

MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

MARCH 1977

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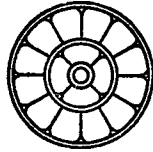
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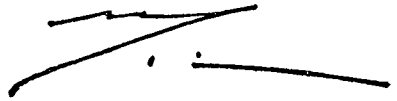


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

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. XXIX

No. 3

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail."

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THE MOTHER'S HOUR OF BIRTH

THE year, the month and the day of the Mother's birth are common knowledge. But the hour at which she was born has remained unknown all these years. Only now it has come to light. In answer to our inquiry, the Mother's son, André Morisset, has very kindly provided the required information in some detail. He writes from France:

“Mother was declared to be born on February 21st 1878 in the morning at 10 o'clock and a quarter. But the declaration was only made on February 24th at 10 o'clock in the morning. Besides it is to be remembered that the time in France was, at that time, based on Paris meridian and not GMT. The copy of the birth certificate was made on September 16th 1893.”

WORDS OF THE MOTHER

IN our way of working we must not be the slaves of Nature; all these habits of trying and changing, doing and undoing and redoing again and again, wasting energy, labour, material and money, are Nature's way of action, not the Divine's. The Divine Consciousness sees first the truth of a work, the best way of doing it according to given circumstances; and when She acts it is final; She never comes back to what is done, She goes forward, using failure as well as success for a new progress, one more step towards the goal.

In order to progress, Nature destroys, while the Divine Consciousness stimulates growth and finally transforms.

★

Your work can never be good if you go on thinking of the next thing. For work, it is the present that is the most important. The past should not drag you behind, the future should not pull you forward. You must be fully concentrated on the present, on what you are doing. You must be so concentrated on what you are doing that it is as if the salvation of the whole earth depended only upon your work.

★

Wherever you are, you are always complaining that you have too much work. It means that you are unfit for this Yoga, because to do Yoga is a hundred times more difficult than any of the works given to you.

★

In ancient times the disciple had to undergo severe tests to prove his ability for initiation. Here we do not follow that method. Apparently there is no test and no trial. But if you see the truth, you will find that here it is much more difficult. There the disciple knew that he was undergoing a period of trial and after he had passed through some outward tests, he was taken in. But here you have to face life and you are watched at every moment. It is not only your outer actions that count. Each and every thought and inner movement is seen, every reaction is noticed. It is not what you do in the solitude of the forest, but what you do in the thick of the battle of life that is important.

Are you ready to submit yourself for such tests? Are you ready to change yourself completely? You will have to throw off your ideas, ideals, values, interests and opinions. Everything will have to be learned anew. If you are ready for all this, then take a plunge; otherwise don't try to step in.

THE SUPRAMENTAL MANIFESTATION

I

THE SUPRAMENTAL MANIFESTATION AND OURSELVES

From a Talk of the Mother on 27th June 1956

...I BELIEVE that...when I announced that it had been granted to the earth to receive the supramental Force in order to manifest it, this did not mean that the manifestation would be instantaneously apparent, and that everybody would suddenly find himself transported to a peak of light and of possibilities and realisation, without any effort. I said immediately that it would not be like that. I even said that it would take quite a long time. But still, people have complained that its advent has not made things easier, and that even, in some cases, they have become more difficult. I am very sorry, but I can do nothing about it. For it is not the fault of the supramental Force, the fault lies in the way in which it was received. I know instances in which truly the aspiration was sincere and the collaboration complete, and in which many things that had seemed very difficult in the past at once became infinitely easier.

However, there is a very great difference, always, between a kind of mental curiosity which plays with words and ideas, and a true aspiration of the being which means that truly, really, it is *that* which counts, essentially, and nothing else—that aspiration, that inner will because of which nothing has any value except *that*, that realisation; nothing counts except *that*; there is no other reason for existence, for living, than *that*.

And yet it is this that's needed if one wants the Supramental to become visible to the naked eye.

And mark that I am not speaking of a physical transformation, for this everyone knows: you don't expect to become luminous and plastic overnight, to lose your weight, be able to displace yourself freely, appear in a dozen places at the same time and what not. ..No, I believe you are reasonable enough not to expect this to happen right away. It will take some time.

But still, simply, the working of the consciousness, simply a certain self-mastery, a control over one's body, a direct knowledge of things, a capacity of identification and a clear vision—instead of that hazy and vague sight which sees only the mere appearances that are so deceptive, so unreal, so fossilised—a more direct perception, an inner perception, this ought to be able to come and come quickly if one has prepared oneself.

Simply to have that feeling that the air one breathes is more living, the strength one has more lasting. And instead of always groping like a blind man to know what should be done, to have a clear, precise, inner intimation: it is this—not that: *this*.

These are things one can acquire immediately if one is ready.

THE SUPRAMENTAL FORCE AT WORK

Some Words of the Mother on February 6, 1957

It will soon be a year since, one Wednesday, we had the manifestation of the supramental force. Since then, it has been working very actively, even while very few people are aware of it! but still I thought the time had come for—how to put it?—for us to help it a little in its work by making an effort of receptivity.

Of course, it does not work only in the Ashram, it is working in the whole world, and in all places where there is some receptivity this Force is at work, and I must say the Ashram hasn't an exclusive receptivity in the world, the monopoly of receptivity. But since it so happens that all of us here more or less know what has taken place, well, I hope that individually each person is doing his best to benefit by the occasion; but collectively we can do something, that is, try to unify the ground, to produce a particularly fertile soil to obtain collectively the maximum receptivity and to have as little wastage as possible of time and energies.

A DREAM OF CHAMPAKLAL

AS RECOUNTED BY HIM TO NIRODBARAN

December 24, 1976

BOTH of us (you and I) went to a place with some people. We walked and walked a pretty long distance. The others were all scattered about. Suddenly I realised I was alone, you were not there. So I began looking for you and walked on and on. Much later I saw a huge mountain, but there was no way to go up. I stood thinking what to do, when I myself began climbing, without any effort, as though someone were pulling me upward. At a little height I saw a beautiful place with a big pond. And near the pond I saw you. You said you were taking *Jalasamadhi*, giving up your life by immersion in water. I rushed to catch you, but you went into the water. I reached you and brought you out. You protested and asked me to go where I liked and said you would go where you liked! You began going towards the mountain-top. There were no steps at all. It was so high and steep that we could not even see the summit. I watched where you went and followed you. You did not like my following you. You said, "Maharaj, please leave me alone." I saw that you were very much annoyed. So I stood where I was.

I saw you going up so nicely. I was surprised to see you go with so much ease. Then I tried to climb from the other side of the mountain. I felt that some force was pulling me up and up. I looked down from the height but did not feel at all dizzy. I was surprised. Suddenly I saw you sitting at a certain place. How I reached you I don't know. But we were both very happy, and you said, "Maharaj, my critical period has passed off. Let us go now." We both began to move upwards—higher and higher. At last we reached the top of the mountain. Behind it there was another mountain still higher, with a huge valley in between. We both jumped on to the other mountain, very successfully, and again began ascending. On its summit was an *Aghori*, a particular class of Tantric. He asked us, "How did you manage to come here? It is impossible. I know you have come here because of your Guru. Otherwise I would have eaten you. Now I can't do anything to you. So go on to the next mountain where you will find a very big Sage." We, therefore, jumped on to the third mountain that was even higher; but we still managed to reach it. We saw there quite an open place filled with a golden Light. The Sage was there, but he was moving in the air and not walking on the ground. He was very happy to see us and said, "I was expecting you. Now sit and take rest." Giving us a drink he continued, "Because of this drink you will be able to stay here. You have to remain here, I don't know how long, as you have to move yet farther. I shall tell you where you have to go, and when." But we were extremely happy where we were. Looking all around, you said, "I feel like writing about this place .."

I don't know what happened afterwards. ..My eyes opened and I was smiling.

CHAMPAK

FLOOD OF GRACE AND GOLDEN LIGHT

VISIONS AND EXPERIENCES

It is by Grace that I came into contact with the Mother of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in my youth when she visited my village Veerampattinam, four miles off Pondicherry, in 1928. She poured Her looks of Grace into my heart. I was soon attracted to join the Ashram in my twentieth year which fell in 1933. I come from a poor and uneducated family. I had only completed the lower standards of school education. All the sadhana or spiritual discipline that I did and am still doing is wholly centred upon the work which She gave to me. I work in the sanitary service of the Ashram.

By doing the work with sincerity and devotion as the Mother's own work, I began to get experiences. By Her Grace my soul or psychic being opened after five years of Ashram-life. Since then, the psychic has been my guide and I feel always the Mother's Presence in my heart. From time to time various kinds of spiritual experiences have come, one after another. In my 63rd year, I had a flood of spiritual experiences and visions soon after I had sat in meditation in Sri Aurobindo's room on my birthday, along with fellow disciples and devotees whose birthdays coincided with mine. Then in the next year, when I meditated in my own room on my sixty-fourth birthday (24-7-76) at 12 noon, the Grace of our Divine Mother descended and entered into the depth of my mid-forehead. She came in the form of a Luminous Young Child—Bala, in the same form as when She had been about seven years old—and opened the "chakra" on the top of the head, the Sahasrara, giving rise to wonderful visions and experiences.

I feel that these are purely a gift of the Grace of our Divine Mother, and not at all due to my merits or qualifications or Sadhana. The experiences have continued and developed since then and especially in my midnight meditation between 2 and 3 a.m. Soon after the experiences, the Grace comes in the form of Tamil poetry in which they get expressed. Below I am giving in English some recent experiences in the order in which they came.

The Divine Mother lit the Light of a Lamp burning in the middle of my forehead. It is a Light that extended, with its flaming heat, in all directions.

In the depth of a silence beyond mind and heart, I found the pure flame of Truth blazing in its intensity. As the bud blossoms unfolding its petals all around, so the inner consciousness blossomed and expanded in that profound silence.

In lonely silence again, I realised the Divine Mother, the Consciousness of all consciousnesses, manifesting Herself as a luminous young child—Bala. I became one with Her in consciousness.

My uvula curved upwards and tasted the oozing Amrita (Nectar) of Grace. The thousand-petalled lotus opened itself. I sensed its subtle fragrance full of Grace.

The lid of Brahmarandhra (Aperture of Brahman) opened itself. The last vestige of the ego was dissolved. A flood of Light entered in from above. I became absorbed

in Bliss, the most precious gift of the Mother. The infinite pure Consciousness and the Self were realised.

The bond of birth and death has been broken and with that the dualities of pleasure and pain, sorrow and happiness were cancelled. The being has become free by realising the Light of Consciousness which is the source of the Vedas.

Mother Bala gave by Her Grace the Eye of Knowledge to see and realise the Truth. By surrendering to Her Lotus-Feet one can receive the supreme fulfilment of life as Her gift.

After the rending of the lid on the top of the head, and being surrounded by Light, I quickly rushed through wide spaces of heavens. Heavens within heavens were entered. The consciousness moved both upwards and inwards. It crossed six overhead planes which had been screening the Truth. Then I entered into the experience of the Void, the Sunya of Nothingness. But this was not the end. I felt I was near the Vast Realm of Light which is the Home of Mother Bala who has manifested to me in Her splendour of Light. The ascending path to the Home of Grace and Peace was seen. The Golden Door opened. I trod the interior path to the Heaven of Mother Bala and quickly entered into the vast Realm of Truth-Knowledge. I saw Mother Bala seated in Her Form of dynamic and vibrating golden Light in Her own supreme and universal Heaven of Light. I had wonderful visions of Truth; and Bliss coursed through and overflowed my whole being.

Cascades of intensities of the pure golden Light spread in all directions, and all the spaces were flooded with the golden Light. The Light within the inner Light was realised and I became one with the consciousness of Light and partook of the Amrita of Bliss.

I entered into the vast Golden Truth-world and realised its vast Golden Light of Truth-knowledge. There was an enjoyment of the dynamic play of the Lord, His play of the beginningless and endless Bliss. I realised the supreme Lord with His Shakti Uma as the Two-in-One in the vast Golden Realm of Truth, which even the great gods fail to see. I realised Him as the Lord of my soul and self, present everywhere and bestowing His Grace on the devoted faithful in the depth of their hearts.

I saw the supreme Lord, realised union with Him, and became verily Himself. The birth, maintenance and destruction of the universe taking place in the Heart of the supreme Lord was seen. My being got fused and absorbed in the eternal Ananda which is beginningless and endless, and verily became that.

There, all the crores of heavens and worlds and the physical cosmic bodies, namely, the sun, planets, earth, moon and stars, were seen whirling like atoms. I saw them with the eye of Grace.

I realised the vast and supreme golden Light of Grace in its own Home of Truth which is without beginning and end. I became the pure Consciousness of the dynamic golden Light of Truth. The source of the secret Truth of the Vedas was found, and that without one's learning to know of it. I realised the supreme Light (*shuddha param jyoti*) spreading, from far beyond above, in all directions.

In the supreme and pure infinity of existence which is without day and night the unity of the all-containing supreme Existence (*eka poorana*) was realised. It was realised also as the one infinite and eternal Bliss of the supreme Consciousness.

The world of play of Truth-knowledge is found in the depth of silence. The whole universal movement is the play of the Lord of the Truth-world, the play of Knowledge-Will, the play of the beginningless and endless Ananda. The earthly life shall get changed into a play of Bliss when one annihilates the ego and realises the supreme Lord who has extended Himself as the universe.

The Golden Sun of Truth-knowledge rose up in that supreme world of Peace and Silence, and in the midst of the vibrating ocean of Ananda, spreading the flood of golden Light everywhere and illuminating, sustaining and nourishing the earthly world of ours. With the rising of the Sun of Truth-knowledge, the darkness disappeared everywhere and the Golden Light pervaded the whole universe and the earth too became golden.

The pure Golden Light descended from the vast Heaven of Truth-knowledge like the raining of waters. The earth, being flooded with the descending golden Truth-Light of Grace, changed into a golden earth, shining in its golden luminosity. A golden world is seen born, and men too become golden in the mental, vital and physical levels of existence. With the descending force of the golden Light of Truth on the earth, a new era has begun and the earth has woken up with a new consciousness which is seen vibrating with a new awakening of life at all levels of human existence. The human race is awakening everywhere with a new life.

Carried by the force of the flood of the descending golden Light, I came down to the earthly consciousness when I entered into my body through the Brahmrandhra.

I hear the Omkara-nada vibrating in me and, along with it, the Golden Truth-Light infiltrates into my adhara. The heart is filled with the consciousness of Grace which is indeed the Golden Light of Grace. The ego has been completely effaced. The golden Light of Truth also descended into me, into my mind, life and body and made them golden. The golden Light entered into all the cells of the body, into the bones, muscles, tissues, brain and nerves, blood and its cells, skin and even the hairs, from the root to the end, and made them appear golden with a tinge of red. The whole body appeared a beautiful golden red body.

I saw even the Sun of golden red Light rising up over the earthly sky, spreading its golden red Light of Truth into the whole material earth. The golden red Light of Truth is verily the concrete physical form of the highest supreme consciousness. The descending Golden Light becomes the golden red Light when reaching into matter and the material world and the material body.

The phenomenal universe which is derived and born from the supreme eternal Truth of Bliss, Light and Peace moves to reach and become the Truth of Bliss, Light and Peace again, by enjoying the endless Bliss.

Man shall realise the eternal Truth and become That and he shall live the immortal life here on the earth by attaining a deathless body.

The Golden Light of Truth is awaiting above the head to descend and enter in man through the opening of the Sahasrara when one, being awakened to the psychic being, remains in undisturbed silence and peace. The Golden Light is seen to rush into the whole adhara and into the body and shall transform man.

GANGADHARAN

TWO POEMS

IN DARKNESS

WHEN we search
 so many locks appear
 to which the keys seem lost.
 O mountain with no path
 these trails of footsteps stray
 so far apart
 and yet all yearning
 for thy one translucent peak
 that soars invisibly
 above the night.
 We peer like blind men at the sky,
 waiting for the dawn
 holding the sun
 prisoner in our hearts.

WHERE IS THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW PATH?

Passion is my master.
 The trees will not admit me
 To their silent company.
 The Sun has sunk a ray
 Inside my flesh
 And trapped by bone and skin
 It roars in deep frustration
 Like some impotent volcano
 Yearning underneath its tons
 Of rocks to turn again
 Into a living star and throw
 Its arms around the Sun.

KEVAN MYERS

A POET'S LETTER FROM AUROVILLE

This fine letter was first published in Mother India in 1971 when the poet was residing in Auroville. His feeling that it is still appropriate has made him suggest we reproduce it.

Amal

I will write poetry,—
but not yet awhile...the fields of peace
from which much future poetry must spring
to reach the hearts of men are not yet quite laid.

I will write that poetry
and perhaps now that poetry of the future
prepares itself...
in the experience of events never before encountered
on the face of the earth...or, perhaps
now that poetry of the future is being etched on some
far-guided heart and by another's hand it will be written
once it finds a place of love to come to rest—
a poetry then that will be a torch of truth
calling the world to the arms of Her love and unity.

That place must be a bed prepared for the bride
of the new morning...some place above the horizons of life
where the poet of the future may be opened to dream only
of the sacred delight for which he was especially born.

That poetry is to be...but to be and live and mature,
to reach its destined heights, a place must be made
for its birth, a cradle of consciousness prepared
from the new stuff of heaven and earth.

I will write poetry,—
but not yet awhile...
for the future of poetry and the world depends now on
the nature of something She is establishing here in Auroville,
and for that to become more concretely sure
the hands of action are called foremost.

Now the building must take place; a progressive seeding
of the green fields of consciousness to grow more deeply
than the proliferative weeds of chaos are growing widely,

a preparation for the bloom of peace in a life lucid,
filled with the opportunity for faith and cheerfulness
and the ways divine.

So I will write poetry, but first the plowing, the growing
and the tending of the fields divine. Is that not better
left to the artists, than to the businessmen alone or to
the uninitiated? If the artists do not care enough for the substance
of the matter how can we expect the roots and the tree
to grow with the poise of a natural harmony, a dynamic
integrality, a touch or spark of something from beyond?

Something more than practical conveniences devised
only for the ease of mind and body. Something more
than getting stopped short, caught in the charmed net of transient
pleasures lost in Prakriti's round of passions.

To you, Amal, I can say that, 'that something' is tangibly
related to the poet of the future, and whether he is in
my breast or another's, I dedicate myself to preparing the ground
upon which he can be born, in the name of Sri Aurobindo,
who, above all his work and ways, enjoyed knowing
himself as The Poet.

I will write poetry...or perhaps I am trying to help
create a poetry in Life; whatever, it is not quite yet awhile,
O Lord, not until the waters flow over these harsh desert grounds
and a garden grow with an air on which may cling
all love's responsive things.

Thank you for enquiring,
Yours, GENE

UDAR REMEMBERS

XI

PAVITRA (Philippe Barlier St.-Hilaire) was a talented scientist and fine engineer and he had also a good sense of humour. The Mother used to tease him quite often and he enjoyed it even if it was against him. Once when we were sitting at the Mother's feet, Pavitra joined us and suddenly the Mother said, "You know, Udar, Pavitra is a typical French farmer. When the farmer harvests his apples he places them all on shelves in one layer and then he takes those which are over-ripe to eat for the present, keeping the good ones for the next day. But the next day there are some more that are going off and he eats those, and so on. All the year he eats only such apples and not good ones." Pavitra laughed with us and enjoyed this description. But I myself felt that this is not a characteristic of only the French farmer. It is very much in all of us and we have the same idea of using or eating first those things which are going off.

There is another incident connected with Pavitra which brought out an important point. Once, when I was cleaning the Radio in Pavitra's room, a cockroach jumped out and I was going to kill it when Pavitra said, "No, no! Do not kill it, just drive it away." I was then fairly new in the Ashram and so felt that perhaps it was not good here to kill living things—we must have Ahimsa. Later I asked the Mother about this, recounting the incident. She answered firmly, "You should have killed it. Pavitra is a sentimental person. The truth is that in creation, as it now is, there are forces of two kinds: those that are progressive in Evolution and those that oppose or obstruct the Evolution. Cockroaches and such insects that do harm belong to the latter kind. They can be destroyed without hesitation. There are other insects like bees that are helpful and they should not be wantonly killed."

Now I shall tell of some personal things. When we were having our meals with the Mother I used to tell Her many stories and She liked them quite a bit. One day She said to me, "You know, Udar, when I was a little girl in France I felt, even then, a great urge to go to India. For one thing I expected there were good stories, as it was said in France that Indians are great story-tellers. But when I did finally come here I did not find anything exceptional and I wondered why Indians had had such a reputation. But when I met you, I knew. You are truly a great story-teller." We all laughed at this but I was thrilled at hearing such a nice thing of myself from our Sweet Mother.

Then I come to my name. My name was formerly Laurence Marshall Pinto till I received the name of Udar from Sri Aurobindo Himself, in His own handwriting, which was given to me by the Mother. There He wrote the name as follows:

Udar—Sanskrit उदार Udara —

Noble, generous, upright and sincere—

Sri Aurobindo

26th April 1938

To Udar with blessings—Sri Aurobindo

The Mother also signed the paper. This is truly a most wonderful gift from the Divine which I cherish so very much.

Naturally I did not use my original name except when necessary. I liked the first two names but not the surname. It is a Portuguese name which was given to my forefathers when they were converted to Christianity and is not our true family name. This true name I wanted to find. We are of Saraswat Brahmin stock and so had probably a name like Pai or Prabhu, etc. I had started searching the old records in Goa to find this name, before I joined the Ashram. Then one day I told the Mother of all this and She said to me, "Why change the surname? It was my own mother's name." I was again thrilled to hear this and now the name Pinto has become very dear to me. Then the Mother explained about Her parents.

On Her father's side She was of pure Arab stock and even Her surname today, Alfassa, is Arabic. (The Mother's grandfather was a rich Arab who had come to Rome and had bought a title there. This purchased nobility was always a great joke in their family.) On Her mother's side there was a mixture of English and Portuguese. So though the Mother was legally a French national, She had not a drop of French blood. Also, it may be noted that She was a fine blend of the East and the West.

STARLIGHT

ALTHOUGH still made of earth's imperfect clay,
 And though the perfect radiance you are
 Is still to me the glow of a small star
 Unnumbered millions of light-years away,
 That starlight is to me a greater day,
 More illumined and illumining by far
 Than this sun's, whose bright beams of yellow mar
 The uncreated glow of your clear ray—

That ray whose light once fell upon the dank
 Film of my mind and left a perfect blank
 That now can no more shadow forth the shapes
 Of ordinary life, but lets them pass
 Unaltered through it, like clear window-glass,
 When some strange, splendid hand has drawn the drapes.

PETER HEEHS

(From the poet's forthcoming book, *Image of Adoration*)

FOOTNOTES TO THE FUTURE

I

“EXCELLENCE AS I SEE IT”¹

EPITAPHS are often placed on many a grave indicating the achievements of the dead; my plea is that life itself should bear comparable inscriptions of excellence worthy of emulation by the living.

It was in the 1930's that an American Senator by name Huey Long went to his constituency with the slogans “*Everyman a King*” and “*Share the wealth*”. In an altered form and in a neo-altruistic way the same spirit of equalitarianism, if that could be so described, was sought to be surreptitiously brought into the classroom in the phenomenon of mass copying with the implicit watchwords “*Every student is a Free Citizen*” and “*Share the examination excellences*”. Should we not be free from the grip of such extreme phrases?

This is a symposium about excellence, and more particularly about the conditions under which excellence is possible in our kind of society and certainly, by implication, it is about (i) equality, especially equality of opportunity, (ii) freedom, particularly the content of freedom (iii) national progress and purpose in the immediate context of national unity, and (iv) human fellowship or a civilization of consciousness. Such a symposium should raise not only questions like the characteristic difficulties a democracy encounters in pursuing excellence and the way out of these difficulties but also problems relating to the larger interests of the nation as well as the nature and destiny of the human individual.

Are the universities really producing highly educated people? If so, should we concentrate merely on mental talent? Is mental talent sufficient to help a society to progress in a composite and wholesome way? Otherwise, would that not lead to the eventual domination by the intellectual elite? Have we, in spite of our being a most ancient nation, lost sight of our cultural and spiritual ideals? Have we lost our sense of the secret purpose of life itself and with it the innate capacity to achieve over-all and multiple excellence?

“Excellence” is a curiously powerful and purposeful word; it is like a many-sided diamond, and means different things to different people. The more we consider it and contemplate on it the more it is likely that we read our own aspirations and ideals into it, our own conceptions of life and destiny, our own hopes for a better and nobler world. We become acutely aware of all these particularly in the context of national stocktaking and more so against the background of the kind of infertile or rather chaotic mediocrity we have fallen into in recent times, and the abuse of freedom over the past quarter of a century. Different people see “excellence” from different

¹ Adapted from a Paper read at the symposium held at Jawahar Bharati, Kavali on November 14, 1975.

vantage points; the teacher, the administrator, the artist, the thinker, the jurist and the spiritualist, each is concerned with issues which are of immediate importance for him and will likewise approach it for their solutions. As a student of excellence and more so of philosophic excellence and not in any way its author I am concerned with the spiritual context in which excellence may be pursued in this country if we want to seek and establish a higher ecology in our national life and affairs. This primary concern for the spiritual well-being of society seems to necessarily lead me to the study of some of the interesting and perplexing problems of excellence in the areas of education, political thought, industry and technology and philosophy of history. For it is the pursuit of excellence in these interrelated areas that brings a whole people to that fine convergence of morale and conviction, zest and self-sacrifice, dedication and hard work that makes for true and lasting greatness.

In the midst of all our debilitating confusion of standards, in the face of all our stubborn problems that refuse to be solved so soon, we should be equally stubborn to confront and solve them. This is possible if only we have an unswerving allegiance to excellence and to our dream of building a great nation. But if we hold conflicting views about excellence and cannot rouse ourselves to the pursuit of excellence everything that we undertake will be adversely affected resulting in national retardation.

In colleges and universities it is better that we seek excellence in the context of our national progress and human fellowship which is a matter of concern for all. In this let us not place an altogether false emphasis on college education for all our children. In Virginia, U.S.A., there is a story told of a kindly Episcopal minister who was asked whether the Episcopal Church was the only path to salvation. The minister shook his head—a bit sadly perhaps—and said, “No, there are other paths”, then added, “but no gentleman would choose them.” The attitude of many of us to college education is unfortunately of the same temper. Undoubtedly “everyone has a right to go to college” but to favour an almost limitless expansion of college attendance is positively harmful to the balanced growth of any society. It must be noted that not all students profit by continued formal schooling. Simply because college education has gained extraordinary prestige in our times let us not be tempted to assume that the only useful learning and growth comes from going to colleges and universities, listening to teachers talk from prepared notes, and reproducing the required information on occasions called examinations. This is an extremely constricting notion. It is a mistake to assume that learning can be accomplished only in formal schools. Many individuals might be better off if only they could be exposed to alternative growth experiences. Many of our children are kept on pointlessly in formal schools which do not provide them with any vocation and merely expose them to continuous psychological failure. This is not at all a sensible way to conserve national human resources. The university is an instrument of only one kind of further education; it is not the sole means of establishing one’s human worth. It should not be looked to as the unique key to human

happiness, self-respect and inner confidence.

Colonial education has done its good bit to foster these misconceptions. At the root of this Frankenstein difficulty is the dirty habit of assuming that the only meaningful life is the "successful life", defining success in terms of high personal attainment in the world's eyes. Today college attendance has come to be believed as a prerequisite of high attainment in the world's eyes and consequently a passport to a "meaningful life". No wonder our colleges are getting over-crowded.

But this crowding is less regrettable than the confusion in our values. Human dignity and worth should be assessed in terms of qualities not merely of the mind but of the heart and spirit, which could be practised and expressed by all. This does not mean we should not value mental achievement; it simply means that such an achievement should not be confused nor equated with human worth. Our recognition of the dignity and worth of the human individual is based upon cultural, moral and spiritual imperatives and has been of universal application. The more we allow the impression to gain currency that only college graduates are worthy of respect in our society the more we contribute to the fatal confusion of the fundamental values of life which in turn only injures our national image and hampers national growth.

A few years ago the Mother of Sri Aurobindo Ashram gave a message to the Education Commission appointed by the Government of India which read:

India has or rather had the knowledge of the Spirit, but she neglected matter and suffered for it. The West has the knowledge of matter but rejected the Spirit and suffers badly for it.

An integral education which could, with some variations, be adapted to all the nations of the world, must bring back the legitimate authority of the Spirit over a matter fully developed and utilised.

But a scaling down of our emphasis on college education is only part of the answer.

We should educate our children in ways other than merely sending them to colleges. We should be able to develop an enormous variety of patterns of education other than formal education to fit the psychology and capacity of the enormous variety of students. And no single pattern should be regarded as socially superior to any other pattern. It may appear a little cynical to say but it is true that these days everyone seems to have two personalities — "the one under his hat and the one in his employment file", and the latter which seems to be more important is made up of primitive considerations and shady categories. If we are keen on equitable justice, we at all levels of life and education must cultivate diversity to correspond to the diversity of the clientele. There is no other way to handle within one given system the enormously disparate human capacities, levels of preparedness and motivations which flow into our colleges and universities. It is only then that

we can promote multiple excellence in our society. Young students who do not go to college should look forward to just as active a period of growth and learning outside the college as do the college students. What they must recognize is that there are many kinds of further learning outside formal institutional programmes and could more profitably pursue their true education in other kinds of institutions and work-centres.

As a traditional society and as a resurgent nation we should not promote only limited kinds of talent; we must nourish the kinds of excellence that will create a greater civilization — a civilization not merely of technology and industry, but “a civilization of consciousness”. We may legitimately speak of “an aristocracy of intellect”, but there are different forms of aristocracy too. Today we have more reasons to respect intellect for its extraordinary gifts to humanity as a whole but in our total scale of values it must still be a subordinate good. It is essentially a means, even as money is, to a greater end. Intellect alone is not a sufficient basis for the creation of a civilization of consciousness — a civilization of human fellowship.

Education in the formal sense is only a part of the society's effort to help the individual's intellectual, emotional and moral growth. What we must strive and reach for is “a conception of perpetual self-discovery, perpetual reshaping to realize one's best self, to be the person one could be”. This conception far exceeds formal education in its scope. It includes not only intellectual development but emotional refinement, character growth and personality fulfilment, for it involves not only the surface nature but deeper layers of thought, feeling and action; it involves creativeness, effective vitality and inner evolution. In our present-day society it is not possible for large numbers of young people to fully realize their potentialities. Any adequate approach to this problem involves not only the school but the home, the playground, the Church and all other institutions which together shape the destiny of the individual. The way of thinking that it is the sole responsibility of the school to take care of the personality development of the child is long overdue for a drastic change. If we truly and sincerely believe in educating the entire nation then it must become our deepest concern, rather our national preoccupation, nay, our passion and obsession to think of creating conditions of continuing education to persons of all ages and in all walks of life.

Most human societies, through history, have been so cleverly organized that they always kept down the good and exceptional men. The irrepressible and the brave, of course, always burst all barriers but on the whole societies did attempt to severely limit the realization of individual promise. Such societies were doomed by the Industrial Revolution. New modes of economic and social organization demand that the individual be free to bargain and assert. But individual freedom should go hand in hand with individual responsibility. It is of the utmost importance and an immediate necessity that our society gives up hereditary social stratification and allows both equalitarianism and competitive performance to function simultaneously, as they both are necessary ingredients of a healthy society. It is in this

way that we can take full care of the mass of mankind and also promote individual excellence.

In our time there have been released quiet but volcanic forces which eventually are bound to shatter the shackles of hereditary stratification and such other fossilized patterns of obscurantism. The newer principles of moderate equalitarianism and healthy competitive performance are bound to become, though gradually, part and parcel of the day-to-day round of existence. For under conditions of moderate equalitarianism it is possible for gifted individuals to develop their talent, as also the weak are protected from wanton injury and the strong prohibited from becoming ruthless. In a way certain areas of equality are defined which have not to be transgressed.

Few themes since Independence have gripped the imagination of our countrymen so intensely as the recovery of the slum-child alongside the discovery of hidden talent in unexpected places. The vivacity and vividness of this theme is convincing evidence that the supreme ethos of India is once again manifesting itself in newer ways.

A nation which does not have an ideal before it—a purpose, a goal—will never achieve excellence. Concern for the individual as well as the well-being and emancipation of the group should be the central motif in our consciousness. Individual fulfilment coupled with the strengthening of society can alone be the lasting edifice of freedom. It is appropriate that free people if they prize individual freedom must take special pains to insure the prosperity of their fellow-men. Poverty, illiteracy, obscurantism and social inequality are a challenge to our sense of purpose, our vitality and creativity, to our very cultural and spiritual heritage. If we fail to meet this challenge squarely and quickly the movement of history will not save us. A free society must also be capable not merely of survival but of all-round progress.

The courage demanded of all of us is therefore the courage not to live for ourselves, for the final form of ontogenic self-affirmation would be an act of ontogenic self-negation. Our nation because of its great heritage has inexhaustible life-power, and our courage must express this perfect vitality—a vitality which in ancient times gave us the power of creating beyond ourselves without losing ourselves in the world of transcendences. The world of technology is the most conspicuous expression of man's creative vitality and is proof of his superiority over animal vitality but certainly that is not the fullest expression of man's potentiality. Only when his vitality—the *pranic energy*—is directed towards the manifestation of more meaningful contents that man transcends the immediacy of his existence and becomes creative aesthetically, culturally and spiritually. It is only thus that man opens to universal consciousness, anticipates the future and fulfils the present. If we have to build a great future for our dear country we have not only to affirm ourselves as free conscious individuals but also to affirm ourselves as participants in the destiny-making of our nation. This conscious mutuality between the individual and society is the very essence of *Karmayoga* as enunciated in the *Bhagavadgita*. The courage to exist as a part of the total human develop-

ment, *lokasangraha*, is an integral element of the courage to be as oneself, and the courage to exist as oneself, is consequently an integral element of the courage to exist as a part of Nature's evolutionary process, *lilasahachar*—the conscious instrument of the Lord, *nimittamatra*. The time is now when we all should plunge heart, mind and soul into the *Mahayagna* of national resurgence and give evidence of the greatness of our manhood and our nationhood. But let us take care that in no case we relapse into tribal or chauvinist and primitive collectivism, for that would be fascist and gravely harmful in its consequences. We should work consciously and conscientiously for national integration and international cooperation. The Infinite and the Absolute is the decisive source of courage to be a conscious participant in the creative and evolutionary process of Nature and History. Verily we are today in the process of making new history not only for ourselves but the entire human race. It is this courage that characterises our present-day New Revolution. It might astonish the critic of modern Indian history but such is the essence of our Resurgent Individualism and Resurgent Universalism and the productive process of their creative unification.

To quote again the Mother of Sri Aurobindo Ashram: "India must be saved for the good of the world since India alone can lead the world to peace and a new world order.... The future of India is very clear. India is the Guru of the world. The structure of the world depends on India. India is the living soul. India is incarnating the spiritual knowledge in the world. The Government of India ought to recognise the significance of India in this sphere and plan their action accordingly."

To-day we are at the crossroads of history. One road leads to a completely mechanized and technocratic society with man as a helpless cog in the machine, if not to a total mutual destruction by thermonuclear war. The other road points towards "a renaissance of new humanism and hope"—a society that puts organized Matter and Science in the service of man's material, cultural and spiritual well-being. It can even be said of humanity that it has crossed the stage of standing at the crossroads; as things are, it seems to be at the edge of history facing a deep and bottomless precipice. I have the conviction that we can still and always find the necessary new solutions to the many crises that our civilization is facing. This is possible with the help of reason, passionate love for the human life and renewed insistence on the practice of spiritual values. Even the most radical development that we seek for our future must have its inner continuity with our great heritage of Spirit. We cannot progress truly and integrally by throwing away the best achievements of our ancient forefathers, and it is good to realize that only to be modern is not enough. The only alternative to dehumanization which technocracy brings about is the divinization of human life; the alternative to the *System Man* is only the *Superman*.

Very few of us seem to be aware of the spectre of a completely mechanised society stalking in our midst, the spectre of an unidentifiable, unalive and infertile individualism. Exclusive pursuit of materialist excellence results in a society of sick people, people with inner deadness. Let us in this country get over the old-fashioned belief that the machine will help lighten man's burden. As we see in the

Western world, the machine is no longer a means to an end; permitted to follow its own logic it is consuming, cancer-like, the very vitals of individual and social life. There seems to be little possibility of restoring the social system to man's control. The system has imperceptibly lost sight of the spirit factor—nay, even the human factor does not find any place. While conscious people and those who are still alive inwardly seek a new orientation, a new philosophy of life, physically and spiritually, the rest are enveloped with a widespread hopelessness in regard to the possibility of changing the course they have taken.

Only a revolution of hope can salvage them. For it is only faith that can take them on the road to greater aliveness, awareness and consciousness. It is not just a passive, waiting hope, a mere hoping for time, but a revolutionary faith and hope which bring us face to face with Eternity and the Future. It is not the worship of the Future as time that will change our destiny but the acceptance of the Future as Infinite Consciousness on its way towards increasing manifestation. Hope is an intrinsic element of man's inner structure; it constitutes the dynamics of his progress; whereas faith is the conviction in the not-yet-born, the awareness of the would-be. Together, hope and faith make the vision of the Future; they constitute the certainty of the Unknown. We should have faith in ourselves, faith in the greatness of our nation and armed with hope and courage build our Future.

Outside of Religion, Marxism "is the most significant expression of the Messianic vision in a secular language". It is corrupted, disfigured and distorted by its enthusiastic protagonists. What our country is attempting to accomplish is the vision of a socialist society based on our spiritual heritage. Faith, hope and fortitude are the concomitants in this great adventure—in our endeavour to build a New India.

All through our efforts we must be aware of the dangers of a dehumanized society in which men are transformed into unthinking and unfeeling machine tools. By taking advantage of our spiritual heritage we should be able to give a new depth and perspective to our future. The passiveness of man in a technocratic society is a characteristic pathological feature. He is reduced to an appendage of the machine and transformed into *Homo Consumens* and is no longer the *Homo Sapiens Spiritua-lis* with the result that man is forced into a new search for identity.

What we need is a fresh philosophy of life, a fresh perspective of the world—a dynamic world view. Sri Aurobindo offers such a World Perspective—an Integral *Weltanschauung* — wherein man is looked upon as being in the process of developing a new consciousness, a new creative capacity. As a result the conscious individual tries to substitute a goal-directed evolutionary process for the slow, biological evolution in which the major apparent factors have undergone mutation and natural selection. In ancient Indian terminology this is called Yoga.

In the words of Erich Fromm: "By intelligent intervention in the evolutionary process man has greatly accelerated and greatly expanded the range of his possibilities. But he has not changed the basic fact that it remains a trial and error process,

with the danger of taking paths that lead to sterility of mind and heart, moral apathy and intellectual inertia; and even producing social dinosaurs unfit to live in an evolving world." Only through Yoga will it be possible to integrate material accomplishments with spiritual evolution. We look to leaders with an integral spiritual perspective for guidance. For the ultimate answers to the problems facing modern society rest on the spiritual fibre of man and on the wisdom and responsibility of those whose decisions are as objective as they are truly subjective. Mankind can finally place its trust neither exclusively in socialist authoritarianism nor solely in scientific humanism, for both have in a sense divided the human family and betrayed the spiritual propriety of human evolution. It is only in the unity and fraternity of a New Consciousness that harmonizes and fulfils all multiplicity and diversity that the unification of the race is possible. We are entering a World Age and we should dedicate ourselves for laying the foundation of a genuine World History not in terms of race, religion or nationality, "but in terms of man in relation to God, to himself, his fellow man and the universe", which promote a deeper and better understanding of the basic values of all cultures and peoples. Precisely this is the message and mission of India.

In the prophetic words of Sri Aurobindo written when he was a leader of India's fight for freedom: "Indian renaissance is arising, and that must determine its future tendency. The recovery of the old spiritual knowledge and experience in all its splendour, depth and fullness is its first, most essential work; the flowing of this spirituality into new forms of philosophy, literature, art, science and critical knowledge is the second; an original dealing with modern problems in the light of Indian spirit and the endeavour to formulate a greater synthesis of a spiritualised society is the third and most difficult. Its success on these three lines will be the measure of its help to the future of humanity.... The sun of India's destiny would rise and fill India with its light and overflow India and overflow Asia and overflow the world. Every hour, every moment could only bring them nearer to the brightness of the day that God had decreed.... The function of India is to supply the world with a perennial source of light and renovation. Whenever the first play of energy is exhausted and earth grows old and weary, full of materialism, racked with problems she cannot solve, the function of India is to restore the youth to mankind and assure it of immortality. She sends forth a light from her bosom which floods the earth and the heavens, and mankind bathes in it like St. George in the well of life and recovers strength, hope and vitality for its long pilgrimage. Such a time is now at hand."

For long we have been in a state of constant "pilgrimage and crucifixion", and now is the time when we should liberate ourselves from the grip of dogma, superstition and obscurantism, lethargy and self-complacency and press forward to actualize new forms of awareness and action. It is time that we became instrumental in the unfoldment of a world-consciousness which restores both God and man to mankind. This will be man's second communion with the universe around him in

relation to the Divine within him. This will be the individual's integral self-fulfilment in relation to humanity and the Supreme Reality.

V. MADHUSUDAN REDDY

BHARATA

(The Ramayana tells how Bharata, a brother of Rama—by another wife of Dasaratha's—and an extreme devotee of his avatarhood, was sorely grieved to learn that Rama had been sent into exile and that he himself was to succeed to the throne owing to an unfortunate promise made by Dasaratha to Bharata's mother. He set out to find Rama and after a strenuous journey reached his goal. He fell at Rama's feet, but Rama lifted him up and embraced him, yet while appreciating his devotion exhorted him to stand by the word of their father. Bharata surrendered his will to Rama's and returned to the capital: only, he took with him Rama's sandals to rule in his stead...)

SANDALS of the great Wanderer's feet rest here—
 Calm on the desolate throne, still as the Spirit
 That moves not with the moving universe
 But, imperturbable, bears the toil of Time,
 The ache of heavenly feet through a wilderness
 Of worlds that Truth may live and laugh in the dust!
 Here in this kingdom's vigilling heart I place
 Twin-lamps—the quiet sandals touched by the heat
 Of God's pure trample on His own wide power!
 Rule, while the Lord's bleeding and beggar step
 Goes printing deep His love on forest paths
 Tangled with wry desires and shadowed over
 By titan clutchings at the glow of heaven:
 Rule without stir and light each soul to peace!

AMAL KIRAN

RECENT TRENDS IN BIOLOGICAL THEORY AND PSYCHO-PHYSIOLOGY

SOME SCIENTIFIC APPROACHES TOWARDS SRI AUROBINDO'S VISION

I

PERHAPS the most interesting finger-post in recent science to the presence, in general, of a psychic energy in evolution such as Sri Aurobindo discerns as ascending to *homo sapiens* and pointing beyond him has been put up by the English biologist, Sir Alister Hardy.

The import of Hardy's most impressive book, *The Living Stream*, based on his first series of Gifford Lectures, is twofold. It lies not only in suggesting at the end more persuasively than ever before a background of psychism to the evolutionary process, which sets this process ascending in the midst of the energy modern Darwinism reckons with in the play of random-seeming genetic mutation and in the work of natural selection upon this material to bring about the survival and propagation of the forms best adapted by heredity to the environment. The import lies also in proving psychism to be in action in the very forefront of evolving life. Hardy's pre-eminent stand comes out in the words: "My 'vitalism' is a belief that there is a psychic side of the animal which, apart from inherited instinctive behaviour, may be independent of the DNA code [of the genes] that governs the form of the physical frame but that it may interact with the physical system in the evolutionary process through organic selection."¹

"Organic selection" or, as Hardy prefers on the whole to say, "behavioural selection" means in the simplest terms:

If a population of animals should change their habits (no doubt often on account of changes in their surroundings such as food supply, breeding sites, etc., but also sometimes due to their exploratory curiosity discovering new ways of life, such as new sources of food or new methods of exploitation) then, sooner or later, variations in the gene complex will turn up in the population to produce small alterations in the animal's structure which will make them more efficient in relation to their new behaviour pattern; these more efficient individuals will tend to survive rather than the less efficient, and so the composition of the population will gradually change. This evolutionary change is one caused initially by a change of behaviour.²

Hardy does not claim to have discovered behavioural selection. It has been a fact long admitted. Julian Huxley in his *Evolution, A Modern Synthesis* (London,

1942) refers to it twice (pp. 304, 523), mentioning the original enunciation of it by three early biologists: Baldwin (1896, 1902), Osborne (1897) and Lloyd Morgan (1900). At the end of his second reference he remarks: "The principle is an important one which would appear to have been unduly neglected by recent evolutionists."³ G. G. Simpson too has a general review of it and puts his finger on the cause for the neglect of the ideas described as the "Baldwin Effect": they were put forward "shortly before the rediscovery of Mendelism gave a radically different turn to biological thought."⁴ Many biologists dismiss the "Baldwin Effect" as of minor value. Even Huxley, though granting importance to it, does not dwell on it. Hardy makes it his central thesis and illustrates it with many examples culled by himself, as well as with the corroborative researches of Dr. R. F. Ewer and C. H. Waddington and numerous contributory studies like those of Sidnie Manton, J.W.L. Beament, J. M. Thoday and W. H. Thorpe. From his demonstration behavioural selection emerges not as a mere subsidiary effect but as a major or perhaps the most operative factor whereby the species is to a great extent the master of its fate. Linked with this demonstration is the array of the diverse problems which raise difficulties for the accepted theory of the mechanism of evolution.

Most surprisingly, Jacques Monod, the foremost apostle of "chance" in genetics, displays keen appreciation of Hardy's standpoint without naming him. We find him writing:

...the selective pressures exerted by outside conditions upon organisms are in no case independent of the teleonomic performances characteristic of organisms. Different organisms inhabiting the same ecological niche interact in very different and specific ways with external conditions (among which one must include other organisms). These specific interactions, some of which the organism 'elects', determine the nature and orientation of the selective pressure sustained by the organism....

It is obvious that the part played by teleonomic performances in the orientation of selection becomes greater and greater, the higher the level of organization and hence *autonomy* of the organism with respect to its environment—to the point where teleonomic performance may indeed be considered decisive in the higher organisms, whose survival and reproduction depend above all upon their behaviour.

It is also evident that the initial choice of this or that kind of behaviour can often have very long-range consequences, not only for the species in which it first appears in rudimentary form, but for all its descendents, even if these constitute an entire evolutionary sub-group. As we all know, the important turning points in evolution have coincided with the invasion of new ecological spaces. If terrestrial vertebrates appeared and were able to initiate the wonderful line from which amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals later developed, it was originally because a primitive fish 'chose' to do some exploring on land, where

it could however only move about by clumsy hops. This fish thereby created, as a consequence of a change in behaviour, the selective pressure which was to engender the powerful limbs of the quadrupeds. Among the descendants of this daring explorer, this Magellan of evolution, are some that can run at speeds of fifty miles an hour; others climb trees with astonishing agility, while yet others have conquered the air, in a fantastic manner fulfilling, extending, and amplifying the 'dream' of the ancestral fish.⁵

Monod refers also to the 'choice' by the ancestors of the horse "to live upon open plains and to flee at the approach of an enemy (rather than try to put up a fight or to hide)". As a result of this behavioural selection, "the modern species, following a long evolution made up of many stages of reduction, today walks on the tip of a single toe".⁶ Coming to the birds, Monod further explains how "it is correct to say that sexual drive—or better still, *desire*—created the conditions under which many magnificent plumages were selected".⁷

However, even more surprising than Monod's Hardyan biology is his failure to realize the profound implication of his own "choice" of such a biology. Behavioural selection throws into prominence throughout the story of life the activity of what becomes most marked in man: awareness. Hardy observes: "Dr. Thorpe in his penetrating survey of different kinds of animal learning in his *Learning and Instinct* (Second Edition, 1963) follows Agar⁸ and Whitehead⁹ in regarding the animal as an essentially perceiving organism. He suggests 'that the concept of perception includes an actively organizing, possibly a purposive element; and that perception is a basic characteristic of the drive of the living animal.'¹⁰ A quotation Hardy makes from Waddington also discloses the implication of the word "behaviour". Waddington, in *The Nature of Life* (1961), writes: "We have considerable grounds for believing, then, that mentality (in the broad sense), or at least behaviour (biologists tend to be very timid about mentioning the mind), is a factor of importance in evolution."¹¹ Waddington, passing from animal to human mind, goes still further in his assumption. Hardy quotes him as saying in "his arresting book, *The Ethical Animal*" (p. 31), about consciousness:

As soon as one places the problem of freewill in juxtaposition with that of consciousness it becomes apparent that it cannot be solved either by any manipulation of our existing physico-chemical concepts, since these include no hint of self-awareness, or by any analysis of the language used in formulating the situation, since no linguistic analysis can annul our experience of self. We need ideas which depart more radically from those of the physical sciences; something perhaps akin to the thought of philosophers such as Spinoza and Whitehead, who have suggested that even non-living entities should not be denied qualities related to the self-awareness and will which we know, in much more highly evolved forms, in ourselves.¹²

The passage from Waddington is used by Hardy to bear upon what he designates "natural theology" and conceives as a legitimate pursuit of science. Before moving to that subject he touches upon a number of topics. He has a whole chapter entitled "Problems for Current Evolution Theory". For instance, he notes how the current explanation of "homology" (similar organs in different animals under many varieties of form and function) in terms of similar genes handed on from a common ancestor has broken down. Another problem is linked to Monod's mention of sexual desire in the female bird leading to the selection of "many magnificent plumages" in the male. One reason why Monod, in spite of admitting "behavioural selection" on a large scale, fails to move in the Hardyan direction is that he is unconscious of a subtle point about those plumages. Alfred Russell Wallace, co-discoverer with Darwin of natural selection, brings up the puzzle in his *Tropical Nature* (first published in 1879.) Criticizing Darwin's theory of "sexual selection" in this field, Wallace, as quoted by Hardy, writes in his chapter on the Colours of Animals:

We now come to such wonderful developments of plumage and colour as are exhibited by the peacock and the Argus-pheasant... The long series of gradations by which the beautifully shaded ocelli on the secondary wing-feathers of [the latter] bird have been produced are clearly traced out, the results being a set of markings so exquisitely shaded as to represent "balls lying loose within sockets" —purely artificial objects of which these birds could have no possible experience. That this result should have been attained through thousands and tens of thousands of female birds all preferring those males whose markings varied slightly in this one direction, this uniformity of choice continuing through thousands and tens of thousands of generations, is to me absolutely incredible. And when, further, we remember that those which did not so vary would also, according to all the evidence, find mates and leave offspring, the actual result seems quite impossible of attainment by such means.¹³

Hardy tells us that Wallace's solution to the problem—"the action of a hypothetical 'male vigour', the bright pigments being supposedly due to a higher male metabolic rate"¹⁴—has not proved satisfactory. The colour patterns and behaviour we now know to be certainly directed towards the female. "Nevertheless, the puzzle which Wallace pointed out of the extraordinary *constant* nature of the patterns still persists."¹⁵ Hardy has no doubt that the "design" is coded by the genes, yet in view of the great variability which science has observed in the gene-complex how does the design, the *plan* of its layout, remain so constant?

We may approach an answer by quoting from a review of Hardy's book in the *Times Literary Supplement* (London) of December 23, 1965 under the caption "Masters of Our Fate?" After referring to Hardy's chapter on the inadequacy of current biological science face to face with topics like homology, the reviewer says:

He then runs the risk, as he admits, of diverting attention from his main argument by introducing the biological relevance of telepathy. He is in no doubt—nor can any reader who examines his evidence objectively be left in much doubt—that the mind can be in contact with mind other than through the senses. If telepathy is proved to exist in man, it is a major biological discovery, for it is unlikely that so remarkable a phenomenon should be confined to just a few individuals of one species. It will, of course, take place mainly in the realm of the subconscious, but that does not lessen its importance.

With telepathy proved, the extensive operation of the psychic factor in evolution by way of Hardy's "behavioural selection" should lead us naturally to accord a momentous evolutionary role to so extraordinary a psychic power as telepathic communication. The existence of such communication "between members of the same species of animals might at least help in developing and stabilizing common behavioural patterns" resulting from behavioural selection and making them "widespread" and thereby creating the conditions necessary before they can be "incorporated" in the DNA gene complex—the complex which we know to be governing all "truly instinctive behaviour".¹⁶ "Such a hypothesis might help to explain the development of elaborate instinct in invertebrate animals among which it would be difficult to conceive of new habits spreading by copying and tradition."¹⁷

Now Hardy takes a further step. Reminding us of how, in the various telepathic experiments he has described, "impressions of design, form and experience...can occasionally be transmitted by telepathy from one human individual to another", Hardy asks: "might it not be possible for there to be in the animal kingdom as a whole not only a telepathic spread of habit changes, but a general *subconscious* sharing of a form and behaviour pattern—a sort of psychic 'blueprint'—shared between members of a species?"¹⁸ Then Hardy refers to similar notions, put forth by different thinkers, of common experience participated in by individuals, below or beyond the level of ordinary consciousness. He writes: "If there were such a psychic plan it would be something like the subconscious racial memory of Samuel Butler, but it would be a racial experience of habit, form and development, open subconsciously to all members of the species, as in Whately Carrington's group mind, or as in Jung's shared unconscious, if I understand him aright."¹⁹ Then Hardy conceives of "the psychic stream of shared behaviour pattern in the living population" flowing on "in time parallel to the flow of the physical DNA material".²⁰ He continues: "External conditions being equal, those animals with gene complexes which allow a better incarnation of the species plan would tend to survive rather than others whose gene complexes produced less satisfactory versions."²¹ As a general reflection Hardy tells us:

If such a highly speculative concept of a 'racial plan' were true, then the old idea of a 'morph', 'form' or 'archetype' of the preevolutionary transcendentalists... might not seem quite so quaint as we have sometimes thought them; they might

perhaps be the equivalent of what Jung has called the psychological archetype of his shared subconscious in the human species. Again might not the shared subconscious mind, in man, provide some reality for Plato's world of ideas: shared ideas built up with the evolution of conceptional thought?²³

Mention of Plato must make strict Darwinists shudder. But if something akin to Platonism serves science we cannot attend to their idiosyncratic sensibilities. And it is the theory of the "racial plan" that best explains "the secret of homology in face of an ever changing gene complex".²³ This theory also sheds light on the riddle of the Argus-pheasant's precisely articulated and long-persisting splendour of plumage. Such splendour has "all the appearance of a definite mental conception like that of an artist or designer—a pattern outside the physical world—which in some way has served as a template or gauge for selective action".²⁴ The "plan in the group 'mind' indirectly *selects* those gene complexes presenting (in development) its best expression".²⁵ Hardy does not wish to be dogmatic and calls his theory speculation, but he validly remarks that such speculation is "no more fanciful than some of the statements that are made in all the confidence of proven fact by some of our mechanistic biologists—such a statement, for example, as...: 'We now find ourselves...reducing the *decisive controls* of life to a matter of the precise order in which the units are arranged in a giant molecule.'" ²⁶ Hardy is glancing at the substance of a pronouncement by a competent but dogmatic geneticist, F. H. C. Crick.²⁷ It may as well serve to illustrate the general attitude of Monod and all who swear by him.

We do not suggest that Hardy is totally capable of carrying to their ultimate conclusion the implications his speculative genius lays bare in the field of biology. But he goes sufficiently far for the purpose of opening eyes like those of Darwinian extremists. We may again draw upon the reviewer in the *Times Literary Supplement* to finish our survey. He follows up thus from his reference to telepathy and biology:

From this it is not a far step to assert that the living world is as closely linked with theology as it is with physics and chemistry. The feeling of contact with a greater power beyond the self seems to be a fundamental feature in the natural history of man. Sir Alister Hardy believes that science will come to make a second great contribution to natural theology by showing the reality of that part of the universe which is not accessible to the physical senses. It is in this apparently non-material part of the universe that the power called God must lie—some sort of influence to which man can have access in an extra-sensory way by the communicative act called prayer.

Finally, the reviewer eagerly awaits Hardy's second series of Gifford Lectures where the present ideas would be developed, and concludes:

In the meantime he has given us a book in which theologians, philosophers and men of science will alike find stimulating ideas backed by penetrating argument and sound experimental evidence.

(To be concluded)

K. D. SETHNA

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SOME FACTS ABOUT WORDS

I

THERE are between 2,500 and 3,000 known languages in the world. English, spoken by about 225,000,000 people, contains more words than any other language.

The languages spoken by most people in the world are English, Chinese and Swahili.

In Europe, about 600 separate languages and dialects are spoken.

In Russia, one hundred and forty-six different languages are spoken.

The earliest dictionary in the world is Chinese.

There are about 620,448,401,733,239,439,360,000 ways of combining the letters of the alphabet.

Sir Richard Paget has put forward the theory that human speech started from gesture. For example: when a man points upward his mouth opens wide so that we have words like alps, altitude, aloft, etc, indicating height.

Sir Richard has constructed an apparatus which actually pronounces words. It is a metal tube, containing parts which correspond to the human larynx, tongue and palate. The air is blown in by means of bellows, which he works with his foot. The result is that whole syllables can be sounded and, some years ago, Sir Richard's apparatus "broadcast" to the United States. It sounded like the voice of a deaf person. The inventor, who wanted to show that all human speech is crude, believes gesture would be a far more effective means of communication.

Maurice Scaiky of New York worked out a language of eye-winks for paralytics. Patients, who can neither talk, write nor use their limbs to give signs, can indicate the letter of the alphabet by winking.

There are various theories of the origin of speech known as the bow-wow theory, the yo-hi-ho theory and so on. The bow-wow theory gets its name from the supposed descent of human speech from animal sounds. But it isn't a very good name, because most scientists maintain that dogs did not bark, but only howled before they met some men.

Some scientists believe the language of a nation may be responsible for the appearance of its people. Through speech, the parts of the mouth and the throat, the lips, the jaw and other parts of the face near the mouth have changed down the centuries.

Shakespeare used about 24,000 words in his works, about 5,000 of them were used only once. The Authorised Version of the Bible uses 7,200 different words. Samuel Johnson's dictionary (1755) contained about 15,000 words. President Roosevelt, in an after-dinner speech of 1,050 words, in Washington in October 1936, used 325 different words. The vocabulary of the average Englishman is 11,700 words. Only 850 are needed to carry on an ordinary conversation.

The national association of teachers of Speech made out a list of the ten ugly-

est and most unpleasant words in the English language. They were: phlegmatic, crunch, flatulent, cacophony, treachery, sap, jazz, plutocrat, gripe, and plump.

The following word occurs in an American-Indian translation of the New Testament, by John Eliot (1661): Wutapesittukqussunnookwehtunkquoh. It means "kneeling down to him."

The word usually considered the longest in the English language occurs in Shakespeare's *Love's Labour Lost*: it is Honorificabilitudinitatibus.

Thomas Love Peacock, 19th century author, in his novel *Melincourt*, uses this phrase: "A tacitvindication of his Tethrippharmatelasipedioploctypophilous pursuits."

These words cannot compare for length with words used in science, such as the 34-letter Tetramethyldiamidotriphenylmenthone or the 46-letter Ethylbromoke-tohydroxpenthrednicarboxylate.

No wonder chemical and medical terms used by the laymen immediately appear in abbreviated form, such as DDT.

It is said that "scissors" can be spelt in 58,365,440 different ways while retaining its pronunciation. The first sound represented by "sc" in the correct spelling could be rendered by 17 combinations, the second sound by 35, the third by 17, the fourth by 33, and the fifth by 17.

A few years ago the B.B.C. published "Recommendations to Announcers regarding the Pronunciation of some British Family Names and Titles," written by the Secretary of the B.B.C. Advisory Committee on Spoken English. It contains 2,000 names such as Mc Ganghey (pronounced Ochinnarchy), Tyrwitt (pronounced Tirrit), and Pennycuick (pronounced Pennicook). Every announcer has to have this booklet beside him. Difficulties arose with the name Cecil, which the Marquess of Exeter pronounces "Sessell," but the Salisburys "sissil."

One B. B. C. announcer was dismissed for pronouncing "indict" indikt.

2

The following letters were written above a copy of the Ten Commandments in an episcopal chapel in Wales:

**PRSVRYPRFCTMN
VRKPTHSPRCPTSTN.**

It took almost a hundred years to discover the meaning. Only one vowel is needed to make two lines of verse: the letter E.

Persevere, ye perfect men.

Ever keep these precepts ten.

A Polish girl in a cataleptic trance once spoke fluent Latin and Hebrew, neither of which she knew when she was awake. Such cases have occurred frequently, and it

has been suggested that the human mind can receive and radiate matter from unknown sources. But as a rule there is a more logical explanation. William James, the psychologist, tells of a girl, also in a trance, who spoke in a language which none of her friends or relations could understand. Her words were identified as sentences out of the Hebrew Talmud. She had once worked for a Jewish Rabbi, and was probably remembering unconsciously the verses he had spoken.

A German Professor, Ludwig Schutz, was master of 200 languages. He once told a team of Red Indian circus performers, that they were not Sioux, as they said, but Pawnees.

The Red Indians of the American Plains developed a sign language which could easily become a universal language: almost any message can be conveyed by it. It was developed when 10 to 15 tribes speaking different languages came into contact with one another.

The Hung Society in China, consisting of five million people has a secret sign language which enables its members to carry on a conversation unnoticed. The signs consist of hand signs, body postures, and actions like offering cigarettes.

The difficulties of deciphering unknown alphabets of unknown languages are almost insurmountable. Cuneiform (wedge-shaped) writing was deciphered in the early 19th century by the ingenious son of a shoe-maker, named Grotefend. Cuneiform was the system of ciphers started in Asia Minor about 4,000 years B.C. and the writing consisted of a number of vertical and horizontal sharp-edged wedges hewn into stone. Young Grotefend reasoned that the most likely person to make inscriptions was the king, and that his name and title must appear frequently. A seven-lettered word appeared very often, and the names of several Persian kings were known. By September 4th, 1820, Grotefend presented the following translation to the Gottingen Scientific Society: "Darius, the Great King, King of Kings, King of Countries, the son of Hystapes, has built this palace."

To-day any cuneiform inscription can be read without difficulty.

An Englishman in China sent his Chinese servant to buy a pot of glue. He came back with biscuits. In Chinese, there are eight words pronounced GOW of which glue and biscuits are two. The right meaning depends upon the intonation.

The Chinese word SHI has 62 different meanings, a few of which are: a lion, to employ, reply on, a market, poetry, to pass away, solid, a corpse, an army, beginning, etc.

The Chinese symbol for "home" is a pig under a roof; for "wife" a woman with a broom; for "lawsuit," two dogs; and for "to think," the brain and the heart.

French is spoken at an average speed of 350 syllables a minute. English is fairly slow, 220 syllables a minute. German is spoken at the rate of 250 syllables a minute.

Until 1850, every Act of Parliament was supposed to consist of only one sentence, without punctuation. To this day, lawyers use punctuation marks only when they cannot avoid them.

The state of Arkansas once banned Webster's dictionary because they objected

to the appearance of the word "evolutionary."

The expression O.K. was recognised officially when President Wilson used it to initial papers he approved. The Judicial Committee of His Majesty's Privy Council recently legalised its use in these terms: "Inscribing O.K. upon a legal document means that their details contained are correctly given."

RILKE'S DEATH-MASK

INVISIBLE the true country.
 So much he strove and sought
 To find it within himself,
 Unlike another man
 He had no other country.
 So long, so much he gazed
 Contemplated and tried
 To understand its shapes
 Textures and colours, each shade
 Of the landscape appealing
 To him in its own way.
 This was his form of courage—
 To wait. So long he waited!
 When he grew almost ready,
 Ready, that is, for death,
 When he took up and handled words
 As if they were holy things,
 Beauty flew out of his hands
 Like the spirit, leaving him
 Emptied and completed.

Pondicherry, Jan. '76

MARTA GUHA

THE CHARACTER OF LIFE

CONSCIOUSNESS APPROACH TO SHAKESPEARE

(Continued from the issue of February 21, 1977)

3

The Character of Life in *Macbeth*

THE opening scenes of *Macbeth* present an atmosphere of darkness, violent intensity and almost supernatural foreboding. Three witches appear briefly followed by a blood-covered sergeant reporting on the progress of the war. We hear of a rebellion of some Scottish lords against King Duncan and a simultaneous invasion by the Norwegian army. The king's forces led by Macbeth and Banquo display great heroism in combating and defeating the larger armies of their enemies. We find Scotland in a state of strife. The monarchy is threatened from within and without. Opposing forces seek to devour each other and we feel civilisation itself is threatened by the conflict. Each of these impressions contributes to an understanding of the prevailing life situation. A country is at war with itself and its neighbours. The power of the king is challenged. Both these challenges are met successfully but the sense of conflict remains. The witches reappear and we feel something more is at stake than a battle.

Let us try to identify the forces at work. The powerful challenge to Duncan's rule is an indication that his position is weak. The rebellion of his own lords shows a society bound by the rule of the strongest, not by moral principle and the sovereignty of the king. The invasion from abroad suggests the inner conflict has weakened the whole social structure of the country and made it an inviting object for foreign conquest. The appearance of the witches is a sign that the conflict is not merely a surface disturbance but something has released deeper elements from the subconscious levels of the society or perhaps even from other planes of existence. At this point the balance of forces remains in favour of the King's rule and social order. But even news of victory comes from a wounded soldier. "Great happiness!" is the King's response to the news of victory, but there is more of relief than jubilation in it.

The King's position becomes more clear as we proceed. We learn that he is a very good and just man but a weak leader. In Macbeth's own words,

...this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels...

(I.vii. 16)

To his loyal friend Macduff he is "a most sainted king." The war appears to have been motivated simply by the temptation to seize power from a weak ruler. The King has survived not by his own strength but by that of his generals. Immediately the King rewards Macbeth with the title and privilege of Thane of Cawdor. Just how dependent Duncan is on him is expressed by Ross as he greets Macbeth on the King's behalf:

The king hath happily received, Macbeth,
 The news of thy success; and when he leads
 Thy personal venture in the rebel's fight,
 His wonder and his praises do contend
 Which should be thine or his. (I.iii.89)

Ross is expressing the King's conscious or half-conscious recognition that the kingdom rests on Macbeth's strength, not on his own power, and that, in effect, it is Macbeth's victory.

When Macbeth and Duncan meet for the first time after the war, the King expresses his deep gratitude for his general's services and openly states his regret that what he offers in return is insufficient recompense.

...Would thou hadst less deserved,
 That the proportion both of thanks and payment
 Might have been mine! only I have left to say,
 More is thy due than more than all can pay. (I.iv. 18)

The king's recognition here is an awareness of life itself that the present balance of power is precarious. For if one occupying the highest station in the kingdom cannot fully repay a debt to one of lower station but instead is dependent on him for that position, then the arrangement is preserved, on the one hand merely by the force of social values and conventions upholding the sovereignty of the monarch and, on the other, by the strength of Macbeth's loyalty and virtue. Regarding the first of these factors we have already seen that the social fabric is in a state of disruption, that rebellion and treachery have raised their heads powerfully. All indications are that Scotland at this time lacks the cohesive strength of a well-established social organisation. Crude impulses are free to express though inviting a quick response from the forces of the established order which remain dominant. To fully understand Duncan's position we must now examine the second major determining factor, Macbeth's character.

When we first hear of him it is

...brave Macbeth—well he deserves that name—

who faces the rebel hoard and "like valor's minion carved out his passage" killing Macdonwald and who in conjunction with Banquo defeats the Norwegian army in a

bath of blood and death. The impression is one of tremendous courage and power. But soon after we see him on the heath before the witches in a different temper. When they hail him as Thane of Cawdor and King to be, he reacts with fear. Banquo says:

Good sir, why do you start, and seem to fear
Things that do sound so fair? (I.iii.51)

Soon we discover the answer. Macbeth is not only strong and courageous, he is also ambitious; and it seems that the witches have spoken something which stirs a deep chord of response in his being.

...why do I yield to that suggestion
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair
And make my seated heart knock at my ribs?
My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical
Shakes so my single state of man that function
Is smothered in surmise... (I.iii.134)

We immediately understand that it is not the witches' suggestion to which he yields, for they mention nothing about "murder". It is the "black and deep desires" rising in his own mind, the desire to take by force what they say will one day be his.

It is very unlikely that Duncan consciously feared his dependence on Macbeth but it is significant and revealing that he should give to him the title of one who sided with the rebels and has just been denounced as "that most disloyal traitor the Thane of Cawdor." Is it not a subtle perception that Macbeth will follow his example? Immediately the witches' prediction comes to Macbeth's mind:

Glamis, and Thane of Cawdor!
The greatest is behind. (I.iii.6)

and

Two truths are told,
As happy prologues to the swelling act
Of the imperial theme. (I.iii.128)

As we have seen, the position of strength is Macbeth's, but that alone need not lead to murder. Human character does have its say. Had Macbeth possessed feelings of intense loyalty and devotion to Duncan, his enormous strength and will would have been totally at the king's service and not capable of opposition. Instead he feels the direct pressure of life forces compelling him to action, "Forces that move according to the same plane or the same motive power as our lower vital nature."²⁷ His ambition is an open channel for the forces of life in the atmosphere to rush in and express themselves.

But the influence of these forces does not go unchallenged within Macbeth him-

self. It is not loyalty and devotion that opposes them but a sense of fright and horror arising from his own conscience in the form of "horrible imaginings". The outer conflict of forces represented by civil strife and foreign invasion finds a correspondence in Macbeth's inner being. The lure of ambition struggles with a primitive conscience struck by fear. This conscience acts in two ways. In the early stages of his inner struggle it expresses through his thought as a fear of being caught, "If we should fail?", a fear of public reprobation:

We will proceed no further in this business:
 He hath honor'd me of late; and I have bought
 Golden opinions from all sorts of people,
 Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,
 Not cast aside so soon. (I.vii.31)

and as a fear of moral retribution by the forces of life itself:

We still have judgement here; that we but teach
 Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
 To plague the inventor; this even-handed justice
 Commands the ingredients of our poison'd chalice
 To our own lips. (I.vii.8)

Later his conscience assumes more vivid and powerful forms in the vision of the dagger, the voice crying "Sleep no more!", etc.

We have so far been examining some of the major forces active in the opening scenes. There remains one further element requiring our attention, the appearances of the witches and their relationship with the outer conflict of forces and the struggle within Macbeth. The witches are human beings, old women, who delight in mischievous deeds and the suffering of man. We can judge by Banquo's response that their appearance is not a common occurrence as it may have been in earlier times, for initially he is not sure what they are:

...What are these
 So withered and so wild in their attire,
 That look not like the inhabitants o' the earth,
 And yet are on't? (I.iii.39)

What we have here is not simply an experience or an intrusion of supernatural forces into human affairs though the latter of these may have an element of truth in it. Instinctive forces of destruction and evil are the common heritage of all humanity from man's primitive past. As the power of mind over life increases, man learns to control the expression of these forces, suppresses the barbarian in himself and takes

on the aspects of civilised behaviour. Still such forces survive in man's subconscious awaiting an opportunity to emerge. In the course of social evolution, the likelihood of these eruptions is diminished as society becomes more ordered and better organised.

The occasion of war is a natural scene for the most primitive impulses of cruelty and animality to arise in man under the fear, stress and chaos of the situation. But normally the community is bound together by a common cause of self-defense against a common enemy so that the social consciousness of the group is actually intensified and disciplined while the elements of violence and destruction are directed only at the outer threat. In this case Scotland is subject at once to inner rebellion and outer invasion, conditions producing severe disruption of the social life and ones in which the inner integrity of the society is under a double threat. The result is likely to be an unleashing of all man's most primitive instincts.

It is understandable that at such times those elements in the country in sympathy with these instinctive forces should come forth and revel in the violent intensity of their expression. This much can be said with confidence about the witches. It is certainly possible to go further and postulate that they are women possessed by beings from the vital plane seeking to express through them in order to spread disorder and destruction all over the country. But this possibility does not correspond to their actual role in the action. Their main activity is that of prophecy. We never see them acting upon life with a force beyond that of their prophecies to Macbeth. Among themselves they talk of keeping a sailor tempest-tost at sea because his wife refused them chestnuts. But it is not clear whether this is anything more than conversation. Certainly such pranks are hardly the work of very great forces nor of those capable of establishing chaos throughout the land. Still their prophecies do prove true and this suggests some link with the subtle planes. Finally there is the appearance of Hecate who is obviously not human like themselves, but the true presence of a vital being in the guise of the goddess. Still her strength and the extent of her influence over the outer action is difficult to judge.

At any rate these questions are not of primary concern to our study. The important point is that the forces of evil represented by the witches are already present in the subconscious of the society and its members and that they have been set loose in the social life, finding expression in the clash of armies. These same forces are able to find a willing agent in Macbeth not because he consciously identifies with evil or destruction but because they suggest to him a course of action that at first suits his ambition and later confirms his suspicions.

The war, the witches and Macbeth are intimately connected in the course of events. We may note that G. Wilson Knight has considered these connections in great detail but without proposing any underlying principles by which they are inter-related. The war comes as a challenge to the authority of a weak king. The ensuing violence releases deeper impulses of destruction, attractive to beings that thrive on darkness, suffering and death. Macbeth is a chief agent in the war, throwing his strength on the side of the established order. But the seed of ambition within him is

fertile ground for these beings to sow further discord. The evil forces represented by the witches seek to prolong the carnage by their influence over Macbeth who is himself an active force rather than a passive instrument of other forces. Thus we can see that the causes of the events in the opening scenes are multiple and complex, and avoid the over-simplification of attributing all to a single agency such as the witches. Here we have an interaction of individual human character and will; social character and will; evil forces released from the subconscious of an individual and the society; and corresponding forces intruding from the plane of universal life. When we take into account each of these factors and evaluate its strength from the evidence at hand, the action and consequences which follow become intelligible.

We have already referred to the king's meeting with Macbeth where he expresses his deep appreciation for courageous services rendered. Immediately following this Duncan makes a decision which proves to be fatal to him. He decides to travel that very night "From hence to Inverness" to Macbeth's castle and he departs speaking of Macbeth as a "peerless kinsman". This decision does not at all appear inevitable from the preceding events. It is one of those actions which critics label either as dramatic construction or chance occurrence in life. Yet when the reader examines his own feelings regarding this decision he senses that somehow it is a natural, if not inevitable, outcome of the situation. Certainly we would not admire Shakespeare as the greatest of all dramatic poets, a seer of life, if he made such a crucial incident dependent on artifice or inexplicable chance, for a good part of his genius may be attributed to his capacity to perceive and express the movements of life as they are and yet communicate to the reader that all is not "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

Let us then examine further this crucial decision. Social tradition would suggest that the victorious general present himself before the king's court and receive honours for his heroic deeds, for even in victory the general is merely a subject of the sovereign monarch. Here we find Duncan away from his court yet at some distance from the battle. He does not lead his own forces in the war which is a frequent custom of mediaeval kings, but he appears too anxious for the results to remain in his castle. He feels that the fate of his whole kingdom lies in the hands of his generals and he must be close by to the action. As we saw earlier, even after the war has ended Duncan feels his dependence on Macbeth. What expresses here is neither individual nor social character but simply power. Strength attracts, the weaker moves toward the stronger for protection. Duncan is king by convention but the real strength and power lies with Macbeth. The king's decision is an expression of this prevailing balance of forces. Had he suspected Macbeth's plot to kill him he could only have postponed what he had no power to prevent.

What follows afterwards up until the murder is a further working out of these same forces. The outer battle is over, the war within Macbeth increases in intensity. The forces of goodness, virtue, social order and humanity are outweighed by the insistence of evil pressing from within and without. At this point Lady Macbeth appears

for a brief but crucial period. In comparison with Macbeth she is a much smaller personality with little character of her own. The forces pressing him into action find a much easier access and expression in her. She lacks his strength and organisation. When she opens to the forces of evil, the possession is total. All traces of morality and humanity are cast aside. But we cannot lay the responsibility for Duncan's murder solely on her any more than we can attribute the war solely to the initiative of three old witches. Lady Macbeth displays openly and unreservedly the forces at work within her husband and the degraded state of the general atmosphere. The war is over but forces of darkness still walk in the land and find willing agents for their work.

Once the dreadful act is accomplished the truth of this description becomes more apparent. The forces which stirred her to an inhuman resolution and gave her the appearance of a dominating character have exhausted her limited energies. She returns to normalcy and realises what has been done. Her fainting when Duncan's murder is discovered is probably genuine. She continues to support her husband but has lost her active role. Even now we see no signs of stricken conscience in her, only a gradually diminishing intensity which leads to disintegration of her personality, ending in madness and suicide.

(To be continued)

GARRY JACOBS

NOTE

27. Sri Aurobindo, *The Hour of God*, p. 35.

A SHEAF OF SYMBOLS

(Continued from the issue of February 21, 1977)

5

MUSING at times on the Protocol that guides
The various stations and varied movement-modes
Of chessboard pieces in game, I get amused;
The King and Queen have individuality sure;
The One never moving till a 'check' knocks doors,
And the other who has Freedom of all the squares—
Lengthwise, breadthwise, crosswise, one or more;
And Knights-errant (or arrant Knaves?) on either side
Who can hop over your head and can havoc work,
And ponderous elephant-castles at either end,
Who can hardly move, or, moving, run amock!

And then there's a phalanx of full-eight humble pawns,
Looking like blockheads, but blocking indeed the paths
Of far greater worthies, moving but a point ahead,
With blinds on eyes that can only strike askew,
Who readily lay down lives, and cheap glory earn
Of yeoman's service on reaching the furthest end;
But what shall we say of those long-necked mitred Pawns,
(Flanking their majesties to feed their whims?)
Who are ever wedded to their order's Black or White—
Falling sudden, like Wolsey, with hardly a word on lips but: "O
Cromwell, mark my fall!". .

6

Of all the games played on symbolic ground,
There's none so teeming with dramatic turns,
None so fraught with innocent frolic and fun,
None so testing alacrity—acumen,—
As what? Your cricket? No, my Friend, Kho-Kho! ..

For, that's Game Royal of endless rounds of thrill
For all the parties—spectators, players both—
Except perhaps for two statuesque planted Poles
At either row-end, who can neither play nor see,
But can only buttress tiptoe Januses!...

Fain would they fling themselves into the fray—
 And carry off victory, too, within no-time:
 But that they cannot: they are bound by Protocol,
 And have no Active or Passive Voice in play!..

And fain would the runners of the opposite camp,
 Hounded from point to point, like to sit down,
 Glued to some resting place, to recover breath:
 But that they cannot: they have their 'honour', too!...
 'Life's like that', my Friend! when you bid for play
 And enter the arena-lists, and dice are cast,
 You must bide by the Rules of the Game, and bide your time to the
 last!...

CHIMANBHAI

TIME

IN the interstices — there is time.
 There is time to make the great discovery.
 Walking across a field
 Cycling down the hill
 There is time.
 Between this act and the other
 Vast fields of eternity
 Open up within each moment.

There is time
 Time for poems
 For prayers
 Time to open the inner door
 And enter.

Behind the words
 Time widens—time
 To be healed, completed—
 To bathe in floods of silence
 Endlessly.
 Open the door and enter.

SHRADDHAVAN

MILTON'S *PARADISE LOST* & *SAMSON AGONISTES* SIMULTANEOUS COMPOSITIONS

It is universally believed that *Samson Agonistes* is the last poetical composition of John Milton. But it is my opinion that it was written along with *Paradise Lost*. The fact that it was published with *Paradise Regained* does not necessarily denote that it was his last written work. While working on his epic during that long period of seven years he might have worked on the play also.

My observation is based on the several characteristics that *Paradise Lost* and *Samson Agonistes* have in common. In both these works we trace a mood of revolt and rebellion against God's justice. By the time Milton begins his long-expected epic, his disillusionment is complete. He has lost faith in the glory of his nation and, to a certain extent, even in Cromwell's administration. He is obsessed with melancholy ideas and in this mood he doubts even the justice of God. *Paradise Lost* records this doubting and his ultimate acquiescence in God's justice. The same is true of *Samson Agonistes*. In the very opening lines of the play we observe Samson doubting God's ways and finding fault with His Justice. But gradually he becomes more and more reconciled to his lot and concludes,

let me not rashly call in doubt
Divine Prediction;— (S. A. 43-44)

The chorus ends with the same note, for it observes,

Tax not divine disposal.

It discusses the problem of God's justice elaborately in the speech commencing with,

Just are the ways of God,
And justifiable to Men;
Unless there be who think not God at all,
If any be, they walk obscure; (S. A. 293-296)

With such lines interspersed all through the play we come to the final summing up of the problem when the Chorus says,

All is best, though we oft doubt
What th' unsearchable dispose
Of highest wisdom brings about,
And ever best found in the close. (S. A. 1745-1748)

These concluding lines of the play clearly reveal the reconciliation of Milton to God's ways of dealing justice to mankind. Milton at this period of his life seems to have experienced some spiritual awakening.

We have the same puzzling problem presented in both these works. When we read *Paradise Lost* a simple question crops up, "Why did not God prevent Adam from being corrupted?" Manoa feels the same about Samson, for he says,

Alas methinks whom God hath chosen once
To worthiest deeds, if he through frailty err,
He should not so o'erwhelm, and as a thrall
Subject him to so foul indignities,
Be it but for honour's sake of former deeds. (S. A. 368-372)

This is a natural reaction that one experiences as one reads these works. One is for a time perplexed and may even find the ways of God inexplicable. Only Milton's belief in free will and the essential dignity of man will enable us to understand the intricacies of this problem. Free will, according to Milton, is nothing but the service of God.

In a peculiar way the central figures in both these works fail to fulfil their duty of obeying God. Adam betrays the trust of God, overwhelmed by his excessive fondness for Eve. Consequently, his fall is due to the blinding of reason by passion. In the same way, Samson is himself the root cause of his fall. His inordinate liking for Dalila makes him indifferent to the will of God. By confiding in Dalila he breaks his vow and hence undergoes untold misery. In his penitential mood he says,

But I God's counsel have not kept, his holy secret
Presumptuously have published, impiously,
Weakly at least, and shamefully: A sin
That Gentiles in their Parables condemn
To their abyss and horrid pains confin'd. (S. A. 497-501)

Closely allied to this test of obedience is the conception of virtue. By virtue Milton does not mean the withdrawal from all sources of temptation. On the contrary, he means the active association of a person with temptations, yet having the power to resist them. He expresses this idea all through his works, but with special emphasis in *Paradise Lost* and *Samson Agonistes*. In the latter he says,

But vertue which breaks through all opposition,
And all temptation can remove,
Most shines and most is acceptable above. (S. A. 1050-1052)

Another striking parallel between these two works is the idea that patience is

a heroic virtue. By the time Milton is writing these two works, he is seen to be admiring most the calm, passive force in man. The Samson he presents is not the fighter but one who is no longer susceptible to the flattering words of Dalila. Life in prison has taught him patience and with an almost unfaltering faith in God he regains his strength. In both *Paradise Lost* and *Samson Agonistes* Milton states unhesitatingly that patience is a heroic virtue. The introductory lines in Book IX in *Paradise Lost* and the following lines from *Samson Agonistes* illustrate this quite clearly. The Chorus refers to this idea on two different occasions. It declares,

Many are the sayings of the wise
 In ancient and in modern books enroll'd;
 Extolling Patience as the truest fortitude; (S. A. 652-654)

and on another occasion it adds:

But patience is more oft the exercise
 Of saints, the trial of their fortitude,
 Making them each his own Deliverer,
 And Victor over all
 That tyrannie or fortune can inflict (S. A. 1287-1291)

Adam and Samson are not tragic heroes in the strictly Aristotelian sense. According to Aristotle a tragic hero is one who falls from the heights of happiness and glory to the depths of misery and degradation. Adam falls from divinity, from an elysian bliss to human suffering. But very soon he rises again through his faith in God. The fitting close of the poem indicates the inward ripening and the spiritual enlightenment that Adam and Eve possess while leaving Paradise. This sort of tranquil close is found in *Samson Agonistes* also. From the state of a great hero Samson goes down to the level of a slave, of a drudge at the mill. But he rises again when he becomes indifferent to the blandishments of Dalila. The fall in both Adam and Samson is of the same type and for the same reason too. It is based on the betrayal of the trust of God and they are entirely responsible for their fall. But when once they realise their mistakes and believe in God they attain perfection. This conception of heroism as revealed in Samson and Adam is typical of Milton in a certain period. With the son of God in *Paradise Regained* there is a different idea. He never falls and he is above all temptations. So in this respect *Paradise Regained* differs from these two works.

The conception of God as Light is found in *Samson Agonistes* as well as in *Paradise Lost*. Samson's opening soliloquy and the invocation to Light in the third book of *Paradise Lost* clearly illustrate this. Prof. Dobrée writes, "Whenever Milton touches upon light he is profoundly moved: he knows that God is light; for his own experience has taught him so."

Over and above these similarities in 'thought existing between these two works there are some other striking resemblances purely of a subjective nature. In both of these works we feel the presence of the poet and realize how greatly he is afflicted. In *Paradise Lost* he says,

though fall'n on evil dayes,
On evil dayes though fall'n and evil tongues;
In darkness, and with dangers compast round,
And solitude; (P. L. Bk. VII-25-28)

thereby giving vent to his innermost feelings of bitterness and misery. The same note is reflected in *Samson Agonistes*. After complaining of his loss of sight, Samson concludes,

But made hereby obnoxious more
To all the miseries of life,
Life in captivity
Among inhuman foes. (S. A. 106-109)

Undoubtedly, Samson is to be identified with Milton. Both of them believe that God has intended them for doing some good for humanity, for achieving something noble. But both of them are disappointed in their beliefs. The mood of dejection is clearly visible in both *Paradise Lost* and *Samson Agonistes*. It is but natural that Milton should feel so bitter and disappointed in this period, for on the 13th of August, 1660 a proclamation was issued by Charles II, "And whereas the said John Milton and John Godwin are both fled, or so obscure themselves, that no endeavours used for their apprehension can take effect, whereby they might be brought to legal trial, and deservedly receive condigne punishment for the treasons and offences..." We can visualise how precarious Milton's life must have been under such circumstances. These two works written in this troublesome period consequently bear references to the poet's turbulent mood and become subjective. But by the time he begins to write *Paradise Regained* conditions are more settled and his personal safety is ensured. His life is no longer endangered. He secures mental calm and spiritual peace and in this period he writes *Paradise Regained* with a sort of detachment. The self of the poet does not intrude into the content of the poem, at least not to such an extent as it does in the other two works. Probably, *Paradise Regained* is the least subjective of all his compositions.

Another similar element in these two works is the poet's repeated references to his blindness. He probably felt the loss of sight very keenly at this time. If both the epic and the play were written at the same time, we should expect that he would mention his blindness in both these works. By the time he took up *Paradise Regained* he was perhaps accustomed to his blindness or had become almost pathetically resigned to his misery. Another instance of this subjective element is the con-

tempt shown for women in both *Paradise Lost* and *Samson Agonistes*.

We may also imagine that *Samson Agonistes* is an indirect hint that blind Milton will ultimately triumph over the Royalists as the blind Samson does over the Philistines. Only a few months before the Restoration, Milton is still hopeful that God will protect the Commonwealth, for he writes to Oldenburg, "But I hope that God will not permit the machinations and assaults of our enemies to succeed as they desire on His own account and for His own glory, which is now at stake, whatever disorders kings and cardinals may plot and desire." (December 20th, 1659 Westminster)

Probably, he retains at least a part of this faith for a few years even after the Restoration. But by the year 1666 he shows no such faith. On the other hand, he begins to accept his defeat, for he writes to Peter Heimbach, "One of those virtues, however, has not requited me very handsomely for my hospitality. For the virtue you call statesmanship (but which I would rather have you call loyalty to my country), after captivating me with her fair sounding name, has, so to speak, almost left me without a country." (London, August 15th, 1666). So the play might have been begun before 1666; before he had completely lost faith in his statesmanship.

Let us consider the general tone of these two works. As we read *Samson Agonistes* we feel that Milton is still in the same mood as he has been while writing *Paradise Lost*. But in *Paradise Regained* there is suggestion of his confidence in God's justice. There is no questioning, no doubting. It appears as though Milton were believing with the disciples in *Paradise Regained* that the Lord will never fail to help mankind. If *Samson Agonistes* was written after *Paradise Regained* it is inconceivable that the poet who has shown such implicit faith in God's justice should again be doubting it, as is shown in the opening lines of *Samson Agonistes*.

But as *Samson Agonistes* is a drama it may be argued that Milton in his old age is writing this, surveying as it were his own past experiences. He may be supposed to be saying that he, Samson, has undergone a period of doubt and despair from which he has recovered through faith in God. Argued in this manner, the conflict presented in *Samson Agonistes* may be reconciled with the accepted notion that it is the last poetical work of Milton. It may also be pointed out that in a play like *Samson Agonistes* we need not look for any personal element. But to me it appears as though *Samson Agonistes* were expressing the intensely felt emotions of Milton. His agonised cry is clearly heard through Samson's pathetic references to his state of blindness. It is the outcry not of a man looking back at his bitter experiences with a calm resignation, but of one who is actually struggling against personal discomfort and unhappiness at the time of writing. Some of the passages referring to Samson's blindness are as poignant and personal as Shelley's *Ode to Dejection*. A person portraying his misery long after the event is over will never be able to give expression to such piercing and heart-rending outbursts of grief as we find in *Samson Agonistes* and *Paradise Lost*.

No doubt, *Paradise Lost* begins with the solemn note of justifying God's ways to men. But it seems as though Milton is struggling to come into a mood. The first two books with all their eloquent speeches of Satan challenging God and upholding liberty

are in no way unnatural. It is the love of liberty in Milton that is forcibly expressed in these speeches. But gradually Milton comes out of this mood of doubt and dedicates himself solely to right duty, the duty to acquiesce in God's justice. In *Samson Agonistes* also we find the same conflict and reconciliation, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that these two works with all their stress on God's justice give us an idea of Milton's mental state at that period of his life. He is torn asunder between his belief in the essential dignity of man and his awareness of man's duty to worship God. The spiritual unrest which he is actively experiencing comes out in both these works. But in *Paradise Regained* we find equipoise of thought, a serenity of expression, a philosophic attitude towards life. This would surely be his mental state at the close of his life when he became more reconciled to his disappointments and when he had greater faith in God's ways. *Samson Agonistes* with its spirit of questioning is more compatible with the spirit of *Paradise Lost*.

Samson Agonistes is purely Greek in spirit and it is Hellenic tragedy restored. In *Paradise Regained* Milton speaks lightly of Greek culture. This has been a perplexing problem to most scholars. They wonder why he should disapprove of it, when in *Samson Agonistes* he again follows the Hellenic tradition. The answer will be clear if we assume that *Samson Agonistes* was written earlier than *Paradise Regained*. If we take the latter as his last poetical composition, we can easily assume that by that time he had come to an almost ascetic stage when he had lost all interest in worldly things. It would then be no wonder that he should lose all his former enthusiasm for the display of his vast erudition in Greek and Latin literatures. If we accept the general view that the play was his last work, its inconsistency with *Paradise Regained* cannot be explained.

It remains to be seen why Milton did not make any mention of *Samson Agonistes* while offering *Paradise Lost* to Ellwood for his perusal. Presumably he did not attach much importance to his play. Ellwood was introduced to Milton in 1662. By that time *Paradise Lost* was already in progress. We might as well imagine that *Samson Agonistes* also was begun about that period. But it was never intended for the stage and it had nothing in common with the Restoration plays. Milton, I believe, wrote it for his own satisfaction, to find relief in expressing his painful personal experience through Samson. So it was possible that he kept it to himself. Later, encouraged by the success of *Paradise Lost* he might have been tempted to send it along with *Paradise Regained* for publication. This would explain why *Samson Agonistes* appears with the latter epic.

To conclude, *Paradise Regained* is the reflection of Milton's mental peace and philosophic calm, gained after boldly facing the ills of life. It is unreasonable to suppose that the poet who has once revealed such equanimity of temperament should ever again lose it, and then produce the play whose tumultuous spirit is similar to that of *Paradise Lost*.

ADARSH BALA

THE FROG STORY

You've all heard about the frog that turns into a princess when you kiss her. It's not something one often thinks of when the story books are closed and passed on to your sister's children and it's not something that I'd often thought about. Perhaps I'd never thought about it at all. I didn't even think about it the first time I saw a small green smooth frog hopping from one white tile to another in my kitchen one evening.

I was having a late snack, just a little cucumber and mayonnaise sandwich. I was overeating, compensating as they say. I can't say I remember having been really hungry when I made myself the sandwich. In fact I don't even remember making it. I think it was just something to do. I do remember I'd had a rather dull evening reading a novel in which a man gets himself into all sorts of improbable situations with a woman. I had not been able to follow it. It was supposed to be a very exciting story, very amusing but it had made me yawn a lot. It struck me as repetitious and sad. The fact was that I had just lost my own love. Nothing tragic. She hadn't died. She hadn't proved untrue as they say. She simply told me two weeks before that I didn't have what it took. And I knew it to be true. I'd always felt inadequate and now I knew it. But the world had become very stale and I think the first thing that had woken my interest was the sight of that little green frog hopping along, hugging the wall and then the kitchen cupboards and suddenly stopping on the threshold. They say, don't they, that frogs can see without turning their heads. I suppose so, for they have no necks to speak of. I had no way of knowing whether she had paused to look at me. But I know I was still smiling when she had disappeared into the dark of my garden.

On the following evening I had gone to the theatre and I went into the kitchen for a glass of milk before going to bed. And when I turned on the lights there she was. I had completely forgotten about her. And even now I told myself it might well be one of her relatives. The marking on her back and legs looked familiar. I'm an artist and have good visual recall but of course you can't be sure. I now resolved to memorise the markings. You may think that I went into the kitchen the next evening with a sense of anticipation. But I don't think I went in at all. And after that I went away for the week end.

It was on the Monday night. I'd had a dreadful week end. I hadn't been able to enjoy anything and I kept on hearing what Lorna had said to me on the phone that last time, "You've got an incompetent heart." I knew it was probably true since she wasn't the first to say so. I even supposed it had something to do with my failed week end. But what did it mean, an incompetent heart? Was it the sort of trouble that could be cured? Lorna apparently had thought not. There was no doubt that life was much worse without her. I missed her but could not say whether that was a sign of heart competence. I had finished cutting the bread and was going to the refrigerator for the butter and the mayonnaise when something made me look down. There was my frog, squatting almost underfoot and still as a stone. In fact if I hadn't lifted my foot I think I would have squashed her. The thought was naturally very repulsive, specially as it



was accompanied by the visual image of what my tiles would look like and what I would have to do to make them look white and shining again. So I said, "Look, I've got enough on my mind without having to worry about murdering frogs." She lifted her head at that and I could see her wide white throat. It was rather beautiful. I then looked at her markings and recognised a spade-shaped greenish brown one just about where the head ends and the back begins though of course this isn't very clearly defined in a frog. I knew very little about frogs and had no idea of whether this was a common trait or not in certain species. But I felt it was my frog.

"Are you my frog?" I said. "Anyhow I've just saved you from a very nasty end," and I added bringing my foot down carefully so as not to startle her, "You owe me..." I was going to say allegiance but I stopped because I realised that I was speaking to a frog which was, I supposed, not a good sign. Besides which she appeared to me to be looking and listening, undoubtedly an even worse sign. I went to the refrigerator and finished making my sandwich but I didn't eat it as on other nights, the way one eats a late snack alone in the kitchen. It was as though ... in fact I wasn't alone. She was watching me. From the corner between the window and the cupboard. I felt no need for the sandwich but to have put it back in the refrigerator would have been an admission of something.... "What big eyes you have, Froggy," but it sounded absolutely wrong. I had said it to joke us out of the situation. The frog princess held her ground admirably. Her eyes bulged at me. Her white throat gleamed. I felt...incompetent. There in that very region in which I had been accused of incompetence. Obviously all very subjective but I couldn't finish my sandwich so I trimmed it and threw the scraps to my companoin. I had no idea of what frogs eat but she went on staring at me and I knew that my gesture had been gross. She began hopping towards the door. Graceful hops. She paused on the threshold as a woman does, giving you a last chance to apologise. I would have stopped her if I'd known how. But it's the very moment when I always say the wrong thing, make a joke which I regret afterwards. After a while she hopped into the garden. I followed her. It was a moon night. For a moment she stood phosphorescent against a tree. Her hands, her front legs really one should say, were lifted and she looked as though she knew things and understood things in a human way. She paused there and I was strangely moved. Moved as though I had become a child again. An owl hooted. It said, "Woo her woo her." I had entered a magic world. And the tears came down my cheeks. Quite soon the frog was no longer there. She must have hopped into a shadow. I stood in the garden, perhaps waiting for her to come back. She wouldn't of course not tonight and probably not ever. I forced myself to go back into the kitchen. The spell was still on me but by the time I had thrown the scraps away and wiped the tile with a wet cloth I was merely disturbed about my condition. A man of thirty-eight weeping at sight of a frog. Perhaps it was an aesthetic experience? But that was just what it was not. I was always having those. Perhaps I shouldn't live alone. Perhaps I should advertise for a companion or buy a dog. Perhaps I should see someone about my condition.

By next morning it was all gone. I woke up feeling better than usual perhaps because I was amused by my involvement of the night before. As I shaved I even went into a self-parodying fantasy about meeting the frog in her dressing gown at breakfast. So that was all right and that's what I thought again when I stepped out into the garden which was all morning-red and yellow and orange with no trace of mystery or phosphorescence.

That day I resolved a picture with which I had got stuck for almost a week and I even started a new one, which in the afternoon is a rare thing for me to do. Only when the light went did I begin to clean my brushes. I was whistling, which was a rare thing too. I was about to dip a brush into turpentine when a piece of handboard which I had used as palette several pictures ago caught my eye. And my eye caught a picture in the blobs and shapes. Without thinking I saved the paint brush from the turpentine and began to work on the blobs. I drew back and saw that I had done a quaint little picture of a tree, a moon, an owl and . a frog. I slowly put the brush into the turpentine and I am quite sure I stopped whistling. I was pensively wiping my hands when I realised that it must be that this fantasy or illness or whatever could not seize me by day. I was not yet frightened but I had to work things out, of course. You see, I was an abstract painter, geometrica, clear colours. I liked clarity. I hadn't done anything like the picture on the handboard since my student days. Oh it was a charming picture but I'd painfully built up a clientele for my sort of picture and obviously Kurt Furstenburg, the owner of my gallery who'd helped me do so, wasn't going to be at all happy if I started bringing him little animal pictures no matter how charming they were.

By the time I went home through the little glassed-in gallery that separates my studio from my house I was tempted to go through the kitchen to see if she was waiting. I said to myself, "Your very livelihood depends on putting a stop to it." This sort of phrase has its own sort of magic. I decided to have a bath and go out for dinner then to a show and come back very late. I would have a snack somewhere before coming home. I would phone a friend. In fact I phoned Kurt and we spent a very enjoyable evening and he came home with me for a drink. I went into the kitchen with no other thought than that of getting the sodas and the lime juice. We spoke, Kurt and I, pictures and sales, into the wee hours and when he was gone and I took glasses back I wondered whether she had been there, whether she had waited for me. And I felt like crying.

I left the kitchen. And I did; I wept myself to sleep.

I woke up released from my inexplicable grief but wary. In the studio I told myself that if I surrounded myself with friends all the time I could not be seized by this inexplicable...I left a blank. To name it might lend it strength. I could not be seized unless alone and after nightfall. By the end of the afternoon I had come to the obvious conclusion. The only way of warding off another encounter was to get someone to come and live with me. But who?

Another Lorna? I could hear her contemptuous echo. She was right. It could

not be done, not like that. Not even my heart was that incompetent. Besides I could imagine trying to organise my life so that I should never for one moment be alone after nightfall. Hell. Nothing less than some farcical hell.

No. I wouldn't do that. I would face it out alone. Frogs didn't have a very long life span I thought I'd heard. If necessary I could always go and see a psychiatrist.

That evening she was there at the usual time.

"What do you want?" I asked her. She looked at me with her protruding eyes. In the absence of an answer your voice comes back to you. In the silence of my kitchen with only the low hum of the old refrigerator, mine came back to me defensive. Her eyes weren't very attractive. They bulged. In fact human standards ... but it was best not to think about these. My business was to find out what she had come into my life for, why it was now so disturbed, what was expected of me.

We looked at each other for a long time. All the fairy tale rules came into my head and with them the notion that she wanted me to kiss her. At this she gave a small croak, the first sound she had made in my presence. Whether it was encouragement or its opposite I had no way of knowing. But suddenly the owl's message came to me and I knew that I had to go through with this thing.

"You see, Froggy...." I stopped because it didn't seem a complimentary form of address. "You see, I'm not very good at this sort of thing even with my own species. You probably know that," for as I spoke it seemed certain that she must know all about me. Woo you, the owl said. Yes, but how? "If I've never really known with a girl, is it likely I'll do better with you?" She gave another tiny croak but since she didn't hop away I went on. "I don't know what it is. Perhaps the good fairy who gives out this talent wasn't invited to my christening. Perhaps...." It seemed too improbable...to say, "Perhaps that's what you came to do something about?" The white tiles gleamed very brightly, the jars on the shelf bulged. Everything swam before my eyes. Was it possible that a frog would succeed where a string of psychotherapists and a series of beautiful and intelligent girls had failed? "Is that what you came for?" Anticipation rose in me. I could already see myself phoning Lorna, hear myself saying, "I'm cured." At this she began hopping towards the door. I knew immediately what I'd done wrong. You don't woo anybody, not even a...well, you don't woo anybody by thinking of somebody else. No, wait. Give me another chance. I made a crazy lunge and cannoned off a cupboard towards the sink. She hopped neatly away and paused on the threshold. "I'm sorry," I said. "I'm a lout. Perhaps I don't..." What I had been about to say seemed too absurd even in my confusion. My wrist which had received a nasty bang began to hurt. I had been about to say, "Perhaps I don't deserve you." She waited on the threshold. Perhaps waiting for me to finish the sentence. But I couldn't.

So she hopped out into the night again. And I took a few steps into the garden. This time I wanted to see if she really hopped into the shadows or just disappeared like a figment of my mind or a magic frog. She was near a tree again and I felt something deliciously cosy and at the same time I felt great anxiety. Amidst all this I told

myself to watch, to keep my eyes skinned. She did not go away this time. She was nearer than before and next to a different tree. She now turned to look at me. I cannot say why but I was indescribably moved. Now the tears started welling immediately and neither did I want to keep my eyes skinned nor would it have been possible to do so through the tears.

I don't know what her look implied to me: reproach, compassion? I do know that more than anything else in the world I did not want her to disappear and in that moment I knew that...I was forced to know that...I was in love with her.

Then she was gone and it was of no consequence whether she had hopped away or disappeared into the air. She was gone. And that was what mattered, for I felt completely alone.

The next morning was to show that she could occupy my days as well as my nights, for I woke up thinking of her and I thought of her in a way that I had never thought of anything or anyone before. I went through my morning routine lingeringly, smiling to myself, not at all anxious to get to my studio as I usually was. The kitchen, when I got my breakfast, was full of her presence. I heard myself speaking to her as I had the night before. And I realised with a shock that I had never been quite so frank with anyone before. It turned to a shock of delight and when I remembered her small croak, my heart turned over, but quietly, as a man turns carefully in order not to disturb a delicious dream. I worked and ate and rested in a mood of quiet happiness and tranquil anticipation. It was only as evening came that I found my pulse racing from time to time, and when I heard the croak in my head or rather in my heart it released a stream of sweet knowledge so that it no longer seemed a seat of incompetence at all but the centre of my being. I had worked more slowly today but I was pleased. There was a lyrical quality to my colours and to everything I looked at. The trees and the garden sang and even my brushes and rags spoke to me.

It was at ten o'clock that I went into the kitchen, much earlier than usual. She wasn't there. Nothing alarming in that. I seldom went in for my late snack before eleven. But at eleven she was still not there. And my uneasiness turned into fear. At eleven thirty for the first time mere loneliness turned into complete loneliness. I kept on going into the garden. The bands of trees slipped away into the darkness as usual bluish-green, greyish-green. But there was no magic in it now, only a grey emptiness and the thought came to me that if only I knew her name perhaps I could call her. Something seemed to respond to that. Whether from her or inside me I could not be sure. Certainly it wasn't my heart which gave a small snicker and asked whether I wasn't mixing my fairy stories most horribly. And it was rather the Rumpelstilskin theme, for where was I going to find her name?

The summer night was full of the sound of frogs and crickets and I listened intently in case any were calling. I was sure that though I didn't know the name I would recognise it if I heard it. It was thus that I kept on falling into a doze sitting on the kitchen chair which I had placed near the threshold to the garden.

And then suddenly she was there near my feet, very small and very beautiful, more beautiful than I could ever have imagined and she spoke to me, not in croaks but in words, in words such as no human has ever spoken to me. And she told me her name. After that we were able to talk in a new and intimate way with all barriers down. When I opened my eyes she was not there but my head had fallen forward and I was looking at the tile on which she had been sitting. For a moment I was bewildered, wondering whether I had suddenly developed transparent lids such as frogs possess, but it seemed after a moment or two that I had merely fallen asleep. The bitterness of this was only tempered by the belief that she had come to me in any case and that now although it would not come to my tongue I nevertheless knew her name. I remembered the light as it shone on her back there where the spade-shaped marking was and for a moment the name nearly came to me; I felt it rush to my tongue, hit my palate, like a wave and then it was smashed to foam.

I slept and then woke and slept again. And at two o'clock I got up and went to bed. I left the lights on in the kitchen as a signal for her. I thought she would understand. Nevertheless there was a desolation even in sleep, as though I were waiting for the small beat of the soundless hop. And when I woke I was still waiting for it. Once during the night the boiler had started making knocking noises. But there had been no true sounds as there were none now, and I had forgotten her name.

In the studio I turned out fairy tale illustrations all day. I did think of Kurt once or twice but I couldn't help it. Every time I tried to get back to my big canvas a great revulsion arose in me. There was nothing I could do about it. Yet what was the use? What would I do if she left me stranded high and dry, if she never came back? I was neither completely with her and probably never would be until I could say her name nor could I seem to continue in my old life. The idea of phoning any of my friends repelled as much as my old pictures. I couldn't live alone like this...; neither in one world nor in the other. Nor could I go back to the old. What was left but to find her name again?

And then when I was cleaning my brushes and looking at a picture that I had done of her on the kitchen threshold, pausing as she always did to give me time to do or say the thing I never could, I heard her asking me the question:

"Would you be willing to move into my world?"

I cannot pretend I wasn't startled. And yet in another way it was as though I had been waiting for this all along. If I were to give her the proverbial kiss, it would have to be from love, not as one kisses a puppy dog. And yet hadn't I already entered her world—by renouncing friends, by choosing solitude to be with her, by painting her sort of picture? "What is it you want?" I asked. "That I should come and live in the garden? I can't catch flies like a frog. I would die. There are all sorts of things that I need in order to survive." I tried to imagine myself living in the garden and coming into the house for pyjamas and a tooth-brush and a baked potato which I would eat with her under a tree while she caught insects on her sticky tongue.

She disdained to answer this and I knew this wasn't what she was asking at

all. At last I gave in.

"You want me to become a frog!" My tone must have been astonished as well as enquiring because suddenly she was gone, and though all day I pleaded with her to return and discuss this with me there was no sign of her. I was entirely incapable of working. I went into my studio several times but nothing happened.

That night I went into the kitchen at ten o'clock and she was there. "Look," I said, "you have turned all the stories upside down. I love you and I can't live without you. But in the stories he kisses the frog and she turns into a beautiful princess. Can't you do that?" She would not answer. "I would settle for a freak, a fat woman in a carnival or anything."

There was a long reproachful silence.

"You mean that I have to turn into a frog? Actually and really a frog and no fairy tale about it?" She looked at me and did I imagine it or did her eyes bulge with compassion for me and my predicament? For a moment I tried to imagine what it would mean, giving up everything forever, the studio, the bath and the hot water, the cosy little dinners, the exhibitions and critics and the million things that went to make up my life as a man. How would it feel to be now, suddenly and immediately turned into a small spotted frog and hop neatly out of the door with my love? To find myself croaking contentedly beside the pool at the foot of the garden? Why, yes, to swim together between reeds and then bask in the sun again? But it was none of these things so much as being always with her. Always always. Of course, and what else was there to do when the alternative was to lose her, for I was sure that that was just what would happen if I failed now? I took a deep breath. With darkness descending on me, and feeling like a man close to death I said, "Yes."

And as I said it I collapsed onto the kitchen chair trying to see her through the mist that clouded my eyes. I knew her name at last. I wish I could write it for you. It is so beautiful it would bring tears to your eyes but I myself who never forget her can only recall it when my heart is brimming over and this does not happen while I speak to others. For a moment I was no longer myself, but something else. Then she came hopping towards me. She hopped onto my foot, then up my leg, onto my hand (she was dry and pleasant to the touch), up my arm and onto my shoulder. She kissed me on the cheek. Blindly I turned my face towards her. She kissed each eye. Then she kissed my forehead.

When I opened my eyes again she had jumped down to the floor and this time she did not stop at the threshold.

When I got to the garden door she was gone. The trees were there, the owl was there but she was not. I knew I would never see her again because she had made me a prince, whether a prince of frogs or not I cannot say. It does not much matter, I no longer make the distinction. But I bear the seal. On my cheek, on my forehead and on each eyelid I have a little white leaf-shaped welt. Kurt no longer exhibits my paintings. I am a happy man.

I would like to get in touch with anybody bearing similar marks.

MAGGI



DIALOGUES

(Continued from the issue of February 21, 1977)

Synopsis:

The voyaging soul returns to life as Martine, a young Parisian in prerevolutionary France. In keeping with the times, the girl is caught up in the revolutionary fervour and mental idealism of the age, and agitates through her own writings for the downfall of the monarchy. But virtually on the eve of that very downfall, she is overcome by a sense of recoil, and flees the city to seek solace in the peace of the countryside.

Chapter XIV

By early morning, Martine was already well out of Paris, half staggering, half walking with exhaustion, but free of all conflict, all involvement, all part in pain and death and destruction.

From then on she found her way from farm house to farm house, village to village—not quite knowing where in the end she wished to stay, nor wanting to remain anywhere she had been before. Almost everywhere she heard alarming reports from the capital—all the reports she had known would come: all that represented the violent end of one world and the blood-smearred birth of another. But as she wandered on she scarcely even needed to ask herself any more where her revolutionary ardour had gone. She knew it had gone to the same graveyard where all things go that have served their purpose. Now the revolution was here, she felt superfluous to it. Man would be free, he would enjoy a new life of abundance unworried by monarchical oppression, none would now dictate the fate of another. Oh God, it had all come at last just as she had always dreamt it would. But somehow in the anticipation of that coming Martine had burnt out all the fire of her heart. Now nothing remained but a profound fatigue and a shimmering fairy-like image in her mind of her night in Versailles, symbolic of the hated yet magical thing that had been destroyed forever. It was an image whose soft, exotic tones were for her dyed with sorrow and a nostalgia that wept silently during the darkest hours of the night. Not her tears, for she did not feel it as a personal sorrow, but the tears of everything that had fallen and died and that now wept through her. For she had opened herself to that sorrow, so poignantly had she been impressed on that fateful night she had danced before the most brilliant court on earth.

After many weeks of a random stumbling from place to place, Martine found her destination in a remote corner of the countryside undisturbed by contact with any highway or thoroughfare, city or even provincial town. It was thus in the merest, least accessible farm that she found a place—a rough woodsman's cottage to herself and a modicum of food in exchange for a number of chores she would

perform daily around the farm. The aging family that lived there, taciturn both by habit and nature, could have come upon no helper more suited to their tastes. Martine was the very type of hermit whom they found the most congenial. Except for the bare necessities of human exchange, she left them alone and they her.

But in her solitude, Martine began to have strange dreams and intimations. Had she not in fact led this phase of her life once before? Visions superimposed themselves, dream upon reality, reality upon dream. In the actuality of her life, there were forests beyond the verges of the farm, where she wandered for hours alone. Those of her visions and dreams were only slightly different but charged always with an atmosphere—a presence—a strange ecstasy that was coloured somewhere in its depths by a nameless pain. How similar they both were, the living forest and the dream one, yet always with that nuance of difference, for her present existence was surely not the same as the one in her dreams. The two images, if placed one upon the other, did not, after all, perfectly fit. And that presence! Why in the visions was it always so clear, and why in this present actuality so blurred, so dim, so reluctant to appear? There, in dream, when the fog crept through the trees it was as if the arms and fingers of the invisible beloved were reaching forward to embrace her and all around her. Here the fog in its heavy stealth seemed on the contrary to be mocking her with its obscuring veil. Whereas in vision the rain caressed her, here it lashed down as though to drive her into hiding. Yet sometimes on a spring day, even here would she see a glimpse of that same ineffable smile that had greeted her during the delicate splendour of the same season in that other forest, that other time of which her dreams and visions spoke. For those brilliant moments the veil would seem to part, and she would come face to face again with the primeval reality, the primeval truth of being which nature seemed to guard as her special province, her special secret.

Simultaneously, Martine learned once more to yearn—a yearning in which dream and reality became a fantastic and occasionally gorgeous jumble. It was a jumble in which the reality intermingled with an exotic, other-worldly spectacle of colour and feeling and movement; in which a humble, present-day living interlaced with that of an ancient, oriental myth, a fairy-tale wonder that flitted in and out of her consciousness from some unplumbed past, not to speak of a more recent evening in Versailles where magic had lived in her for one marvellous, evanescent hour.

Almost unconsciously at times her feet would move to the steps she had performed and that evoked in her being the heady word: magic... of another world, another creation of an unimagined beauty. Yet how few were the steps she knew, how poor and limited the movements, when in actuality she wanted to fly, to soar, to leap and suspend herself in that air that somehow seemed most to contain the Presence of her visions. At rare moments, even music would come to her, a music never heard before—music as fantastic and splendid as her visions and her remembrances from another time, as her desire to dance in a setting redolent with magic.

Nevertheless, the more her aspiration grew light and beautiful, the more she dreamt, and the more her inner spaces sang to her, the older her physical body became. Indeed she aged with an unusual rapidity. Her feet dragged, even as she dreamt of flying. Her face wrinkled into a pattern of unexpressed sorrow and longing. Her joints grew rheumatic, her hands knotted. And her hair whitened before turning to that palest yellow which marks extreme old age. Martine made no effort to resist the process of aging. Nor, on the other hand, did she welcome it. She watched its invasion of her body with an uncomplaining, child-like passivity, even as far as the day when she became bed-ridden and had to be cared for by the sons and daughters-in-law of her one-time employers.

Then one morning after what seemed to be an aeon of waiting and lingering in infirmity, her being drew silently away. Oddly, for once, she was not conscious of the passage. It was as though she had merely traversed the threshold of one form of sleep to another. Only much later did she half-awaken to the familiar sensation of a marvellous heavenly embrace. But in moments she was asleep again, oblivious, absorbed in some unconscious indrawing of energy for which wakefulness was not required. Instead an invisible umbilical cord once again joined her to her divine parent, and the nectar of a new life flowed through it in a constant and ever-swelling stream. At last the work of preparation was done and the being remade, was ready for its new sortie into life.

But this time there was no delay in the soul's awakening, no passage through darkness, no farewell to the divinity at the heart of the being. The being itself opened its eyes on life almost immediately and saw trees, sunlight, rock-cliffs, and within them one of many openings, the one that marked the door of her own family's dwelling. Beyond the cliffs for endless miles to the arching horizon, stretched a plain half-steppe half-desert with tracks crossing it in far-flung abstract patterns, and the branching skeleton of a long-deceased river imprinted beneath the tracks. Nowhere in all the vast expanse could a soul be seen save for the members of the small tribe to which she had been born and which had clung to its cliff-side habitation for uncounted centuries. Few human beings, perhaps none, knew of these isolated people, for the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics had sent a government expedition there only once twenty years ago, and then never again. So the tribe lived on in its little paradise of isolation as though nothing had happened—nothing since the last major invasion of their land still remembered in their folklore—when the Tartars had passed that way and left traces of their Mongoloid heredity on the faces of a people whose racial ancestry was already obscure.

But in one respect neither Tartar, nor trans-Asiatic caravan, nor twentieth-century government commission had been able to affect the ways of the lost tribe. None had been able to touch its belief—stemming from what prehistoric source no one could tell—in a universal, all-pervading Mother Goddess. Therefore, from her earliest moments, the little girl who had been born a mere three years ago was already conditioned to seeing this great divinity everywhere. Indeed, so integral

a part of her vision, education, and even experience had the worship of the goddess become to her—as it had always been to all the people of the cliff caves—that she took her existence and omnipresence as one of the fundamental facts of life. No moment could exist without that presence. No thing animate or inanimate could pursue its life without it. No occurrence could take place without the knowledge and surveillance of the deity to whom all other supernatural beings, be they god or demon, were subordinated. Ika, as the little one was called, learned to place flowers and handfuls of food offerings daily before images roughly carved in the rocks of the mountainside, for she had been taught that in the rock lived its soul that was a child of the Universal Mother—just as she was herself—and that the mountain and rock souls were much beloved by that greatest of beings. For this reason some grandfather of the tribe had managed to carve the rock's image upon its outward face so that none would forget that it was an inhabited entity, or that the Mother visited it in its sacred abode—who knows how often? It was not for man to judge in his ignorance. A great and powerful rock might be one of the divinity's favourites, or else why would it jut so proudly and with such massive beauty from the mountainside? Hence the daily offerings, for the great Mother's favoured ones could not be left untended. One could not afford, either, to neglect the trees, the promontories, the fresh spring above the cliffs, and even the clouds that sometimes brought rain. To each Ika made her offerings as did all the others, while there were always special offerings to be placed before the small and, by the tribe's reckoning, infinitely ancient image of the Mother at the foot of the cliffs. It had come from none knew where, for it was made of a hard black granite not available anywhere in the area. Yet all knew by process of time-honoured tradition that if one made one's offerings to it devotedly, it would shield one against the dreaded sandstorms of the desert; and so all paid it special heed, as well as a special veneration on account of its age.

Perhaps Ika performed all her offerings with particular care, or perhaps it was simply that she had been born with the great Mother already seated in her heart; but from the earliest age she had learned to fear nothing. Even in those very sandstorms that occasionally howled across the desert beyond her rock dwelling she felt and delighted in the goddess's might. After all, if one had the good sense to stay indoors why should one fear the exuberant disporting of the great forces of the gods in their own spheres and arenas of action? Similarly in every area of life, Ika found an order and sense, and mode of right action which always kept her safe, as it did all her fellow-tribesmen who stayed within the same self-protecting and traditionally hallowed limits.

It was in Ika's seventh year that the changes began. All at once it appeared that the government at the centre had remembered the existence of her people. The first commission that came was a small one whose purpose was apparently merely to assess the situation. Its several members asked many questions through a not very competent interpreter, visited the rock dwellings, played with the child-

ren, and departed. They left only the interpreter behind to perfect his knowledge of the tribal dialect, and once again for Ika and all the others—who scarcely noticed his presence after the first few days—life assumed its normal rhythm.

Almost six months later came a more positive intrusion. A fresh commission arrived at the tribal outpost to set up an educational centre which would have a program for both adults and children. The people would be taught simple Russian, the elements of what the Soviet form of government stood for, and would be introduced in various other ways to the culture of the great country to which they belonged and about which they knew nothing whatever.

Ika, in the class for the smallest children, struggled through all her lessons—among the first to be begun in the new school—but truly came to life only for the film shows in the evening. It was then that she first realised the whole world was not made up of a desert backed by a cliff face, that Nature and the Great Mother had indeed a myriad faces and not just the one she knew, and that mankind lived in every imaginable form of self-constructed dwelling rather than in caves built mainly by nature and only slightly improved by human hands. But above all, Ika saw through the films that human beings danced—not with the simple folk-steps of her people which she had already mastered at the age of five, but in incredible, breathtaking creations of form and movement, in an intricacy, a beauty and a perfection she had only dreamt of, once upon a time. When, she could not remember—all she knew was that the dreams were there buried in some profound substratum of her being, but which now, upon her seeing the dancers of the renowned Bolshoi on film, rose with a powerful insistence to the surface.

Finally, after having seen a particularly splendid film performance the night before, Ika walked up to her teacher in class as fearlessly as ever and said in her broken Russian, “I want to learn to dance.”

Her mentor raised his eyebrows in delighted surprise. “But, Ika dear, you already dance the best of anyone here!”

“No, no—not like here.” She was emphatic. “Like the film.”

Now Piotr really raised his eyebrows. Good grief, he thought, she wants to be a ballerina. For several moments he said nothing. Then all at once it occurred to him, well, why not? She was a beautiful child, and even if she did not make the grade as a prima ballerina or even as a minor member of the troupe, would it matter? A few years in Moscow would do her a world of good, and then they could send her back here to help her people. Altogether a marvellous idea, because hadn't his team been discussing the day before how to persuade some of the tribespeople to journey out of their little environment? To learn more of the world? To improve their way of life in consonance with the advances of the modern world? Now here was a ready-made volunteer with no persuasion necessary.

Piotr's face lit up. “Ika darling, that's wonderful!” he cried. “Of course you can learn to dance. But do you know that you will have to go for many years to Moscow? It's very far from here and you won't see your people for a long time.”

She hesitated. She hadn't thought of that. Leave her parents? Her tribe? Her precious home among the cliffs? The great Mother Goddess? But no—she at least would come with her, because the divine being could go anywhere and surely she would not hesitate to accompany Ika, her little daughter.

“Yes,” the child whispered very softly, so softly that tears came to Piotr's eyes. He looked at her once again—so small, so delicate with her perfect wheat-coloured skin, her Mongoloid eyes, her straight black hair, and her utter gentleness that masked nevertheless a will of iron. He took her in his arms and held her there. Who knows, he was wondering, perhaps she'll make it.

(To be continued)

BINA BRAGG

THIS MARVEL

A SONG FOR MARCH TWENTY-NINTH

O Lord, Divine Builder of this marvel:

meeting of the worlds on earth,
Ishwari calls to You inviting

into Her House the revelation
of Your Silence, the unspoken

Word that makes dead grass to spring
and dying branch to green, the stony

heart to melt and all the planes
of the aspiring instrument

to lift in dance their adoration
moving through the slow cement

the song that vibrates it to Fire,
casting for its inmost home

the chamber of Her House where meet
the worlds on earth, Your Truth its ray,

New Light to build in us this marvel:
meeting with Your worlds divine.

SPYRIL

Matrimandir Workers Camp,
Peace, Auroville

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Guidance from Sri Aurobindo: Letters to a Young Disciple—Volume II: *Nagin Doshi*. Published by Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Publication Department 1976. Rs. 15.00 Paperback 293 pages.

Nowhere is Sri Aurobindo's unbounded patience and love illustrated so well as in his correspondence with the sadhaks of his Ashram; and, although he maintained contact and gave guidance through many levels and channels of communication, we are really fortunate that he took the trouble to write to so many people, for now we have available to us a written record of his guidance in Yoga. *Guidance Vol. II* is certainly a very compact and complete, though not exhaustive, account of a very important stage of sadhana. It is interesting also because the young disciple, Nagin Doshi, was only eighteen years old at that time and had already been at the Ashram for four years. He says, "When the correspondence with Sri Aurobindo started, he had to teach me everything, not only what was meant by Yoga but also what culture, religion, philosophy and morality were. He used to correct my English, too, for quite a long time..."

Guidance Vol. I, which contains the correspondence of the first two years of Nagin's sadhana, is like an introduction to Yoga. It may certainly have a greater appeal to the layman, because it deals with a wide variety of topics related to Yoga, but somewhat lacks in the depth that *Guidance II* provides. In this book, one immediately gets a picture of sadhana proper. The disciple is rapidly maturing, his questions probe deeper and are indicative of his coming to grips with the forces opposed to the Divine Realisation. Nowhere is there any record of the dates of the letters but the notion of time elapsing is very vivid as one follows Nagin's sadhana; often there is a note of despair or depression as the difficulties mount but each time Sri Aurobindo's patient and solid reply is there to support him. Nagin's progress is seen to spiral upwards as he alternates between periods of overwhelming difficulty and times of spiritual ease yet always manages to grow within.

The correspondence is very well arranged. There are six parts to the book. The first deals primarily with the Physical and the Subconscient. Part Two discusses the Vital Being, Ego, Work, Speech and General Sadhana and then the successive parts are arranged in ascending order from Aspiration, Surrender, Silence, etc. to the Inner and Outer Being, the Psychic Being and Love to Mind and Knowledge and finally the Higher Planes of Consciousness and the True Yogic Consciousness. It seems that Sri Aurobindo usually answered each point in a letter separately and in the book these points have all been placed separately with the answer. So although a letter may have contained many questions, the form in the book maintains a fluent continuity.

There is nothing here that is difficult to understand—in fact, it has certainly cleared up a lot of misconceptions in my mind. Each aspirant to Yoga will find

something useful in this book, but I am sure it will have a special appeal to the young seeker. Nevertheless, it is certainly not an easy book to read, for it lacks the glitter of *Guidance* 1. It calls for a patient and sustained approach, for otherwise its value may be missed. It is an intimate and personal record of a part of Nagin's sadhana and we are indeed fortunate that he has enabled us to share it with him.

I should like to reproduce here some extracts from the book—questions (in italics) with Sri Aurobindo's replies:

Why am I singled out by the difficulties? Any error on my part?

Everybody has his full share of difficulties, except those who do not mind what difficulties they have.

Difficulties come from the old nature trying to rise up—they need not be the result of any error.

What makes good conditions for sadhana?

Aspiration, untiring will, steady calm and detachment, make the best conditions.

Since my being wants the sunlit path, kindly enlighten me how to make it possible.

It is possible if you (1) can get free of the vital demand, (2) regard the difficulties of the nature calmly and dispassionately as if some defects of a machine that has to be set right, the being that uses the machine remaining fully dedicated to the Mother.

Could I have an interview with the Mother? Two or three difficulties have been troubling me right from the beginning of the sadhana. I want to discuss them and get at least a verbal solution.

This method of asking questions and getting solutions in an interview is one of which the Mother does not approve. She finds it useless and it forces her to come down to meet a superficial mental consciousness which she has long left.

Usually it is the outer being that is talking. But it is rarely reasonable and speaks a lot and of useless things. So I want my inner being to take charge of speech.

Yes. The speech must come from within and be controlled from within.

In talking one has the tendency to come down into a lower and more external consciousness because talking comes from the external mind. But it is impossible to avoid it altogether. What you must do is learn to get back at once to the inner consciousness—this so long as you are not able to speak from the inner being or at least with the inner being supporting the action.

How is the psychic to be brought forward?

It comes forward of itself either through constant love and aspiration or when the mind and vital have been made ready by the descent from above and the working of the Force.

To bring the psychic forward, selfishness and demand (which is the base of the vital feelings) must be got rid of—or at least never accepted.

Get rid of the dissatisfactions, they prevent the permanent psychic opening.

What is the use of knowledge when we can't act according to its light and truth?

Knowledge is always better than ignorance. It makes things possible hereafter, if not at the moment, while ignorance actively obstructs and misleads.

In the same book Brunton has discussed the central teaching of some great Yogis of modern India. I find nothing new in them. They seem like a repetition of the Yogas of ancient India. To leave the world and seek self-realisation is their goal. All that does not appear to me a very difficult stage.

Wonderful! The realisation of the Self which includes the liberation from the ego, the consciousness of the One in all, the established and consummated transcendence out of the universal Ignorance, the fixity of the consciousness in the union with the Highest, the Infinite and Eternal is not anything worth doing or recommending to anybody—is “not a very difficult stage”!

“Nothing new”. Why should there be anything new? The object of spiritual seeking is to find out what is eternally true, not what is new in Time.

From where did you get this singular attitude towards the old Yogas and Yogis? Is the wisdom of the Vedanta and Tantra a small and trifling thing? Have then the sadhaks of this Ashram attained to self-realisation and are they liberated Jivanmuktas, free from ego and ignorance? If not, why then do you say, “It is not a difficult stage”, “their goal is not so high”, “is it such a long process”?

I have said that this Yoga is “new” because it aims at a change in this world and not only beyond it and at a supramental realisation. But how does that justify a superior contempt for the spiritual realisation which is as much the aim of this Yoga as of any other?

ANGAD

The Grace Of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother (Stories about Sri Aurobindo and The Mother) Part One by *Har Krishan Singh*. Published by Har Krishan Singh, 16, Rue Saint Louis, Pondicherry-1. Price Rs. 2.80.

Har Krishan Singh needs no introduction to the readers of *Mother India*. In this book he has included the stories in which both Sri Aurobindo and The Mother have given help and showered their Grace. Strictly speaking, their Grace is coeval and runs concurrently. Wherever and whenever The Mother comes into the picture, there Sri Aurobindo also invariably steps in and *vice versa*. Each disciple, whether in the Ashram or outside, has a story to narrate.

There are nine beautiful stories which are included in this book. All of them are written in a simple and readable language by the author.

The very first story is connected with the niece of Singh himself. The second is connected with the life and property of a Swamiji who was miraculously saved by the help of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother.

A special feature of the book is that at the end of each story the author has given an appropriate quotation of The Mother which lends importance to the story.

Lastly, the cover of the book contains a painting of a village-view along the Pondicherry-Madras Road done by the author himself. This brings him into light as a painter also.

We wholeheartedly request the author to collect all the possible stories about Sri Aurobindo and The Mother from the visitor-disciples and also from the inmates of the Ashram and to publish them in subsequent parts.

We appeal to the author-disciples of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother to translate these stories into the different State languages of India so that the teeming millions of rural India may be benefited. These stories, more than the monographs and lectures on the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother, straightway make a dent into innocent hearts.

In the end we also appeal to all the disciples to send their stories and reminiscences to the author so that he may compile and subsequently publish them especially in the Birth Centenary Year of The Mother.

V. MANMOHAN REDDY

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Announcing a New Biannual Journal

SRI AUROBINDO Archives and Research

Sri Aurobindo: Archives and Research will be devoted to the publication of primary source materials. Its chief object will be the issuing of authoritative texts of hitherto unpublished writings from the Master's manuscripts. In each issue will appear selections from several of the following categories: early political writings, early cultural writings, writings in Bengali, poetry, translations, literary writings, Veda, Upanishads, later philosophical, yogic and cultural writings and letters on Yoga. The divisions and the order of the material will thus follow lines already laid down in the Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library.

The journal will also publish newly discovered biographical documents, consisting of autobiographical writings and other authentic historical records.

Although the journal will mainly be concerned with the presentation of archival materials, it will also bring out the results of scholarly research, such as monographs of a biographical and bibliographical nature, and articles highlighting specific aspects of Sri Aurobindo's teachings.

New photographs of Sri Aurobindo and of people and places connected with him, as well as photographic reproductions of his manuscripts, will be printed in every number.

Sri Aurobindo: Archives and Research will be issued twice a year; on 4 April, the day of Sri Aurobindo's arrival in Pondicherry and 5 December, the anniversary of his Mahasamadhi or final withdrawal.

The annual subscription for *Sri Aurobindo: Archives and Research*, will be Rs. 25/- inland and \$ 5.00 abroad. Remittances may be sent to *Sri Aurobindo: Archives and Research*, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Publication Department, Pondicherry - 605002, India.
