N: All moves seem to fall on us some way or other.

SRI AUROBINDO: Of course. The Asura is more concerned with us than anything else. He is inventing new situations so that we may fall into difficulty. Nazis, Fascists and Communists are all against us and we are safe under none of these. Mussolini perhaps may allow us.

S: He has read some of your books.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes.

N: He will allow us so long as he is not criticised.

P: It seems Bonvain can't get into communication with the Pétain Government. The British office doesn't accept his telegram.

SRI AUROBINDO: Then we may be safe at least during the war, unless they send somebody by aeroplane which may be shot down by mistake by the British.

P: But the aeroplane has to land at Karachi—unless they make a nonstop flight from Syria, for instance.

The French are again blaming the British that they have dislodged Weygand.

N: The British staff officer's saying in reply that Weygand's plan was good on paper but not in practice, makes one suspect that the allegation is true.

S: Yes, he should not have said that.

SRI AUROBINDO: But they don't say they disobeyed. His plan may have been strategical at the beginning but after the breakthrough and encirclement, things changed. And then they have disagreed about the plan.

S: There must have been some agreement afterwards, otherwise how could the evacuation of French soldiers take place?

SRI AUROBINDO: Quite so.

P: These are all political views put forth by the French leaders, not by the military. They are dictated by the German High Command.

S: If they have surrendered everything, why did they fight at all? Without their co-operation, England also would have kept aloof.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, England could have been on the defensive. But England has learnt one lesson by the fight. She could have gone on evading Hitler and been put to some difficulty later, but now she knows all his tactics.

N: Has Gandhi himself proclaimed Independence for India or has the Working Committee forced it on him?

SRI AUROBINDO: It must be his own move. He is warning the Congress against accepting Dominion Status.

N: Our fate seems to be changing. Before we were under the French and now perhaps the British will be over us.

S: Can't say; everything is in a flux.

SRI AUROBINDO: The British, at least, won't give in so easily to the Government in France.

S: No.

P (*After reading a letter from X stating that judgment had been in her favour by the grace of Sri Aurobindo and Sri Krishna*): Setalvad's son, who is the Advocate General and related to the lady, may have spoken to and influenced the judges against her husband who is a drunkard, etc.

SRI AUROBINDO: But do the judges discuss a case with anyone when it is *sub judice*? If he is defending the case it is different.

P: No, he is not defending it.

N: In Calcutta the judges are said to take bribes.

SRI AUROBINDO: In Calcutta?

N: Yes.

SRI AUROBINDO: High Court Judges?

N: People say so.

SRI AUROBINDO: People say all sorts of things. One can't believe what people say. Mofussil judges may sometimes take bribes, but I don't think High Court Judges do so. The British judges have so far kept a very high standard.

## A DREAM AND AN ATTEMPT AT ITS READING

*“I had a dream some days back. I am in a shop to buy an umbrella. I ask for the colours. I pick up an emerald-green umbrella from those set before me. It is very fine but somehow has marks of birds’ droppings on it! Still, I decide to take it. Then suddenly I am by the Pondicherry sea. Many Ashramites are there. Some are sitting on rocks in the water but none is really in the water. All of them are children—except Lalubhai. I ask why all are there and am told that the Mother is coming and it is best to be in or near the water. I wonder why then people are not in the water. That is the end of the dream. I wake up feeling full of expectancy.”*

I DON’T know what Freud or Jung would say, but here is a poet’s interpretation. Your dream is an interesting mixture of several consciousness-levels and symbol-layers. The emerald-green of the umbrella in a shop seems at the same time to represent the vital plane characteristic of the life in the West, amidst which you outwardly are, and the Universal Consciousness of the Divine that is a Super-Life all about your inner being and that can extend anywhere, even to the farthest West and its vitalistic existence. I put together the pretty triviality of that umbrella and the Divine Universality because of the way the dream develops.

The first connecting point is the marks of birds’ droppings on the umbrella. They are at once a bit of scorn from on high and a touch of Divine Grace: the droppings suggest the former and the birds the latter. But as the droppings come from birds, the scorn and the Grace play into each other, and Mahakali the falsehood-smiter and Mahalakshmi the love-showerer are two simultaneous and identical gestures from a single source that is Maheshwari, the all-comprehending all-enveloping “Wisdom supernal”. And the double gesture I would imagine as ultimately issuing into the worldward creative dynamism of Mahasaraswati, the Mother-Power of harmony and order, missioned to change turbulent *Sansara* (World-existence) into blissful *Brahman*.

Here your “Pondicherry sea” comes in as the next link. Indian spiritual symbology discerns in the sea-vision both the emerald-green vitalism of world-existence and the emerald-green vastitude of Brahmic Bliss in its manifested conscious universality living deep within that world-existence itself. So the Pondicherry sea is our Mother’s Cosmic Presence as an earth-transformative love and force, with the centre of her all-circling light in a little town on the eastern coast of South India. Your mind and heart have floated to this Presence and wait with the others who are on the rocks lapped by the sea—rocks that are emblems of a firm soul-stand within the “innumerable laughter” (*à la* Aeschylus though in a super-Aeschylean sense) of the waves of Infinity. The rock-supported Ashramites are all in the form of children because the psychic being that turns towards the Divine Mother is always a seer-child. But Lalubhai, who is found among them, does not need to have a child-form

since very much of him is an unpretentious though wisdom-seeking child. Perhaps the name I gave him, following his own queer "creative" reading of words, caught a hint of this side of him: you know that I have dubbed him "Lullaby".

Now for the problem: If the Universal Consciousness of the Mother is already there in the Bliss-sea, what are all of you waiting for? Your dream is definitely charged with an expectancy. The Mother has still to appear. I believe the waiting is for the personal, the individual aspect of her. And perhaps it will be poetically in tune with the vibration of the dream to say: "The Mother Power of harmony and order, the Mahasaraswati-aspect, the infinite transformative force turned personal and individual for the Divine's delight in perfection of detail in earth-life, is the object of the waiting." I have referred to Mahasaraswati as descending from above: now to meet this descent I would imagine an emergence of the same Goddess-presence from the sea, as if in answer to the reflection of the descending divinity in the vast waters. And what, from the viewpoint of India's spiritual visionary tradition, could be more apt? Does not this tradition speak always of Saraswati rising on a lotus-throne, with her various instruments of inspired concord, from the depths of the ocean?

You write: "I...am told that the Mother is coming and that it is best to be in or near the water." I should like to comment on the last part of your phrase. Now that the Mother has left her body a certain emphasis falls upon her universal aspect: to stress this aspect is one of the lessons we have to learn from her departure. And the more we feel as if we were in wide water the more we are likely to come into rapture-rhythmic touch with the Mother's divinity. At least to be near such a vastness is necessary. Most vividly and rapidly we shall approach the personal and individual Mother whom we knew and loved if we put ourselves in contact with the inner universality and move towards being—to quote Sri Aurobindo—

A heart that has grown one with every heart

and

An unvalled mind dissolved in the infinite.

Out of the inner universality will the intimate intense communion arise with the truth of the Incarnation by whose daily nearness we were so long blessed.

I may add that this truth is indispensable for the transformation of the individual and the person that we are in our psyche and in our embodied nature. That is why in your dream there is the expectation of the Mother we were familiar with. Yes, what was shown in the Incarnation is ultimately needed, but we used to be too occupied with the "form" and "name" and these even engendered in us a competition and a grasping and a jealousy, a forgetting of what was within and around and above: we tended even to forget that the "form" and "name" before us had a within and around and above of its own being. We have to develop a detachment from the small self, we have to expand inwardly into a universal and transcendent tranquillity. Then alone can we reach most profoundly, most abundantly, the soul-power to unite with the Supreme Person in a blaze of devotion and delight and thus transmute all our outer being into God-gold.

Your dream ends with the question: "I wonder why then we are not in the water." It is a question that faces us acutely at present. Our progress in Yoga towards the Mother depends on how we reply to it.

P.S. I have mentioned Lalubhai and my calling him "Lullaby" because of his own "creative" reading of words. Let me give you some instances. When reading with me Sri Aurobindo's comments on the Mahabharata, Lalubhai stopped and asked me: "Why does the poet say that King Yudhishtir's crown was full of germs?" I said, "Lullaby, look again at the text." He looked and exclaimed: "Oh, it is 'gems', not 'germs'!" Later he read out as Arjuna's apostrophe to Krishna: "O thou beast among men!" When I burst out laughing, he looked again and said: "I'm sorry. It was 'best'." Somewhere else he turned the poetic phrase "Starry eyes that falter not, set in an exalted visage" into the champion distortion: "Staring eyes that flatter not, set in an exhausted village." Once he asked me: "Isn't the hero of Homer's epic Odious?" I said: "Lullaby, many people have thought that, but nobody before you uttered such an apt thing about Odysseus." On another occasion he informed me in Nirod's office-room upstairs: "The latest number of the New Testament is waiting for you on Nirod's table." It proved to be the recent issue of the London Weekly, *The New Statesman*!

AMAL KIRAN

---

## THE ONE PROBLEM

THERE is only one problem,  
 The problem of the one and the many,  
 And the many will not rest  
 Till they have wrested from the one  
 All they can wrest rightfully.  
 But what the many do not know  
 Is that the one also is interested  
 In the victory of the many.  
 Victory for both  
 Or victory for none  
 Is the solution.

GIRDHARLAL

## A LETTER FROM HUTA

IN CONNECTION WITH THE EDITOR'S NOTE TO "AN UNPUBLISHED TALK OF THE MOTHER ON AUROVILLE" APPEARING IN THE SPECIAL NUMBER OF *MOTHER INDIA*, FEBRUARY 21, 1976.

Dear Editor,

I thank you for your Note bringing out the true facts about the guardianship of the Matrimandir, as decided by the Mother for me. But I must point out that the context, which has called forth your explanation on my behalf in the interests of truth, does not refer to me.

The "new girl who has come from Africa" and who "wished to be the guardian of Auroville in order to let only the 'servants of Truth' enter" is not myself but someone who arrived in Pondicherry in April 1965. It is she and not I who wrote to the Mother the wish to be Auroville's guardian for the purpose indicated above.

On 25th June 1965, the Mother appointed me the guardian of the Matrimandir—"the guardian of the Pavilion", as the talk puts it—and She precisely defined in May 1973 my work there. Vasudha, the Mother's personal attendant, has reported the Mother's own words about this work: "She will keep the keys of the Matrimandir. She will open and close the Matrimandir, and she will also see whether everything is all right in the Matrimandir."

A clue to the "new girl" being quite different from "our little Huta" (to quote the Mother's words) is to be found in the Mother's saying that She would "probably put her there as guardian of the park". The "park" and the Matrimandir are not the same. Besides, in 1965 I could hardly be considered "new"—I who had come from Africa to the Ashram in 1955.

I may add that the idea about the "new girl" becoming "guardian of the park" was given up by the Mother soon after 1965 and there was no further talk about it in the subsequent years.

Let me close by appreciating again what you have written in a clear-cut way and with absolute finality based on the Mother's own handwritten letters about the Matrimandir's guardianship and myself.

24.1.76

HUTA

### EDITOR'S REPLY

I am glad the mix-up has been cleared. It took place not just because you and the "new girl" had both come from Africa. The reason for it was also that you had once feelingly recalled to me the Mother's statement to the effect that only the consciousness with aspiration for Her Truth should enter the Matrimandir.

# RAMA, RAVANA, LANKA

## LEGITIMATE RECONSTRUCTIONS AND DUBIOUS SPECULATIONS

### I

IN connection with Valmiki's epic and Dr. H. D. Sankalia's discussion,<sup>1</sup> which were the subject of a review-article by Angad in the January and February *Mother India*, a few more points may be made. One or two would be in further clarification of Sri Aurobindo's outlook on Rama's historicity and Avatarhood.

What the reviewer has said so far goes a long way to modify the view taken by Sankalia that Sri Aurobindo totally denies the existence of the Valmikian Rama as a historical person. The correct situation that emerges is simply that Sri Aurobindo is not sure of the particulars of the story Valmiki tells in the Ramayana and of the particular "name and form", as it were, of its hero. Sri Aurobindo has no doubt of an Avatar's reality behind it all and of some great event whose central character was that Avatar—call him by any name and see him in any form.

An additional touch may be given to this vision by references to Sri Aurobindo's letters. Sri Aurobindo says that in the scheme of Avatarhood showing the chief evolutionary stages established by successive Divine Incarnations the stage of "the sattwic civilised human being who governs his life by the reason, the finer emotions, morality, or at least moral ideals, such as truth, obedience, co-operation and harmony, the sense of domestic and public order"<sup>2</sup> has to be fixed by someone, and he sees "no one but Rama who can fill the place" of "the Avatar of the sattwic Human".<sup>3</sup> This statement invests with a basic actuality the psychological fundamentals and the episodic essentials of the Valmiki-narration of Rama's life and work. Even the particular "name and form" acquire a core of historicity.

In another place Sri Aurobindo alludes to the topic of Atlantis and mentions the highly developed but Asuric or Rakshasic (ego-aggrandising) civilisation the Atlantis legend portrays. Then he tells us that in India too such a civilisation has figured in legend as having existed at some point of humanity's career. According to him, Ravana's Lanka, as depicted by Valmiki, images the Indian counterpart of Atlantis. This declaration not only indicates, for Sri Aurobindo, a supporting reality behind Valmiki's picture of Lanka. It also implies, for him, the utter improbability of the locale of Lanka such as Sankalia<sup>4</sup> urges: an isle within a lake or marsh in forests inhabited by crude aborigines near Jabalpur, the home of a Gond Ravana on the Chota Nagpur plateau. The evolutionary transition Sri Aurobindo spotlights as the work of the Avatar of the sattwic Human who is central to the Ramayana is surely not confined to a passage from the primitive Gond-psychology to the Aryan mentality? In fact

<sup>1</sup> *Ramayana: Myth or Reality?* (People's Publishing House, New Delhi, 1973).

<sup>2</sup> *On Yoga II*, Tome I (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1958), p. 420.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 422.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp 49, 62.

he<sup>1</sup> lists two types of “anarchic forces” to be replaced: “the Animal mind and the powers of the vital Ego making its own satisfaction the rule of life, in other words, the Vanara and the Rakshasa”. Sankalia’s Gonds could be Vanaras, but only Ravana with his luxurious and powerful Lanka beyond the southern sea can exemplify the Titan vitalism from which a movement to a condition of enlightened conscience and inner self-disciplinary Law was effected. Indeed, with an eye to the future, predominantly “it was Rama’s business to make the world safe for the ideal of the sattwic human being by destroying the sovereignty of Ravana, the Rakshasa menace”.<sup>2</sup>

## 2

Whether we should choose old Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka) as the seat of an opulent “Atlantean” culture whose memory lingered in Indian tradition as handed down by Valmiki is a matter one may debate. But one should seriously pause before accepting the opinion Sankalia<sup>3</sup> voices: “In Ceylon itself the Ramayana—Rama’s story—is not so popular, though some places are associated with Asokavana (where Sita was kept by Ravana)... Lastly, in Ceylon (or Sri Lanka) itself, there are no monuments which answer to the description of Lanka in Sundarakanda of the Ramayana.”

Some years back K. V. S. Vas, a close student of affairs Ceylonese, wrote an article, *Buddhism in Ceylon*.<sup>4</sup> In the course of it he tells us:

“Sangham literature of the first, second and third Tamil Sangham periods, corroborated indirectly by internal evidences available in the Pali chronicles themselves, would go to show beyond reasonable doubt that Hinduism and Hindu civilisation were at their peak in Ceylon, centuries before Buddha was born at Kapilavastu and that Ceylon, contrary to what the Mahavamsa and other Pali chronicles would make us believe, was not inhabited by a semi-naked uncivilised tribe but had remained the focal point of a great civilisation which endured the passage of many centuries.

“Ravana, the epic king of Lanka who is believed to have ruled over the island some four thousand to five thousand years ago, was a staunch devotee of Koneswara and his father-in-law, Maya, is said to have built the ancient temple at Tiruketeswaram at Mannar district in North Ceylon.... According to tradition, Sri Rama who is said to have built a Siva temple at Rameshwaram, is believed to have worshipped Lord Shiva at Tiruketeswaram on his way back to India from Lanka with his beloved wife Sita....

“Whether one believes the story of the *Ramayana* or not, belief is still there in Ceylon as to the rule of Ravana in Ceylon and there is a temple to Vibhishana at the ancient town of Kalyani, now called Kelaniya. There are a number of places which are associated with Ravana....

“Coming to the period of Buddha himself, the Mahavamsa and such other ancient chronicles mention two Naga strongholds in the sixth century B.C., one at Nagadipa

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 426

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 421.

<sup>3</sup> Pp. 51-52.

<sup>4</sup> *The Hindu*, Madras, May 12, 1957.



...in North Ceylon and the other at Kalyani...on the West coast of Ceylon near Colombo. Kalyani, reputed to have been the capital of the epic king Ravana, was the centre of Hindu civilisation in the past.... Of the Naga kingdom of Mani-Palavam which is identified with Nagadipa, a tiny island off Jaffna today, only a very small slice of a once powerful kingdom remained. A large portion of the kingdom should have been submerged almost at the same time as the Western Naga kingdom of Kalyani during the reign of Kelani Tissa in about 250 B.C. The great deluge which the Ceylonese chroniclers mentioned as having occurred during the time of Kelani Tissa wrought irreparable damage to the landscape of Lanka as had done the much earlier one during the reign of Ravana which engulfed his fortress, 25 palaces and 400,000 streets situated between Mannar and Tuticorin. An idea of the damage done by the deluge to the powerful Naga kingdoms may be had from the account given in the *Rajavaliya* which states among other things that the two deluges caused by the wickedness of Ravana and Kelani Tissa destroyed eleven-twelfths of the island of Lanka and that only one-twelfth of Lanka remained after these two deluges.

“Whatever may be the truth or historical value of these stories, the existence of powerful Naga kingdoms in Ceylon many centuries before Buddhism was introduced, the high state of civilisation of the people of the island in the pre-Buddhist era and the practice of Hinduism before Buddhism was introduced—all these go to show that Ceylon was after all not an uncivilised island, as Sinhalese chroniclers would have us believe, before Mahinda brought the gospel of the Buddha. These tales also indicate that it was the hand of a cruel fate intervening in the shape of a deluge, petty quarrels, etc., that had destroyed the Naga dynasty and given place to a new race and a new faith.”

What is of special interest here is that Valmiki's Lanka, which represents Sri Aurobindo's Indian “Atlantis”, is said to have suffered, like its Western counterpart, a natural disaster which sank its glory under water. A touch of credibility is lent to the legend by the evidence of actual marine destruction occurring even in historic times in Ceylon. The temple at Koneswaram, associated with both Ravana and Rama, does lie sunk today below the waves and, as Vas tells us, “the excavations done by the well-known undersea photographer Mr. Mike Wilson and Mr. Aubrey Clarke, the explorer, have shown that the ancient temple is still there under the sea mostly intact.”

## 3

It may not be possible to establish beyond question the identity of Valmiki's Lanka with Ceylon. But neither can the opposite case be positively proved. One instance of controversy that our reviewer has picked out underlines both the futility and the irrelevance of the type of argument it illustrates. Sankalia<sup>1</sup> points to the Ramayana's mention of sala trees being used by the Vanaras against the Rakshasas and observes that “a study of botanical literature showed that the sala—*Shorea robusta*

<sup>1</sup> P. 50.

—grew in the Chota Nagpur plateau only and nowhere else”. Our reviewer faults this botanical literature by citing the presence of *Shorea robusta* in the Dehra Dun Valley. This must play down the importance Sankalia attaches to items of such sort as constituting geographical indices to the location of Lanka. A further fact quoted by our reviewer from A. D. Pusalker<sup>1</sup> knocks these items clean out of the field. The Ramayana (III.33.13,21; IV.40.14,18; VI.4.75; 22.55), in its account of the area where Lanka is located, refers to sandalwood trees, coconut trees, etc, which cannot ever be associated with the Chota Nagpur plateau but strongly suggest the South. Valmiki, bringing in various botanical features, was letting his imagination run as it liked without any thought of providing scholars with geographical directions.

A passage to which Sankalia himself refers appears to bear out Valmiki's attitude. He<sup>2</sup> writes: “The sea was filled up [by the Vanaras] with all kinds of trees—sala, asvakarva, tala, tilaka, kutaja, arjuna, bilva, saptavarva, kamikara, asoka(6-15-15-20)... One may ask, ‘From where did they bring all these trees?’ Some (many) do not grow at all in the vicinity or for that matter in South India!” It is obvious that the jumble of trees suits no locality in particular, whether South India or the Chota Nagpur plateau, and that the poet's botany has nothing to do with geography.

Rather, we should make a fine point by saying that the “sala”-instance is non-determinative because of *Shorea robusta* occurring a second time in a context in which its possible determinative character is annulled. One context cancels out another. Whenever such a conflict of contexts is there, Valmiki's botany and geography cease to be related and he is indulging in imaginative creativity more than exercising “the eye upon the object”. Botany would be a finger-post to geography only when a survey of the poem yields a clear-cut, univocal, uncontradicted vision.

In pursuance of his anti-Ceylon brief, Sankalia<sup>3</sup> tells us: “Lanka or Lakka is a Mundari [Gondi] word, and so also Ravana.” This bit of ethnographic and linguistic information is said<sup>4</sup> to confirm the location of Lanka in the Chota Nagpur region. But the source of a word is really neither here nor there in the discussion. The river-name “Ganga” has been claimed to be in all likelihood a Munda derivative.<sup>5</sup> Must the Ganges be located exclusively among the habitats of Gond tribes? At any rate, Ceylon, which is far indeed from Jabalpur, is yet designated “Lanka”. And, like “Ganga”, it is so much part and parcel of the Sanskritist consciousness that its supposed origin has no meaning left for any conclusion. As far back as we can go in time, we find this fact. Sankalia<sup>6</sup> has himself quoted what seems the earliest available mention of the term. Referring to Tamil Sangham literature which dates to “a period between the first century B.C. and sixth century A.D.”, he writes: “...Dr. Vaidya-

<sup>1</sup> “Location of Lanka”, *Journal of the Oriental Institute*, Vol. XV, Nos. 3-4, March-June 1966, p. 340.

<sup>2</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> P. 7.

<sup>4</sup> P. 50.

<sup>5</sup> *The Vedic Age*, edited by R. C. Majumdar and A. D. Pusalker (London, 1952), p. 154.

<sup>6</sup> Pp. 55, 70.

nath, Reader in Dravidian linguistics, Deccan College, kindly informs me that in *Purananaru* occur words like *iraman* (verse 378, line 18) and *ilankai* (verse 378, line 6) which stand for Rama and Lanka respectively. According to him both these are loan words from Sanskrit in Tamil.”

Apropos of this information one may submit that if in 100 B.C.-600 A.D. the name “Lanka” crops up in South-Indian literature it must, in the first place, point to Ceylon and not Chota Nagpur and, in the second place, show that Ceylon was called Lanka at quite an earlier date than the one which Sankalia<sup>1</sup> inexplicably notes when he says: “The name Lanka is not known earlier than inscriptions of the 10th century A.D.” He<sup>2</sup> bases his statement on *The Early History of Ceylon* (1947) by G. C. Mendis; but surely, even apart from the *Purananaru*, there are the Pali Chronicles, the *Dipavamsa* and *Mahavamsa*, belonging to the 4th and the 6th centuries A. D. respectively, about which B. M. Barua<sup>3</sup> writes: “The Pali Chronicles apply the names Lankā, Sihala and Tambapanni to one and the same country and island of Ceylon.” Further, with “Lanka” borrowed by southern literature from Sanskrit, it is hardly credible that, as Sankalia<sup>4</sup> opines, Ceylon has accepted to be termed “Lanka” because in Austro-Asiatic languages like Gondi the word “means ‘an island’, ‘a high elevated place’”. The most likely reason is the identification of the *Ramayana*’s Lanka with Ceylon.

## 4

Sankalia is at pains to rule out South India from the epic. The Critical Edition of the *Ramayana* has retained the reading “Godavari” as genuine,<sup>5</sup> but, as the river Godavari is south of the Vindhya which for Sankalia is the utmost southern limit of the stage of the poem’s drama, he<sup>6</sup> refers us to “Hiralal and others” who tell us of “a small river Godavari” which was north of the Vindhya and which “has now disappeared”. And, when in the *Kishkindhakanda* this shadowy Godavari cannot be pressed into service because the Godavari mentioned there is placed south of the Narmada which is itself south of the Vindhya and cannot be equated to any small namesake of a river that has disappeared, Sankalia<sup>7</sup> remarks that “the most remarkable thing” is “the fact that the river Narmada which flows south of the Vindhya, almost across the heart of India, is not once mentioned except in the much later interpolated sargas in *Kishkindhakanda*, wherein Sugriva gives instructions to the Vanara chiefs how and where to seek Sita”. True, the Narmada occurs only in this place, but may it not have been unnecessary elsewhere? It may not have been sufficiently southern for Valmiki’s purposes, whereas the Godavari, if it is not the river of “Hiralal and others”, was just right for the required southward orientation. Besides, what proof is there that the sargas to which Sankalia refers are “later” and “interpolated”? One

<sup>1</sup> P. 51.      <sup>2</sup> P. 69.

<sup>3</sup> *Asoka and His Inscriptions* (New Age Publishers, Calcutta, 1946), Part I, p. 336.

<sup>4</sup> P. 51.

<sup>5</sup> Pusalker, *Op. cit.*, p. 336.      <sup>6</sup> P. 48.      <sup>7</sup> P. 48.

cannot dismiss them for being inconvenient to a certain theory. And indeed they are the acme of inconvenience, for they list not only the Narmada and the Godavari but also the countries of the Andhras, Pundras, Cholas, Pandyas, Keralas and the region of the Tamraparni river—an ensemble painting an undeniable picture of the South.

This ensemble, which is ascribed to a late interpolation, can be easily given its *terminus ad quem*, its latest necessary time limit. For, here is a collocation of countries remarkably resembling the series of southern territories provided by Asoka's Rock Edict II. The sole difference, as Barua<sup>1</sup> notes, is: "we have the Pundras instead of Asoka's Pārimdas, and the Keralas in place of Asoka's Satiyaputras and Keralaputras." The general succession is too obviously the same to allow us to dwell on minor differences. It is as if Asoka had the Ramayana at the back of his mind or the Ramayana echoed Asoka. The unmistakable correspondence is the sign of related epochs. Asoka, as presently dated, promulgated his Rock Edicts in c. 256 B. C. So the criticised sargas need not be later than the middle of the third century B. C. And, as Asoka's own declared addition to the empire he inherited is only the province of Kalinga, his string of southern territories was continuing a geographical fact of a fairly earlier time. To that very time the sargas can be attributed.

Perhaps we should speak of "times" instead of "time", and hazard a guess at the earliest period. The immediate collocation of Andhras and Pundras occurs first in the Aitareya Brahmana (VII.18), a very ancient scripture, though there it is followed by a mention of Sabaras, Pulindas and Mutibas. What is particularly to be marked is that the Andhra-Pundra pair is put in the Vindhyan jungles, unlike as in later books where the country of the Pundras corresponds to Bengal and Bihar. The Ramayana's ensemble appears to be a sort of palimpsest, in which more than one age may be traced. But an impression of considerable antiquity is conveyed from its deepest layer. A very old account seems to have been worked upon. And even the latest working could be substantially pre-Asokan.

To return to our discussion. As against the absence of the Narmada in one sole place of the poem, we may counter-argue: "If there is nothing more southern than the Vindhya and if Kishkindha is not to its south, how is it that the Vanara army marching southward from Kishkindha does not encounter the Vindhya and how is it that Rama returning from Lanka to Ayodhya does not see the Vindhya before passing over Kishkindha? The Vindhya is absent from both the accounts (VI.4, 70-71, 92-94 and VI.123) bearing on the region to the south of Kishkindha."

These two accounts, let us stress, are not in the suspect Kishkindhakanda. They are in Book VI, the Yuddhakanda. And in Book V, the Sundarakanda (63. 8-10), we are explicitly told: "Lanka is situated on the southern bank of the southern ocean." Book III, the Aranyakanda (47. 10) and (46. 25), makes Ravana speak of Lanka: "Beyond the ocean stands my beautiful capital Lanka"—"That great city in the midst of the ocean, Lanka."

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 76.

A general indication southward and therefore on the way to a southern Lanka is met with also in the Aranyakanda (11.51). The topic now is the hermitage of the Rishi Agastya. There is an old tradition that Agastya led the first colony of Aryans into the Podiyal Hills. Scholars of Sankalia's school discredit it, but in this kanda Rama, mentioning to Lakshmana the route to Agastya's hermitage, says:

*Pippalinām cha pakvānām vanādas mādupāgataḥ.*

*Gandho'yam pavanoṭkṣiptaḥ sahasā katukodayaḥ.*

This is to be translated: "The smell wafted by the winds from the pippali forests bearing ripened fruits is very pungent." The reference to the pippali forests is suggestive, for it is in Malabar that these forests of pepper stand. If one has to pass by, or in sight of, them in order to reach the hermitage of Agastya, one has surely to travel to South India? And we may note that, unlike as with sala-trees and Central India, pippali trees are nowhere in the poem jumbled with any vegetation sweeping us away from the geographical direction in which they seem here to point—namely, southward.

We have no particular precision here in placing the hermitage, but the general indication is definitive in support of its southern location. The Kishkindhakanda, in one (41) of the allegedly interpolated sargas bears out the old tradition of the Podiyal Hills by locating Agastya on the top of Malaya near the river Tamraparni. Hence that kanda itself gets supported once more by a passage against which no charge of interpolation can be levelled. In any case, we may safely assert that the Ramayana directs us southward and does not stop short with Central India for its Lanka.<sup>1</sup>

Even if all the allusions in the epic to South India occurred nowhere except in the Kishkindhakanda, our judgment on this part of the poem would depend on a certain decision of ours: we have first to make up our minds on what would qualify as interpolation. Did Valmiki intend Lanka to be far to the south of the Vindhya or not? Sankalia claims that the original Ramayana was concerned only with a Gond Ravana from the Chota Nagpur plateau abducting Sita and being attacked and defeated by Rama and that Valmiki turned this nucleus into a heroic poem—that is to say, the poem which has grandiose descriptions of Lanka and embodies other great flights of imagination. In other words, Valmiki's Ramayana takes us far south of the Vindhya down to the southern sea and beyond it to Lanka. In that case many of the so-called interpolations are Valmiki's and several are by other hands after him and all of them are introduced into a modest poetic work before his time, consisting of ballads. To the eyes of readers like Sankalia, there are clear signs of that work in Valmiki's Ramayana and in subsequent inflations. But here arises a most crucial literary point.

If Valmiki was the great poet and consummate artist he is universally held to be, it is unthinkable that he should leave clear signs of a Gond Ravana from Central India within the Rakshasa Ravana who is king of magnificent Lanka and the gigantic villain of the epic story whose godlike hero is Rama—a story full of "adventure and

<sup>1</sup> The line of argument followed in this paragraph and in part of the preceding is based on pp. 69-70 of the recently published remarkable book on linguistics, *Dravidian Theories* by R. Swaminatha Aiyar (The Madras Law Journal Office, 1975).

daring” as well as of “high ethical and philosophical principles”, as Sankalia<sup>1</sup> says. Valmiki would certainly have removed such contradictions of his theme if they had ever existed. He may have enlarged and extra-supernaturalised a theme originally treated on a less splendid and less multi-significant scale. But he could never have allowed traces of an altogether different motif and treatment. Whatever signs such as Sankalia banks on must be gaucheries injected later in the course of the inflation the Ramayana underwent in smaller hands through the centuries. The original or *Ur* Ramayana must have been Valmikian and conjured up a southern “Atlantean” island of Lanka whose remnant is most probably modern Ceylon.

The actual interpolations are, on the one side, those passages that blow up beyond the rich yet inevitable poetic word the lofty natural-*cum*-supernatural conceptions of Valmiki and, on the other side, the passages that go against these conceptions and reduce the theme to restricted issues and terms of mundane probability and suggest an episode about which Sankalia<sup>2</sup> can say: “There is nothing unnatural about it—either the persons or the places.”

To get hold of the true nucleus of Valmiki’s story we must not resort to the image of a quite human king of a moderate dominion fighting and killing an aboriginal woman-stealer in a primitive marshland, all within a small area between Ayodhya and the Vindhya mountains. We must create the vision of extraordinary embodiments of divine and diabolical forces pitted against each other and ranging across the whole subcontinent which represented for them the wide earth at a critical psychological stage of human development. We have to distinguish between the supernatural agencies behind and the natural instruments in front, but we must not cut down the grand size of those instruments, the size without which they would not be the instruments of such agencies. Neither must we limit too severely the scale of their activities and the measure of their organised life-expression, nor, again, deny totally the occasional influx of supernature into nature in a period of the remote past when man’s consciousness was not as outwardly faced and fixed as now. Ravana’s ten necks and twenty arms (III.30.8) we should consider symbolic of the transmundane Titanic vitalism he incarnated, but we must not underestimate the power of the two human hands which he used for his visible action: at the back of them we must keep our sense of those numerous necks and heads and arms. It is to help us do so and yet focus our attention on the visibly human that Valmiki has lines (III.50.12-13) enabling Sankalia to say: “Though he has 20 arms he fought with two hands only.” The visibly human is even more frankly expressed by saying that Ravana “had only two ears and one head” (V.20. 27). This proves that Valmiki conceived Ravana as a man among men, however endowed he might be with more-than-human strength and power: it does not prove that the Rakshasa Ravana is wholly a myth foisted by Valmiki on a Gond original. To be able to extricate a human Ravana from the heroic

<sup>1</sup> Pp. 62.

<sup>2</sup> P. 63.

poem is not to identify him as an aboriginal tribesman: it is simply to realise that Valmiki knew and recognised the human exterior to the Rakshasic actuality within.

*(To be continued)*

K. D. SETHNA

## NIGHT SONG

By the wandering waves of the shadowy sea,  
Through moondrunk mist, near a stormstirred tree,  
In the silverfresh swiftness of a wind running free,  
I seek the shy enchanted gleam  
Of the silken thread of Thy starspun dream.

The waves rush in, the waves retire,  
And through the night burns a secret fire  
That fills with flames my soul's desire.  
Thy eve enfolds a fiery cloud,  
And the stars are holes in its dim shroud!

When night sweeps in on silent wings  
That wheel in wide calm shining rings,  
And through the darkness rapture sings,  
I fly into a moonlimned land  
And race like a child through its starblown sand!

The wind winds through the night's wild heart  
And my soul, O Lord, would sit apart,  
And spin starpatterned songs that start  
With the burning breath of Thy Love's fierce flame,  
With the bright soaring sound of Thy infinite Name!

JBAN

## UDAR REMEMBERS

*(Continued from the issue of February 21, 1976)*

WE often asked The Mother for Her Blessings and Protection but perhaps were not always conscious of how they worked. So let me give a few examples of the experiences I have had of Her Infinite Love and of the Blessings and Protection it brought.

Once when I was returning from Orissa to Madras by the Howrah Mail there was a great accident to this train. It was not far from Madras that it happened, in the early hours of the morning. The train was passing a wayside station at high speed and there was a wrong point changing. Our train went at high speed towards a stationary goods train. When the engine staff saw this wrong point change and knew they could not stop in time, they put on the breaks and all jumped out of the engine. They all escaped unhurt. Our train went right into the other and with the collision the whole train was lifted right off the rails. But instead of being thrown over, it came to rest upright, by the side of the rails. We were all flung out of our seats on to the floor by the shock. But, on investigation, it was found that no one in the whole train was even injured. A relief train came and took us to Madras with only a little delay.

When I reached the Ashram I went straight to The Mother to tell Her of this accident. I found Her smiling and with a twinkle in Her eye. She said: "Yes, I knew of the danger threatening you and in order to save you I had to save the whole train." Is She not the Universal Mother?

The next incident of which I now write happened at Delhi. I was staying there at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Branch at Mehrauli, near the Kutub Minar. I had come to town to meet a friend and stayed with him till the late evening. Then I asked him to call a taxi for me to return. I knew my way back very well but my friend wanted to be extra helpful so when the taxi came he told the driver to take me straight to the Ashram by the shortest route. When the driver took all sorts of by-lanes and I asked why, he told me of the order given by my friend to take the shortest route. Normally the journey should have taken 20 minutes but after 30 minutes we reached some strange place and the driver said: "Here we have come to the Ashram." I was puzzled. The driver said it was the Ramakrishna Ashram. This was the trouble. The Mother had so often insisted that the centre at Delhi should be called the Ashram Branch, but many continued to call it the Ashram—and I had to pay for that now.

I said to the driver: "I want the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Branch at Mehrauli." The driver replied: "Why did you not say Mehrauli? I know it very well. Your friend said 'The Ashram' and so I brought you here."

I began to get angry with my friend for his unnecessary interference but I suddenly felt I should not be angry with him as there must be some purpose behind it all. It took me another half hour to reach home and it cost me Rs. 20 extra. I was quite calm by now. The next morning I read in the papers that there was a big accident at



the junction where the road from town meets the wide Mehrauli Road (now called Sri Aurobindo Marg). Many cars were involved in a smash-up and several people were injured and some died. I calculated the time of the accident and found it had happened just at the time my taxi would have been at the same junction, and I was saved by our sweet wonderful Mother from this accident also in Her own Divine way.

The third story is of something that happened at the Ashram. It was a school holiday and when I came to the Ashram gate with my car (an old Vanguard) some children surrounded me and said: "Udarda! Udarda! Today is a holiday for us. Take us for a ride to the Lake. Please, Udarda." How could I refuse? So I took them. On the way the children picked up some "eats". We reached the Lake and I took them along one of the beautiful but very narrow roads that are by its side. This road is high above the Lake with steep bunds. While on it, the children began to munch the things they had brought and offered me some, from the back seat. When I turned back to take them, the steering wheel of the car turned a bit also and the car went right off the narrow road. It went right over and began to slide down the steep bund. It should have ended up in the canal below and there would certainly have been a serious accident. But a short shrub stopped the car sliding down and it came to an upright position on its four wheels. I was quite frightened for the children, but they were not. They just thought it was part of my fun. The car started immediately and we drove up the slope and returned home.

When I went at once to The Mother and told Her the story She asked me: "Did you take my permission to take the children out for a ride? You know you must always take my permission before you do such things and you did not. It was wrong of you, Udar. It was your mischief. But, you see, even when you do mischief I am with you, so I had to save you!"

The last story I shall recount here happened also at the Ashram. It was during the anti-Hindi riots. The South resented the imposition of Hindi as the common language of all India on the South where they have their own great Dravidian languages and would be at a disadvantage with Hindi. Somehow some people looked on our Ashram as a Northern Institution and so a supporter of Hindi although the Mother had announced that Sanskrit should be made the National Language. But a number of interested parties excited the crowd against the Ashram and there was a large attack on the central building of the Ashram one morning. I did not know what it was all about, so I dressed quickly, went out and pushed my way through the angry crowd up to the main gate, which was closed, and stood for sometime in front of it. No one touched me although the crowd were armed with sticks and stones. When things became a bit quieter, I came back home again through the angry crowd and again without anyone touching me. I was so much concerned about the attack on the Ashram that I had not had even a passing thought for my own safety. But later I realised what a wonderful escape I had had. The crowd could have beaten me to death. There were no Police or anyone there to prevent this and yet I came through unscathed.

Later, when I told the whole story to The Mother I said: "I do not know, Mother, why the angry crowd did not touch me at all." She just smiled Her sweet enigmatic smile and said: "Do you not know why?" I really felt ashamed. I knew it was Her Grace and Protection and yet stupidly said: "I do not know why." How little worthy we are of all She gives us, and yet She gives. She is our Mother—The Divine Mother—yes, but still "our Mother".

We are not always conscious of this and we *must* be. We often say things by force of habit, a wrong habit, where The Mother is concerned.

As another instance of this wrong habit, I would often ask The Mother: "What do you think of this, or that?" She would then give me a loving knock on my head with Her hand and say: "How often have I told you, that for over 40 years I have not thought! I do not *think*, I see and from that I act. So do not ask me again what I think!" And yet I went on asking the same stupid question. It is only Her great loving patience that could take this.

(To be continued)

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## WIND FLOWER

HIGH-BLOWING dance on the wind, the call of delight;  
 A freedom of isolate rapture, the thrall  
 Of something beyond what I knew  
 As the world, captured my being; I flew.  
 A far-fleeing ecstasy drew  
 Me into a high-flying whirl, a wind flight.  
 The glow of an aureate purity entered my reverie bright.  
 Alight on a buoyance of hope, I followed my dreams.  
 Released from the burden of man's common care,  
 Soaring wind-winged in a radiant air,  
 Ascending in brilliance, flawless and rare,  
 An aerial flower, I flew into light.

LORETTA

## HOW CAN WE EXPECT THEM TO COME?\*

How can we expect them to come soon to this world  
Where men love to wallow in muddy meanderings,  
Pray alone for fulfilment of their hankerings  
And long to live in pleasures fully furled?

Where is the place for them in these corrupt hearts  
Which court a thousand falsehoods and little loves,  
Clinging to low pursuits, perverted moves,  
Bargaining poor cheap moods in life's mad marts?

We ask for their coming, do we have true call,  
Keep honestly longingly clean our being's cup?  
Has a single love's pure zeal eaten us up?  
If our cry had been genuine, they wouldn't have gone at all!

How much did we value them when they were here,  
How much did we follow them, obey their will?  
Let all search deep within, the mind made still:  
We were falling to leisured living year after year.

A thorough self-sweeping is the need of the hour,  
A ruthless cleaning of self's impurities,  
A deep self-delving of soul's intensities:  
They, throned above all, men's only effective power.

It's wishful thinking that all for us will be done,  
Nothing can the need of our conscious effort erase,  
All self-centred life must be yoked to selfless ways,  
No grace can help if pureness is not won.

They called and called but men remained deaf and dumb;  
A thousand years' cleaning is nothing to gauge their worth.  
Unless with a bare soul's welcome cries the earth,  
How can those pure feet and their bodied love come?

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

<sup>1</sup> On the occasion of the 62nd anniversary of Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's first meeting on 29th March 1914.

## DIMENSIONS

FROM where I sit leaning back eased, I look on my world  
and wait for the spell to fall upon the hour,  
so around fivish or six when dusk falls upon the leaves  
and the colours begin to put on a different cloak,  
the best hour of the day.

Then as I ease unweighed, the magic begins to sit upon my brow,  
I enter through a plastic door and we meet at borderland,  
my past and nowadays, and together we plunge toward  
the beckoning light, sensed but unknown.

Mostly I shift to where my fondest thoughts live sacred, large—  
for why dream at all if not about unimaginable heights?  
There I remain as long as it will let me and  
fashion the world to come.

It is familiar, this new life and yet dreamt before. When? Where  
has the chain begun?—Walk back the lead, it's yours to try,  
all of it, slide either way you like—I try.

Oh, there sits a little girl around seven, now maybe ten,  
how warm her dreams, how bravely she scans the skies!  
Serene her look as she sits amongst the field flowers in the grass—  
there alone unalone, she talks to them of my dreams,  
my unbeheld longings of realities which are true.

Little girl, I call, you are familiar, haven't we fashioned  
this world before? She looks upon me, wiser than I am now  
an adult, oh those eyes of light—

Come, she requests and leads me by my grown-up hands in hers,  
this is what we will make, you and I, a world made anew  
perfect, paradisiacal—grand or don't you know it's true?  
How will I tell her that sometimes in the dusty labour my muscles  
strain and ache, that the breath gets heavy with the effort  
and I forget who else I am, the pictures fade away and  
a shadow falls upon my bread?

We know each other, this child and I are one.

Hither, she says, listen, this is where your longings live,  
they are getting born—

I walk toward the hall of birth of created thoughts and sounds  
and see me shining standing there in utter rapturous joy—  
this is my fulfilment, I think, my moment come born,  
I am at last new!

All white I stand without a fault, two shimmering wings  
are mine, angel-self I become...

A voice from nowhere, infinitely sweet finds my ecstasy and  
stirs me to attend;  
'Child of my own, my own angel-light, I heard you calling,  
long have you called. Not unheard, no, your voice was truly  
taken down. It pleased me when it pleaded throughout the nights—  
call me, it said, call me to serve you and a better world,  
I long to serve you alone—it called.'  
I stood in radiant gladness, have my calls been truly heard?  
'Caller,' the voice sung to me, 'truly calling soul,  
your request is granted, to your work proceed—  
go now, go forth and take my light and plant it in the dust.'  
The voice ceased to sing, I left alone, my wish fulfilled  
I cast my glance down and beheld two shining wings lie on  
either side dropped, then fade.  
I looked down and sadness welled up in my heart,  
tears came up unasked.

The light has gone out, night settling finds me sitting here  
where I waited for the best hour of the day to come...  
Where is the child who led me, I cry—haven't we been like one?  
Just one more moment, just a blink of an eye!  
—Then I glance at my stove waiting, the hungry folks will soon be here,  
and think of the labour ahead tomorrow in the field—  
the grain to be gathered, the hay to be laid on the ground,  
and feel my back ache, my burning hands roughened in the toil—  
and remember the birth of the wings—the labour in the dust.

24.6.72.

GEORGETTE COTY

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# PSYCHE

## A PLAY IN VERSE

(Continued from the issue of February 21, 1976)

ACT ONE  
SCENE FIVE

*A place in the mountains.*  
*Enter DAPHNE and PHILLIP*

DAPHNE: Wait here. When I whistle meet me over there —

PHILLIP: You can whistle?

DAPHNE: Of course I can whistle. — But if they come  
Don't let them see you. Hide behind this rock.

And don't doze off. And put your helmet on.

Look like a soldier. If you see anything

Just whistle and I'll come back. All right? Well, go! [*She goes out*]

PHILLIP: It sure is eerie, just like the princess said.

And right behind my back the cliff. It's dark.

The moon won't rise till midnight. Hope no spooks

Are flitting round here. Well, I'll get some sleep.

We'll be up late tonight.

[*Enter ZEPHYRUS with EURUS, THERME and AUSTRALIA*]

ZEPHYRUS: And what is this?

A veritable monster. No, a man.

Who knows about him?

EURUS: Me. I saw him come

With another one, a lady, but now she's gone

Up there. She said she'd whistle for him to come.

I heard her tell him, Master.

ZEPHYRUS: But do you think

A whistle will wake him? Sleeping like a stone.

I'll make him stir and then you whistle, but first

We'll find out who the other one is. Come on.

DAPHNE: What a tremendous oaf. I hope to God

No demon does come if he is all I have

To keep me safe.

EURUS: I see her, Master, there.

THERME: And I know who it is.

EURUS: Well, I know too.

- THERME: It's Psyche's sister.
- EURUS: Just what I was going to say.
- ZEPHYRUS: You're right, it's Psyche's sister Daphne.
- THERME: You see.
- EURUS: But I knew too.
- ZEPHYRUS: Be quiet now, both of you.  
She's going to spoil things, her and her sleepy friend.  
We'd better get rid of them fast. You two stay here.
- DAPHNE: I knew it was going to be weird, but — what was that?  
A screech owl. Evil omen. I'm not so sure  
We should have come here. It's all very well and good  
To want to save somebody, but not to lose  
My own life doing it. That owl again.  
Why did I come here? What do I care about  
My little do-good sister anyway?  
What has she ever done for me? And she  
Gets all the attention. Ever since she was born  
It's been nothing but Psyche, Psyche. Again the owl.  
It makes my blood run cold. What's that over there?  
I shake like a child afraid of the dark. Each stone  
Is a hungry demon. What if the priest was right?  
What if a monster from below does come?  
Some huge blood-thirsty subterranean fiend,  
What could I do against it? What a fool  
I was to come. Why don't I ever think?  
I'm getting out while there is still time. What's that?  
A whistle. Someone has come. Which way to go?  
Again.
- PHILLIP: Hunh? It's the princess. I've got to go  
Up there and meet her. I'll keep behind these rocks.  
No use exposing myself.
- DAPHNE: No need to run.  
I'll circle around. It must just be the priests  
With Psyche and the rest. I'll go have a look.  
Why does he keep on whistling?
- PHILLIP: Over here.  
It's so dark I can't see anything. Whoops! Good grief.  
Where is she?
- DAPHNE: Where is that idiot?
- PHILLIP: What's that?
- BOTH: Ahhhhh!
- ZEPHYRUS: Well done, my lovely spirits! When they have run

As far as they can run, then wrap a dream  
 Around their heads and let them sleep until  
 Our work is done.

AUSTRA:                               Look Master, the other men  
 Are coming. Listen.

ZEPHYRUS:                           All of you quick go hide  
 Or else make yourselves invisible, and then wait.  
 Ha ha. These two have left us just in time.

[*Enter in procession KING, PSYCHE, EUNICE, PRIESTS, others.*]  
 KING: Here we must leave you. Give me your hands, my child.

Before the gods, before Necessity,  
 That was before the gods, and rules their lives  
 Even as it rules the lives of mortal men  
 I stand. To him whom destiny has named  
 I give this child, her dowry is her heart.  
 Yet presents have I brought to satisfy  
 Established custom, caskets filled with gold  
 And silver stamped with the seal of Babylon:  
 Oriental riches. Nor is Greece so poor  
 That each of her great kingdoms cannot provide  
 Its special treasure. All we give to thee,  
 Almighty Zeus, to each god give his share.  
 Embrace me, Psyche. Soon the sun will set  
 And we must leave you. You must not be afraid.

EUNICE: Come, Father, it is better not to try  
 To tell her anything except Good-by.

[*All come up to embrace PSYCHE while the PRIESTS circumambulate  
 chanting:*

Golden Phoebus, hear our paeon,  
 Driver of the golden car,  
 Lord of Mysteries Apollonian,  
 Light of the diurnal star.

Master of the harp and healing,  
 Master of the mystic mind,  
 Rend its glimmering veil, revealing  
 All that is unseen behind.

Golden Phoebus etc.



Grant us thy divine protection,  
Slay in us the Evil One.  
Lead us to divine protection  
By the pathway of the sun.

PRIEST: Lord god Apollo, grant us purity,  
Divine catharsis that we might arise  
Immaculate into immortal light.

[*All go out chanting "Golden Phoebus" etc.*]

PSYCHE: Alone. The night is dark. There is no moon.  
The sky is low. I cannot see but feel  
Black clouds that press down heavily, as if  
To suffocate me, and all around huge rocks  
Loom menacingly like titans. No escape.  
The wind blows from the north, sharp, clear and cold  
And thrills my body and it drives the clouds  
All headlong southward, and I can see a star;  
Another, and another and I can see the moon!  
The moon has risen golden in the east!  
And from the west the wind returns. It feels  
Like springtime and a springtime fragrance fills  
The air. [*Enter ZEPHYRUS*] Someone has come. Someone is here  
Behind me. Daphne, is it you? Come out!  
It is too dark to see. Who's there? Come out  
And answer Psyche, daughter of the king.

ZEPHYRUS: You Psyche? The king's daughter? Here alone  
On this ungodly mountain? And what brings  
You from the palace at this time of night?

PSYCHE: And who are you that joke with princesses  
And court a king's displeasure?

ZEPHYRUS: Ah, the king.  
But wasn't it the king that I just saw down  
The mountain? But he was headed the other way,  
With all his lords and ladies and high priests,  
All of them chanting some outrageous prayer.  
Have they abandoned you? Oh dear. Poor girl.  
Aren't you afraid some hungry bear will come  
And make a meal of you?

PSYCHE: I have no fear.

ZEPHYRUS: No fear at all?

PSYCHE: Not any.... What was that?

ZEPHYRUS: Only the north wind whistling harmlessly —  
A bad show for a girl who has no fear.

- PSYCHE: Enough. Who are you?  
 ZEPHYRUS: One that has been sent  
 By one whose state is greater.
- PSYCHE: And who is he?  
 ZEPHYRUS: You will find out soon enough, because we two  
 Must go now.
- PSYCHE: And if I refuse to come?  
 ZEPHYRUS: Refuse to come?  
 PSYCHE: I am lifted up in the air!  
 ZEPHYRUS: Air is my element and I command  
 Its comings and its goings.
- PSYCHE: Set me free!  
 You sorcerer, you thaumaturgic fiend!  
 ZEPHYRUS: You have me wrong.  
 PSYCHE: This power is not of earth.  
 ZEPHYRUS: But not therefore of Hades.  
 PSYCHE: Set me free!  
 ZEPHYRUS: Surrender rather to a force too strong  
 To be resisted.
- PSYCHE: I cannot escape.  
 It is too much, but yet I have no fear.  
 A breeze surrounds me, gentle and fresh and warm,  
 And lifts me lightly. I am borne away.  
 The near seems far, direction vanishes.  
 And I am falling down the deep abyss,  
 Falling down the warm and deep abyss,  
 Falling helplessly falling, falling, falling....  
*[She faints. While she lies as if unconscious, the scene is transformed  
 around her; the mountain-side becomes the palace of EROS. A few  
 rocks and trees remain which prevent actors downstage from seeing  
 the palace, and the area immediately in front of it, where PSYCHE  
 is lying. Enter PHILLIP.]*
- PHILLIP: No use my staying. I guess they've come and gone.  
 I sure was sleepy. Wait till I tell my dad  
 That I saw that monster. It sure was an ugly thing.  
 But I swung my sword and scared it right away.  
 I wonder where the princess went to? Well,  
 I might as well get back home. *[Goes out]*  
*[Enter DAPHNE]*
- DAPHNE: This is the place.  
 No one around. They must have left her here.  
 But where is she now? The fool, the idiot!

It's his fault. If I hadn't lost my head  
 I would have ... but it's too late now. Psyche!  
 It serves me right for trusting him. Psyche! Psyche!  
 She must be around here someplace. Psyche, Psyche. [*Goes out*]

PSYCHE: [*Coming to*] Where am I? I have travelled far, but now  
 I feel firm earth again beneath my feet.  
 What place is this?

ZEPHYRUS: [*Entering*] My master's mansion, built  
 For you, Psyche.

PSYCHE: It's you! But I have learned  
 To trust you, for I know the force is good  
 That brought me here, and all things here are good.  
 Tell me your name.

ZEPHYRUS: Men call me Zephyrus.

PSYCHE: Zephyrus! Spirit of the west wind!

ZEPHYRUS: At your command.

But come. Come, Psyche, enter your new home.

PSYCHE: My home? It is a temple fit for a god.  
 Vertical shafts of columned strength  
 shoot straight from massive base  
 To capital exploding out  
 in constant crowding bloom.  
 They stand in seried silence  
 like a sacred grove of fir  
 Whose mystic shaded clearing  
 is a high-roofed portico.  
 It is too grand for me.

ZEPHYRUS: Come, Psyche, come.

This mansion has been made for you alone.

[*She enters*]

PSYCHE: Oh Zephyrus, here too the columns climb  
 Above me like the pillars that upbear  
 The vault of heaven, but the ceiling is  
 More beautiful than heaven and it makes  
 My heart aspire ecstatically to God.  
 And all around the walls are wrought with signs  
 That hold the secret of the one who hides  
 Majestically behind them, but the eye  
 Insatiate of splendour is denied  
 The chance to probe those secrecies, for line  
 And form and colour and superb design  
 Attract from everywhere and I am lost

Like one who has spent long and fruitless years  
 Digging for treasure in the common earth  
 Who all at once discovers a hundred veins  
 Of pure gold. Statues, frescoes, pictures, all  
 Speak to me of the one I have so long  
 Been seeking and I know that he is near.  
 Oh help me, Zephyrus, I cannot contain  
 My rapture. Zephyrus! But where is he? Gone.  
 I must compose myself. My love is near.  
 I feel him all around, but though my eyes  
 Search everywhere I cannot find him. Come!  
 Come now, Beloved! Where has Zephyrus gone?  
 [Enter ZEPHYRUS]

ZEPHYRUS: I had to make arrangements for your stay.

PSYCHE: You have come back.

ZEPHYRUS: But soon I will go again,  
 So listen carefully. Within the hour  
 My master, that is, our master, will return.

PSYCHE: Oh Zephyrus, he is coming here tonight?

ZEPHYRUS: At least I think he said tonight.

PSYCHE: Oh you!  
 You monster! When will you be serious?

ZEPHYRUS: I am more serious than you think, my friend,  
 But hide it behind a smile. Tonight he comes.

PSYCHE: Tonight! My body trembles and my hair  
 Bristles in ecstasy. He comes tonight.  
 How shall I pass the centuries till he comes?

ZEPHYRUS: How pass the time? It all has been arranged!  
 [Clapping his hands] Come, little ones.

PSYCHE: What voices do I hear?

[Enter SPIRITS]

ZEPHYRUS: Ethereal attendants at your beck  
 And call to minister to your desires.  
 They will bring playthings to beguile the hours,  
 Bright diamonds in boxes, ruby rings  
 And trinkets to adorn your breast and arms  
 And make you fairer than the fairest queen  
 That ever ruled the kingdom of the Nile.  
 They will bring perfumes made from blossoms grown  
 By Ganges, jasmine, rose and passion-flower,  
 To make you more alluring. They will bring  
 Rich balms of cooling sandalwood to smear

On limbs made feverish with love, and wine  
 For surely you must thirst, and savouries  
 For surely you must hunger. All you ask  
 They will provide, provided that you ask.

PSYCHE: I ask for nothing but to see my love.

Send them away. And make this music stop.

ZEPHYRUS: As you desire. But if you want anything  
 You only have to clap your hands, like this,  
 And they will come. I must go now. Good-by.

PSYCHE: Good-by. How strange, this room that seemed so grand  
 Now feels so cold and empty. Tonight he comes.  
 [*Singing*] ...“How long have I waited.”  
 [*Breaks off*] Perhaps he won’t come at all. How many times  
 I thought he was going to come but in the end  
 No one appeared, my life remained the same.  
 Perhaps he does not even exist at all,  
 My imaginary lover. I must stop  
 Deluding myself, stop living in an empty dream  
 And face the facts of life. If he exists—  
 Even if he exists—he does exist!  
 But why should I think he loves me, why believe  
 That he will ever come? I feel so tired.  
 Why should I stay awake? I will lie down  
 And rest awhile. I feel so very tired.

[*She lies down. SPIRITS enter and stand around the couch. Then  
 EROS enters and sits beside PSYCHE.*]

SPIRITS: Psyche!

Psyche, awake. Open your eyes. Awake.

Psyche!

Psyche, awake. Open your eyes and see.

EROS: Psyche.

PSYCHE: It is you! Oh, you have come at last! [*She throws her arms  
 around him.*]

[*After some time*] Is someone here? Oh, when will we be alone?

*Eros makes a gesture and the SPIRITS go out.*

[*Some more time passes.*] It’s too dark. I can’t see you. I’ll go and  
 bring

A candle, Love.

EROS: No.

PSYCHE: Oh, I’ll be right back.

EROS: Psyche, you must not go.

PSYCHE: It will only take

A minute, Love. [*Gets up and claps*] Now where have those spirits  
gone?

EROS: Psyche, they will not come.

PSYCHE: But Zephyrus said  
They'd come whenever I called them.

EROS: They will not come.

PSYCHE: But I want to see you, Love.

EROS: What need is there  
For you to look at me? Now that I have come  
Why do you flit away like a butterfly  
That is afraid to drink the nectar of a flower  
That has opened just for her? There is no time.

PSYCHE: No time? But we have all eternity,  
A hundred million years for endless love—  
But I want to see you now.

EROS: Psyche, come here.  
Don't be afraid.

PSYCHE: Afraid? What, me afraid?  
Everybody's always thinking that I'm afraid.  
But I'm not. I'm just a little nervous, that's all.  
Why should I be afraid of you? I know  
You better than my own self. I just want to see  
Your sweet adorable face.

EROS: You are afraid.  
You're shaking.

PSYCHE: I am not. I'm just excited. It's just  
A little passing excitement. You see. It's gone.

EROS: Psyche, did you believe the things they said?

PSYCHE: Who said?

EROS: The priests.

PSYCHE: What? That my husband would be  
A big black snake? Oh yes, Love, every word.  
That's why I came here. I've always had a secret desire  
To get eaten up by a big snake just like you.  
[*After a pause*] Listen to me, Love, I've been waiting all my life  
for you.

For you. And now you've come. Is it so strange  
That I should be excited?

EROS: Well, you may rest at ease,  
Young lady, I can assure you that my love is true  
And honourable.

PSYCHE: Don't be so serious!

EROS: And I promise not to eat you.

PSYCHE: Why thank you, sir.

EROS: So come.

PSYCHE: In a minute.

EROS: Now.

PSYCHE: Are you afraid  
To let me see you? Oh, don't be silly, Love.  
I'll be right back.

EROS: No, Psyche, you must not go.

PSYCHE: Deny me not, or I'll wait, and when you're asleep  
I'll go and get a lamp and admire you all I please.  
Here in my lonely chamber, undisturbed.  
Like a miser gazing on his gold, alone.

EROS: That you must never do!

PSYCHE: It was a joke, Love.  
Why should it make you angry?

EROS: Be content  
To have me as I now am. You must never try  
To see me in the night.

PSYCHE: But what difference does it make?  
I'll see you in the morning anyway. Why not now?  
How can my happiness be complete  
If I can't see you?

EROS: Psyche, come here. Come. Come. [*Kisses her*]

PSYCHE: All right, I'll wait till morning. But when I awake...

EROS: You'll find me gone.

PSYCHE: Not likely. I'm out of bed  
Before the day breaks. But you're not going to go  
Tomorrow? Our first morning?

EROS: But I must go  
Each morning, Psyche, and must stay away  
Until the night has fallen.

PSYCHE: But why, Love?

EROS: When I am here I am yours and yours alone.  
But often I will be absent.

PSYCHE: Love, but why?

EROS: You must try to understand me. All I am  
Belongs to you, but often I will be away.  
There will be separation.

PSYCHE: But now that I  
Have captured you I will never ever let you go,  
Not even for a moment. [*Spirits approach*] Love, the night

Is filled with presences. Come close. It feels  
As if the whole wide universe has come  
To witness the consummation of our love.  
The past and future meet and disappear  
And all is this one moment that you and I  
Have met and there is only you and I.  
And I in you embrace eternity.  
And I in you embrace all things in time.

EROS:

*(To be continued)*

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PETER HEEHS



# DIALOGUES

## CHAPTER IV

(Continued from the issue of February 21, 1976)

### *Synopsis*

*The girl's soul in its travels continues to pass through its many existences. In the most recent she is born into an Indian family, and soon becomes a devotee of Krishna. Even after her marriage she continues to commune with her Lord. Then upon the birth of her fourth child she passes quietly away.*

ONCE again all vision, all sensation, all earthly phenomena receded from the voyaging soul, and she felt herself adrift like a sleeper who wakes fitfully and then almost at the same moment falls back into torpor or nebulous dream. Quickly, she accustomed herself to her new condition, and gave up her consciousness to the delight of her unearthly repose. Indeed, so absorbed did she become that she scarcely noticed when she returned to earth, not once but many times. Each time she might awaken briefly or not at all, depending on whether some little fragment of her life attracted her.

Once she remembered awakening as she was carrying an empty water jug up a steep hillside to a spring. In what country or time? She neither knew nor cared. Small blue flowers were blooming by the rock-encrusted path on both sides, tender and sky-bright in their spring garb, when suddenly sleep fell from her. Spontaneously her inner voice too awoke:

“Flowers, tiny azure marvels, why have I never seen you before? Why has the morning never seemed such an ecstasy of perfection as today? Each day I tread this path yet never before have my eyes been truly open, never before have my lungs truly breathed, never before has my heart felt wonder.”

At that moment she was overtaken by a chattering group of women from the village, and the voice fell silent in one shocked instant. The wonder was swallowed back into the inner sleep, and her eyes never truly looked again upon the little blue flowers by the path.

The next time she awakened may have been a different life, a different age—who knows—inwardly she had no way of keeping track of these things. She was seated in a corner of a small stone hut, her hearth before her, a forest of translucent dappled green beyond the single small window in the wall at the end of the room. Her few possessions lined the walls, together with a tattered barely recognizable doll on top of a dusty bundle of clothes—her only memento of the children she had brought up and then seen depart. She was old now—even her man had passed on—and she was simply sitting with her back against the wall waiting for her own time. As she looked about her she suddenly saw again with her inner vision—saw how every stone and pot and scrap of string in the hut was imprinted with her love, her patient un-

failing care of endless years...even the mud floor that she had resurfaced and tamped down season after season...the places on the wall worn dark and shiny where each of her family had been used to sit...the slate roofing neatly repaired after the winter's storms...the front doorstep worn hollow in the middle by a million familiar footfalls, in and out, in and out, year after year....Beloved, each inch of remembrance beloved, cherished by stone and wood and earth, for such things never forget. And then she found herself speaking to them, to all the inanimate objects about her with the voice that was not her human voice, but the one that had awakened temporarily out of its sleep:

"My dearest loves, they say you have no being, no life. Yet do I not see the great Spirit alive in you? As alive as in myself? Do we not breathe a common breath, share a common, secret, inner knowing? Have we not lived intimately together throughout our lives till we remain no longer separate things but a unity? Oh yes, of course...I feel myself in you and you in me, but I feel too that I must be going now, as the others have gone. Still, it is almost inconceivable that we must part. What will you do without me? Speak—the pain in my heart grows and my eyes swell with tears..."

Strangely, everything about her answered immediately and spontaneously: "Man that moves and thinks with a mind that no speed can measure feels us to be inert and dumb, and yes, even dead. Yet he in his rapidity does not see us live because he does not see us move. Nevertheless, Soul of our Soul, we live, immeasurably slowly, immeasurably profoundly and minutely. For nothing passes us by: the impressions that sink into us linger and solidify forever. Fear nothing—unlike man, we shall not pass away. Nor shall we forget—the slightest touch, or the daily care of years. Even voices and sounds, laughter and whispers, the rhythm of your breathing as you slept or as you laboured over your grinding stone, your humming as you sat at your loom now propped against the wall—all, all we have taken in and recorded forever. None can steal you from us. And even a thousand years hence if any were to come here with the ears to hear and the eyes to see they would hear and see you recreated from us exactly as you had been."

"But perhaps such a one shall never come."

"Perhaps as a man, or men, never—but what does it matter, beloved one, it is the gods who pass most often. And it shall be for their delight that we shall sing of you as they walk by."

"Of me—for the delight of the gods?"

"Of course...beautiful wonder of existence...soft marvel of life..."

"You are right. I know what you mean. How beautiful it has all been—how exquisite each moment. Sing to me, my darlings, sing your sweetest, for I am going now..."

And the last thing she saw was a shimmering gambol of morning sunlight on the leaves of the forest outside her small, square window. Then all disappeared as though it had never been.

She travelled on through a long night across vasts of dark velvet, touched with silver highlights. She voyaged through swathes of dewy mist, cool and gentle to the touch. She meandered in half-sleep through glades of filtered green light cradled all the while in the loving, ever-solicitous arms of deities she could not see. Yet she felt them with the instincts of her being and abandoned herself to them like an infant through all the long duration of her journeying.

Then suddenly once again she awoke, a strange, hard awakening such as she had scarcely believed possible, yet curiously, perfectly blended with the dream state out of which she had come—the most perfect natural consequence of it, so to speak.

She found herself to be a young girl once more, though not a child, with long straight hair blonde to the point of whiteness, and a skin as pale and untinted as the northern heredity and climate of her race could make it. She found that she was a queen, the sixteen-year old queen of a young tribal lord; and that she had been married and crowned only the day before. But the thing that she found truly the strangest of all was her own nature. For she saw herself to be utterly cold, as cold as the tundra near which she lived, as cold as the winter sky above her dwelling. Even within, enclosed in her wrappings of bear-skin and ermine, she felt as one in whom nothing moved—no shock, no fear, no recoil, no easy laughter, or quick response... just a stillness, not gross or heavy, but clear and ice-like, as a river in winter. Yet she was able to stand off and observe the oddity of this new self of hers. Or was it because of that stillness that she could see it so clearly? Surely it was, for in that quiet the inner questions resounded all the more distinctly:

“Oh ye gods, why am I like this? I feel nothing, nothing whatsoever but the cold, hard column of myself. Was I ever this way before? I think never. Even then I feel no discomfort—only, rather, the curious naturalness of my condition. Tell me, have I acquired some new disease of the being? Or should I laugh at my state even though laughter is foreign to this mask I call my face?”

Once again the answering voice was not long in coming. “Neither laugh nor think yourself diseased, child. Thor and Odin have need of you as you are. Just look at yourself—you stand like a pillar of marble at the heart of a wild and riotous tangle of bramble bushes. Your Lord Oswif’s tribe are the brambles, mad, untamed, barbarous. Yet none of them shall ever look you in the eye. None shall ever dare to stand before the perfect stillness of your arctic gaze. Even Oswif—he shall rush forth to prove his valour to you, he shall attempt all the feats of courage known to man, yet he shall fear to come before you because of what you are.”

“Yes—yes... I understand. I know; for I fear nothing.”

“So have the gods created you, because no lesser one could stand in your shoes and live. It is the age of wolves and bears—an age when one must exist who shall be beyond the coarse animality of the others—infinately superior and infinitely untouchable. One whom they shall fear almost as much as they fear the gods, for of love they know as yet only the merest breath.”

“Love? Odd word—in this present garb I scarcely know, myself, what meaning

to put upon it.”

“Seek no meaning, Queen Hallgerda. It is better you should not know of things for which you have no need. Be yourself, as the gods have made you and they shall be pleased.”

“Indeed, I can be nothing else. Do with me as you wish. In this utter stillness of mine I shall await your direction.”

It was in that very stillness, therefore, that she watched the active menfolk of the tribe depart the following spring, her Lord Oswif included—the seal and bear trappers to the north, the seafarers to the west in their brave, dragon-prowed longships, the coastal plunderers to the south, and the slave and pelt traders to the east. Behind remained the women, the children and the elder warriors to survive the summer and the following winter.

The summer slipped by easily and quickly enough, but the winter descended on the Viking village early in all its arctic fury. Hallgerda was sure that it was only due to the foresight of the gods that so many had left—even some of the boys who would not normally have gone so young—and would not return till the following season; because as it was, the year’s harvest would scarcely last till the spring thaw and the cattle would start dying long before of cold and starvation. There was no way out but to take the affairs of the entire community into her own hands, particularly the distribution of food. Otherwise between theft, murder, and starvation, none of her people would remain to welcome the wandering menfolk home next summer. None would be there to rejoice in the hard-won plunder of many raids, in the gold and the ornaments, the weapons and the skulls. Ah, but of course all that was mainly for the men—animals and demons that they were still in their hearts. Women had better things to think of: like survival, like living through this winter in which all of hell’s darkness and fury seemed to descend with each evening’s storm.

She was now seventeen but one did not count one’s years at such a time. She was the queen and she demanded obedience. She distributed the stores as fairly as she could. Yet many thronged to her with complaints, because they thought it would be an easy matter to impose their opinion on a mere girl. Most melted away at her pale, passionless gaze which none could pierce or break, while the rest understood when she meted out the punishments and penalties. For it became immediately clear that she had no pangs about the death penalty, that she knew justice but no meekness of mercy, not even for herself. She took and consumed less than the rest. She kept no furs that she did not need. She searched in the perilous winter forests with the others when a hunting party failed to return. She tended the single, all-but-frozen survivor after they found him wounded, staggering among the trees like a madman. She helped bury the infants and the children who died first. And she even hunted with the men till her own weakness drove her to stay behind and speak in her heart to her gods:

“So this is what you have wanted of me? Have I proved myself then? Fearless, unflinchingly cold, to the point of inhumanity?”

“Yes, child.”

"Then is it enough? Will you take me back now? It's an easy time to slip me away. You know that beneath my fur-robies my bones show as starkly as the branches of a dead tree and that I eat but once every two days."

"You are raving, child, and have become peevish with your starvation. Do you think that it is easy for ones such as you to die? The gods make your kind in such a fashion as to survive the perishing of nations."

"Indeed they do. And yet you are wrong about me. I am not as much one of your perfect indestructibles as you seem to make out. Oh yes, I know the type. My Lord Oswif's longship was full of them—the pick of the tribe, the royal housecarls who could see death coming in all its terror and torment and feel nothing, nothing but the desire to fight and stagger on, fight and stagger yet a little further. But you must have noticed as well as I have that their eyes, their hard blue eyes, remain forever like painted beads—unchanging, fixed, so that they take nothing in nor send anything out."

"Your eyes too are as cold and as unmoving—more: your eyes paralyse and freeze with the fixity of their regard."

"You are playing with me and trying to make me betray myself, omnipotent gods that you are! But I will not let you shield the truth from myself. Look deeper into those forbidding eyes of mine and see what you know is there—myself imprisoned in this desperate moment of time, manifested in an armoured shell of a body and being, yet remembering : kindness and love and gentle beauty—"

"Silence, child. Wound yourself no longer with those terrible words. The gods bear in store for you a deeper alchemy, a subtler turn for which you must wait. Meanwhile bury all you know of your deepest self, your profoundest memory. Bury it well and hold it down with blocks of granite. This is not the time. It is not the place—not the time. . not the place... not the..."

She was raving in feverish delirium when her attendants found her; nor did they hold out much hope for her survival as they laid her on her bed swathed in three extra bear skins and her ermine cap fitted about her head. Still she lingered through the night and the following several days while her servitors cared for her fearfully. They knew well their own lives counted for nothing in the event of her death, for the Lord Oswif would spare no one if he returned and suspected foul play or even any negligence in her care.

*(To be continued)*

BINA BRAGG

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# EUROPE 1974

## A Travelogue

(Continued from the issue of January 1976)

WITH the coming of the modern age the picture of Germany changes altogether. The ruler of the most insignificant little principality known as the Mark of Brandenburg was making himself powerful. One of his descendants was to become the first German Emperor. This phenomenal rise of Prussia started with the Great Elector and reached its pinnacle with Kaiser Wilhelm II. Germany in the 18th century produced two monarchs with the epithet of "Great": Frederick the Great and Catherine the Great of Russia known in history as the Mother of all the Russians. Catherine was a German girl sent to Russia to be married to the young boy Peter, the future Czar. Catherine ousted him in due course and herself became the Czarina.

The modern age aroused in Germany an unheard-of gusto for life. The lethargy was gone. A volcanic energy made itself felt in the life of the nation; to this was added the courage of conviction. If the credit goes to Bismarck for the unification of Germany, to Hegel goes the credit of bringing in the idea of the all-powerful German Reich. One wonders if he did not mislead the German nation. In any case it was easy to influence a headstrong and ambitious ruler like Kaiser William II. His motto was "world domination or downfall". And downfall it had to be. In Hegel's view the rights of the individual dwindled into insignificance before the rights of the state. It is an irony of fate that an individual's ambition and caprice brought about an unparalleled catastrophe to the state. The Kaiser's Drang Nach Osten became a drive towards perdition. His egregious vanity only brought a stunning debacle. War and progress to Hegel were synonymous. Mirabeau had once commented, "War is the national industry of Prussia." Had not Hegel's *Idea* produced another maniac within twenty-five years, perhaps the world would have been spared so much bloodshed and suffering, and Germany could have remained one. Today we see no chance of the two Germanies being united in the foreseeable future.

Germany in modern times has excelled in subtle, metaphysical and political thinking. Kant and Hegel enjoy the highest prestige among the philosophers of the modern world. Karl Marx, the great systematiser of ideas, rules the political mind of half the globe. Max Muller, the great indologist of the last century, not only opened the way to Vedic scholarship in the West but also laid the foundations of comparative philology and comparative religion. There is a galaxy of great names in German Science culminating in that of Einstein. In less pacific fields Germany gave the world the first submarine, the "pocket" battleship, the blitzkrieg and the long-distance lethal weapon, the rocket. The German mind could cry out with Schopenhauer at the depressing state of man's life upon earth, as well as get intoxicated with the heady wine of Nietzsche's superman and the indomitable "will-to-power".

We were very near Frankfurt. We were to see another side of the German character. Chimney-stacks appeared on the horizon. Frankfurt is one of the greatest commercial and industrial centres of Germany. On both sides of the road there were large hoardings carrying names familiar all the world over—Siemens and Opel, Mercedes and Krupps. We were obviously now leaving the land of romance and coming into close touch with modern industry. The airport was a few miles ahead of Frankfurt. This airport is the second largest in Europe, with planes taking off or landing every two minutes. This is no hyperbole. We checked it by the watch as we passed. London comes first. Very near Frankfurt there is a huge American base complete with airfield and war planes and barracks and live tanks and numberless soldiers in uniform or civilian dress. The Germans must surely be feeling unhappy at this “occupation” of their sacred land. It is certainly a matter of no accident that the quiet university town of Bonn has been chosen as the headquarters of the new regime so as to be far away from this alien intrusion.

Frankfurt is a very old city, occupying as it does a strategic position so near the Rhine frontier. Modern Frankfurt is very impressive. It must have been ruthlessly bombed during the War. But the Marshall Plan and the industry of its citizens have left no trace of the war damage. Its roads are wide, its shopping centres rich with beautiful merchandise, the citizens look prosperous. The shops, we were told, are patronised not so much by the Americans as by the citizens themselves. They seem to be rich enough. Frankfurt is practically the London of West Germany. The shop windows were beautifully arranged. That reminded us of the pre-war days when almost everything worth buying in the Indian markets was labelled *Made in Germany*. From toys to combs and chocolates and cameras, perfumes and creams and paints and medicines, everything was *Made in Germany*. And no family ever went without a bottle of eau-de-Cologne, and a copy of Grimm’s Fairytales. There is, however, one type of business going on in Germany that most people would disapprove of. There are people who are extremely rich and no one knows how they have become rich. In fact these men are brokers. Titled nobility in dire need of money approach these brokers. These men arrange to sell titles to the new rich. It seems these brokers had even invaded England. But they were hunted out of Britain when the authorities came to know of their activities. The English get their titles from their Queen and they think that it would be an insult to her if they were to sell their titles.

We visited a flower market at Frankfurt, and it was a delightful experience. Some of the flowers we saw there were known ones, in the sense that they are grown in India too. There were others that we had not seen before. What astonished us was the size of the flowers and their freshness. Later on we saw flower gardens, specially rose gardens, miles and miles around Frankfurt. Love of flowers and forests is another side of the German character. We were told that the Germans never cut down their forests. So the trees of the forests we passed through and of the famous Black Forest, a little to the west, may have been there when the *Nibelungen Lied* was written....

Frankfurt on Main is the birth-place of Goethe, the greatest name in German literature and one of the greatest in all literature. When Napoleon met him he is reported to have exclaimed in admiration, "Here is a man!" Sri Aurobindo studied German in order to be able to read him in the original. Goethe will always have a soft corner in our hearts for the praise he lavished on Kalidasa's *Shakuntala*:

...Wouldst thou heaven and earth

In one sole name combined?

I name thee Shakuntala

And all at once is said.

*(To be continued)*

CHAUNDONA and SANAT K. BANERJI

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# CONSCIOUSNESS APPROACH TO BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

*(Continued from the issue of February 21, 1976)*

## **IV. Maximum Utilization Brings All the Supply Needed**

THE principle of full utilization of available resources—labour, materials, energy—is a fundamental principle of modern enterprise. Wastage, loss, hoarding, carelessness in distribution are all acts of unconsciousness, lack of attention, ignorance of the inner divinity of those things which have come to us. What is not commonly realized is that proper usage of what one has generates a momentum of flow that keeps the supply uninterrupted. At one time the manager of Mother Estates was finding it difficult to attract a sufficient labour supply for the work at hand. Despite all the usual inquiries and efforts no increase was possible. He decided to examine present usage of available labour and see if some lapse was apparent. During the meeting he found that the men had been working under poor supervision and sometimes without any supervision for the past week or so and that their work output had been very low by any standards. He decided to clamp down and require a full day's work for a full day's wage. After a single day the supervisor in charge reported over a 100% increase in work completed and the very next morning three new men appeared for work unsolicited. He continued his efforts and in the following days men continued to come until there was no longer a shortage.

This principle holds good even when the required resource is in general shortage. About the same time there was a nationwide shortage of cement because power cuts had reduced factory production time. When the manager tried to obtain cement for building an irrigation system, the government officers told him there was a waiting list of 500 people or approximately six months. He decided to try another method. First he ordered a search of the entire garden for unused cement, anything from a handful to a bag, and gathered about three bags which he immediately used to begin the irrigation project. Then he reviewed the entire history of cement purchases and utilization at the garden and uncovered areas of wastage and misuse. He made an inner effort to arrive at the proper attitude and feelings towards the cement already used and that which was yet to come. Within three days a cousin of one of the staff called to offer 5 bags of cement at market rates. The cement was purchased and utilized. A few days later someone in town offered 15 more bags and a week later another man came forward with 50 bags which the manager purchased. Thus he could complete all the pending work.

During the power cut in 1973 there was not sufficient electricity for running the water pumps at Mother Estates. Local officials appealed to the farmers not to raise the next crop. The current supply reached a minimum of four hours per day. Even when the current was on, often the voltage was below the level required for the larger motors. Besides this there were frequent shutdowns during the four hours so that

each pump had to be restarted one or more times. Furthermore, the pumps were far apart and the responsibility for starting them was given to only a few responsible men wasting additional time in travel from one pump to the next. Between all these factors 30 or 40 minutes would be lost daily before all the pumps were commissioned. The staff made a collective resolution that every minute of power must be utilized. New systems were employed to cut down on each of the sources of waste. On the first day all of the pumps were started within the first 5 minutes. Gradually the time was reduced to 15 seconds. The next day there was an announcement by the government that 7 hours of electricity would be given. A few days later it was extended to 9 hours. Within two weeks it rose to 15 hours and finally to 20 hours during the hot season.

Besides these considerations, there is also a relationship between the availability of resources and the distribution of the final product. When the product is neglected for any reason, there may be difficulty in acquiring resources. This point is illustrated below.

### V. The Philosophy of Unsold Stock

Stagnation in the sale and distribution of the final product results from a mental inertia or hesitation on the part of management to make decisions and execute them in action. This inertia will also express itself in other places, *e.g.* backup of work, delay of orders, raw material shipments, payments, etc. Often a product will accumulate in stock and, after initial efforts to move it fail, it is ignored or forgotten. The remedy lies in establishing full awareness of the product, of all possible avenues for distribution, removing hesitation and taking active initiative. When proper attention is given and all possibilities are exhausted, even when one's initiative leads only to the movement of a fraction of the quantity, life will respond by attracting buyers for the remainder.

The son of a liquor merchant came for guidance because business had been unusually slow. In the course of discussions he mentioned a \$4000 consignment of wine that had been sitting for 6 months in the cellar without a single sale. We highlighted this unsold stock as the major cause of the business slump and requested him to examine every fact relating to the consignment from the day of purchase, to look for movements of indecisiveness, hesitation, laziness, forgetfulness, unconsciousness in his own and his father's attitude, to take a firm mental decision with genuine feeling that that wine stock must be sold, to exhaust every possibility for sales and report back in two days. In short, to give the product the attention it deserved. The man returned four days later and apologized for his delay. He said that in the intervening days over half the consignment had been sold and general business had increased so much that he had no time to come earlier.

A manufacturer of hand-made paper asked us to study his factory. He said that the local supply of raw material for the paper was in abundance but he was running into continuous delays in getting his own supplies on time. In the course of investi-

gation we came across a stockpile of drawing paper worth \$5000 which had been produced about a year earlier and then the order cancelled. Since then it had been lying forgotten in storage. We gave him a similar recommendation, adding that he should take initiative to remove delays from every aspect of his production lines, including delays in his response to other companies or prospective clients. The manufacturer made a firm decision to act. The next morning a truck load of raw materials arrived. But the manufacturer's hesitation remained and he failed to make a serious effort to market the paper. A few weeks later he realized his mistake and re-affirmed his decision. Within five minutes a man came in and offered to arrange the sale of the entire stock overseas. The response of life to our decisions is immediate. Accumulation of unsold stock retards the availability of raw materials, the sale of other products and the receipt of new orders.

## VI. Silent Will

In any institution, communication plays a vital role. In a dynamic organization such as a business enterprise this communication is not only composed of mental ideas and instructions, but must carry with it the enthusiasm, interest, forcefulness necessary to provoke a clear response in the recipient and motivate him to proper action. Where there is similarity of purpose, language, background, understanding and interest, words and explanations and orders are easily communicated, but where any of these are lacking, difficulties may arise.

First there may be a problem in communicating a mental idea. Even if this is accepted, it requires also a response of interest and enthusiasm to prepare the listener to act on it, and still it requires the proper receipt of instructions to know how the idea is to be implemented in practise.

For all these levels of communication, silent will can be a very effective medium. A prior condition for the effective use of silent communication is a general tuning of the different levels of the institution to the central purpose. This can be commercial in nature or psychological or spiritual. Where this tuning is present, where employees are consciously aware of the central purpose, a climate is created of receptivity and harmony in which new thought is easily introduced. Most often when a new idea or plan arises man has the tendency to speak it out immediately, to elaborate it through conversation, to test it by expression. The result is that much of the energy carried by a new inspiration or fresh thought is dissipated in premature unclarified discussion which often leads to misunderstanding, argument or initially poor response that hampers later acceptance of the finished product. Instead one can retain the fresh thought and allow it to develop quietly for some time, gradually becoming aware of the points of unclarity, weakness or possible objection. The idea is allowed to ripen and mature. One can then silently concentrate on the idea and will that others receive and accept it. One can patiently and carefully put seeds and suggestions into the atmosphere and, when the climate is right and the people receptive, give a fuller expression which will come with a far greater intensity due to the conservation and

retention of energies. What commonly happens when such a procedure is followed is that either the idea is readily accepted on being presented or, even before presentation, the identical thought will be expressed by another member of the organization. This latter possibility is a very good one, for if one can suspend the egoistic need to impress others with his ideas, and allow them to accept a new thought as their own, he finds that the idea is much more readily accepted and supported.

The general climate of an organization can be made ripe for silent communication by means of periodical or regular meetings of staff. At these times emphasis can be placed on increasing the awareness of the central purpose, or introducing higher aims, or allowing open expression among the staff, all of which help to create and sustain an atmosphere of harmony, sympathy, interest, enthusiasm and participation among the members. Staff meetings have the further effect of allowing individuals and departments to become conscious of the work in all other areas of the organization and so increase their awareness of the entire institution in its dynamic wholeness. In such an atmosphere communication is made easy and it is not limited to the communication of ideas. Plans are far more effectively put into action when the person involved feels it to be his own idea or at least is given voice in the development and finalising of the procedure and a degree of discretion in the execution. Silent will can bring this about by creating a basic commonality of viewpoint and receptivity.

There are certain people who habitually respond to new ideas with a note of pessimism or by attacking and questioning them. There are others who have a vested interest in the *status quo* and resist changes or improvements in another's work. Such reactions drain the strength from a new idea, throw up a blanket of confusion and hesitation, reduce one's will and determination. In any situation where communicating a new idea is likely to meet with negativity, resistance, hostility, it is better to refrain from expression and to work inwardly until the idea has gained greater strength or the climate is more receptive. On the contrary, if one has the confidence of another person of similar disposition or close emotional identification, a certain amount of communication strengthens the movement represented by the idea and accelerates effectuation. Still moderation in speech is a valuable guideline to follow and conscious silence is a very powerful means of effectuation.

A related topic is that of gossip. In every institution there is a good measure of private conversation among staff and management concerned with the behaviour of other company members. When this conversation includes derogatory comments, sarcasm, a perverse pleasure in criticising others, it is a very powerful vibration which undermines the relationship between individuals and erodes the atmosphere of the institution. Gossip is always a negative movement which destroys harmony and goodwill. If one cannot speak positively about another or offer a mature constructive suggestion, it is better not to speak at all.

*(To be continued)*

GARRY JACOBS

## EDUCATION FOR A NEW LIFE

*(Under the above title a book by Narayan Prasad has just come out with Mother India as publisher. Much of it is an abridged edition of what appeared in this monthly in serial form under the caption "Life Can Be Beautiful". Most of the chapters in Part I are new. The book opens with the chapter whose first section we are printing below.)*

TAGORE came to see Sri Aurobindo in 1928. On returning to the ship he kept quiet for a long time and then wrote his impressions. The tribute opens with the lines:

"For a long time I had a strong desire to meet Aurobindo Ghose. It has just been fulfilled. I feel I must write down the thoughts that have come to my mind.

"In the Christian Scripture it has been said, 'In the beginning was the Word.' The Word takes form in creation. It is not a calendar, that which introduces a new era. It is the Word, leading man to the path of a higher manifestation, a richer reality."

The article ends with:

"I felt the utterance of the ancient Hindu Rishi spoke from him of that equanimity which gives the human soul its freedom of entrance into the All. I said to him, 'You have the Word and we are waiting to accept it from you. India will speak through your voice to the world, Harken to me.'<sup>1</sup>

What was that great Word—the immortal message of Sri Aurobindo—to man who is in perpetual gloom?

Man is not doomed, he is destined to rise to the status of superman. Sri Aurobindo did not remain content simply to explain the theory of the superman; he staked his all to see it actualised.

The malady of the age is that people feel the need of everything but God. Sitting on the bank of the Ganges we are crying for water. This is due to 'the hold of ignorance' in our life. We suffer but do not want to get rid of the suffering.

Sri Aurobindo's letters provide an infinite variety of topics. In one of them he writes about the Universal Ignorance:

"The whole earth is now under one law and answers only to its vibrations."

The fundamental questions before all those who, in whatever field, seek to improve today's world is:

"How to improve the quality of life? How to make life sweet and beautiful?"

All life is a conflict of light with darkness. If the door opens a little, the light will rush in, driving out the darkness. Hence Sri Aurobindo's insistence on the opening of consciousness.

A faint echo lingers in my memory of the following timely question and sharp answer:

<sup>1</sup> The original was written in Bengali on May 29, 1928. Its English version by the author himself appeared in *Modern Review*, July 1928.

Q: "Everywhere there is chaos and confusion."

A: "Chaos is inside. Bring an order there and all will change."

Yes, if we want to improve the quality of life, the change must come from within.

All of us live below our potential. In every sense we can become better than we are. Strength comes to the nation by education. True education is that which awakens the hidden faculties. A constant education will offer to each of us the possibility of self-development. Knowledge of the self is among the first essentials of a blissful and beautiful life.

"Is this not a daydream? Will the men of today, rushing headlong towards hell, ever be able to walk the earth like gods?" a sceptic mind would ask.

Every great achievement of the world was once the dream of someone. When it has dawned in dream, it is sure to be realised one day.

Sri Aurobindo holds, "Man as he is cannot be the last term of evolution."<sup>1</sup> A new type of man, a new race is not only possible but inevitable: as man was in the making in the animal, "a god is in the making in man."<sup>2</sup> The present upheaval is the birthpang of Mother Earth. However dim our present, "Sri Aurobindo gives the assurance of a Divine future."<sup>3</sup>

### Man's Search for Happiness

Life has all along been a search for the Beautiful. Man is torn by the call of the future; hence his feverish search for new values, a new philosophy of life.

Even those who have plenty do not feel happy. Why? Because there is something in them which is always seeking the satisfaction of desires. It "hunts also after un-realised possibilities...to possess and enjoy them....If there were not this factor, the physical mind of man left to itself would live like the animal."<sup>4</sup> It is the vital mind in him that "creates a dissatisfaction, an unrest, a constant demand for more and always more, a quest for new worlds to conquer"<sup>5</sup>.

Then there is in him the thinking mind which is always travelling but never reaching. Sri Aurobindo reveals: "Happiness comes by the satisfaction of the soul." The search for happiness will not cease till man obtains "the spiritual key".

The spiritual key might open the gate of heaven but the earth must be ready to welcome the onrush of its light. Here I am reminded of what Sri Aurobindo said to Dilip Kumar Roy:

"I too wanted at one time to transform through my Yoga the face of the world... but it was not enough...Humanity has to be ripe for it too."

For the root of the difficulty is that even when the Light is ready to descend it cannot come to stay until the lower plane is also ready to bear the pressure of the

<sup>1</sup> Centenary Edition, Vol. 19, pp. 846-9.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 18, p. 381.

<sup>3</sup> An extract from the Mother's Message.

<sup>4,5</sup> Centenary Edition, Vol. 18, p. 414.

Descent. There lies the whole problem. Unless we choose to be governed by the law of Light, darkness is bound to crowd our life.

There is no end to man's search for happiness from his birth. To a tiny baby, a few toys give all the joy he needs. As he grows in years he outgrows toys. His attraction shifts to education, sports, sex, etc. They too cannot quench his thirst. He runs after money, hoping feverishly that it will make life gay and beautiful. With the passing of the years he feels bewildered; the more he runs after happiness, the more it eludes him, the more it recedes. Shocks and blows of life make him cry, "Is there no way to get some peace?" Here begins the first turning. At times he wonders why there is so much conflict between the world within and the world outside. Now is the time to come out of the dreaming darkness to light. In those who are earnest begins the search for a new life, revealing the yearning of the soul.

To acquire a zone of peace in the battlefield of life the Mother formulates a very simple process:

"First you have to will, and then you have to try, and go on trying. Sit down and, instead of thinking of fifty things, say to yourself, 'Peace, peace, peace.' Imagine calmness and silence. Don't look at the thoughts, do not listen to their noise. You simply refuse to listen.

"Snatch opportunities again and again to sit down and create the spell of Peace. Do it as soon as you wake in the morning and when you go to bed in the evening. It will have a good effect on your health also. In the beginning keep up the peace formula for two or three minutes in a very simple way. If you continue long enough, peace will not have to enter into your head, whatever you do, whatever the circumstances it will be there."<sup>1</sup>

### **Journey from the Human to the Divine**

The theory of evolution is of a movement from imperfection to perfection. Sri Aurobindo does not take an alarming view of the present crises. In his view the all-round crisis is an evolutionary one. None is to be blamed for that. Where we stand in the present stage of evolution it is bound to be so. The crisis will deepen till man consents to change. Now the question that stands uppermost is whether man will be in the end swept aside by Nature as an experiment which has failed or he will lend himself to a higher power and let it mould him into a new race.

The fresh seed-bearing wind that saturated every corner of the Ashram during the life-time of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother nourishes in us the consciousness that their vision, their life-long labour cannot fail. The endeavour of Nature for millions of years cannot end in a fiasco. There is no end to human possibilities. The New Force must find a chance to play.

Thousands and thousands of years had to pass before man could reach the stage of steam from the day he discovered fire. But to reach the age of electricity from

<sup>1</sup> *Mother India*, May 1975.

that of steam took only a century or so, and to arrive at the atomic age there was a gap of only a few decades.

Nothing can stop the onward march of evolution. It may take time, but it cannot be denied or deferred.

In this respect Dr. Beatrice Bruteau's finding deserves special mention:

"Sri Aurobindo's theory of evolution has several remarkable features. It is an evolution of consciousness as well as of matter. It operates by assuming the properties of the lower levels into the higher levels...the higher level descends into the lower and transforms the lower level... Sri Aurobindo's thought can be seen to approach its climax in the conclusion that evolution has a definite goal and that goal is life divine on earth."

Another estimate—now by Jesse Roarke—is very touching:

"Sri Aurobindo is not just a thinker...not just a literary man. He has come to take and help the world forward in the largest step of its evolution and to divinise the very earth<sup>1</sup>.... He didn't teach or show how to reach a heaven beyond: he brought the heaven down<sup>2</sup>...

"It is to tell us this, and to tell us how, that Sri Aurobindo has given us his voluminous literature."<sup>3</sup>

We must wait till all is ready for the journey of the human to the Divine—the transition of the mind to the supermind.

To give this ideal a practical form, the first necessary condition is education which will mirror this ideal, this philosophy of life. So the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education was established. Its whole attempt is to prepare the child so that the Divine may begin His role in him.

*(To be continued)*

NARAYAN PRASAD

<sup>1</sup> Jesse Roarke, *Sri Aurobindo*. Preface.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 176.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101.

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*Coming Shortly*

**Guidance  
from  
Sri Aurobindo**

Letters to a  
young disciple

Volume Two

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## BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

**Selections from Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri*, Edited by Mary Aldridge.** Sri Aurobindo Books Distribution Agency, Pondicherry, 1975, 253 pages, Rs. 12.50.

A PASSING surface indication of the unspeakable qualities of *Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol* may be seen by glancing at the definition of an epic poetic work. As originated by the Greeks, it should deal grandly with one of these three possibilities: heroic warlike adventures or personal romance, a didactic purpose, or a celebration of the mysteries of religion. In Sri Aurobindo's epic, Aswapathy and Savitri reveal incomparable heroic qualities in battles whose lines enclose all the physical struggles that might ever come to be; he in shattering the primal Night of Inconscience, she in burning up the will of Death. Satyavan and Savitri's romance is only fringed by the human personal, gathering into a love expressed in the embrace of the soul of humanity with the transforming being of the Divine Mother. The word "didactic" withdraws in shame from the lifetimes of yogic guidance in every stage of human to divine development offered by the lines of *Savitri*. This epic celebrates not only the mysteries of religion but also the mysteries of all the fundamental religions and spiritualities. Yet it goes beyond celebrating mysteries into revealing them directly—what was occult grows open.

Just as Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol* is wordlessly beyond my capacity to "review" it, so selections from his creation, in themselves, are also. There is the obvious question of the selections' merits as selections; but no less obvious, as Dick Batstone observes in the introduction, is the fact that a selection from the boundless dimensions of *Savitri*'s planes and worlds of consciousness, its thousands of spiritual perceptions, its plethoras of archetypes of humanity's realms and memories of experiences, its nearly uncountable mantras of single-line up to more than page-length configuration, its poetical and literary embodiments—in teeming phrases or passages throughout the work—of the souls of great poets and artists inhabiting the ranges of the world's cultural history, its cosmic castings of philosophies and religions, sciences and technologies, its natural and political and moral and occult histories, its psychological and material landscapes whose foregrounds are scenes of human and of divine relations beyond the widest possibilities one dimly conceives, well, . . . a human selection from these diversities of infinities can only be merely personal.

Faced with that situation, yet earnestly wanting to provide a modest collection of selections for new readers' introduction to the poem's Being, the editor and selectors certainly appropriated a hazardous and formidable task. For example, a very great hazard, inevitable in an epic with such a royal story's vastitude, is the intrinsic attraction away from intact selections (such as those made by the Mother for guidance in the sadhana) toward selections which, by trying to stay more or less with the narration, would take things in the direction of a "popular edition" of *Savitri*—that is, away from selecting and toward editing the poem.

I can only commend the courage, perseverance and meticulous effort of Mary Aldridge, Amal Kiran and Ravindra Khanna in undertaking such a razor-trailed task for the benefit of new readers who they felt might otherwise delay contacting the awesome body of the complete poem. *Selections from Sri Aurobindo's Savitri* has an uncommonly possessed quality of daring.

The physical design of the book is as meticulously cared for as its contents demand. Small and literally handy in softcover dimensions of 12 by 18 centimeters (about 4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> by 7 inches), it nevertheless contains nearly one fourth of the approximately 24,000 lines in 180 selections taken from all forty-nine cantos—some as short as four lines, others running to as much as eight pages—in a pleasing small type that the School for Perfect Eyesight would be proud of. Bound in an elegant white handmade paper cover which is entitled in brilliant orange ink with an aesthetic regard for the use of space, it repeats the color judiciously on the title page and in the beautifully reproduced closeup photo of Sri Aurobindo further inside. The table of contents intelligently gives the corresponding page numbers of selections in the Centenary Edition.

In his introduction, Dick Batstone succinctly relates something of Sri Aurobindo's life and work, his development of *Savitri*, the epic's story, the kind of poetry Sri Aurobindo describes it to be, and some hints about how to read it helpfully. As he declares: "Ultimately the hope of all selectors and editors must be that their work will lead people to the source from which they have drawn." I believe this publication will do that, and so will succeed in the truest and finest way one could hope for it.

RONALD JORGENSEN

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