

MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

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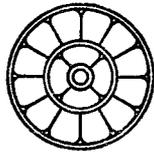
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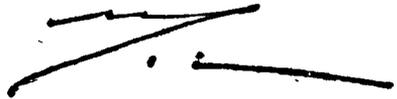


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

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. 8

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail."

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GOD AND THE WORLD

FROM A TALK BY THE MOTHER TO THE ASHRAM CHILDREN
ON JULY 17, 1953

...I CANNOT say that money goes spontaneously, freely, without effort, where useful things will be done most. No. The maximum of good will is to give money for something which one understands well (which is also easy to understand), to build a hospital, for example, or to open a crèche for little children. These are all works of good-will that men understand. But if they are told that we want to change the human consciousness, we want to create a new world, oh! the first thing they say is: "Pardon me! Do not speak of God, for if it is God who is doing the work, well, it is God who will give you the means for it and you have no need of our help." I have heard people saying: "If you represent the Divine upon earth, you can do whatever you like; there is no need for us to give you anything." And how many among you are free from this idea (an aftertaste of that idea): the Divine is all-powerful, therefore the Divine can do whatever he likes?

That is the first argument, that is the theory. The Divine is all-powerful, he can do whatever he likes; therefore he does not need anybody's help. And if you push your idea sufficiently far, you will see that if the Divine is truly all-powerful in this world and does always whatever he wants, well, I tell you, he is the greatest monster in the universe! Because One who is all-powerful and makes the world such as it is, looking with a smile at people suffering and miserable, and finding that all right, I would call a monster. It was the kind of thing I used to think about when I was five. I used to tell myself: "It is not possible, what is taught there is not true!" Now, as you have a little more philosophical mind, I shall teach you how to come out of the difficulty. But, first of all, you must understand that that idea is a childish idea. I simply call on your common sense. You make of your Divine a person, because that way you understand him better. You make of him a person. And then this person has organised something (the earth, it is too big, it is difficult to understand—take anything else) and then this thing the Divine has organised with the full power to do exactly as he likes. And in this thing—that he has made with the full power to do as he likes—there is ignorance, stupidity, bad-will, fear, jealousy, pride, wickedness, and also suffering, illness, grief, all the pains; and a set of people who cannot say that they have perhaps more than a few minutes of happiness in the whole day and the rest of it is a neutral condition, passing by like a thing that's dead—and you call that a creation!.. I call it something like a hell! And one who would make that deliberately and not only make it but look at it and say: "Ah! it is very good", as it is narrated in some religious books, that after having made the world such as it is, on the seventh day he looked at it and was extremely satisfied with his work and he rested...Well, that never! I do not call that God. Or otherwise, follow Anatole France and say that God is a demiurge and the most frightful of all beings.

But there is a way out of the difficulty. (*To a child*) Do you know it, you? Yes, yes, you know it! You will see all these conceptions and this idea that you have are based upon one thing, an entity that you call God and a world that you call this creation, and you believe these are two different things, one having made the other and the other being under the first, being the expression of what the first has made. Well, that is the initial error. If you could feel deeply and that there is no division between that something you call God and this something you call his creation, if you said: "It is exactly the same thing" and if you could feel that what you call God (perhaps it is only a word), what you call God suffers when you suffer, he does not know when you do not know; and that it is through this creation, little by little, step by step, that he finds himself again, unites with himself, is realising himself, expressing himself, and it is not at all something he wanted in an arbitrary way or made like an autocrat, but that it is the growing expression, developing more and more, of a consciousness that is objectifying itself to itself... Then there is no other thing but the sense of a collective advancing towards a more total realisation, a self-awareness of knowledge-consciousness—no other thing but that, a progressive self-awareness of knowledge-consciousness in a total unity which will reproduce integrally the First Consciousness.

That changes the problem.

Only, it is a little difficult to understand and one must make a little more progress. Instead of being like a little child that kneels down, joins hands and says: "My God, I pray to Thee, make me a good child so that I may never hurt my mother..." That of course is very easy and indeed I cannot say that it is bad. It is very good. Only there are children with whom these things do not go, because they say: "Why should I ask You to make me good? You should make me good without there being any need of my asking You for it. Otherwise You are not nice!" It is very good when one has a simple heart and does not think much, but when one begins to think, it becomes more difficult. But if you had by your side someone to tell you: instead of that, instead of lighting a candle and kneeling down before it with your hands folded, light a flame in your heart and then have a great aspiration towards "something more beautiful, more true, more noble, better than all that I know. I ask that from tomorrow I begin to know all these things, all that I cannot do I begin to do and every day a little more." And then, if you throw yourself out a little, if, for one reason or another, you were put in the presence of much misery in the world, if you have friends who are unhappy or relatives who suffer or you meet any kind of difficulties, then you ask that the whole consciousness might be raised *all together* towards that perfection which must manifest and that all this ignorance that has made the world so unhappy might be changed into an enlightened knowledge and all this bad-will be illumined and transformed into benevolence. And then as far as one can, as far as one understands, one wishes it with all one's heart, and indeed that can take the form of a prayer, and one can ask—ask of what?—ask of that which knows, ask of that which can, ask of all that is greater and stronger than oneself, to help so that it may be thus. And how beautiful those prayers would be!

My children, in five years I shall take with you a study course of spiritual life. I give you five years to prepare yourselves, what I am telling you now is just a little of the kind, as one would light a small candle to give you an idea of what light is. But I want you all to see that we do not repeat and say over and over again indefinitely all that nonsense which is uttered every time one turns towards something other than the ordinary life. Even as I have spoken here, in this book, of the confusion that is made between asceticism and the spiritual life,¹ well, one day I shall speak to you of the confusion made between what one calls God and what I call the Divine.

¹ *Questions and Answers* 1929 (19 May)

SECRET FIRE

THE fire of the heart is a crystal mist,
 A towering torch of white flame
 That leaps and sears a path of rest
 To the living sound of your Name.

The fire of the heart is a lighted way
 Through the netherlands of the night,
 Blazing a road of eternal day
 To the home of the Ever-Bright.

The fire of the heart is the Blood of your Grace,
 Like a distillate of pearls,
 O I would behold your wondrous Face
 At the hidden heart of the worlds.

ELEANOR MOORE MONTGOMERY

SRI AUROBINDO'S LETTERS TO SAHANA

I am always aspiring for Sri Aurobindo's Light in my mind. Tell me, Mother gracious, will I ever be capable of receiving the touch of His Light in my mind?

It can always come in the mind if you aspire patiently. But the basic condition, if you want that Light, is to get rid of all other mental influences. 22-5-1932

What is the meaning of "to get rid of all other mental influences"? Is it that I had better not read any other books except Sri Aurobindo's writings or not try to learn anything from hearing or reading others?

It is not a question of books or learning facts. When a woman loves or admires, her mind is instinctively moulded by the one she loves or admires and this influence remains after the feeling itself has gone or appears to be gone. It does not refer to X's influence merely. It is the general rule given to keep yourself free from any other admiration or influence. 30-5-1932

However much I try to surrender myself or whatever resolution I take, everything fails at the end. Either some acute problem or some difficulty arises and sweeps away my firmness. I seem to have missed the right way. Will you show me the right way and give your strength and force to follow it?

The difficulty about meeting your demand that the Mother should plan out and fix a routine for you in everything which you must follow is that this is quite contrary to the Mother's way of working in most matters; in the most physical things you have to fix a programme in order to deal with time, otherwise all becomes a sea of confusion and haphazard. Fixed rules have also to be made for the management of material things so long as people are not sufficiently developed to deal with them in the right way without rules. But these things of which you write are different; they are concerned with your inner development, your sadhana. In fact, even in outward things the Mother does not plan with her mind and make a mental map of what is to be done; she sees what is to be done in each case and organises and develops it according to the nature of each case. In matters of the inner development and sadhana it is still more impossible to map out a plan fixed in every detail and say "Every time you shall step here, there, in this way, or that line and no other." Things would become so tied up and rigid that nothing could be done, there would be no true and effective movement.

If the Mother asked you to tell her everything, it was not in order that she might give you directions in every detail which you must obey. It was in order first that there might grow up the complete intimacy in which you would be entirely open to her, so that she might pour more and more and continuously and at every point the Divine Force into you which would increase the Light in you, perfect your action, deliver and develop your nature. It is this that was important; all else is secondary, important only so far as it helps this or hinders. In addition, it would help her to give wherever needed the necessary touch, the necessary direction, the necessary help or warning, not always by words, more often by a silent intervention and pressure. This is her way of dealing with those who are open to her; it is not necessary to give express orders at every moment and in every detail. Especially if the psychic consciousness is open and one lives fully in that, it gets the intimation at once and sees things clearly and receives

the help, the intervention, the necessary direction or warning. That was what was happening to a great extent when your psychic consciousness was very active, but there was a vital part in which you were not open and which was coming up repeatedly, and it is this that has created the confusion and the trouble.

Everything depends on the inner condition and outward action is only useful as means and a help for expressing or confirming the inner condition and making it dynamic and effective. If you do or say a thing with the psychic uppermost or with the right inner touch, it will be effective, if you do or say the same thing out of the mind or the vital or a wrong or mixed atmosphere, it may be quite ineffective. To do the right thing in the right way in each case and at each moment one must be in the right consciousness—it can't be done by following a fixed mental rule which under some circumstances might fit in and under others might not fit in at all. A general principle can be laid down if it is in consonance with the Truth, but its application must be determined by the inner consciousness seeing at each step what is to be done or not done. If the psychic is uppermost, if the being is entirely turned towards the Mother and follows the psychic, this can be increasingly done.

The kind of outward obedience you lay stress on, asking for a direction in every detail, is not the essence of surrender, although obedience is the natural fruit and outward body of surrender. Surrender is from within, opening and giving mind, vital, physical all to the Mother for her to take them as her own and recreate them in their true being which is a portion of the Divine; all the rest follows as a consequence. It would not then be necessary to ask her word and order outwardly in every detail, the being would feel and act according to her will, her sanction would be sought but as the seal of that inner unity, receptiveness of her will and obedience. 11-6-1932

Mother, will you explain to me what is meant by your "using your Mahakali method" and why you don't use it with all people?

All these things depend on the person, the condition, the circumstances. The Mother uses the method you speak of, the Mahakali method

(1) with those in whom there is a great eagerness to progress and a fundamental sincerity somewhere even in the vital,

(2) with those whom she meets intimately and who, she knows, will not resent or misunderstand her severity or take it for a withdrawal of kindness or grace but will regard it as a true grace and a help to their sadhana. There are others who cannot bear this method—if it was continued they would run a thousand miles away in misunderstanding and revolt and despair. What the Mother wants is for people to have their full chance for their soul, be the method short and swift or long and tortuous. Each she must treat according to his nature. 7-5-1933

What you write is quite accurate about the true soul, the psychic being. But people mean different things when they speak of the soul. Sometimes it is what I have called in the 'Arya' the desire soul,—that is the vital with its mixed aspirations,

desires, hungers of all kinds good and bad, its emotions, finer and grosser by sensational urges crossed by the mind's idealisings and psychic stresses. But sometimes it is also the mind and vital under the stress of a psychic urge. The psychic so long as it is veiled must express itself through the mind and vital and its aspirations are mixed and coloured there by the vital and mental stuff. Thus the veiled psychic urge may express itself in the mind by a hunger in the thought for the knowledge of the Divine, what the Europeans call the intellectual love of God. In the vital it may express itself as a hunger or hankering after the Divine. This can bring much suffering because of the nature of the vital, its unquiet passions, desires, ardours, troubled emotions, cloudings, depressions, despairs. The psychic can have a psychic sorrow when things go against its diviner yearnings, but the sorrow has in it no touch of torment, depression or despair. Nevertheless all cannot approach, at least cannot at once approach the Divine in the pure psychic way—the mental and vital approaches are often necessary beginnings and better from the spiritual point of view than an insensitiveness to the Divine. It is in both cases a call of the soul, the soul's urge—it only takes a form or colour due to the stress of the mind or vital nature.

29-5-1936

It is quite certain that these discussions are often a source of friction and misunderstanding.

Perhaps what might be best from the point of view of sadhana is to use these occasions as occasions for psychic self-training and the overcoming of those things that in the matter of speech stand in the way of a complete harmony between the inner consciousness and the movement of the outer being. The psychic self-control that is desirable in these surroundings and in the midst of discussion would mean among other things

(1) Not to allow the impulse of speech to assert itself too much or say anything without reflection, but to speak always with the conscious control and only what is necessary and helpful.

(2) To avoid all debate, dispute or too animated discussion and simply say what has to be said and leave it there. There should also be no insistence that you are right and the others wrong, but what is said should only be thrown in as a contribution to the consideration of the truth of the matter.

(3) To keep the line of speech and wording very quiet and calm and uninsistent.

(4) Not to mind at all if others are heated and dispute but remain quiet and undisturbed and yourself speak only what can help things to be smooth again.

(5) If there is gossip about others and harsh criticism (especially about sadhaks), not to join—for these things are helpful in no way and only lower the consciousness from the higher level.

(6) To avoid all that would hurt or wound others.

Perhaps you have tried to do these things already; if so, then see how far you have succeeded and perfect the self-control.

14-6-1936

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 11, 1940

P: Italy says that the change of the French Constitution has come too late. Because of the change, she can't waive her claims on France.

SRI AUROBINDO (*laughing*): Of course not, that would be an easy way for France to get out.

N: Ireland is getting more and more into a difficult position. What do you think of De Valera's proposal?

SRI AUROBINDO: Which proposal?

N: About Provincial autonomy to North Ireland.

SRI AUROBINDO: They won't consent unless De Valera joins the British in defence. I didn't know De Valera was so foolish as to say that by remaining strictly neutral, Ireland would avoid a German attack. Hitler may or may not attack, as it suits him.

N: Even after so many examples before his eyes, he doesn't learn!

SRI AUROBINDO: Maurice Magre has said that one of the chief characteristics of the human race is stupidity. I think he is right.

S: But even England's help would not do much in case of attack.

SRI AUROBINDO: Why not?

N: It will be far more effective than Ireland's own defence.

SRI AUROBINDO: Of course. Still, Germany may start aerial bombing.

Evening

N: Roosevelt has declared that America won't join the European war.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes.

S: What we have been hearing about America's participation came from New York papers which are pro-Allies. Other papers did not mention it at all. The isolationist sentiment is still too strong in all other parts.

N: Roosevelt says that in case of aggression America will attack, which goes without saying. (*Laughter*)

P: There won't be any choice left then.

SRI AUROBINDO: If New York is invaded, they may take action.

N: But Roosevelt's attitude was strongly pro-Allies at one time.

SRI AUROBINDO: That was before the fall of France. After the fall, things have changed and now America is not likely to join.

P: Yes, they see that England can't stand alone against Germany.

SRI AUROBINDO: Besides, they can't send an Expeditionary Force if they joined. Where will it land?

N: It can land in England if Germany invades her.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes; but if with four million soldiers England can't do anything, a few hundred thousand Americans won't help much. Of course America can help with ammunitions and the Navy.

S: The Navy is not strong.

SRI AUROBINDO: No, but the Americans are building fast. They have a Navy for one ocean and now they will have for two.

S: The British Government have sent the Duke of Windsor to the Bahamas—as far away as possible.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes; he may be talking freely again, though not in public, or they think perhaps that he may be made a Fascist king if England is defeated.

S: Hitler has already declared that.

SRI AUROBINDO: Has he?

S: Yes.

P: Sammer has a very nice idea. He says that all Europe will turn communist.

SRI AUROBINDO: Every communist says that. If Hitler is defeated, Germany may turn communist. In that case the whole of Europe will become communist. And, after Hitler's death, there may be dissensions in Germany and then Communism may follow. But that is a remote possibility.

JULY 12, 1940

N: Dilip says that he met a Turkish lady at Madras, who told him that England has not the ghost of a chance against Germany. "They won't fight at all, you will see," she said, and added, "Don't live in a fool's paradise, Dilip." When Dilip asked whether Turkey wouldn't back Britain since she is her ally, she said, "That was before the fall of France. Now we have to save ourselves first."

SRI AUROBINDO: How?

N: By alliance with Russia, perhaps.

SRI AUROBINDO: Then she is a fool herself. (*Laughter*)

N: Russia is following a very secret method. Behind all the rumours of the denials of the ultimatum to Turkey nobody knows the truth. It may be true as in Rumania's case.

SRI AUROBINDO: If she has demanded a free passage through the Dardanelles,

it would be quite natural (which is quite different from control) and the denial of it would be unnatural.

N: X has paid back Rs. 7 out of 9.

SRI AUROBINDO: Oh, then his character has changed.

P: Is Y still with him?

N: No.

SRI AUROBINDO: She refuses to be a party to his polygamous tendency and says that so long as this dancing girl is with him, she has nothing to do with him.

P: He is trying to start a school there for training young people, and to call it by the name of this dancing girl.

SRI AUROBINDO: Training in mutual borrowing? (*Laughter*)

P: In Bombay also he realised some money from the public for a national school. When they came to know him they feared that all the money...

SRI AUROBINDO: Would be nationalised? (*Laughter*)

Evening

P: Laurence Binyon has not adequately dealt with Indian art in his book on Art.

SRI AUROBINDO: Hasn't he done that in a separate book?

P: Yes, in the one on Moghul art. Coomaraswamy says that images were found in India even before the Buddhistic period, before the Greek influence.

SRI AUROBINDO: What proof is there?

P: Isn't Gandhara art Greek?

SRI AUROBINDO: No, it is mixed. No Greek artist claims it as pure Greek art.

NIRODBARAN

TWO PERSONAL DOCUMENTS OF HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE

Statement by Surendra Mohan Ghose

ALMOST immediately after India's independence on August 15, 1947, which coincided with Sri Aurobindo's seventy-fifth birthday, I received at Calcutta a telegram from Sri Aurobindo signed for the first time with his own name. It asked me to come at once to Pondicherry.

I came. When I met him, he explained to me his ideas on the relationship to be brought about between independent India and the French possessions in the Indian sub-continent. Then he told me that the Governor-General of French India, Monsieur Baron, had already gone to Delhi to discuss a proposal for integration under certain significant conditions. Sri Aurobindo asked me to proceed to Delhi, meet M. Baron and take him to Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajendra Prasad, Sardar Patel and Maulana Azad.

I left for Delhi and met M. Baron. I took him to all the leaders above-named and explained to each of them the ideas of Sri Aurobindo.

Pandit Nehru called a meeting of the Working Committee and personally reported the talk he had held with M. Baron. The Working Committee appreciated Sri Aurobindo's ideas and welcomed M. Baron's proposal.

Several factors intervened to prevent the successful carrying out of these ideas and that proposal. If the success had not been prevented, a New Age of internationalism both for India and the world would have dawned long ago.

I should like M. Baron to confirm this report of mine which is meant to provide an important piece of historical information.

Statement by François Baron

I agree with the above report. But I should like to make some explanatory remarks. I did not go to Delhi in my official capacity as Governor-General of French India. Although I held the highest Government post in the French colonies I was never imbued with the spirit of Colonialism. And I carried my proposal to Delhi in my strictly personal capacity as a representative of French Culture and Literature to which I had myself made some contribution. I also went as one who agreed with the vision of one of India's most luminous sons: Sri Aurobindo. I was in favour of the ultimate establishment of India's sovereignty over the existing French possessions but the integration was essentially to be of a cultural type and bring into close rapport the great liberal traditions of France and the great spiritual traditions of India. The important fusion in French India between the two cultures should continue and in-

crease. Pondicherry and other prominent French places were to be windows of India upon France and windows of France upon India.

As a French patriot I would always fly the Tricolour over my residence in India but I would simultaneously raise over my residence the Indian flag. A double or multiple symbol of human culture would be my ideal.

After discussing my proposal with the Indian leaders, it was my plan to submit to the French Government the results of my unofficial talks and try to help the New Age for which Sri Aurobindo stood.

THE PARSI

WHAT country shall I take as mine? Iran
 is but the perfume of a rose long dead;
 while India, that has moulded me a man
 whose heart goes throbbing with a sunset-red
 and straining toward a mystery beyond eyes,
 makes deeper yet the homelessness of me.
 I move a stranger whose horizon flies
 hither and thither, settles on no sea

guarding and lulling one dear land alone.
 Flame-cult that neighboured the Greek world of thought
 yearns through my Persian blood for Europe's large
 earth-riches: India's infinite Unknown
 Lures up the same fire-cry—both stay uncaught.
 My country's a future where all dream-lights merge.

K. D. SETHNA

LIGHT ON TWO ENIGMATIC LINES IN *SAVITRI*

LETTERS BY HUTA AND NOLIN'S REPLIES

I

Huta's Letter

Dear Nolinida,

A certain line in *Savitri* has puzzled me by the image it contains. I have asked Amal about it. He has told me to ask you. For, he too is doubtful about its exact meaning.

I am sending you the whole passage from Book One Canto Three, p 30 (1954 Ed.). The line in question is the 3rd:

A seer was born, a shining Guest of Time.
For him mind's limiting firmament ceased above,
In the griffin forefront of the Night and Day
A gap was rent in the all-concealing vault;
The landmarks of the little person fell,
The island ego joined its continent:
Overpassed was this world of rigid limiting forms:
Life's barriers opened into the Unknown.

What exactly is "the griffin forefront"? Will you kindly explain the line?

11-5-1976

Nolini's Reply

Griffin=Golden Hawk

+

Winged Lion

The piercing eye of soaring aspiration

+

Upsurging energy of the pure vital

Remember Vishnu's Garuda

+

Durga's lion

With these twin powers you cross safely the borderland between the lower and the upper hemisphere—the twilight world (Night & Day)—Griffin is the guardian God of this passage—*dvārapālaka*.

Huta's Letter

Dear Noliniida,

Thank you for your illuminating comment. Both Amal and I are overjoyed.

There is one more problem. It occurs in the passage from Book Ten Canto Four, p. 741:

Then stretches the boundless finite's last expanse,
 The cosmic empire of the Overmind,
 Time's buffer state bordering Eternity,
 Too vast for the experience of man's soul:
 All here gathers beneath one golden sky:
 The Powers that build the cosmos station take
 In its house of infinite possibility;
 Each god from there builds his own nature's world;
 Ideas are phalanxed like a group of sums;
 Thought crowds in masses seized by one regard;
 All Time is one body, Space a single book:
 There is the Godhead's universal gaze
 And there the boundaries of immortal Mind:
 The line that parts and joins the hemispheres
 Closes in on the labour of the Gods
 Fencing eternity from the toil of Time

What exactly is meant by the words "a group of sums" in the 9th line?

13-5-1976

Nolini's Reply

Ideas are phalanxed like a group of sums;
 Thought crowds in masses seized by one regard...

The image is that of the composition of an army or that of a mathematical series (*e.g.*, arithmetical or geometrical progression). It is composed of regularised units of different values (*group of sums*), but all measured and definite and precise—*e.g.*, in the case of an army—company, brigade, battalion, army—an ascending scale, the whole also forming one big unit, taken in at a single glance—that is the nature of overmind vision.

Note, a unit is a summation of sub-units—even the ultimate units are composites (*masses*, in case of bigger units)—*e.g.*, molecule, atom, particle (nucleon), point.

15-5-1976

SRI AUROBINDO'S ENLARGEMENT OF SPIRITUAL METAPHYSICS

A LETTER

YOUR little disquisition on Plotinus *vis-à-vis* Abbé Monchanin's article on Sri Aurobindo's philosophy is delightful.¹ Especially appealing to me is your statement that according to Plotinus "the original emanation of Nous from the One is not a temporal distinction (*Ennead*, V. 1, 6th section), for they are as intimately conjoined as the Sun and its rays to which these hypostases are compared (*Ennead*, V. 1, 6th and 7th sections)." Here we have two points: (1) the One is not only a self-locked stasis but, in spite of its absolute supremacy and without abrogating its unity, its "aloneness", it is also and always a self-expressive dynamis; (2) the archetypal Ideas are inherent in and intrinsic to the supreme Reality and not either a secondary realm of manifestation or else themselves an abstract primal pattern which a secondary being, a demiurge, has to immitate or work by: they are both an original self-expression of the One and, in their own right, a primary creative power.

I don't know whether Plotinus elaborates these points, but the image of the Sun and its rays must, in my view, imply them. Perhaps a more accurate image would be to compare Nous itself to the Sun. It is a mass of gathered knowledge—light—gathered by the One from its own illimitable self-luminous essence, which we may compare to an immense nebula, for an organized play of its own infinite verities, a play still within its unmodified being and not projected into space and time as phenomenally known. The rays, then, would be the power-efflux of Nous towards phenomenal creation, but still in a kind of planning potentiality, a controlled corona of world-initiatives.

A vision similar to Plotinus's is, I believe, behind Platonism, though Plato seems to reduce it more than Plotinus to intellectual terms, except perhaps in the *Symposium*. Plotinus, too, perhaps loses the wholeness of the vision while putting it into a philosophical system. For the problem of the One and the Many appears to be worrying that system in some way or other: else the emphasis on the flight of the alone to the Alone

¹ "From *my* reading of Plotinus, it would seem that Monchanin errs (*Mother India*, December 1974, p. 924) when drawing a distinction between the systems of Plotinus and Spinoza as to the coincidence of the points of departure and arrival in the Eternal, the One. In Plotinus, the original emanation of Nous from the One is not a temporal distinction (*Enneads*, V. 1, 6th section) for they are intimately conjoined as the Sun and its rays, to which these hypostases are compared (*Enneads*, V. 1, 6th and 7th sections). The soul's laborious return to the All-Transcending culminates in an ecstatic reunion beyond all distinction of space and time, a reabsorption into the Eternal. Plotinus rarely includes both 'fall' and resurgence in one passage, as he does at VI. 9, 11th section 'It is not in the soul's nature to touch utter nothingness; the lowest descent is into evil and, so far, into non-being but to utter nothing, never. When the soul begins again to mount, it comes not to something alien but to its very self, thus detached, it is in nothing but itself, self-gathered it is no longer in the order of being, it is in the Supreme'. (From Stephen MacKenna's translation of *The Enneads*, VI. 9, 11th section, p. 625.)"—Rand Hicks.

would not be so great and the concept of the absorption of the soul into the One would not be so extreme—at least in appearance.

The same problem has lain heavy on the mind of Indian spiritual philosophy and has led to uncompromising Monism at the end, to utter a-cosmism, with whatever head-ache and heart-ache accompanying it. The whole work of Sri Aurobindo, on the conceptual level, is occupied with resolving the problem from the yonder side rather than from the hither side as done so far. That is to say, he explicates it not by tackling it from the viewpoint of the mind that looks at it from below but by dealing with it from above and, as Coleridge would put it, “defecating it to a transparency” through the use of “That which thinks not with the mind but by which the mind is thought” (*Kena Upanishad*).

The oldest Indian seers also used this “That”: what they did not succeed in keeping alive was the fine distinction between—to use Sri Aurobindo’s terminology—Supermind and Overmind. In the Supermind there is a perfect balance among the three modes of divine dynamism: Brahman is all, all is in Brahman, Brahman is in all. The Overmind, while never losing the first two, stresses the last and lets each member of the all, each God-name and God-form of the multiple One, act to the fullest stretch of its individuality though without actually reaching a breaking-point with the rest. The failure of the seers—to differentiate the Supermind’s “integral” harmony, where every detail is in perfect balance, from the Overmind’s “global” accord where there is a perfect balance only on the whole—was, I believe, due to their living at their highest not quite in the Supermind but midway the Supermind and the Overmind, with a pull towards the latter all the time because the latter is more in tune with the spiritualized mentality as well as with the phenomenal world where the Many stand out and the One is far in the background if not even submerged.

The One, however, always remained the magnet *par excellence* and the spiritualised mentality could not give a satisfying reconciliation of it with the Many. All spirituality worth the name has this passionate attraction towards unity—

The one entire and perfect chrysolite—

and if it cannot be fully reconciled with multiplicity, then hang the multiplicity! That is what the post-Rigvedic sages tended to do and finally the very secret of the Supermind was lost or at any rate hazed off. The lack of a concrete complete grasp of the Supramental is clear to me from the fact that the last formula of Indian spiritual thought was Sat-Chit-Ananda (Existence-Consciousness-Bliss)—surely a magnificent summing up of Reality and yet containing the seed of a static realization in which no vision of a universe sprouting from that Reality was inevitable.

As you know, Sri Aurobindo has introduced a basic change in the formula. He speaks of Chit-Tapas, not Chit. Tapas means “energetic heat”. To Sri Aurobindo Consciousness is always Force, and to leave this truth inexplicit is to open the door to misunderstanding of the original summing-up. This key-statement came really from

the Supermind where Consciousness is inherently Force and so there was no need to make a special point of the identity of the two, but it has been seized by the Overmind and interpreted by the spiritualized mentality, with the result that cosmic creativity is not taken necessarily as involved in it. If the transmission of the triple synthesis had been done by a seerhood stationed in the Supermind instead of in a middle vastness between what is Super and what is Over, a clear expression would have been given and we would have had Chit-Tapas rather than Chit. The compound is most vital to spiritual metaphysics, for without it the cosmic movement is left shorn of an indubitable ground in the Supreme.

Nor is the introduction of the compound the sole change Sri Aurobindo has brought about in Indian philosophy. There is also the concept of Vijnana added. Creative Conscious Force at blissful self-deployment is only the first step towards giving a foundation to the cosmic movement. The second step is the ordering out, by this Conscious Force, of the truths implicit in the Supreme, the organization of these truths in a perfect interrelation and interaction by the faculty of harmonizing unity and multiplicity in a universal self-deployment. This faculty is Vijnana, the maker of a detailed design, at once a mass of particulars and a *gestalt*, on a divine scale. Vijnana is the Aurobindonian Supermind, the "Truth-Consciousness", which is part and parcel of the Ultimate. The term exists in the Taittiriya Upanishad with at least an Overmind-suggestion but later was misunderstood as merely the highest or intuitive intelligence. Vijnana is the reality behind Plotinus's notion of the intimate conjunction of the Sun and its rays. It is involved in Chit-Tapas, just as Tapas is involved in Chit, but unless one is poised in the Supermind itself the involvement is likely in the long run to be overlooked. But, whereas Tapas and Chit stand together, Vijnana is a special mode of them and is best conceived as an extra term. Hence it is not enough to speak of a Divine Trinity: we have to speak of a Divine Quaternary in order fully to formulate the Transcendent which is yet the Archetypally Cosmic, as it were. With Vijnana there, we have also the Personal or Super-personal Godhead, the omniscient and omnipotent and omnipresent Creator in whom the ideal blue-print of all phenomena is held forever and with whom the phenomenal can be in a kinetic love-relation.

Yet here too we must pass beyond the implications of a merely Aurobindonianised Platonism and Plotinism. The latter's *Nous* and the former's World of Ideas come out in their true colours in the concept of the Supermind. The Christian God also finds his grandest form there. But the Supermind or Vijnana is more than just creative. It is also transformative. And because the post-Rigvedic sages and even the oldest Indian seers did not have their poise in the sheer Supermind they missed altogether the transformative aspect. God was indeed taken as omnipotent but it was never thought that he could totally divinise mind, life and matter. Indeed the thought of doing so was never taken as having entered God's consciousness! Just as even God cannot make a square circle or effect $2 + 2 = 5$, so also He cannot be ascribed the power to do such an impossible, such a logically self-contradictory thing, as a divinised mentality, vitality, physicality. And once the omnipotent is considered impotent in this

concern, we cut away the phenomenal world from the Ultimate. If, behind whatever veil in this world, Brahman is all and yet this world cannot be divinised, it cannot truly be Brahman, however incognito, but only a Brahman-semblance and therefore real-unreal, a magic of Maya, an illusionist trick. In Platonic, Plotinian and Christian terms, the world is temporal and must finally pass away; the Divine Plenitude cannot be totally materialised, and the soul's fulfilment is in the Beyond.

The instinct of transformation has always been there because the Supermind is always behind everything: the ideal of a perfect knowledge here and now, the ideal of an all-effecting life-force, the ideal of a radiantly perpetuated body have never stopped haunting man but they have come to be regarded as magnificent will-o'-the-wisps even while felt to be compulsive. They are both unavoidable and futile unless the Supermind is possessed, and without a revelation like Sri Aurobindo's from the Supermind they will never have a rationale.

5-8-1975

AMAL KIRAN

“OPEN TO MY HELP, IT WILL NEVER FAIL YOU”

O TRAVELLER of eternity, light-child,

With thy staff of faith glide on thy path; mourn not
Thy slips; cross pitfalls, conquer valleys wild,
And safely to Her care leave thou thy lot.

Heaven at times may refuse to hear man's cry;

Not in high heaven thy heart of happiness lies,
But here on earth is She thy saviour sky,
To Her must every call and prayer arise.

Let no life's loves tie thee to the world, O Soul;

Body's geotropic pull has been too strong
For a sun-born love-flame, but let thy role
Be singing for world thy God-heralding song.

Stumblings and Nature's engulfing deluge are there,

But, if clung to; stronger Her Love, Her Care.

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

UDAR REMEMBERS

V

I FEEL it is time to come to the beginning, how and why I came to The Mother and Sri Aurobindo.

I had come to Pondicherry around 1934 to earn money so that I could get married and Pondicherry was a good place for this. I joined Mr. Robert Gaebelé in an export business and made quite enough money for my purpose and asked Mona to come out to India. She arrived in January 1937.

From 1934 to 1937, though I had been in Pondicherry most of the time and had many friends in the Ashram, I had never entered the Ashram main building or felt like going for a Darshan or anything like that. I was just busy making money and having a good time. My friends in the Ashram were first Amal (K.D. Sethna), Purani, Ambu, Dr. Ramchandra and some others. Amal was quite close and we had lots of good times together—so much so in fact that, as I learned later, The Mother Herself intervened. She told me this one day. She said that Amal would report to Her on all the things we did together and one day She said: “This Pinto! He is leading my children astray. I will teach him a lesson!” And She certainly did—a great lesson and so wonderful. She tied me up, hands and feet and head and all, into a helpless bundle with the golden cords of Her Love and Joy. I said all this to The Mother and She laughed. “The streams of heaven shall murmur in her laugh.”

Well, I finally got married to Mona in February 1937 and then we had several more friends in the Ashram. They suggested that we should go for a Darshan and it was arranged for us through Amal to go on August 15th 1937. In those days those who went for Darshan had their names listed and the time for each person to be present was indicated on it. Our time was just before noon. We dressed up in our best clothes and went upstairs and were led into the Darshan room and then I received a shock which I had not at all expected. It was my first sight of Sri Aurobindo and the words that came into my head were: “I have seen majesty at last!” This word, “majesty”, had attracted me both for its sound and meaning and I had often regretted not ever having seen it. I had seen majestic robes and crowns and all that, but no majestic person. Here I saw—no wonderful robes or any crown—just a simple dhoti and chaddar, but such a wonderful figure of Majesty. I was also a bit awed by it. Then I looked to The Mother and saw there so much sweetness and love that I just ran up to Her and put my head into Her lap. Mona did the same.

I may mention here that our entry was specially noted by Sri Aurobindo. I saw that when we entered he looked at the list and asked The Mother about us. She told us all this later. We both were a fine-looking pair. The Mother even remarked to Arjava (John Chadwick) that she did not know English girls could be so beautiful. This was about Mona, of course.

Then, after The Mother had blessed me and caressed my head in Her lap, I took

up courage to put my head in His lap and felt His love and sweetness that went with His majesty. Then I put my head between Them and both blessed me together. Such a marvellous experience. I feel I must share the thrill of it with others so I write about it in so much detail.

Then I had some fine experiences at home and wrote of them to Sri Aurobindo who commented very favourably on them. Soon after, I had an interview with The Mother and it was decided that I take up Their Integral Yoga. All this happened in 1937. Mona came, we got married, had our first Darshan and decided to take up the Yoga—all in this one year. Then our daughter Judy Anne, renamed Gauri by Sri Aurobindo, was also born the same year, in November. It was truly the most wonderful year for me.

I took up the yoga quite seriously, though we did not actually live in an Ashram house but continued to live where we were. I have spoken of some fine experiences but shall now write of a little incident that is interesting. I was, at that time, quite a heavy smoker—20 to 25 cigarettes a day, and pipe and cigars too. In one of my experiences I felt I should give this up and I stopped at once, without really much difficulty. I was quite happy about this, my first real effort at self-discipline. Then when I had my next interview with The Mother, I announced to Her proudly: “Mother, I have given up smoking”—and She replied, “Why? It was not necessary.” Really I was astounded at Her answer and then I actually heard the hiss of the air as it escaped from the bubble of my conceit. This first achievement, quite a small thing really, had filled me out with conceit, and The Mother, very sweetly, pricked that bubble. So from the beginning The Mother worked on me in Her truly wonderful but often most unexpected way.

SRI AUROBINDO'S YOGA OF SYNTHESIS

AS A YOUNG AMERICAN SEES IT

This article is by Bonne Badenoch, renamed Bhaktipriya by Dr. Judith Tyberg (Jyotipriya). She belongs to a large Yoga Group in Costa Mesa, some 60 miles south of Los Angeles and is one of the students about whom Dr. Tyberg writes: "They are a joy indeed. I am teaching many young university students keenly interested in Yoga and Indian Scriptures and Sanskrit."

He is greatest among the knowers of Brahman who sports with the Atman, who out of love is one with the Atman and yet full of activity.

Mundaka Upanishad, quoted by Sri Aurobindo

THE purpose of the sadhana and life-example of Sri Aurobindo was to make this divine state of consciousness and divine life available not to a spiritual élite only, but to all sincere aspirants. Prior to Sri Aurobindo, the world seemed to have divided itself into two opposing camps over the past few centuries—the materialists and the spiritualists. The former invested all their belief and energy in the reality of the material creation, but failed to appreciate that consciousness lives in matter, so fascinated were they with the outer manifestation of force. The latter sought to rise above brute matter to pure consciousness and consequently, for them, the world of matter (and themselves along with it) vanished into the Silent Beyond.

But nothing is without its divine utility and the beauty of this situation is that with the full development of these two perspectives on the nature of reality, the time was ripe for a synthesis, for the dynamic emergence of a new ideal which would include, harmonize and yet move beyond this duality to a new unity. In this synthetic process, one can also see the pattern of the practice of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga. Almost any fact from his life, before and after sadhana began, follows this divine pattern. Even his pursuit of Western education in England into young manhood can be seen as providing a balance for the spiritual impetus he would receive on his return to India.

There is nothing in Sri Aurobindo's Yoga which was not manifested in his own sadhana and the Mother's, but in briefly surveying the overall pattern I will be looking mainly from the viewpoint of an aspirant. The practice of this Yoga could be described using many different models (chakras, sheaths, planes of consciousness, etc.), but the perspective of a progressive harmonization of various dualities seems a most fruitful way to approach the uniqueness of this system. The emphasis is ever on balance. Sri Aurobindo has said:

A perfect yoga requires a perfect balance; that was the thing that saved me—I

mean the perfect balance. First of all I believed that nothing was impossible and at the same time I could question everything.

(*Life of Sri Aurobindo*, pp. 209)

Without balance, synthesis is impossible, and this attitude of mind in the aspirant prepares a calm, open field for progressive experience.

So the adventure begins with one fairly average person balancing his life-long commitment to the world with an intense upward thrust in the form of aspiration toward greater spiritual consciousness based on faith in the vision of reality offered by Sri Aurobindo (*Mahayogi*, pp. 229-30). Now, on the spiritual path, dualities manifest in what might be called a static, transcendent or stabilizing element and a dynamic, immanent or activating element. Even at this early stage, abiding faith in the path provides stability for the energy of intense aspiration. When these mature into balance, the sadhak is able "to surrender his whole being to the Lord in a supreme effort of will" (*Mahayogi*, pp. 230). This movement of offering up everything makes way for grace to descend in the form of Śakti, the Mother Force, to assist the sadhak through all difficulties to his goal. This Force is pure Consciousness and when it meets, in its descent, an answering combination of faith and aspiration that has become surrender, it opens up new realms of awareness, releasing latent consciousness and giving the sadhak a wider perspective and ever more freedom.

So surrender becomes the first synthesis, but it is the law of all growth that each synthesis becomes the next thesis, generating its own antithesis to prepare for a new synthesis. Balancing surrender, the abiding element, comes the activity that the Mother calls rejection—"rejection of the movements of the lower nature" (*Mahayogi*, pp. 231). The sadhak has simultaneously opened himself completely to the Divine and set up a guard at the door to keep out undesirables. At maturity, when the surrender is complete and all thoughts are experienced as entering from outside, the mind falls silent. This is the first big step toward Supramental Consciousness.

It must be kept in mind that synthesis means an inclusion and transformation of all previous steps, so at this point faith, aspiration, surrender and rejection all remain, but seen now from an increasingly conscious perspective as acts of the Lord or Consciousness/Force rather than the sadhak, and really as one unified act taking place behind the silent mind. At maturity, the new state becomes so natural as to be virtually unnoticed by the aspirant, just as it is natural to us to be thinking and acting as we do now.

At this point in his sadhana, Sri Aurobindo experienced a most marvellous thing. Out of the perfect silence of Nirvāṇa, a voice began to speak and subsequently directed every step of his sadhana, even to the point of having him thrown in jail when he refused to heed the inner Guru's advice to take some time for solitude. At this point Sri Aurobindo was dwelling in Nirvāṇa and increasingly observing the active side of this duality in the form of the Voice. This always seems to be the preparatory step in the generation of a new thesis/antithesis pairing. A synthesis is achieved and matures,

then as it moves toward its own thesishood, the antithesis is revealed bit by bit, first to be appreciated, then to be experienced. In this case, after Sri Aurobindo's Nirvāṇa state had matured so fully that it was his normal, effortless mode of operation, he found himself in jail and there the active counterpart of this state opened to him as awareness of the immanence of the Lord everywhere.

I looked at the jail that secluded me from men and it was no longer by its high walls that I was imprisoned; no, it was Vasudeva who surrounded me. I walked under the branches of the tree in front of my cell but it was not the tree, I knew it was Vasudeva, it was Sri Krishna whom I saw standing there and holding over me his shade. I looked at the bars of my cell, the very grating that did duty for a door and again I saw Vasudeva. It was Narayana who was guarding and standing sentry over me. Or I lay on the coarse blankets that were given me for a couch and felt the arms of Sri Krishna around me, the arms of my Friend and Lover. (*Uttarpara Speech*, p. 8)

In traditional Yoga or religion, these experiences do not usually develop in balanced pairs because the aspiration of the devotee is focussed not on integration, but on realizing one aspect of the Lord—the Absolute, or God in Form, or God as Energy. When the goal is achieved, aspiration stops and the devotee is stuck with a no doubt joyous and wonderful realization, but nonetheless he is stuck. The antithesis is never allowed to develop and without the appearance of the opposite force there can be no growth. Sri Aurobindo often spoke of the Purushottama precisely because He both combines and transcends the unmanifest and manifest, the impersonal and personal, the Śiva and Śakti aspects. This provides the basis for the descent of Spirit into matter because not until the Purushottama stage is there a synthesis of these elements allowing an interpenetration to develop so Consciousness can descend and awaken the deeply sleeping corresponding Consciousness in apparently dead matter. Until one human consciousness can embrace both Śiva and Śakti, it cannot move beyond Spirit and matter seen as duality instead of unity. No doubt some of the great ones had experienced this realization in a bygone age, else it could not be spoken of in the *Vedas* and *Gītā*. But Sri Aurobindo's goal was not personal perfection, rather the awakening of a new potential for the use of all mankind who, through eons of evolution, were finally ready to make the leap into the next stage of development beyond mental life, the Supramental.

There is another aspect to this, too. In order to transform the physical world, it is necessary to get in harmony with the laws by which it manifests. All energy, all force, all manifestation vibrates, and vibration expresses itself through amplitude, never moving in a straight line. It achieves progress which appears straight by a series of balancing up-and-down oscillations. So it is necessary to match the physical fact of amplitude with the spiritual fact of Purushottama for the two to interrelate and transform each other. The matter world becomes more spiritual and the spiri-

tual world more concrete until divine life manifests fully.¹

Returning now to our growing aspirant, he has by gradual stages stilled his mind and finds a consciousness growing up in that stillness, a consciousness which he first observes and then gradually feels to be his very nature. "It integrates, harmonises, establishes a new rhythm in the nature" (*Adventures in Consciousness*, p. 42). His consciousness has become wider and gradually this new state becomes more stable. When this happens, the Force is now ready to descend an equal distance into the more unconscious areas, bringing Light in to liberate, make conscious, previously dormant areas. First the area to be worked on is silenced, made stable, then the Force descends, transforms. As long as the aspirant doesn't cry "Halt!" this process will move him automatically to higher and wider states of consciousness because he is participating in the natural rhythm of evolution being used by God Himself/Herself to manifest and nourish the creation.

Another remarkable fact is that greater consciousness means greater individuality. It is hard to tell amoebas apart and impossible to find individuality in a Vedantic ocean of bliss, but between these two extremes, in human life, there is considerable individuality and at the confluence of Spirit and matter, the Supermind, there is full individuality, concrete manifestation of divine attributes. Consequently, the sadhak has more and more enjoyment in his own unique way as he has greater and greater consciousness.

In this way our seeker is proceeding from ordinary mental consciousness to higher mind (flashes of light), illumined mind (easily accommodating a steadier light), intuitive mind (clearing consciousness, rapidity, vastness), and overmind (a mass of stable light, unity without loss of individuality, fulfilment of the human mind). Meanwhile, at each upward step there has been a corresponding downward step into the subconscious layers and finally a confrontation with matter itself. At this point he reaches the bottom level of inconscience, the last frontier of the evolutionary past. And at this point, as Dante knew, the most concentrated point of darkness, everything reverses under the pressure of the Light.

... at one bound, without transition, at the bottom of this "inconscient" matter and in the dark cells of this body, without falling into ecstatic trance, without the loss of the individual, without cosmic dissolution, and with eyes wide open, Sri Aurobindo found himself precipitated into the supreme Light ...

The step above the overmind is not "above", it is here and in all things — the door below opens the door above and everywhere ... (*Adventure*, p. 259)

The Supermind is revealed—a new dimension, complementary consciousness, awareness filling every cell—indescribable.

¹ One can express this in terms of the chakras by having the forces from an awakened Sahasrara, ajna and Vishuddha moving down to Anahata, and the purified forces of Muladhara, Svadhussthana and Manipura moving up, and thence all together outward into expression.

For the Supermind is not a more ethereal consciousness but a denser consciousness, it is the very Vibration which composes and recomposes endlessly Matter and the worlds, it is this which can change the Earth. (*Adventure*, p. 260)

So this is only a beginning. With the descent of the Supermind, earthly transformation becomes possible because the Consciousness/Force finally has a vehicle for expression.

According to Sri Aurobindo the essential characteristic of supramentalised Matter is receptivity; it will be capable of responding to the conscious will and modelling itself at its order as clay responds to the fingers of the potter Conscious malleability will be the fundamental property of supramentalised matter. (*Adventure*, p. 310)

After this, the process of reshaping takes place according to the new laws inherent in Supramental life (see chapter 17 of *Adventure* for details). One thing the aspirant realizes almost immediately is that unless the whole cosmos is supramentalized, he is still incomplete, and so each sadhak becomes a focal point for spreading terrestrial transformation. It is not glamorous work.

... God knows the transformation is prosaic enough, one may go out shopping in the bazaar in the midst of an opaque and disintegrating crowd or at night stroll into certain malicious regions of the Subconscious and do both with the same intensity of consciousness, of light and peace as one has when seated alone, eyes closed, in one's room, in deep meditation. This is "to descend." There is no longer any difference, high and low are equally luminous and peaceful. (*Adventure*, p. 359)

But it is glorious work, and inevitable because that is the thrust of evolution's movement. The only question is whether we want to consciously cooperate or not. Sri Aurobindo's life-example gave us this option.

My sadhana is not a freak or a monstrosity or a miracle done outside the laws of Nature and the conditions of life and consciousness on earth. If I could do these things or if they could happen in my Yoga, it means that they can be done and that therefore these developments and transformations are possible in the terrestrial consciousness. . . I had no urge towards spirituality in me, I developed spirituality. I was incapable of understanding metaphysics, I developed into a philosopher. I had no eye for painting—I developed it by Yoga. I transformed my nature from what it was to what it was not. I did it by a special means, not by a miracle and I did it to show what could be done and how it could be done. I did not do it out of any personal necessity of my own or by a miracle without any

process. I say that if it is not so, then my Yoga is useless and my life was a mistake ... (*Adventure*, p. 319-20)

No mistake, but a fulfilment of true potential for us all.

BONNE BADENOCH (BHAKTIPRIYA)

APPENDIX ON SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER

Although it would not fit comfortably in the body of the paper, it is not possible to leave this subject without at least briefly considering the relationship between Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Both achieved Supramental Consciousness and yet they functioned in very different ways. Sri Aurobindo often seemed to play Śiva to the Mother's Śakti in the conduct of his sadhana and of Ashram life.

When I came to Pondicherry I got from within a programme for my Sadhana. I carried it out for myself, but could not make much progress regarding the help to be given to others; then came Mira—I found with her aid the method of this help. (*Mahayogi*, pp. 128-29)

From the time of her arrival at Pondicherry, the Mother began taking outer responsibility for the Ashram and the devotees, manifesting the Ideal Sri Aurobindo was revealing in his room.

They both stated that they were essentially the same.

The Mother's consciousness and mine are the same, the one Divine Consciousness in two, because that is necessary for the play. Nothing can be done without her knowledge and force, without her consciousness—if anybody really feels her consciousness, he should know that I am there behind it and if he feels me it is the same with hers. (*Life*, p. 248)

Their relationship is like a diagram of the process of sadhana, the perfect dynamic balance of divine opposites, ever achieving new synthesis only to move into thesis: antithesis at this higher level and ever onward.

B. B.

THE DRAMA OF INTEGRAL SELF-REALIZATION

THE SPIRITUAL MESSAGE OF SRI AUROBINDO'S *SAVITRI*

SRI Aurobindo's *Savitri* is an epic poem of high spiritual challenge in the Yoga or Divine Union or goal of Self-Realization it presents. Its spiritual conception is so all-encompassing, so integral that it gives birth to a power which transforms life on earth to a life of divine activity rather than leading to an escape from life. The epic is the mantric expression of this great Seer-sage's inner findings and conquests, leading to his vision of an age of truth-consciousness and immortality. It portrays in living drama the daring climb within of a king-soul through progressive states of consciousness to Nirvanic heights and beyond to summits never reached before. The poet reveals how at meditation's peak at one with God, where many cease their search, he becomes aware of a Presence, God's Consciousness, Power and Bliss, which he calls the Divine Mother. He relates how this Creatrix of Boundless Love and Wisdom-Splendour comes down to Earth to transform Darkness into Light, the Unreal into the Real and Death into Immortality.

The famous Mahabharata legend of "Savitri and Satyavan", the story of 'Love Conquers Death' is made the basic symbol of this mystic scripture of 'Divine Life on Earth'. The legend tells of the noble and virtuous king Aswapati performing all kinds of austerities in order that God might be pleased and grant him a child to uphold his kingdom. After eighteen years the Goddess Savitri, wife of the Divine Creator, issues forth from the sacrificial flames and promises the king a radiantly spiritual daughter to spring from her own being.

The child is born and is named Savitri. She grows up like unto the 'Goddess of Beauty' herself in embodied form and is blessed with godlike qualities. When she reaches maturity kings and princes overwhelmed by her divine character dare not ask her hand. So her father sends her forth to seek her own lord. Her heart finds Satyavan, the faithful son of Raja Dyumatsena, a blind and exiled king who lives in a forest hermitage.

When Savitri comes to declare her love to her father, she finds him in conversation with Narada, the great heavenly sage. When Narada hears Savitri's words he warns that Satyavan, though endowed with all high qualities and with honor constant as the Pole Star, is destined to die in a year. The parents try to persuade their daughter to choose another, but in vain. Narada advises the father, however, to allow Savitri to marry Satyavan. So the princess is married and lives a simple quiet life in the forest. She pleased all with her tender service, self-denial, evenness of temper, her skill and gentle speech and her love for Satyavan.

But night and day Narada's prophetic words are present in her mind but she speaks of them to no one. When the appointed day for Satyavan's death approaches Savitri fasts and prays and on the fated day she begs permission to follow her husband

into the forest in order to see the blossoming woods through which he passed daily. Never having petitioned anything previous to this day she is granted her request. Satyavan goes ahead to make way for her and soon comes to the place where he stops to cut wood for the home-fire.

After a few strokes Satyavan falls smitten with pain and Savitri stricken with grief sits and holds his head in her lap. Suddenly she beholds Yama, the God of Death, standing before her with noose in hand. She rises and asks why he had come himself instead of sending one of his emissaries as was his custom. Yama tells her that this prince is endowed with such a sea of virtue and accomplishment and beauty that he is too worthy to be borne away by anyone but the God of Death himself. Then Yama takes the soul of Satyavan and proceeds southward. Savitri, undaunted, follows him. Time and again Yama turns to stop her but with wise and appealing words she moves him to grant one boon after another, except the life within his hand. Still she continues to follow him, right into his dark cave, until finally her devotion and unparalleled love and wisdom move Yama to return the soul of Satyavan. Savitri hastens to the woods where her lord's body lay and woos the soul back into consciousness and together they return to their home and all the boons promised by Yama are fulfilled.

Adapting this legend as a symbol for a great living spiritual experience, Sri Aurobindo changes King Aswapathy's sacrificial asceticism into the Tapasya or conscious spiritualization of an aspiring soul of humanity. Savitri is not only the incarnation of a goddess but Divine Grace born in answer to Aswapathy's longing for help in bringing some living form of God on earth to relieve it of its burden of inconscience. The marriage of Savitri and Satyavan is the divine linking of their lives for the raising of the world and man to God and the bringing of God to earth to transform it into an abode of Divine Delight.

Sri Aurobindo first¹ gives a panoramic vision of the character and mighty events of the momentous day of Divine Conquest. Dramatically he opens the epic with a description of the dawn of the day destined for Satyavan's death and makes it the symbol of the Dawn of the Spiritual Tomorrow which is to usher in an age of Truth-Consciousness and Immortality. How this wondrous dawn appears to humans with "time-born eyes" and how it affected Savitri awaiting her mighty struggle with Death is compared. Telling verses give the key to the source of Savitri's power to rise above her lone grief and the thoughts oppressing her mind. Her godlike character and sensitive nature are set forth and reveal the source of her power and will in the battle with Death

As the significant day of Death arrives² Savitri is pictured preparing within, struggling with the burdens of her Karmic past, seeking the aid of her Will born of Self to help her disown the trails and legacy of past selves which were "a block on the immortal road." As she reviews her past we hear the radiant prologue to this day, her

¹ From the Paturata Mahatmya Parva in Chapters 291-294 of the Aranyaka Parva.

² *Savitri* (Sri Aurobindo International University Centre Collection, Pondicherry, 1954), Book I, Canto I, pp. 3-13.

twelve months' life in the secluded beauty of the woodlands where there was "deep room for thought and God."

Striking verses tell how when faced with the Death of Satyavan her heart stood "in the way of the driving wheels" of the "engines of the universe", how she kindled her divine strength, how pain assailed her divinest elements and how the truth of her Divinity within "broke in in a triumph of fire", and empowered her to smite Death's "dumb absolute" and "burst the bounds of consciousness and Time."

After this survey of the mighty moments of the epic the poet takes up the sequence¹ of events in accordance with the original legend commencing with a description of the spiritual steps taken by Aswapathy for his soul's release. We learn how through inner concentration and a steady will he kept his consciousness in his super-nature and is helped in turning "his frail mud-engine to heaven-use." To free himself from ego and its finiteness, from mind's limits and "the lines of safety reason draws" are his task. What a conscious sleep brings once one is no more drugged by Matter, what powers develop are part of the spiritual romance related.

Then we are told how "these wide-poised upliftings" whose peace the "restless nether members tire of" are made to endure, how the spirit's power gradually transforms the darker parts of man's being, even the body's cells, and makes them feel the need and will to change in order that² this immense creation's purpose may not fail. What he must check crowding through mind's gates under "forged signatures of the gods" what the silences of his being reveal, and what priceless riches he finds in the deep subconscious as his being becomes transfigured, all are here described.

The secret knowledge³ follows, giving out the grandiose meaning of our lives, the story of the climb of the god-spark through the kingdoms of the earth to Godhood, how the Spirit-guardians of the Silence of the Truth work in the vicissitudes of our lives, what the true sources of our beings are, who the cosmic managers are, and how the secret God within makes himself felt in our lives. But still unexplained problems made Aswapathy plunge into "unplumbed infinitudes" in order to find the key to what could join Spirit and Matter, join what is now parted, "opposed and twain" and fulfill the Oneness that was the stamp of Being.

So Aswapathy moves⁴ into the freedom and greatness of his Spirit, dares "to live when breath and thought were still" and steps into that magic place where all is self-known, where the riddle of the world grew plain and "lost its catch obscure." In magnificent poetry we follow him as he rises, leaving earth-nature's summits below his feet. We are made to feel the ecstasy, might and sweetness of God's mystic power, as he is drawn from his loneliness into God's embrace.

As he climbs, his sealless eye uncovered a series of graded kingdoms "twixt life's poles" through whose "organ scale of consciousness" souls move. Up this stairway of worlds he starts and enters into another space and time. With Aswapathy we travel⁵

¹ *Ibid.*, Canto II, pp. 14-25. ² *Ibid.*, Canto III, pp. 26-52.

³ Canto IV, pp. 53-83. ⁴ Canto V, pp. 84-104. ⁵ Book II, Cantos I-XV, pp. 107-302.

and become acquainted with the nature of these spheres and their godheads. Here Sri Aurobindo unveils occult cosmogony in vibrant detail, in a clarity of language that only direct experience can utter. To read of these inner states of ourselves, also the pattern of the universe to be seen within, below, without, above, is to more fully understand ourselves.

Aswapathy crosses out of this gross material world into a subtle material existence where the patterns of our forms are found; then into planes of pure life-force. Here in the lower regions, "an unhappy corner of eternity", the little cravings of earth's beings and a motley mass of lower vital creatures abound; while in its higher regions live the higher emotions, desires and aspirations, where unattained ideas are beings and kings. Then lower into the dangerous nether regions of nescience with its brood of hate and selfishness along with this explorer we go to find the causes of the failure of the desire-worlds to fulfill themselves. There we see the twists of Nature. Further below into Hell we penetrate with this warrior-adventurer who keeps "a prayer upon his lips and the great Name" to protect him from its terrors and demoniacal creatures. What scenes of horror and yet grim majesty are portrayed! Even to the hidden heart of Night, the absolute denial of Truth and Being, this spirit-soul dives, where the "hypocrite blooms", a "spiritless hollow", a home of the dark Powers, "a studio of creative Death" and a dire place of torture. Passing through the suffering of its blackest pit, while "treasuring between his hands his flickering soul" Aswapathy discovers that the Highest Secrets are locked in these abysmal depths.

Then up into the paradises of the Gods of Life and Hope we are made to feel the sweetness and joys of this state. But this too he quickly leaves, journeying on to find something higher, that which makes all One; for to remain within the limits of Desire's satisfactions delays the discoveries of that Immortal One who gives all one could desire and more. The Kingdoms and Godheads of the Little Mind show him their ceaseless analytical workings and we are introduced to the three dwarfs of mind: habit, desire and reason. Then to the more luminous planes of Greater Mind, where few are guests, he enters and finds them a world which God uses as a bridge to send his forms of Truth to man. Inspiring are the lines outlining what could be ours if we opened the gates leading to this shining corridor of mind.

Next Aswapathy ascends to the blissful heavens of the Ideal, the home of the source of our spiritual longings wherefrom we hear "the flutings of the Infinite" which rouse the soul from its depths. From this beautiful realm where mind's radiant flower-children dwell he enters into the Silence where the Self of Mind, the Witness Lord of Nature has his secret base. Aswapathy watches the motive-thoughts of this Thinker, but this firmament of abstract thought he observes is a Finder only, but not a Knower or a Lover.

Seeking for an escape from these limits the king-soul goes through a brilliant opening carried by a mysterious sound into the Soul of the World. Here the poet describes the universal harmonies, sympathies and wisdom of this Cosmic Consciousness, home of souls in spiritual sleep between lives on earth. We learn how souls plan

there in this "fashioning chamber of the worlds" the adventures of their new lives. The watching eye of this spiritual traveller sees there his own soul and now, soul-conscious, becomes aware of the "Two-in-One", the Cosmic Father-Mother absorbed in deep creative joy, and learns of their works and powers. In awe he falls before this unveiled Goddess, knowing he was nearing the heart of things. Now our hero-soul steps into a realm of boundless silences "where all are different and all are one." The plenitudes of Wisdom found there are spread before us.

Next¹ on creation's heights this tireless seeker arrives where only a formless Form of self is left. There appears the Godhead of the whole with "his feet firm-based on Life's stupendous wings." The utter aloneness, stillness and inscrutability of this God with diamond gaze rejecting from itself world and soul is powerfully set forth. Still this "Consciousness of unshared bliss" did not satisfy him. He sought in this absolute silence "the Absolute Power", for he knew that a huge extinction is not God's last word, that the escape into this glad divine abyss is not the crown of the self's mission or the self's power, or the meaning of this great mysterious world. Verses of challenge ring forth to the soul who might seek the end of his being in Nirvana.

Passages pregnant with deep meaning then flow forth from the poet as he narrates the drawing near of the Divine Presence behind the Godhead, that Luminous Heart which Aswapathy had been yearning for with the passion of his soul. Hers was the Glory of God, the Divine Mother of All. Soul-stirring is his prayer to the Mighty Mother after having torn up "desire from its bleeding roots/And offered to the gods the vacant place." The poet depicts the transformation that comes over Aswapathy as his heart meets the Divine Mother, and describes the vision that comes to him of the New Creation to dawn on earth bringing with it a Harmony of all contraries. Splendid and prophetic passages! Suddenly the Divine Mother rises in him and speaks in his ear's chambers, warning him not to awaken too soon the immeasurable descent, and revealing her miraculous powers. But Aswapathy who has now beheld this Wondrous Mother pleads with a heart grown vibrant with love for all: "Incarnate the white passion of thy Force." The beauteous Immortal's consent and her promise to come down to earth is one of the lofty mantric passages of the epic. So to change Nature's doom Savitri² is born. Exquisite poetry recounts her childhood, and the gradual growth of the Flame within her, and the Call to her divine quest and the meeting of the two young lovers.³

Then we hear Narada⁴ the heavenly sage not only announcing to Aswapathy, the father of Savitri, the fated Death of Satyavan but giving out with singular force the laws and ways of Karma, Fate and Pain, and the mystery of why great souls suffer. Like the despondency of Arjuna in the Bhagavad-Gita, the ordeal of the foreknowledge of Satyavan's death and her heart's grief are shown to be the beginning of Savitri's Yoga,⁵ her union with God. With the poet we watch her struggles with forces of

¹ Book III, pp. 345-394.

² Book IV, pp. 397-438.

³ Book V, pp. 441-467

⁴ Book VI, pp. 471-523

⁵ Book VII, pp. 527-632

indifference and inertia, with the senses, desire and the restless brain, against truth mixed with poison, and against weakness of heart. The strong charge of her Soul in response to her command "Speak to my depths, O great and deathless Voice,/For I am here to do thy will", is the the spiritual charge for every soul seeking to serve the Divine and conquer Darkness.

Next we are given a picture of what Savitri sees when she looks into herself and seeks her soul. Closing the door to the God within are serpents of temptations of all kinds, limitations luring to the easier paths of the all-negating absolute, to escape from the battle with life and to Nirvana. How she answers these and pushes them away is told. In the course of her seeking the occult Fire within, three Soul-Forces appear: the Mother of Divine Pity, the Mother of Might and the Mother of Wisdom. Each relates her various forms and works in the world. Finally the poet chants of Savitri's finding of her Secret Deity.

But soon the portentous yet promising day of Satyavan's death¹ arrives and it is portrayed in verses of poetic pathos. At the moment of his death² Savitri enters the mystic lotus on her head, "a thousand-petalled home of power and light" and rises to meet the dreadful God, the limitless denial of all being. The two oppose each other, Woman and Universal God of Death. The poem shows Satyavan moving with Death into the silence beyond and Savitri casting off her sheaths and entering into the trance of her soul in order to stay with Satyavan. At the brink of the shadow-world Death peals forth his abysmal cry ordering her to go back. But silent, she dares enter into the Eternal Night with them. Death warns her to go no further and depicts his home of dark immensity and the helplessness of all in his power. After his ruthless speech Savitri answers what to her is a Black Lie of Night and declares her spirit's power can resist him and then demands and challenges Death to give what Satyavan desired in his life for his parents. Death smilingly yields but demands her return to earth lest she be destroyed. But Savitri boldly states her powers which like fire can destroy him. Death in mocking verses cries forth that he is the Originator and Destroyer of all. Savitri then meets scorn with scorn and in dynamic poetry proclaims the wondrous might of her God's Will and Love. Death refutes all her statements claiming his Power can deny them all, make all things vain.

Savitri's soul continues to wrestle with Death and to ridicule his words of Reason. Death challenges her to seek to KNOW, for knowledge kills love. Quickly comes her response that the Nature of Love gives birth to Knowledge. Drifting along with them as they move into the Land of Nought³ we hear the debate continue, hear them pit all the contraries of life against each other, and we hear from Savitri the very reason of Death's existence. Death trumpets a long proclamation of how he cancels all life's golden truths. To his dangerous music this warrior-maiden gives a picture of what her God of Love has done and will yet accomplish and dares Death to produce a greater God to captivate her soul. Death sneeringly interprets her words as hallucinations of

¹ Book VIII, pp. 635-640.

² Book IX, pp. 645-672.

³ Book X, pp. 673-749.

the mind and gives an oration on the deceptions of mind and raises Unconsciousness as the pinnacle of all. Savitri answers in Death's own words, calling him the dark-browed sophist of the universe masking divinity with his dance of death. She sings forth in glorious poetry the occult spiritual miracle of God's wonders from a tiny seed; and then again in lines of majestic power speaks of her assured triumph, of her Love as stronger than his bonds of death.

The Dark King, still trying to discourage her, ironically speaks of her fantasy of Truth, says that Truth is hard as stone. Back and forth sparkle the words of the debates. Death uses subtle reason and arms himself with all man's faltering searches, his limiting spiritual goals, and exaggerated and imperfect understanding of Truth to prove the futility of God's power, but Savitri, "delivered of all twilight thoughts", with a Heart of Truth answers his lures. Here Savitri chants lyrics of Nature's miracles, of the wonders of the Infinite and of the limitless powers of a soul integrally surrendered to God.

Death, suspecting her to be the Mother of the Gods embodied, challenges her to show a body of living Truth, for has matter ever been able to hold truth? Savitri tells Death who he really is and warns him he will cease to be when he touches the Embodied Truth Supreme, and then reveals her being all one with God. Death, still unconvinced, makes his last stand in support of his blind force and dares Savitri to reveal the Power of the Divine, for many have Truth but who has the Power to radiate it? Then is given a picture of Savitri as she becomes transformed into a divine being with all her Chakras or Lotuses of Power scintillating. The most powerful speech of all follows and Savitri exhibits her living Power of Truth and proves that Death is needed no more. Death is shown gradually vanishing and finally defeated, eaten up by Light.

In the Silences¹ of the beyond Savitri and Satyavan are alone. Into the avenues of the Spirit they roam happily. But even there voices rise enticing them to come to a blissful home away from battles of life, but Savitri again meets the test with strength. With sun-words she replies that she was born on earth to dare the impossible, that imperfect is the joy not shared by all. Then God, knowing Savitri now to be absolutely at one with his Diamond Heart, rings forth the final joyous paean of the Divine Transformation that shall be on earth and sends Savitri as his Power and Satyavan as his Soul back to earth to change this earthly life to a life divine.

Savitri falls like a star to earth² and Satyavan invisibly drawn soars past her. They reunite on earth and the epic closes unveiling the age-long secret deep-guarded in the stillness—the Promise of a Greater Dawn.

Iti māyā śrutam—Thus have I heard...

Thus have I heard the Revelation of *Savitri*, Sri Aurobindo's epic poem, truly an Apocalypse of the treasures of spiritual experience and of the Perfect Divine Existence.

DR. JUDITH TYBERG (JYOTIPRIYA)

¹ Book XI, pp. 753-800.

² Book XII, pp. 803-814.

THE TIMELESS BOOK

THERE is a lovely book somewhere
whose pages tell
where you have been
where you will be.

You may turn back
and seek to see the places
that you think you've seen
but where you'll go you've never been:
to places you have never seen
with eyes of flesh,
to places you have never known
except with marrow of your bone.

Yet here it is that all is wrought,
the untrained phrase that curves like song,
the effortless gaze that takes all in,
the things that in your life-long mind
you've never thought to note
though now they strike the depths of you.

And everything is there
that can't be learnt
or written down
or ever forgot
except by mind,
except by blindness of the mind.

That is your world, your only world
and it is never what you think
and sometimes errors written
in your sky
in bold and crushing lines
turn inside out
and are the very core of truth,
the virtues of the fold
and crease of life.

But once you close the book,
beware

for habit of the mind is hard
 and else you have the book before,
 all things will blink and blur
 and fade
 and when you try to see again
 by time and place you'll be betrayed.

The book goes on
 and you may turn the pages right
 as well as left
 and see as well as where you've been
 (and never been),
 the things that lie not in the past,
 but, as they say, the things to be.
 And here not differently you'll see
 that close and known as your own hand
 you know the land
 you've never trod
 (save with the marrow of your bone)
 and you will say,
 when in the sunlight shines
 the pool, in which your son is drowned,
 it was for that I built the pool.
 It had to be.
 And it unravels like a spool—your life:
 the wives you take, the sons beget
 the books you write
 the gods that sit unmoved
 (yourself a god)
 while loved ones die
 and scream in pain
 and you yourself have lost the way,
 in total darkness walked a world
 where light has never shone
 and then the day love won
 at last and light
 that told you they had come to stay.

'A dangerous book' is it you say?
 No, not; for lest you have the page before,
 you'll soon forget, you'll soon forget.

PRITHVISINGH

3-6-1898—13-4-1976

A NOBLE scion of a noble past,
A dedicated mind, a faithful heart,
A sweetness rare of soul-felt friendship fast,
Was called by God to play a child's true part.

Self-offering was for him a natural way,
Surrender the rule and service daily food,
The Mother's lotus-feet his only stay,
And Sri Aurobindo was his single mood.

Fate handicapped but could not mar his will,
His spirit's strength was greater than the blow;
But he persisted in his service still,
It was his worship and his spirit's vow.

His mind a pillar rose of strong support
To life divine on earth, the life to be;
His body frail was yet a hill-top fort
To watch with inner eyes eternity.

But time came bidding him to meet his Lord;
It was a call that none could now evade;
Then snapped without a cry life's lovely cord
And freed the soul whose debts were fully paid.

The Lord has now received his seeking soul,
The Mother's smile now greets him in Her inn,
He has reached at last his life-long cherished goal
And only changed his dedication's scene.

PUJALAL

SOME SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES

WITH A TENTATIVE EXPLANATION

X's Letter

ON the 25th September 1975, I was observing the sunrise on my terrace. I had a joy in my heart. After walking a few rounds I sat in a corner. The morning sun had come up. Then I went into a deep trance. I saw a white light. The being seemed to be out of the body for some time. I was going higher and higher. I knew that Devas were there: Vishnu, Shiva and Ganesh. But I was going higher and higher even above them and there I was engulfed in a bright white light. For some time I was senseless. Nobody was there on the terrace. Slowly I came out of the trance. I was very happy on that day. I had never had such an experience.

Later, another movement started. I would become immobile and go into a trance for longer than two to three minutes. Sometimes it was for more than ten minutes. I knew people were worried around me, because I was not answering their calls. I knew that they were calling me, but some force was there which held me and I could not speak.

These periods of trance were repeated many times in a day and I was not allowed to go out.

Then I fell very ill. I would become breathless even at rest. I had repeated pain in my chest and in the left arm. All the cardiac treatment possible was given to me. But while I was sick I used to become immobile many times and I could feel my breath only at the nose.

Y who usually comes to our place in the afternoon sat near me and placed her hand on my heart. Sometimes I passed through such a condition that I felt I would die. From October 1975 till January 1976 I was in bed. Then I was allowed to walk slowly and in February I came to Pondicherry. Relatives were worried whether I would be able to bear the strain. But by the Mother's grace I became almost all right in Pondicherry.

During my illness I was at home. My bedroom is just in front of the sea. Usually in the evening I used to watch the sunsets. Every day I saw not only one orange-coloured sun but many blue-coloured suns round it. These blue-coloured suns made different patterns. I was overjoyed to see such visions.

In fact I had many beautiful visions of Vishnu. Before I came to Pondicherry I used to recite Vishnu-shastranam several times. It was in 1962 that I saw the Virat Swarupa¹ of Vishnu. In this vision I also saw Ganapati, Shiva and other gods. This vision remained before me for four days.

¹ Universal Form

For the last four years I have had a strange feeling in my spinal cord. Whenever I start concentrating on any work a current passes through my back. It continues for a time. Sometimes that current passes upwards and remains concentrated in the middle of the skull. Sometimes the force is so terrible that I feel as if it would break my skull.

On 1st March 1976 I went to Sri Aurobindo's room. When I came down I prayed at the Mother's chair. I felt she was sitting there wearing her yellow salvar and kurta and kitty cap. Her symbol was in the middle of it. But in fact I saw a golden light in human form. In 1973 when the Mother took her Mahasamadhi we were allowed to go upstairs to Sri Aurobindo's room. In front of the photos of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo in the old Darshan room I was in a deep trance. I saw the Mother and Sri Aurobindo in white light.

I always see different coloured lights when I close my eyes. Will you kindly explain these visions and experiences to me when you have the time to do so? I shall be very thankful. Also I want very much to know why I fell ill with heart-trouble after these experiences, and was confined to bed for four months.

A Comment

I am not a master of Yoga, so I cannot make any pronouncements of a final kind but, since you have asked for my impressions, I give them for what they may be worth.

Your experiences are excellent and also varied in range. They seem to be on some universal plane—the plane appears to change at times—once it strikes me as even touching the overmind when you go above the Devas and are engulfed in bright white light.

The current in your spinal cord is evidently the Kundalini at work. When it rises upward and gets concentrated in the middle of the head with a force as if to break through the skull, it is following the typical traditional movement of the Kundalini Yoga, the Shakti coiled up in the lowest *chakra* awaking and darting upward to the thousand-petalled *chakra* on the top of the head in order to unite with Shiva the infinite immobile Self.

The illness after a number of intense experiences evidently indicates that the body is not strong enough to bear the inrush of supernormal forces. I cannot gather whether the heart trouble has led to what is called infarction, a permanent damage to a part of the heart. Most probably the trouble is nervous-functional and not organic.¹ In any case, if you can establish peace in yourself, a deep peace brought down from above the head or found in the background of the being, your body will grow stronger and the effects of the experiences will also stay longer and perhaps become permanent.

The blue-coloured suns which you saw along with our usual sun seem to show a permeation of our physical world by another plane. On each plane the light has a colour symbolic of the type of consciousness that has organised that plane. Thus Sri Aurobindo has the line in *Savitri*:

¹ This diagnosis has been confirmed by the electrocardiogram

...griefless countries under purple suns.

Some old Indian books speak of seeing our sun in several colours according to the development of our consciousness. The blue colour is said by Sri Aurobindo to mark the spiritual consciousness above the mind, reaching up to the Overmind.

At the moment I am not able to say much more, except that you appear to have a powerful spontaneous opening of the psychic being, accompanied by an outbreak of subtle sight characteristic at the same time of the psychic plane, the plane of the inner mind and perhaps the overhead level which Sri Aurobindo terms the illumined mind.

But I may remind you that a contact, however vivid, with these domains is not enough. Much remains to be done. They have to become familiar and intimate with our being. Also, from Sri Aurobindo's viewpoint all inner experiences have to spread their consciousness and power into the outer self. We must not let inner experiences sweep us off our feet and give us delusions of greatness. Many disciples of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have had similar openings and upliftings. The ultimate value of Yogic phenomena for us lies in their transformative influence on our day-to-day mind, vital force and body.

TWO DREAM-EXPERIENCES

SHE NEVER FORGETS

MY birthday falls on the 13th of January. It coincides with that of Nolini. Therefore whenever I asked Mother for an interview she would grant me this privilege two days ahead of my birthday; for, on that day she gave a long interview to Nolini. This year while asleep I saw the Mother sitting in her chair and giving blessings to devotees who had queued up to receive the blessing flower one by one. When I stood before her she looked up at me with her face beaming with joy. While handing a fresh rose to me she said, "Bonne Fête." It came to me as a most exhilarating surprise, firstly, because she could recognize me and secondly, because she remembered that it was my birthday. Then she told me that she was giving me the birthday blessings early in the morning because later on she would be busy with Nolini. My brother was standing next to me and addressing him she said about me, "His birthday comes on the same day as Nolini's." I came away overbrimmed with joy and started telling everyone there, "See, she never forgets anything. She forgets only that which she does not want to remember." When I woke up I looked up at the time-piece and saw the hour hand at 5 and the minute hand exactly at 12. Being mid-winter, I could say:

It was the hour before the gods awake.

THE SUNLIT FUTURE

The Mother was standing in her room with a group of young men around her. One of them posed a straight question, "Have you failed in your mission?" She forthwith gave the answer very emphatically, "No, I have been quite successful. I have lighted the psychic Fire!" Then I recited a few lines of mine composed in Urdu and rendered them in English. The refrain is: "This candle of Love has been lit," and the other couplet is: "In this world which is full of sorrow, pain and grief I have been made to drink the wine of Delight." The refrain is by another religious Urdu poet. The Mother fully approved of this and remarked, "That's it." After that, personally, a great roadblock which had arrested my sadhana was removed and I saw humanity's supramental evolution ensured without a shadow of doubt.

On the preceding night I had seen a motor boat sailing rapidly through a wide blue ocean with curling waves crested with white foam. I was so exhilarated that I exclaimed, "This is the ocean of Ananda." Someone else in the boat said, "What if you get drowned in it?" I replied cavalierly, "The pain will be only for five minutes." The notable feature of this experience is that the ocean was more vivid and concrete than any observed by my physical eyes. The Mother's unequivocal affirmation comes as a refreshing contrast to what the poet Iqbal has written in an invocation addressed to the supreme Deity:

If, O Lord, thou dost not feel affronted, then I might say that this saltpetre¹ world of thine is not favourable for the seed of aspiration.

For many lives the human stuff has to be churned, then only one soul with the divine discontent is born.

Well, if during this period our soil has been made fertile for the blossoming of the flame of aspiration, the achievement wonderfully opens before us the Sunlit Path.

RAVINDRA KHANNA

¹ Land covered with saltpetre is absolutely barren. Iqbal being the poet of Lahore knew it because the land near Lahore is barren though rich in this mineral.

BEYOND

To be good is to be dull,
 Evil is a vivacity of Hell.
 Nature is neither good nor evil,
 It is simple and wild and beautiful;
 But Man by his fall is greater than Nature,
 A growing Godhead of the future.

A. VENKATARANGA

**MANMOHAN GHOSE ON SRI AUROBINDO,
TAGORE AND HIMSELF IN 1894-98
FROM LETTERS TO RABINDRANATH TAGORE**

October 24, 1894,

C/o Rajnarayan Bose, Baidyanath, Deoghar.

AUROBINDA is anxious to know what you think of his book of verses,¹ but I have explained to him how busy you are just now; and that you will write later when you have a little more leisure to do justice to his book. I myself think that he is possessed of considerable powers of language and a real literary gift,—but he is lacking in stuff and matter, perhaps in warmth of temperament. But those pieces on Parnell,² consisting of fine philosophical reflections, show, I think, that he might do great things. Unfortunately he has directed (or rather misdirected) all his energies to writing Bengali poetry. He is at present engaged on an epic (inspired, I believe, by Michael Madhusudan) on the subject of Usha and Aniruddha.

Dacca College, Dacca, Oct. 17th, 1898.

My brother is just now at Baidyanath (he has just published a volume of poems at Baroda)³ and perhaps I may persuade him to come down to Calcutta to make your acquaintance and also to see some other delightful people in Calcutta....Both my brothers seem to be better off than me, as regards leisure and peace of mind, in the service of Indian princes...

I have read the *Paroshpathor*⁴ several times again, and am never tired of it—it seems to have soul-echoes of endless haunting beauty.

Dacca College, Dacca,

Many many thanks indeed for your kind letter with all the warm and cordial things you say about my poems. You cannot think how much I value your simple and sincere words of praise. I feel sure that if there is anyone competent to know and criticise about poetry (whether in English or in Bengali) it is yourself, and your praise is doubly precious and encouraging to me as coming from so distinguished and experienced a master of the art of writing verse and the foremost living genius of my country.

¹ *Songs to Myrtilla and Other Poems*. This edition of 1894 (not 1895, as generally believed) was printed for private circulation only and contained a Latin quotation from Virgil with the inscription, "To my brother Manmohan Ghose these poems are dedicated." (Editor)

² "Charles Stewart Parnell 1891" and "*Hic jacet*, Glasnevin Cemetery" (Editor)

³ This must be *Urvashi: A Poem*, which is usually thought to have come out in 1896, but which this letter dates to 1898. The word "poems", however, is puzzling. (Editor)

⁴ A poem of Tagore's which Sri Aurobindo also rated highly. (Editor)

What you say about the *lyrical* quality in my verse, I feel must be true, as it has been a distinctly conscious aim with me. I am so glad you think that all the poems in the selection are good ones. I think I may flatter myself that I made a very careful and conscientious selection, admitting nothing unless it was good *both* in *idea* and *execution*—at least so good as *I* have power to make it. There are two or three however which had to be omitted for want of space, and which will appear, I think in the autumn, in Elkin Matthews' new venture, *The Garland of New Poetry by Various Writers*.

THE BLACK PANTHER

SOMBRE is the midnight
 In the deep forests of Ujjain,
 Where sidling moon's light
 And fire-flies faintly shine.

The temple-gong now sounds,
 And a vast silence softly creeps
 Over long mountain-bounds,
 And settles over dim steeps.

From his secret moonless den,
 The sleek sly Panther black
 Crawls out, and looks again
 Across the gloomy forest-track.

His eyes blaze like green glass,
 He is full of swift ire;
 Fell violence his body flashes,
 He rushes mad with desire.

This is his nocturne through all ages,
 In all the forests of our sphere!
 With monster-eyes he gazes,
 While Beauty and Innocence stare.

The black Terror is abroad now,
 O Fawns of golden morn, awake!
 Birds of vigil are on the silver bough,
 Your age-long slumber forsake.

THE FUTURE OF ENGLISH TEACHING

MAY I share some of my thoughts with fellow-teachers on a subject that is getting to be important and on which we need to pool all our resources? It affects not only our survival but also whether our work is to have a measure of significance which it has so far, on the whole, lacked.

There will no doubt be different approaches to the subject. I am putting forward only one, not that it is the only one. Simply, the Indo-Anglian traffic or terrain needs to be broadened a bit. It is not wholly a question of survival, but of defining, in altered circumstances, our function, the very *raison d'être*. What we do arises out of what we are. And what are we? A set of prestigious parasites, we have been content to enjoy absurd privileges without doing much good to anyone. Circumstances have changed and the old pose of barren superiority cannot go on indefinitely. Unfortunately, even after the British Raj is no more, our English literature programmes have continued in the same old way. It needs no ghost from the grave to tell us that, whether at the primary or at the post-graduate level, there is something rotten about the state of English studies in India. A few lucky ones no doubt manage to escape; some even teach and publish abroad, the dream of every brown boy at home. Still, generally speaking, we have resigned ourselves to the role of the Outsider or the self-exile; else suppliers of footnotes to western scholarship and attitudes. There is little that is genuine about what we read, teach or write, no 'creation of thought', as Tagore had lamented over half a century ago. Individually and collectively, we are all guilty.

As it is, few Indians have tried—fewer had the courage or the qualification—to present a worthwhile critique of Western humanities or of English and European literatures. One of our major challenges has gone by default.¹ At the 1941 Lucknow Conference Professor Amaranatha Jha spoke the plain truth: "The correlation of Western and Hindu canons of criticism is a task which can be performed only by the scholars of English working in this country." It is better not to ask how far that task has been performed or about the quality of the performance.

As for acceptability, that has of course rested with Western approval or imprimatur. From Tagore to R. K. Narayan and Nirad C. Chaudhuri, the reputations were made in England. On the other hand, a good deal of so-called Indian Response to Western Literature has been, till the other day, chauvinsitic and rhetorical rather than critical or sensitive. One could almost say that a good case—for a rooted, relevant criticism—has been spoiled by too much bad pleading.

One way to broaden the horizon and ensure the future of English studies would be towards what is called World Literature or Comparative Literature. The criteria of World or Comparative Literature are not easy to fix. Is comparison at all possible? The comparative method and discipline are not without pitfalls and temptations. Else

¹ See "We shall review European civilization entirely from the standpoint of Indian thought and knowledge."—Sri Aurobindo, "The Ideal of the Karmayogin", Centenary Edition of *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p 20

one could arrive at Enlightenment by wading through encyclopaedias.

All the same our English literature courses can and should be given this wider look, at least to free us from an abject dependence on English literature. What know they of English literature who only English literature know? In this respect the Jadavpur University has been a trail-blazer. And what Jadavpur has done we all have to do sooner or later. Only we should guard ourselves against some of the limitations of that model or experiment. Naturally, most of the staff were recruited from Eng. Lit., often with a dash of Am. Lit. But it would be difficult to call them experts. (It is not easy to be an expert in such a vast field.) Not many have a really dependable knowledge of more than one culture, language or literature; sometimes, perhaps, not even of one. At the same time Jadavpur's *ci-devant* bias for the decadent and the Symbolists made it a little suspect. As for the students, they are probably not the cream of the campus. In any case, other Indian universities have hesitated to take them in. But their *Journal* is certainly one of the best in the country, an ample recompense.

With whatever modification the Jadavpur experiment has to be tried elsewhere, if not everywhere. Since a separate department may not be immediately feasible, we have to make do with the existing English faculty. But in universities with an 8-paper Honours course, it should not be too difficult to restrict, at the M.A. level, English literature to only four papers (but stiff papers). The rest could be broken into: i) Indian Aesthetics and the Foundations of Comparative Literature/Criticism; ii) Western Classics; iii) Modern Western Masterpieces; and iv) Indo-Anglian Literature (or Indian Writing in English). This is a tentative suggestion and does not rule out variations. In most cases a dose of regional literature will do no one any harm. In fact, comparing one Indian literature with another is also comparative literature. After all, not every one of us is going to find himself immortalised among western critics; whereas the scope for re-assessing the regional literatures and setting new trends is unlimited. A few will surely breakthrough; but the majority might cultivate the home-ly acres to advantage. The point is, even they need to be better trained.

I referred earlier to Indian aesthetics. This will mean for most of us Sanskrit aesthetics (though it should not exclude Persian or older Tamil). A familiarity with concepts is always useful. And a clarification, including comparison with their western counterparts, or such concepts as *vak*, *rasa*, *anubhava*, *alaukika*, *sadharamakarana*, *anayaparatantara*, *sahrdaya*, *santa*, *dhvani*, *pratibha*, *tanmayibhavana*, etc., will profit everyone. It will improve not only understanding but communication. Above all, it will help to root us in the racial memory and provide a continuity to our studies. Here the need for translation is not yet over. At a higher level of abstraction such key terms as *atman*, *buddhi* and *samadhi* have no adequate equivalents in either English or the European languages, because the concepts are wanting. But the point must be made clearly, Sanskrit aesthetics is not a cure-all. It will not turn us, immediately and automatically, into infallible critics. (One must admire A.K. Ramanujan the way he has made the ancient texts come alive. A salute is also due to Krishna Chaitanya for trying to relate the old insights to present realities. Old insights, insofar as they are only

old, cannot be adequate for the vastly different experiences and expressions in a post-industrial, disinherited time like ours today. Yet the difference in attitude, life-style and expression, between the past and the present, is not the last word or the heart of the matter. In spite of appearances, the human situation remains more or less the same. Else the older works of art would not have been alive (except as social documents). Works of art are witness to a beyonding inherent in the human perception and imagination. Incidentally, the question has to be faced, why the Indian aestheticians speak so little or nothing about the imagination. The unity and self-transcendence of human culture, the sensitivity with which we unite opposites—*enantiodromia*, to use the mediaeval phrase—may be our final strategy against the disvalues of disinheritance. He alone sees who sees all things in himself, as himself. Or is this too, too metaphysical?

We have referred to Sanskrit aesthetics. But it is not one thing. To mention only a few schools or varieties: Vedantic, Samkhya, Buddhist, Saiva-Tantric, Yoga, Vaishnava, etc. Each has its own emphasis or approach. While distinguishing among these varied approaches, one might single out three for special mention: i) the free self as the delight self in and out of time; ii) the desire-soul and the true soul (a being within being, as Shelley put it); and iii) the Witness Self, *śakṣi puruṣa*, at once witness and relisher of experience.

As for the formulas of visualization, the Buddhist *sadhanmalas* offer a mine of information, suggestive of the traditional doctrine of creativity from above and within: the Real, the Idea and the Form or the phenomenon. In brief, of the priority of the Mind as maker, *formateur*.

Let us mention some possible fields of application, which will be at once a test and an opportunity for the critic. The *Mahabharata*, according to Rabindranath, is unique in world literature, not only because of the marvellous variety of human characters, great and small, but because of the ease with which it carries within its capaciousness all kinds of speculations about ethics, politics and philosophy. One has only to think of the *Bhagavad-Gita* or the Santi Parva. One can hardly imagine the Homeric epics burdened with Socratic dialogues.

Talking of the epics, how many are aware of the *Ramayana's* larger design, the human, cosmic and the redemptive levels? The mythic dimensions of the poem demand that we keep in view the fact that Rama, born without a human father, is united with Sita, *ayonija*, daughter of Mother Earth. In other words, here is the primeval union of Heaven and Earth. The mythic union will last only for a while; and, the divine design fulfilled, Rama will return to Heaven and Sita to the Earth.

Turning to western literature it may be pointed that there are levels of poetic seriousness not known in Arnold's dictionary. In any case, to call poetry a criticism of life is not very critical. Innocent of anthropological evidence, Arnold was without any idea of poetry as ontology vision, the institution of intuition, on which archaic Vedic poetry is firmly based. And this points to quite another way of seeing, knowing and being. Arnold had no doubt his own idea of magical poetry, but it falls short of

poetry as prayer and incantation, as *mantra*.

We hear these days about the language of poetry being the language of paradox. But very little about the reason why. One reason for the paradox must be, as the modern theory about complementarity suggests, that that alone is real which contains its opposite. Reality is a paradox, and so is poetry, its lamp and mirror. As the Nasa-diya Sukta shows, describing in matchless language the birth of Being out of Non-Being, from the earliest times down to the Zen masters, the contemplatives bear witness to the fact that "The now wherein God made the world is as near this time as the now I am speaking this moment". The Sanskrit use of negatives is another sign of making positive assertions through apparently negative statements: *aditi*, *advaita*, *amṛta*, the un-bounded, the non-dual, the im-mortal. Dante is not the only authority for multiple or polysemous interpretations of literature. In the Jagannatha Temple, at Puri, Sri Chaitanya is reported to have given, offhand, eighteen interpretations of a Vaishnava text, a feat worthy of an ex-logician.

Among other areas of inquiry would be hymnology: the mediaeval Latin lyrics and our own bhakta or *santa* poetry. As for the rich store of tribal poetry, except perhaps for Sitakanta Mahapatra, the de-tribalised tribe of teachers of English in India do not seem to have given it much thought. Another happy hunting ground for the sensitive Indian scholar would have been, one thinks, Romantic poetry. But while we have been romantic about the romantics, critical evaluation has been wanting. The subjective self was a *donnés* of the romantic imagination. Here the age-old doctrine of self or consciousness offered an immediate advantage, which we have been slow to seize. When Northrop Frye tells us that "the notion of the inwardness of creative power is inherently revolutionary" there is nothing to prevent us from relating it to the vision and tradition of the Vedic poetry or, say, Aurobindean poetics. A still more significant area where Indian experience could be of some help is tragedy or 'beyond tragedy'. Why not pit Abhinavagupta with Aristotle and see what results from such an encounter? Thanks to the double—or is it triple?—metatheatre theory of *karma*, *adr̥ṣṭa* and reincarnation, the Indian psyche has a mechanism, or more than one mechanism, to contain the tragic schedule. Lear and Hamlet may not be exactly gay, as Yeats loved to think; but here there is no cause for tears. Nor in Sita's final invocation to Mother Earth to take her back. It is a little sad that no Indian critic has attempted to study western tragedies, old and new, from an Indian point of view.

Or perhaps some have. Since we are not a community, we could not care less for colleagues, dead or living. And the way we have neglected the elders! The callousness, better to call it ignorance, cannot be to our credit. Ananda Coomaraswamy had a theory of tradition far more impressive and wide-ranging than the one for which Eliot has canvassed. How many of us know that reading Coomaraswamy's little essay on Dante Eliot had called himself a provincial by comparison? Though not on par, Tagore and Sri Aurobindo had a not inconsiderable view of poetry. Neither has received much critical attention. (Both have received the wrong kind of un-critical attention.) K. C. Bhattacharya and Mysore Hiriyana, mature theoreticians and

excellent expositors of knotty matters, live in limbo. Brajendranath Seal, polymath and comparatist, is almost wholly unknown. His *New Essay in Criticism* has been out of print for well over seventy years.

Other areas of darkness are no less revealing, especially with regard to the History of Ideas, the philosophy of form(s) and semantics. Few of us have passable knowledge of the arts other than that of plagiarising the modish western literary critics. Your most obedient servant, sir. This is bound to make us—as it has—hopelessly servile, shaky, if not downright silly. If an Indian *Dunciad* were to be written, many of us would find honourable mention.

But when we plead for a greater rootedness as well as for spreading our branches far and wide, it is not for purposes of personal or national propaganda. Culture is not a commodity and to brag about the superiority of one's own is the mark of small minds. The task of education, a forever unfinished task, is to enlarge awareness, not to seek elbow room for one's pet and perishable notions. Unless we wish to be victims of the tyranny of the present and the first person singular, values exist as well as co-exist. Every one is entitled to courtesy. Art is a reminder of unity, relatedness and a beyonding. In the words of Tagore: "The fact that we exist has its truth in the fact that everything else also exists; and the I am in me crosses its finitude whenever it realizes itself in Thou art." In the future towards which we are willynilly moving, the dichotomy between the East and the West is going to be dead as the Dodo. Today there is neither the East nor the West but only the Centre for such as care or dare to find it in themselves and the world's unborn soul.

Life is more precious than literature; culture more than academic criticism; wisdom than opinion. Along with our literary studies we need a philosophy of culture and history which shall place our love's labour in the context of the mind of tomorrow, the oecumenical village, the global imagination. If freedom and fullness is what we seek—what else is there to seek?—it can only be freedom from the limits of the ego and conditioning, an expansion of consciousness into the true world of man. It may be doubted how far and how long this can be done in a language that is really not our own. What makes matters worse is that we depend on western scholars to explain even our own literature, arts, their themes and symbols. Let us be partners in a common pursuit and not hangers-on and page boys.

In re-defining our *raison d'être* and an assumption of added responsibility these provisos will be necessary to guarantee professional viability. These alone can give us a sense of purpose where there is none. Not to admit the demand for a world-perspective can be only to prolong the sickness, the weary and unintelligent weight of accumulating trivia. If we read the signs rightly, there is more to be done now than before. Honest, humble, cautiously bold, taller than before, let us do it the way it should be done.

Saraswati expects a little more from the *Angrezi vidvan*.

Let it not be said that when the call came we were found wanting.

SISIRKUMAR GHOSE

DIALOGUES

(Continued from the issue of June 1976)

Synopsis:

The travelling soul now in the form of Oshichi, nurse to the Japanese feudal princess, Fumiko, finds delight in her young and beautiful charge. But when the princess comes of age and is presented at court, Oshichi has unsettling premonitions. These heighten when an infatuated visitor, Lord Ihara, steps forward and asks Fumiko's father for her hand.

Chapter VIII

It was when the days of negotiation for Fumiko's marriage dragged into weeks that misgivings started to flit about like misshapen goblins. No one knew the difficulty for certain, though it was rumoured that Fumiko's father was acting under the impulse of that greed which was so dominant a trait of his nature. Compound his greed with the famous Kitamura pride, and even the old nurse could see through to the heart of the matter. The aging lord had obviously started by making fantastic demands—he had had such a negotiation in mind right from his daughter's birth almost sixteen years ago. Now the emissaries had demurred, and he had taken it as an instant insult to the dignity of himself and his house. In retaliation, Kitamura himself announced that he had sent his own emissaries riding forth from his stronghold with tidings for every noble house in the land. His daughter's hand was up for auction, and he awaited news of suitable bidders.

At this development, the northerners finally admitted defeat and the irretrievable breakdown of all negotiation, packed their mules and wagons, and departed in angry frustration.

In staring, speechless dismay, Fumiko watched the procession of little figures and vehicles wend its way out of the palace fortifications along the dirt road that led into the forest. She was perched in the fork of the peach tree at the furthest corner of her garden from which she could look over the wall, and from which spot she had welcomed her lover a dozen times when life and ecstasy were still within her grasp. But today when she slid down from her seat in the gnarled and venerable tree, Oshichi saw that her face was mask-white, her hands in her kimono sleeves trembled as though with frost, and her eyes were glazed as those of one condemned to death.

It was for such a moment that the gods seemed to have created the older woman. Oshichi took the girl into her arms and held her steady. She breathed warmth into her chilled body and comfort into her paralysed mind and heart. A few minutes later, Fumiko let out a deep, free breath of relief.

“Oshichi,” she said, “Whenever I come to you everything that has gone wrong seems to become all right.”

“My dear, dear child.... Let’s go and sit together quietly then and we shall find that life will truly seem easier. Come, I have made some new puppets—they’re different from the last set and I invented all the characters myself. See? There should be a story to go with them. We can invent that too as we go along. To start with: There was once a little old man, very wrinkled and bent with a big wen on the right side of his chin...”

All too gladly, Fumiko gave herself up to the distraction, then fell asleep in Oshichi’s arms like a child of six. It was a place to which she could always revert and which always gave her the same snug mantle of security that she had felt there from the tenderest age. Even for Oshichi, the hours she had spent and continued to spend with her sleeping charge in her arms were those of the greatest bliss, for then she would drift off most easily into the ineffable suspended presence of her great Spirit and the heavens she inhabited, so full as they were of the ideal harmony and multi-coloured beauty she found reflected in the earth around her. Only, in the goddess’s world there was neither blood nor passion, betrayal nor sorrow. Only beauty and perfect peace.

Beyond the small, noble apartment with its two dreaming souls, the world of men marched on in its own terrible way. A suitor arrived at the court and so pleased Fumiko’s father that he accepted him outright—a not surprising outcome—for the young noble, Kogoro, resembled the old man in nature and motivation to such an extent that they could hardly have avoided coming to an instant understanding with each other. Kogoro had come not driven by love but by thirst for revenge, for blood, and for war. He hated the northerner, Ihara, and his princely house with every fibre of his vital being, and now he, as the successful suitor, would not only snatch the cherished princess away from his rival, but would ally with the princess’s father in a war of retribution against one who had “most thoughtlessly presumed too much.” These were the words the two used to announce to the court their agreement, the betrothal, and their immediate aggressive intention.

But Ihara himself did not lack supporters at his beloved’s court. By midnight they had a messenger on the road galloping northwards at full speed with news of Kitamura’s treachery. Of all those in the castle, the only two who remained unaware of the wheels of intrigue were the princess and her nurse. All the news that came to them was the formal announcement that Fumiko was to be wed in a week to a prince of whom she had never heard. Upon being told her father’s decision, the girl sank like a fallen flag to the floor. Oshichi quickly hustled out the courtiers who had come with the pronouncement, and then gathered the white, inanimate bundle into her arms. Poor, fated child, she thought. Why is it that beauty and perfection so derange this world of men that it must go instantly mad till the offensive intrusion has been shackled and stamped to death? Why could they not have looked at Fumiko and simply admired her as they admire a red and orange maple in autumn, or a purple iris reflected in a pool of golden carp? “Ah, but why should I ask the foolish question,

even of myself?" she mused on. "Trees and flowers cost nothing. The great Spirit makes them again and again infinitely and exacts no fee. But human beauty? That is taken by men as they take a chest of gold coins or a prince's throne. It is worth its weight in blood..."

The old woman's musings were interrupted by Fumiko opening her eyes as she lay in Oshichi's arms. Still neither spoke though the minds of both hovered around the same thoughts. What of the vows the two lovers had taken on their last night together? How was Fumiko to honour them, for the couple had sworn each other to lifelong fidelity, celibacy, or death? But even after many minutes of reflection neither could articulate her thoughts or her unthinkable questions. Nor could they stir, or weep, or drift off into sleep. It was as though time had captured them in a void where air-tight walls of shock and despair blocked off all consciousness of time, movement, and sound.

Fumiko's marriage never took place. In less than a week Ihara's forces stood within striking distance of the castle, and the combined armies of Kitamura and his ally, Kogoro, mobilized hastily to meet them. The day of the decisive battle, a skeleton force remained to guard the castle while all the rest streamed forth to war.

The day proved to be one of the most beautiful of late summer. Clouds scudded across the sky, their shadows gliding over the land and undulating over the castle walls. The first leaves had begun to turn, and the breeze had already become brisk. Like a stone, Oshichi sat in the small garden of Fumiko's apartment and watched it all. She saw the great Spirit everywhere. Yet she felt as surely that somewhere in the bowels of the earth a dragon was preparing to rise and swallow the goddess and her whole perfect creation. "What would happen when these two great powers confronted each other?" she idly wondered. "Would man slip between the two to his own private doom, or would he be snapped up by one or the other, god or demon, and face eternal thralldom in this their game that seemingly, remorselessly went on forever?" The questions were all in the external mind, for inside she was as still as a sea of glass. There the goddess held sway with all her power and she permitted no tremor or movement, till even Oshichi's external mind set aside its torrent of questions without answers, and fell silent.

A small distance away the princess too waited, as immobile and as lovely as a doll in her gold embroidered court robes and elaborately dressed hair adorned with jewelled pins and combs. Why had she gone to all the trouble to dress herself this way today as all the castle marched out to war? She didn't know. An intuition had come to her—that was all—an intuition that it would be a special day. Perhaps the day that her love would come to an agreement with her father rather than fight him? Perhaps the day that the hated upstart baron, Kogoro, to whom they had betrothed her would die? Perhaps...but all were wild miraculous dreams—she sensed it herself. The truth lay elsewhere. The truth...And then she knew. She knew because the intuition came to her once again and her intuition never played her false. With slow deliberation she turned to her nurse:

"Oshichi, I have just learnt something. This morning I am going to die."

"My child—"

"No, I am not raving. I know. I know for certain. But death, Oshichi, I have never really thought of it before. Now, all at once I am afraid! What will happen to me? Will it pain? Shall I be in agony forever?"

Through the tears that lurked in her eyes, Oshichi replied, "No, my dearest one. If you hold your heart firm as a high stone cliff within you, you shall resist all pain. Soon afterwards you shall pass into a perfect silence where you must remain by your own will till your being remembers love and beauty, light and harmony. Whereupon you shall pass into repose and bliss. But at no instant must you weaken and recall torment or fear, that suffering or betrayal or hardship that you leave behind here. For then your spirit may linger and your earthly agony cling about it. No, my child, my beautiful Fumiko, flee from all this like a homing dove released into the heavens and never glance back."

The words had flowed from Oshichi in a steady stream and given forth a knowledge she did not know she possessed, for nothing of what came from her had she ever articulated before. Now she looked into the princess's eyes not with tears, but with a firm strength that tolerated no weakening. Nor did Fumiko prove unequal, but gazed back unflinchingly.

"Could I not think even once of you, Oshichi?" she said at last. "For you are the only one I truly love. You are the only one who has been everything to me. Ihara has been but a dream—you are reality."

"No, dearest. For what I am here is nothing. It is there in the peace and repose and bliss that we all truly live. And it is there that we shall find each other—"

She would have said more, though perhaps in the divine economy of things more was not really needed, but froze where she stood. For suddenly she perceived a helmeted head and then a great, elaborately armoured figure rise over the familiar spot on the back wall of the garden. Ihara had come for his bride.

He did not find her unready. With the stately grace of an empress, she disengaged herself from her aged companion, and slowly crossed the garden to face her master, the sleeves of her vermilion court kimono trailing in the breeze like banners of victory. He greeted her with no warmth or passion, no mark, even, of a lover's recognition. She saw before her, instead, a demon as cold as the steel in his hand, and she rose to the occasion. Unmoved, she looked for no mercy and received none. The love affair was over, the meetings, the vows—all were over. The only thing that remained was the demoniac end, when a man who has had everything taken from him has nothing left either within or without himself but his demon self—the part of him that utters dynastic curses, that walks and haunts and slays even after death. The part that wanders the lower worlds forever finding no solace for it belongs to no god and has no haven. The part that Oshichi had told Fumiko she must leave behind uncompromisingly if she was not to suffer. Impassively now, the princess looked into the face of the man she had loved and heard him say,

"I have come for you."

"I am ready, my lord."

He went on as though he had not heard her.

"I have lost everything. Half our samurais already lie dead behind the forest. But vengeance has not altogether escaped me. There also, your father, the great Kitamura, lies crushed beneath his horse. Only that unspeakable pig, your future 'husband,' still runs before the fury of my sword. Now, with a small band of stalwarts, I have come for you and everything you possess before he should think to lay his hands upon either. The castle is already burning at the western gate. The fields are ravaged, your servitors and vassals are piled in heaps along the castle corridors, all dead, Fumiko, all dead. Oh, don't worry, I am not a selfish man. When I am sure that you and all that belongs to you has preceded me, I too shall die upon my own sword. The only difference is that some like you are destined from birth for the Sun Goddess. Some like me are destined for hell. Our steps are turned towards one or the other from the first day we stand. Our fate is stamped into our hearts, into our faces, our every expression from the moment we first open our eyes. And now I have arrived—the gates yawn before me. Farewell, my angel. We part forever, for I wouldn't wish you to follow where I must go."

His last words were a whisper, as she shuddered wordlessly against the impact of his sword and sank to the ground with the hilt pressing against her obi.

Oshichi saw no more. She did not see her mistress lying on the ground like a magnificent flower that seemed accidentally to have been dropped by some thoughtless giant in passing. She did not see Ihara set fire to the rich, immaculate apartment before leaping away over the garden wall. She saw nothing as she staggered from the scene of desolation. Nothing as she wandered down passages, corridors and pavilions smouldering, plundered, strewn with dead—already bereft of elegance, power and life—already abandoned by the beauty and presence of the goddess. Miraculously untouched, unmolested and unaccompanied, she reached the eastern gate, the one most familiar to her, which now stood open, splintered and unguarded. Past the bodies of the guards she silently shuffled, down the now deserted road, into the forest, the fiercely burning castle behind her, pyre of the one who had been the centre of her life for the last fifteen years of an otherwise unrelieved existence in servitude.

(To be continued)

BINA BRAGG

PSYCHE

A PLAY IN VERSE

(EUNICE and DAPHENE just gone out with THERME. PSYCHE walks about getting things ready for EROS' coming. When she is finished she goes and sits by the window. Enter EROS.)

EROS: Psyche.

PSYCHE: Oh, it is you! I did not think
That you would come so soon.

EROS: The sun has set.
The night has fallen and the stars return
Each to its place.

PSYCHE: How strange they seem to me.
So bright and lovely and so—purposeless;
So strangely unexpected and yet so real,
As you and I are real. Come, sit by me. [EROS sits next to her on
the window-seat.]

I wonder do they wonder why they are
Or only twinkle? Surely they must think
And wonder who has set them there and why.
EROS: But they are not like us, they have no need
To be more than they are. They are content
To keep their ancient places and to shine.

PSYCHE: But how terribly far apart they are,
How dark the space between them; you would think
They would grow lonely sometimes and would try
To touch each other. But even double stars
That circle round each other with streams of fire
Flowing between them like great out-reaching arms
Are still more than a million miles apart
Or so the Babylonian wise-men say
And I can believe them for we, like double stars
Revolve around each other and streams of fire
Flow rapturously between us but we remain
A million miles apart. The lonely night
Invades even our most intense embrace.
Its empty blackness is the terrible smile
Of one who mocks our love.

EROS: Such sombre thoughts.
Where is my happy Psyche, whose bright smile

EROS: Blackguard!
 PSYCHE: Put me down, I say.
 EROS: Not till I've locked you in my dungeon cell
 Where you will pay for your misdeeds, my dear.
 PSYCHE: Oh, please.
 EROS: Forgiveness is not easily bought.
 Your kisses are worthless and the price is high.
 [*They go out.*]

SCENE FIVE

[*Later*]
 PSYCHE: He sleeps. I almost think I love him most
 When he lies here beside me fast asleep
 And I can feel him near without the strain
 Of love's feverish reaching out to seize
 Still more of the beloved. Now my love
 Envelops him in folds of velvet peace.
 I'll go stand by the window. But what's this?
 The lamp. I had forgotten. But it is
 Not lit at all. [*She reaches out to it*] Apollo! It is lit!
 Who would have thought—there—did he see? Asleep.
 It certainly is covered cunningly.
 I wonder if he saw it there before?
 I'll put it somewhere less conspicuous.
 Under the bed? There by the window? No.
 It's not my lamp. If he asks me what it is
 I'll simply tell the truth. Besides, it is
 Most cunningly covered. Not one ray of light
 Can sneak out through a carelessly sewn seam.
 I wish she hadn't been so careful. I wish
 There was the slightest seam, enough to let
 A single slender ray fall on his face,
 If just by accident he moved his face
 Just where the ray was falling. And then if I
 Just happened to look at him at that same time
 It wouldn't be my fault if I should see.
 Besides, he'd never know. But I'd have fun.
 I'd ask him, "Darling, have you always had
 That mole on your left cheek?" and all enraged
 He'd cry out, "How do you know about that mole?
 You've broken your vow!" But I would solemnly swear
 That I was innocent, but that I could see

Even in darkness, even with both eyes closed,
 So there was no use trying to hide from me
 His beauty or his mole and I would laugh
 And he would laugh with me. But no such luck:
 It is a hand-sewn miracle. But if
 I happened to brush against it, on my way
 To sit there by the window and if one ray,
 A single slender ray, slipped suddenly out
 He could not say that I had tried to make
 A single slender ray fall on his face. [*A pause*]
 And what if I uncovered the lamp myself?
 I hardly could be blamed. She put it here,
 Not me. It wouldn't be my fault if I
 Should lift the cloth a little and let one ray
 A single slender ray fall on his face.
 He has no right to hide himself from me.
 I worship him. He knows I worship him.
 Even the gods appear to those on earth
 Who worship them, but when will he show to me
 The form I worship? How long can I live—
 As I now live, hedged in by doubt and fear—
 Like Eunice said. How long will it go on,
 The ceaseless nights and days? Perhaps until
 He goes away forever, leaving me
 To rot here in my loneliness. Oh why?
 Why does he torture me? Eunice is right
 I have nothing to lose and everything to gain
 I can't wait any longer! Now. At last. [*She uncovers the lamp*]
 How beautiful he is, how utterly
 Entirely beautiful. No man could be
 So beautiful. One being alone could be
 So fair: it is Love himself, the god of Love,
 Eros, the son of Aphrodite—she
 Alone could bear such beauty. I have lain
 With Love himself and laughed with him and done
 Such things while he was near—and in this house:
 The house of Love. I will surely have to do
 Long penance for my sins in Tartarus.
 But I have lain with Love and Tartarus
 With all its tortures could never take away
 The benedictive touch and special grace
 Of intimate acceptance I have felt

While I have lain with Love. It is too dark.
I want to see him clearly, all of him
And gaze upon his beauty.

EROS: Psyche, who?

Oh Psyche!

PSYCHE: I have wakened him. [*falling at his feet*] Oh, Lord,
Do not be angry with me.

EROS: And how could I
Be angry with my pretty little child?
But you have broken your vow and looked on me,
Not in the light that I had hoped to bring,
The light of heaven, but in earth's poor light,
Its pale distorting light that drives away
All truth and beauty. I must leave you now.

PSYCHE: Oh no, Lord, divine Eros, stay, forgive
Your disobedient child. What I have done
I did for love of you.

EROS: Yes, child, I know.
This is the very image of earth's love,
That over-ardent smoke-polluted flame
That flickers as it is burning. I must go,
But not for retribution, to chastise
A breaker of the law, but, as the light
Of moon and stars dissolves in the sun's harsh glare,
And no more can be seen from earth, so I
From this light must retire and not return.
[*Enter ZEPHYRUS*]

ZEPHYRUS: It has happened then?

EROS: Yes.

ZEPHYRUS: She could not obey
One simple prohibition.

PSYCHE: Zephyrus,
Speak to him. Make him stay.

ZEPHYRUS: The deed is done.
The wheel has turned. We do not act like men,
Driven by idle fancies, but obey
The laws that were established from of old;
For in obedience is sovereignty.

PSYCHE: Oh no! Love! Love, stay! Love! I will die! Love, stay!
[*She falls down unconscious as EROS and ZEPHYRUS go out.*]
[*Enter SPIRITS distractedly from all sides*]

SPIRITS:

Now she has lost him!
Lost him forever!
Will she regain him?
Never! never!

Why must she lose him?
It was her sisters:
Hearts that are twisted
Hoping to twist hers.

But she allowed them;
Opened the portals:
Such is the woeful
Weakness of mortals:

Pure in themselves, they
Touch what is tainted
And with its painful
Pigments are painted.

Now she has lost him!
Lost him forever!
Will she regain him?
Never! never! never!

(To be continued)

PETER HEEHS

EUROPE 1974

A TRAVELOGUE

9

WE were in a town called Rudesheim. We lingered here to enjoy the beauty of the Rhineland. For this is another beauty-spot of Western Germany.

The river Rhine flows through the hills. The hills at this place were not rugged or pointed with high peaks but smooth round hills like the hills of the glaciated areas. Through these hills flows the Rhine, the longest and the most beautiful river of Europe. Far away in distant Switzerland the crystalline waters tumble out of some rock and flow down to Basle. Then the river flows through the Black Forest, past Cologne and finally pours itself into the North Sea—a journey of 820 miles. The Rhine was a commercial route before Christ. And Julius Caesar crossed it in 55 B.C. The hills on its banks are full of beautiful castles and fortresses. And each one has a romantic story to tell. We were told stories of the Drachenfels and the cliff where Siegfried slew his dragon. Then there is the Lorelei rock where once lived a beautiful siren who lured the men sailing down the river. There were treacherous noblemen living in some of the castles who taxed all passers-by. From the fissures in the castle-wall bold lovers escaped with their sweethearts. Throughout the fifty-mile drive along the river we were told fairy tales. . . The river is full of many kinds of fish, Salmon and Bream and Carp, Perch and Pike and many others. Holland depends upon the Rhine for its drinking water. As it flows through four countries, Switzerland, France, Germany and Holland, these have joined hands to take precautions against pollution and see to it that the waterway is kept clean, although they say the Rhine is self-cleansing.

At Rudesheim we would spend hours sitting on the riverside, on the benches provided for day-dreamers. Or we would climb the hill nearby on a lift-chair to see the enormous statue of Germania on top. From there one gets a wonderful view of the whole area. The villages around Rudesheim are even more beautiful. There were flowers everywhere and the bushes were cut into beautiful designs or animal shapes. After the busy industrial city of Frankfurt, Rudesheim was a pleasant change. It was quiet and green and the townspeople went about the place singing folk songs arm in arm. And our hotel had a resounding name, *Darmstadterhof*. We had read Heine and Schiller, in the original and in translation, but never realised that the Rhineland could be so beautiful.

We were so engrossed with the fairy-tales our escort was telling us through the mike that we hardly noticed that we had arrived at the country's capital Bonn. A suburban university town, Bonn is still trying to make itself worthy of being called a capital. Construction work is going on everywhere. The old university buildings are very beautiful and of a style of their own. We were also taken round the area where the governmental buildings are and the Diplomatic enclave. There were some remark-

able buildings but nothing very special. Bonn is still creating itself anew. The capital of the Federal Republic of Germany, Bonn has more than one bee in its bonnet, in spite of its calm and sylvan look. Indeed it looks more like a woodland retreat than the strident metropolis of a great and prosperous country. It has problems to solve. One of the most important is the question of the two Germanies and the two Berlins. Feelers are being sent out from time to time from either side. Yet the obstacles in the way are still very great, and nothing seems to happen. The other worry is NATO. West Germany, like France, does not naturally wish to hang on to the apron strings of the United States for its defence. At the same time it does not yet feel strong enough to declare its complete independence in this matter. But Bonn is not merely concerned with its security. It has been actively interested in building up a "European Community". The ideal of course would be to have a United States of Europe; that now seems to be a vain chimera, for the cleavage between East and West in matters of political and economic ideology is too deep to bridge for quite some time to come.

There is a saying that, while others work to live, the Germans live to work. Yet the picture is not quite like that today. Rather with the high scales of pay and all the protection and facilities provided by the "Economic Miracle", the German workers have become a bit lax. There have been complaints that a lot of things have to be sent back to the workshop before they are fit to be displayed in the shop windows. But the worker's dream has come true. The worker's dream is to become a Bourgeois, a Mittelstand. In Germany he has become one. Every third worker has a car, they say. Not that the pride of work has altogether left. Some people opine that it is the shortage of men that has caused a certain fall in the excellence of the products turned out. The war is probably responsible for this. Not only have the war wounds been healed and the dirt and debris cleared, but also the picture is that of a rich and prosperous country. The Germans seem to be sailing gaily along in the stream of rising prosperity. The five-day working week has come to stay. They work hard for five days from Monday to Friday, relax and get sun-burnt during the week-end on a sea beach or river bank or wherever some water can be found and whenever the sun shines. Then they come back home smarting under the pain. When all the places in Germany are filled up during the week-ends and holidays, the Germans overflow to Italy and France and Switzerland. Throughout our travel we found streams of cars with either a boat tied on to the top or a caravan trailing behind. And we passed by innumerable caravan colonies.

Arranged marriages and marriage advertisements we thought were India's specialities. Whoever thought that it existed in Germany too? There appear not one or two but several columns of marriage advertisements in the weeklies and the monthly magazines. The Second World War is responsible for this. For now there is a tremendous shortage of men, in a one-to-three ratio. Seven million died in the last War. Lonely elderly women and many a wealthy widower seek company. And these people advertise in the papers. With this development business sharks too have appeared on the scene. They exploit these unsuspecting men and women. Some have

been actually caught by the police.

Apart from being the capital of the Federal Republic of Germany, Bonn has another great distinction of being the birthplace of Ludwig van Beethoven, the greatest of the German composers. The house where he was born (1770) miraculously escaped bombing. It is a small two-storied house with a tiny garden where one may see a bronze bust of the composer. The house is preserved as a monument, and people go there from all over the world. Inside are valuable souvenirs: one can see the very first piano that Beethoven used and the last one too. A very peculiar thing about his first piano is that the half notes are white, which is the reverse of what we have on the modern piano. At the age of 22 he left Bonn and by 1792 he was in Vienna studying under Haydn and other masters. Beethoven started composing when he was only twelve. Unfortunately he was getting deaf by the time he was 28, and was stone deaf when he was 45. The original scores were bought by kings and queens at a towering price. As he could not hear anything he always kept note-books handy so that the other person could write what he wanted to say to Beethoven. These note-books (about 400) were edited and published on his bicentenary five years ago.

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Cologne was our next stop. It was another Frankfurt. As everyone knows, it is again one of the greatest industrial cities of West Germany. The rise to its present position as a great industrial centre is, however, nothing new. Cologne dates back to Roman times. Colonia Agrippiensis was a busy trading centre and favourite haunt of the Roman tradesmen. During the middle ages trade and commerce lagged behind in Europe north of the Alps. Trade guilds in the small town or village below the Barons' castle wall produced only the goods that were required by that particular community. The idea of commerce and trade with other communities was absolutely absent. As Venice rose to power beautiful things from the south and east flowed into Europe. Europe had nothing to give in exchange, so it had to pay the Venetian merchants in precious metal. This aroused the masters of the trade guilds who had so far worked peacefully with their apprentices and journeymen. Europe started producing goods for export. But sending out goods was no easy matter in those days. On the land routes were highwaymen. On the sea routes were the pirates. So, some of the great cities of Europe formed the famous Hanseatic League. There were some seventy cities in Germany and outside that became members of this League. The goods were brought together and sent out in caravans under armed escort. On the sea a man-of-war protected the merchant ships. The Hanseatic League made war on the pirates and actually was able to make the sea and land routes safe. To protect their interests the League even made war on other nations like England and Denmark. Cologne was one of the most powerful members of the Hanseatic League.

If one wants to see the German people in their gay and fun-loving mood, seeing a Festival or a Carnival is a *must*. Carnivals and Festivals are very popular in Germany.

The Cologne Carnival is one of the most spectacular, gay and colourful imaginable. The present form of the celebration started round about the year A.D. 1000. It originally came from the Saturnalia Festival in Rome. The Festival goes on for three or four days. People at this time just let themselves go. All work is stopped for fun and merriment. A fantastic procession is the main attraction. Huge floats on which are staged pantomimes and dancing girls and all fairy things and witches and clowns make the whole show a fantasia. It takes three hours to see the whole procession. For this, wooden stalls are constructed throughout the route and the seats are sold. Even window seats in the houses that line the route are sold and advertised months ahead. Every aspect of life is staged and made fun of. The people go about the place dancing and singing, eating and drinking. They invite known and even unknown guests and give them a drink or a fête. They have at this time masked balls and fancy-dress dances. You see the very heart and soul of the German people. The whole city is turned upside down. The Cologneans talk in Cologne's own peculiar dialect that people from other parts of Germany would not understand leave alone the people of other countries. The Carnival king and his most gorgeous retinue dominate the show. And you must not mind if an unknown person comes and kisses you. The police, they say, keep their eyes shut during these Festival days. When the celebration is over all go to church. There the priest forgives them their sins. We felt like quoting our favourite poet:

O heart that would be saint,
How will you wash the taint
Of your own blood?

(To be continued)

CHAUNDONA AND SANAT K. BANERJI

CONSCIOUSNESS APPROACH TO BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

(Continued from the issue of June 1976)

APPENDIX I

Some Fundamentals of Yoga

MAN at his highest is a mental being. He perceives, knows, judges and wills action through the power of mind. Yoga begins when man awakens to an existence beyond mind, when he senses or feels a greater consciousness operative in the world, when he turns toward and seeks to discover the Divine in himself, in the world or beyond this world. By this quest he grows in consciousness beyond the limitations of normal human nature and lives in a higher plane of existence with a more illumined knowledge, purer vaster love and more powerful will for action. In his initial attempts to contact the Divine, man commonly resorts to prayer. Prayer is a linking of the human will with a higher power, the Divine Will, for the fulfilment of a particular end, *e. g.* knowledge, love, happiness, health, wealth, strength, peace, etc. Prayer can issue from a thought in the mind, an emotion in the heart or from a deeper center in man, the soul, which lies behind the heart and is in direct contact with the Divine. The power of prayer depends on its intensity as well as the sincerity and faith of the seeker. When these three elements are present in good measure, prayer is a far greater power for effectuation than any human endowment

But prayer by its nature is an attempt to harness the Divine for one's own ends. At its highest prayer becomes an aspiration issuing from the soul not for any worldly end but for contact, identification and union with the Divine. At this point yoga begins. Aspiration when it seeks to express itself in one's outer active life leads to consecration. Consecration literally means to make sacred. In yoga this means doing an act as an offering to the Divine and with the Divine as the central reference. Instead of relying on and being moved by the normal human impulses, understanding and will, one seeks contact with the soul deep within and acts from that center with its guidance. In effect one suspends and offers up one's own impulses, feelings, understanding and will-power so that a higher impulsion, truer knowledge and more powerful will can act through one. By this means the seeker gradually comes more in contact with the Divine and the Divine enters into and takes hold of his entire inner life and all his outer circumstances. Consecration leads to complete surrender and communion. Still a man must act in the world. When an act is fully consecrated it brings to bear a far greater power of consciousness than mind or prayer can generate.

The principles discussed in the body of the text are essentially a translation into

mental terms for execution by the mental will of truths which are self-evident on higher planes of existence. Their power for effectuation depends on the development of the man's mind and the concentration of his will. In so far as one resorts to prayer or consecration, these methods grow in power beyond the human level and bring in the dynamism of the higher consciousness.

When an act is consecrated, it is no longer necessary to say that life responds to us. Rather it can be said that the Divine in life responds to the inner effort. The outer life becomes an expression of the inner consecration. Every outer obstacle and difficulty is an indication of an inner element to be worked upon and an inner progress to be made. When one exhausts all one's human capacities and resources in consecrated activity, it is the higher power, the Divine Grace, that takes over. When one refuses to exercise human power of legal or moral right in deference to the Divine, the higher power enters through life and acts far more effectively than man. As the entire inner being is turned towards the Divine and opens to the higher consciousness, the outer life falls under control and all circumstances arrange themselves to aid in one's progress.

APPENDIX II

A Program of Yoga for Business Management

Based on the practise of consecration a program has been developed, tested and proven very effective when applied to modern business institutions. The prerequisite for this program is for one to have established at least a minimum level of consecration in all his daily activities.

I. Program of Consecration

One round of this discipline can be completed in a period of two to four weeks and then repeated at a deeper level of consecration.

1. Consecrate the physical body of the institution, *i.e.* the building, every room, the atmosphere. See them as living things. Mentally recall that all these are manifestations of the Divine. Attempt to make an inner contact with them. Offer them to the service of the Divine. This can be done in one room each day until a full round is complete.
2. Consecrate every piece of furniture, every object, every machine as in 1.
3. Consecrate the organizational hierarchy of the company. Try to contact the deeper levels where all are One and in harmony. See the Divine at the top and within each position.
4. Consecrate every system and subsystem, *e.g.* telephone, mail, accounting, transportation, etc. Before work each morning consecrate these in advance. Then consecrate every call and piece of mail one attends to during the work day.
5. Consecrate every staff member, his personality's strengths and weaknesses, his

professional skills, capabilities and limitations, his private life at home and his relations with staff and management, his interests, enthusiasms, fears, difficulties. This also means a consecration of your attitude, feelings, reactions toward the man. Try to establish a detached disinterested objectivity toward his personality and an awareness of his true inner being.

6. Consecrate in detail the life history of the company—its founding ideals and emergence from previous types of institutions, its founder and builders, every past opportunity which was missed, every mistake, misdeed, misjudgment. Offer gratitude for every opportunity which came and for every progress as well as for every difficulty. See how each difficulty, when overcome, led to a new advance. Look for a trend of strength which can be traced from the company's inception to the present. Look for a weakness which reappears periodically. Consecrate these strengths and weaknesses. Try to contact the inner being of the company, relate to it, identify with it, offer it to the service of the Divine.

7. Consecrate every new possibility for business, every new client and new sale. Offer gratitude.

8. Consecrate the role of money in the institution and every aspect of money exchange, that received and that paid out. Consecrate the company's policies, attitudes, practices in this regard.

9. See the next step which each element of the business should take in order to progress to a higher level. Consecrate those steps.

10. Consecrate every event and activity that occurs in your presence.

11. Enter into personal, silent, conscious relationship with every person, system, object and nourish them by your consciousness.

12. If any staff member takes up the consecration, the response will be greater.

II. Program of Activity

1. Study every employee silently to learn his talents and untapped potentials. Attempt to upgrade each employee to his maximum capacity.

2. Each employee should be conscious of what he contributes and what he receives. Relieve him of any false sense that he gives more than others and/or receives less recognition.

3. Note simple avoidable sources of friction between employees and try to remove them by silent initiative.

4. Set all machinery in perfect, quiet working order.

5. Examine every system to see if it is working at maximum efficiency. Each system is a resource to be fully utilized.

6. See that all outer events such as mail, telephone calls, obligations etc. are handled as quickly as possible. Work for maximum speed of response.

7. Work to increase cleanliness, orderliness, regularity, punctuality, peace, silence etc. even to a small extent.

8. Try to remove areas of secrecy, hiding, etc., where falsehood prevails or which may encourage falsehood.

9. For every outer difficulty or problem, identify the corresponding inner point in the consciousness of management and staff.

10. If the atmosphere is receptive encourage management to initiate a study of the company including employee relations, use of machines and materials and operation of systems. Such a study should place emphasis on the possibilities for positive improvement and greater progress rather than on destructive criticism of others, self-defense or justification of the *status quo*.

(To be continued)

GARRY JACOBS

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HERE is a Sanskrit work on Sri Aurobindo's philosophy, if philosophy it can be called; for what Sri Aurobindo has said about Reality is a direct vision of his vast Spirit of Truth-consciousness expressed through the intellect but in words charged with a light that reveals the Truth. The author of "Sri Aravinda-Darshanam" is truly a master of this most expressive language and has adopted a very lucid and easy style to deal with a difficult subject which is as wide as it is subtle and as intriguing as the language itself in which the book is written.

Although the present-day Indian mind is unfortunately drifting away from its ancient heritage, there are still great lovers of Sanskrit, the inexhaustible treasure-house of Indian wisdom, Indian culture and Indian achievements in all the fields of existence, existence on earth and existence on planes other than the earth. Sri Aurobindo has journeyed through all these and brought to light the glory of the unseen and dedicated his life to make that glory a living light here in our terrestrial humanity.

Satyaprakash Singh has dived deep into the ocean of Sri Aurobindo's supreme light and successfully endeavoured to restore the Sanskrit language to its role as the speech of the heart and soul of India and make it once more a virile vehicle of the Spirit, transcendental, universal and individual, encompassing all that the human mind is capable of.

The book is much more than interesting inasmuch as it clearly and deftly gives a beautiful form to Sri Aurobindo's direct vision of Reality in all its aspects and in all its relations with the relative worlds we know and do not know as a general rule. We may differ in the coining of technical terms used for expressing the conscious force in Sri Aurobindo's inspired words, but that is a small matter and on the whole we acclaim this enterprise and wish it a far-reaching success in the field of great books.

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