



# MOTHER INDIA

## MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

MAY 1977

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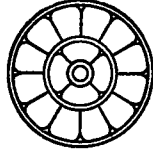
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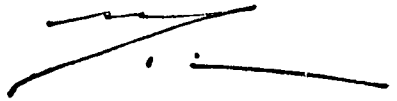


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

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. 5

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

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## WORDS OF THE MOTHER

### ON LOOSENESS OF SPEECH

TRÈS souvent, je vous ai dit que toute parole prononcée inutilement était un bavardage dangereux. Mais ici, c'est l'extrême de la "situation"....

Il s'agit du bavardage malveillant...d'une parole médisante, de ce goût que l'on a de dire du mal des autres.

Celui qui se livre à cette incontinence-là, avilit sa conscience; et quand à cette incontinence s'ajoute l'habitude de querelles vulgaires, s'exprimant en termes grossiers, alors cela équivaut à un suicide, le suicide spirituel en soi-même.

I have told you very often that every word uttered unnecessarily is a dangerous form of garrulity. But now the case is extreme....

It is a matter of malicious gossip,...of slanderous speech, this relish people take in speaking ill of others.

Anyone who goes in for this kind of self-indulgence debases his consciousness; and when, on top of this self-indulgence, there is the habit of vulgar quarrelling, expressed in coarse language, that amounts to a suicide, spiritual suicide within oneself.

July 9, 1957

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(Continued from the issue of April 24, 1977)

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

APRIL 3, 1957

*“All would change if man could once consent to be spiritualised; but his nature, mental and vital and physical, is rebellious to the higher law. He loves his imperfection.*

*“The Spirit is the truth of our being; mind and life and body in their imperfection are its masks, but in their perfection should be its moulds. To be spiritual only is not enough; that prepares a number of souls for heaven, but leaves the earth very much where it was. Neither is a compromise the way of salvation.*

*“The world knows three kinds of revolution. The material has strong results, the moral and intellectual are infinitely larger in their scope and richer in their fruits, but the spiritual are the great sowings.*

*“If the triple change could coincide in a perfect correspondence, a faultless work would be done; but the mind and body of mankind cannot hold perfectly a strong spiritual inrush: most is split, much of the rest is corrupted. Many intellectual and physical upturnings of our soil are needed to work out a little result from a large spiritual sowing.*

*“Each religion has helped mankind. Paganism increased in man the light of beauty, the largeness and height of his life, his aim at a many-sided perfection; Christianity gave him some vision of divine love and charity; Buddhism has shown him a noble way to be wiser, gentler, purer; Judaism and Islam how to be religiously faithful in action and zealously devoted to God; Hinduism has opened to him the largest and profoundest spiritual possibilities. A great thing would be done if all these God-visions could embrace and cast themselves into each other; but intellectual dogma and cult-egoism stand in the way.*

*“All religions have saved a number of souls, but none yet has been able to spiritualise mankind. For that there is needed not cult and creed, but a sustained and all-comprehending effort at spiritual self-evolution.*

*“The changes we see in the world today are intellectual, moral, physical in their ideal and intention: the spiritual revolution waits for its hour and throws*

*up meanwhile its waves here and there. Until it comes the sense of the others cannot be understood and till then all interpretations of present happening and forecast of man's future are vain things. For its nature, power, event are that which will determine the next cycle of our humanity."*

(Thoughts and Glimpses, Cent. Ed., Vol. 16, pp. 393-94.)

*Mother, here Sri Aurobindo writes: "A great thing would be done if all these God-visions could embrace and cast themselves into each other; but intellectual dogma and cult-egoism stand in the way."*

*How is it possible to fuse into one all these views?*

It is not in the mental consciousness that these things can be harmonised and synthesised. For this it is necessary to rise above the mind and find the idea behind the thought. Sri Aurobindo shows here as an example what each of these religions represents in human effort, aspiration and realisation. Instead of taking these religions in their outward forms which are just dogmas and intellectual conceptions, if we take them in their spirit, in the principle they represent, there is no difficulty in unifying them. They are quite simply different aspects of human progress which complete each other perfectly well and should be united with many others yet to form a more total and completer progress, a more perfect understanding of life, a more integral approach to the Divine. And even this unification which already necessitates a return to the Spirit behind things, is not sufficient; to it must be added a vision of the future, the goal humanity has put before itself, the future realisation of the world, that last "spiritual revolution" of which Sri Aurobindo speaks, which will open a new age, that is, the supramental revolution.

In the supramental consciousness all these things are no longer contradictory or exclusive. They all become complementary. It is only the mental form which divides. What this mental form represents should be united to what all the other mental forms represent in order to make a harmonious whole. And it is true that this is the essential difference between a religion and the true spiritual life.

Religion exists almost exclusively in its forms, its cults, in a certain mass of ideas, and it becomes great only through the spirituality of a few exceptional individuals, whilst the true spiritual life, and above all what the supramental realisation will be, is independent of every precise, intellectual form, every limited form of life. It embraces all possibilities and manifestations and makes of these the expression, the vehicle of a higher and more universal truth.

A new religion would not only be useless but disastrous. It is a new life which must be created; it is a new consciousness which must be expressed. This is something beyond intellectual limits and mental formulae. It is a living truth which must manifest.

Everything in its essence and its truth must necessarily be contained in its reali-



sation. This realisation must be as total, as complete, as universal an expression as possible of the divine reality. It is only that which can save humanity and the world. That is the great spiritual revolution of which Sri Aurobindo speaks. And it is that he wanted us to realise.

He has traced its broad outline in the very book we are going to begin reading next Wednesday: *The Supramental Manifestation*.

And the first sentence I read today remains the key of the entire problem not only for the individual but also for the collectivity:

“All would change if man could once consent to be spiritualised; but his nature, mental and vital and physical is rebellious to the higher law. He loves his imperfection.”

I would like us to take this as the subject of our meditation.

(*Meditation*)

---

## FANTASY ON FEBRUARY 21, 1977

UNKNOWN to all, in the soft silent dawn  
 On the beloved Throne, You are once again  
 Gifting to each the precious gems of Your Smile,  
 Your name ringing in our hearts, a sweet refrain!

Ninety-nine years of joyous glory—  
 Beginning a Centenary of treasured hours.  
 Hundred-thousand-million moments of priceless Love,  
 Of a Golden Peace, soul's palaces, courts and towers!

The earth changed to a luminous dream—  
 The dream changing to a scintillating Reality!  
 Our bursting hearts filled bright with poems of praise—  
 A diamond-studded stream of undying Harmony!

MINNIE N. CANTEENWALLA

# EXPERIENCE AND ITS EXPRESSION

## FROM A TALK OF THE MOTHER

*Mother, you said, on one of these Wednesdays: "The experience begins for you only when you can describe it. Well, when you are able to describe it, the greater part of its intensity and its capacity for action for the inner and outer transformation has already evaporated."*

*Talk of 7 October 1956*

So?...

*So what should be done with the experience? If there is an experience without the power to express it, what happens?*

THERE too, what I meant was that the experience precedes and transcends by far the formulation you give it in your mind. The experience comes before, often long before the capacity to formulate it. The experience has a fullness, a force, a power of *direct* action on the nature, which is immediate, instantaneous. Let us take as an example that in certain circumstances or by an exceptional grace you are suddenly put into contact with a supramental light, power or consciousness. It is like an abrupt opening in your closed shell, like a rent in that opaque envelope which separates you from the Truth, and the contact is established. Immediately this force, this consciousness, this light acts, even on your physical cells; it acts in the mind, in the vital, in the body, changes the vibrations, organises the substance and begins its work of transformation. You are under the impact of this sudden contact and action; for you it is a sort of indescribable, inexpressible state which takes hold of you, you haven't any clear, precise, definite idea of it, it is... "something that happens". It may give you the impression of being wonderful or tremendous, but it is inexpressible and incomprehensible for you. That is the experience in its essence and its true power.

Gradually, as the action is prolonged and the outer being begins to assimilate this action, there awakens a capacity of observation, first in the mental consciousness, and a kind of objectivisation occurs: something in the mind looks on, observes and translates in its own way. This is what you call understanding, and this is what gives you the impression (*smiling*) that you are having an experience. But that is already considerably diminished in comparison with the experience itself, it is a transcription adapted to your mental, vital and physical dimension, that is, something that is shrunken, hardened—and it gives you at the same time the impression that it is growing clearer; that is to say, it has become as limited as your understanding.

That is a phenomenon which always occurs even in the best cases. I am not speaking of those instances where this power of experience is absorbed by the unconsciousness of your being and expressed by a more and more unconscious move-

ment; I am speaking of the case in which your mind is clear, your aspiration clear, and where you have already advanced quite considerably on the path.... And even when your mind begins to be transformed, when it is used to receiving this Light, when it can be penetrated by it, is sufficiently receptive to absorb it, the moment it wants to express it in a way understandable to the human consciousness—I don't mean the ordinary consciousness but even the enlightened human consciousness—the moment it wants to formulate, to make it precise and understandable, it reduces, diminishes, limits—it attenuates, weakens, blurs the experience, even granting that it is pure enough not to falsify it. For if, anywhere in the being, in the mind or the vital, there is some insincerity which is tolerated, well, then the experience is completely falsified and deformed. But I am speaking of the best instances, where the being is sincere, under control, and where it functions most favourably: the formulation in words which are understandable by the human mind is *necessarily*, inevitably, a restriction, a diminution of the power of action of the experience. When you can tell yourself clearly and consciously: "This and that and the other happened", when you can describe the phenomenon comprehensibly, it has already lost some of its power of action, its intensity, its truth and force. But this does not mean that the intensity, the power of action and the force were not there—they were there, and probably in the best cases the utmost effect of the experience is produced before you begin to give it a comprehensible form.

I am speaking here of the best cases. I am not speaking of the innumerable cases of those who begin to have an experience and whose mind becomes curious, wakes up and says, "Oh! what is happening?" Then everything vanishes. Or maybe one catches the deformed tail of something which has lost all its force and all its reality.... The first thing to do is to teach your mind *not to stir*: "Above all, don't move! Above all, don't move, let the thing develop fully without wanting to know what is happening; don't be stupid, keep quiet, be still, and wait. Your turn will always come too soon, never too late." It should be possible to live an experience for hours and for days together without feeling the need to formulate it to yourself. When one does that, one gets the full benefit from it. Then it works, it churns the nature, it transforms the cells—it begins its real work of transformation. But as soon as you begin to look and to understand and to formulate, it is already something that belongs to the past.

*Voilà.*

31 October 1956

# DIVINE LOVE AND HUMAN LOVE

## FROM A TALK OF THE MOTHER

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

To go through it. Ah!

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

That is the best way.

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

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

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

If you do that, you have taken a great stride forward and can, through this atti-

tude, gradually advance farther in the feeling itself, and realise one day that love is not something personal, that love is a universal divine feeling which manifests through you more or less finely, but which in its essence is something divine.

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

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

19 September 1956

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## LOVE'S NECTAR

LOVE is a nectar never still,  
An endless tireless laughter's thrill  
Seeking to voice the Ineffable.

Life cannot like a godhead move  
Through the heart-beats till shimmering love  
Breaks news of the golden Truth above.

Precious the quiver of light love bears—  
But this brimmed wealth of ecstasy's tears  
Spills if a changeful universe

Mingles its mood. Uplifted high,  
Our hands must take entrancedly  
The throb of time to Eternity.

AMAL KIRAN

# THE MOTHER AND THE INDIAN HERITAGE

*(Continued from the issue of February 21, 1977)*

## KRISHNA AND BUDDHA

ON the last occasion we spoke of the Veda and the Gita. But the Gita cannot be thought of without Sri Krishna; and it has many points in common with the Buddha's teaching. The spirit of these two great personalities hovers over the land. The Mother could not but speak about them.

### The Inner Reality of Krishna

Krishna in his inner Reality is "the immanent Divine, the Divine Presence in everything. He is also, sovereignly, the joy and love aspect of the Supreme; he is the smiling tenderness and gaiety that plays. He is the player, the play and all those with whom he plays—all at the same time.... So, 'to see Krishna' is to find the Divine within, and 'playing with Krishna' is to identify oneself with the inner Godhead and participate in His consciousness. When one enters into this state, one enters immediately into the felicity of the divine play; and the more the identification is total, the more perfect is the state.... When one has had the experience of identification with the Divine, one cannot forget the immense, the marvellous love that He puts into his play."<sup>1</sup>

### The Radha Consciousness

Radha in the Indian Puranic tradition symbolises "the soul, the psychic personality,... who responds to the call of the Flute-player."<sup>2</sup> The way she responds to the Divine Call can be no better described than in the words used by the Mother in what has come to be known as Radha's Prayer: "All my thoughts, all my emotions, all the feelings of my heart, all the movements of my life, every cell of my body, every drop of my blood belong to Thee. I am Thine, absolutely, integrally Thine, Thine without reserve. What Thou wilt of me that I will be. Whether Thou decidest on my life or my death, my happiness or my sorrow, my pleasure or my suffering, all that comes to me from Thee shall be welcome. Every one of Thy gifts will always be for me a divine gift, bringing with it the supreme felicity."<sup>3</sup>

This Radha consciousness, says the Mother, "has the capacity to change everything into a perpetual ecstasy; because instead of seeing things in their discordant appearance, one sees no longer anything else but the Divine Presence, the Divine Will, the Divine Grace everywhere."<sup>4</sup> Something of this vision and experience must have been vouchsafed to the author or authors of the Bhagavata, the great Indian scripture that celebrates the advent of Sri Krishna on the earth. Their

earthly Vrindavana is the replica of an "inner world, beautiful and very real and existing, where they have seen or experienced all that they have written or revealed."<sup>5</sup>

### The Vrindavana Story

Krishna, the Driver of the Herds in the Vrindavana story, is the "Divine Consciousness which takes possession of all the activities of the physical being and directs and guides all its needs, controls and governs all the movements of the physical animal in man."<sup>6</sup> The herds thus symbolise the animal instincts and the animal needs of the human being.

There is the other side to the Radha-Krishna story where the devotees represent Radha as suffering the pangs of separation because Krishna has not yet made his appearance. That, the Mother explains, is part of the human fondness for drama. "That is when they are *en route*, when they have not yet reached the goal. They have that, they lay much stress on that. . . simply because they remain in the human consciousness and they want to remain there. The moment there is the perfect identification, all that is gone."<sup>7</sup> The poets might protest, but this is the truth.

Some of us moderns have doubted the actual physical existence of a human Krishna and are disposed to regard the Vrindavana story as a pure myth, a creation of the poetic imagination. Here is the Mother's reply. "Whether Krishna was there, in a human form living on earth has only a very secondary importance, except perhaps from an exclusively historical point of view. For Krishna is a real being, living and acting; and his influence has been one of the great factors in the earth's progress and transformation."<sup>8</sup>

### Buddha an Avatar?

Was the Buddha an Avatar? The question was once put to the Mother at one of her Talks. Her answer was this: "Oh, that! There are people who say that he is an Avatar. There are people who say 'no'. But to tell you the truth... I think this first thing that the Avatar comes on earth to prove that the Divine can.... It is not proved so much by the words as by a certain realisation. And I think that it is rather the aspect of the Divine that is constructive and preservative, rather than an aspect that transforms and is destructive. You see, to use the Indian names, the names that are known in India, well, I think it is the Avatars of Vishnu who come rather to prove that the Divine can come on earth. Whilst, every time that Shiva has manifested himself, he has always manifested like that, in beings who have tried to fight against an illusion and demolish what is. I have reasons to think that the Buddha manifested something, to speak more precisely, manifested something of the Power of Shiva. It was the same compassion, and a comprehension of all the miseries, and the same Power that destroys, evidently with the intention of transforming, but which destroys rather than constructs. His work does not seem to

have been very constructive. It was very necessary for teaching men practically not to be egoistic; from this point of view it was very necessary. But in its deep underlying principle, that has not helped much in the transformation of the earth.”<sup>9</sup>

The word “Avatar” is used in the English language, as in French, in a variety of senses, as we know. “But taken in the true sense, the Avatar is the terrestrial incarnation of the Supreme Truth.”<sup>10</sup> This places the Avatars in a category very different from that of the Vibhuti who, in the words of the Mother, are “certain aspects, qualities, of a being,—what are called Emanations in occultism. These are as if certain forces, certain powers, qualities, attributes which are put in contact with an external form, a physical form for example, and manifest themselves through that form.”<sup>11</sup> One wonders if this would not put the Buddha in the category of the Vibhuti. But of course the Mother knows very well that “people who have believed in him have made him a god. One has only to see all the temples and all the Buddhist divinities to realise that human nature has always a tendency to deify what it admires.”<sup>12</sup>

### Buddha’s Compassion

Avatar or no Avatar, there can be no doubt about the greatness of the man. “One of the greatest spiritual teachers,” the Mother calls him, “one of the greatest minds and revealers who have sought for a solution of the ills of humanity.”<sup>13</sup> The Mother speaks of the Buddha’s smile as a “smile of perfect understanding” and refers to his “immense” compassion.<sup>14</sup> This compassion evidently was born of his intense sympathy with the sufferings of this world, which, the Mother knew for certain, were felt by him in an absolutely concrete manner. In this connection, an experience of her body consciousness which the Mother has recorded in one of her last talks must be described in some detail. This would bring out clearly, as nothing else could, the starting-point of the Buddha’s teaching.

Sometime in 1969, the Mother had a “very, very, very difficult day”. All the horrors of the physical world presented themselves concretely, physically, in her body consciousness. “...and it said, in an inner intensity, ‘Oh, why does this world exist?’ Just like that,—so frightful it was, sad, miserable, so miserable it was, and so horrible! Oh! . . . And,” she goes on to say, “it is strange, I knew at that moment that it was an exact repetition of the experience which Buddha Siddhartha had had, and that it was in this experience that he said, ‘There is only one way out: the Nirvana’.”<sup>15</sup>

### The Nirvana Idea

There of course he went wrong. For Nirvana is no solution, at least not the final solution. “The Buddhist solution is only one step taken,—one step. And it is *beyond* that,—it is not on another path but *beyond* that,—that the true solution lies.”<sup>16</sup>

Here is how the Buddha came to his conclusion. The Mother describes his



line of thought in the simplest language possible: "Existence, he said, was the result of desire, and there was only one way of getting out of the misery and the suffering and the desire: get out of this existence."<sup>17</sup> As for the Divine, there was none. "There was no Divinity, said the Buddha. There was no persistence of the ego, there were no beings of the higher worlds who could incarnate themselves.... He has negated almost everything possible."<sup>18</sup>

But, the Mother avows, he "certainly had an inner contact with something, which in relation to the external life was a Non-existence. And in this Non-existence, naturally, all the realities of existence disappear. There is a state like that."<sup>19</sup> For him the ideal was that the world should not exist any more for the seeker of liberation. "It was as if he taxed the Divine with having committed a mistake, and there was only one thing to do: that was to repair the error by annulling it. But naturally, in order to be reasonable and logical, he did not admit the Divine. It was an error," but the Mother asks, "committed by whom, how, in what way? That he never explained. He said simply that the error had been committed, and the world had begun with desire and should end with desire. He was just on the point of saying that the world was purely subjective, that is, a collective illusion, and if the illusion disappeared, the world would cease. But he did not go that far."<sup>20</sup> That was left to Shankara and the rest.

This is as far as the metaphysics go. But this did not prevent the Buddha from giving some very practical and useful hints as to how to get out of the chains that bind men to their miseries. The Mother seems to attach a very great importance to the discipline prescribed by the Buddha. To that we shall turn next.

(To be continued)

SANAT K. BANERJI

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|---|---|
| <sup>1</sup> The Mother, <i>Commentaires sur les Aphorismes</i> , No. 27. | <sup>10</sup> <i>Ibid</i> , 10-5-51.                            |
| <sup>2</sup> <i>Entretiens</i> , 18-7-56.                                 | <sup>11</sup> <i>Ibid</i>                                       |
| <sup>3</sup> The Mother, <i>Quelques Paroles, Quelques Prières</i>        | <sup>12</sup> <i>Ibid</i> , 7-9-55.                             |
| <sup>4</sup> <i>Entretiens</i> . 18-7-56.                                 | <sup>13</sup> <i>Ibid.</i> , 5-10-55.                           |
| <sup>5</sup> <i>Commentaires, etc</i> , No 37                             | <sup>14</sup> <i>Champaklal's Treasures</i> , p. 73.            |
| <sup>6</sup> <i>Entretiens</i> , 5-12-56.                                 | <sup>15</sup> The Mother, <i>Notes sur le Chemin</i> , 31-5-69. |
| <sup>7</sup> <i>Ibid</i> . 18-7-56.                                       | <sup>16</sup> <i>Ibid</i> .                                     |
| <sup>8</sup> <i>Commentaires, etc.</i> , No 37                            | <sup>17</sup> <i>Entretiens</i> , 7-9-55.                       |
| <sup>9</sup> <i>Entretiens</i> , 7-9-55.                                  | <sup>18</sup> <i>Ibid.</i> , 29-3-51                            |
|   | <sup>19</sup> <i>Ibid.</i> , 7-9-55.                            |
|   | <sup>20</sup> <i>Ibid</i> .                                     |

## CHAMPAKLAL'S DREAM ABOUT OUR SCHOOL CHILDREN

THERE was a function arranged by the boys and girls of our school.

I saw a wide open place filled with luminous golden Light. There in its midst the Mother and Sri Aurobindo were sitting on a huge luminous golden throne, in their luminous golden bodies. They were charging everything around with their luminous golden Light.

A little away, on the right side of the golden throne, boys, girls and teachers were standing in that golden Light. There was no difference between students and teachers in their way of standing.

After a short while I saw them going to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother one by one. Each one stood just in front of them praying for what he wanted and expressing in words his inner condition very sincerely.

All were self-gathered, concentrated and gave an impression of complete self-surrender. Their expression was wonderful, remarkable. They were at their best and passed one by one with the expression of a joyful contentment on their faces, as if they had obtained what they had wanted.

Nirod was there standing at one end. He did not stir from his place but went on looking at the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. He was indrawn and his face was very expressive. Half an hour passed: still he did not move from his place.

Those who had finished going to the Mother and Sri Aurobindo were standing and watching what was going on, and were very happy because they got more time to remain with them. All of a sudden Nirod took a piece of paper in his hand and, standing where he was, began to write something. He wrote a paragraph and showed it to me. I was surprised to see his handwriting exactly like Sri Aurobindo's when he used to write in his early days. He wrote only a short paragraph but it was very beautiful. He had written about the Mother and Sri Aurobindo and his own inner condition, expressing it very sincerely. It was remarkable.

I asked him to go and show it to the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. He said, "No." Since he was not willing, I wanted to take it myself but my eyes opened before I could do it. I tried to recall what he had written, but failed.

I saw this dream on the same night of 2.9.76 when I saw the "Wonderful Dream" which has been published in the *Mother India* of November 24 last year.

I had given Nirod my accounts of both these dreams but he took no interest in the second dream. So I put aside my account of it. But when I saw in our Playground programme of the last 21st February each group saying its prayer I remembered this dream. The whole of it came in front of my eyes. I found it very interesting.

**A SONNET BY NIRODBARAN WITH  
SRI AUROBINDO'S CORRECTIONS AND COMMENT**

**MYSTIC BIRTH**

| *In vastitude* *unhorizoned*  
 (DEEP, in the blue wideness) of the soul  
*concording*  
 Reigns a supreme (concordant) ecstasy (:)  
*And from* *eternal,*  
 | (From) Time's (grave-) clutches free, (eternally) whole,  
 | Reflects the many-hued sky-Mystery.

| *laugh*  
 Figures of infinite beauty (smile) like Dawn,  
 | Shadows of earth recede far, far away;  
*a*  
 Thoughts cease and, motionless, (in) silent lone  
 Majesty holds (the) unconquerable sway.

| In constant flux, (yet) a timeless mystic Bride,  
 Queen of the seas girdled with emerald waves,  
 | She casts her might of heaven-begotten pride  
*dun*  
 | Upon the seeking heart's (dark) prison-caves. hearts dark should  
 perhaps be avoided.

| *A* *and* *She*  
 (Of gloom, and a) song of rapture (-) release brings  
*fire-*  
 | With the large sweep of her (fire-) lightning wings.

4-5-37

Very fine, sir, very fine (except the subjectless predicates and the bad metre of the last line but one.) You have certainly got the inspiration in a high measure.

SRI AUROBINDO

# THE NEXT FUTURE

## A) Panorama of the Future

WE, who are citizens of the twentieth century, find ourselves participating in an era of such rapid revolutions and changes that we are almost being catapulted into a completely new reality. The sudden breakthroughs into new dimensions in all fields of life, which are the exclusive mark of our century, sharply differentiate it from the historical epochs of the past. Clearly, something fundamental is happening or, better, emerging, which makes the bearers of the most diverse areas of culture declare that a new aeon is dawning. Looking at this emergent reality from an integral perspective which encompasses all branches of human existence, we find four cardinal characteristics standing as the cornerstones of the new dimension which evolution has set out to conquer. And when we deal with the future, it is only natural that we should give it this widest connotation: the future is the goal towards which human and terrestrial evolution advances presently—the future is much more than later in time; it is essentially further evolved, higher up on the ladder which Nature mounts from rung to rung, from one dimension to the next. To the four essential aspects of the new reality, with which we find ourselves confronted in today's dimension-leap, can be assigned the following key-terms: being, awareness, dynamism and joy. These seem to be the central avenues which meet us on all levels of our existence, in the physical, vital (that is, life-energetic, sensational, emotional), mental and spiritual domains.

The term Space Age which applies to the beginning of a new evolutionary phase goes directly to the core of the first aspect, *being*. New worlds have opened and are in the process of opening themselves to man, within and without. The physical universe (macro and micro) as well as the subtle realms of the supraphysical inner spaces are no longer something distant and alien. Humanity has definitely set out to explore and conquer the continuum of universes, from the most material to the most spiritual. The subtle universe is today the field of an intense and varied investigation through yoga, psychic research, transpersonal and parapsychology, through all the various techniques and methods for the attainment of altered states of consciousness as vehicles for the journey into the supraphysical kingdoms. The astronauts flying to the moon seem to have entered simultaneously into other worlds, as their comments about their experience of altered states of consciousness indicate; and Edgar Mitchell even felt the urge, upon his return to earth, to devote himself to the exploration of the inner spaces, founding the Institute of Noetic Sciences for this purpose. As we have now truly become citizens of the universe, we are no longer primarily inhabitants of a nation, state, province, town; the earth in her entirety has become our home, our mansion within the gardens of many worlds. The pictures which all the travellers, whether of inner or outer space, have transmitted to human-

ity, show with a beautiful clarity the round wholeness and oneness of earth—she is indeed the one Mother whose children we all are.

The same phenomenon, which in the western hemisphere of the globe is known as the Space Age, is in the eastern hemisphere approached from the perspective of *consciousness*. The dawning aeon is here called Satya Yuga or, in the words of Sri Aurobindo, the Age of Truth-Consciousness. Interwoven with a new dimension of being a new level of awareness is also emerging in man, transforming us into new and truth-conscious human beings. Under the modelling fingers of the Truth-Consciousness all aspects of the human reality are being recreated as instruments of the higher light, representatives of the higher dimension. The lower dimension is being infused with the light and power and substance and delight of the higher, new-shaped in the image of the higher truth. The outcome, a truth-life here upon earth, a spiritual salvation and liberation which includes the terrestrial existence as a playfield of evolution, as an environment of inner and outer creativity, is the crowning fulfilment towards which the prophecies from all over the globe have pointed since ancient times: the kingdom of heaven upon earth; the reconciliation of Spirit and Matter, the One and the Many; the unification of the highest self and inmost soul with the body of terrestrial being and the life of universal becoming.

Intimately linked with awareness is *force*. Both are in a sense one, *chit-tapas*, consciousness-force, for consciousness carries its own power, and all forces are emanations or expressions of consciousness. The nascent era could also be referred to as the Age of Power, in which formerly undreamt-of energies are put at the disposal of man, as he learns to become a conscious self- and world-evolver who can handle and master the creative forces active in the evolution of the universe. Already tremendous subtle and physical resources have been discovered and partly harnessed in this century: nuclear energy, electronic and other technology, solar energy, genetic engineering, psychic forces, social energies such as group dynamics, spiritual forces—these are among the powers about to be explored, or already to a certain extent made use of. A power-explosion has taken place and is still on the rise so that the humanity of tomorrow will have all the resources at hand for the task which evolution has set before it: to consciously participate in Nature's working, not merely as marionettes, whose strings are drawn unwittingly by her, but as her conscious children—who draw the strings of her enormous forces. We can see how the responsibility which formerly lay solely in the hands of Nature is being transferred more and more to the human being. Suddenly we are responsible for the ecological harmony of the earth, for the psychological equilibrium of our species, for the continuation (or destruction) of the planet, to mention only a few instances. And the supreme power of Time, as the ultimate lever of our conscious evolution, is also gradually yielding to the human spirit. We have extrapolated into the past, and are beginning to extrapolate into the future: all indications point towards the exploration and conquest of Time which awaits us and is already about to begin. The new aeon is also the Time Age, when the dynamics of becoming are freely revealed to us, since Time is the medium of force in

motion, the manifestation-process of all potentialities and energies of universal becoming.

If a new dimension of being, consciousness and force is about to manifest, it follows that the future can only be a new dimension of joy, the Age of Delight. The pleasure principle of the past, the superficial gratifications devoid of any true deeper values leave us more and more unsatisfied. Something is missing. Increasingly the realization is growing that we want not the pseudo-enjoyments of the ego, but that something which arises from the inmost recesses of our psyche, is in harmony with our deepest individuality and expresses the self-law of each one. The materially rich countries see themselves confronted with a rebelling new generation in quest of a more meaningful life—a life whose joy transcends the illusion and fleeting pleasures of sex, wealth and power as sole sources of enjoyment. We would seek true joy in the depths of the soul, by living a life in harmony with the beauty and truth of the spiritual *summum bonum* towards which each person aspires, by transforming all life into education and creativity, into a Yoga of inner and outer progress. The growing research into education and creativity, which are now seen as fundamentals of human existence, promises a future where all life truly becomes a field of self-development and self-expression, where delight arises from the fact that “All life is yoga” and all life metamorphoses into a field of ecstatic experiencing.

The future which we see taking birth in the present century is a new dimension of Reality opening before us the fields of the Infinite, the processes of the Eternal, the solar consciousness of the Truth, the delight of the cosmic play of the All-Beautiful. The key to this emergent reality is naturally the right development and transformation of our consciousness. And awareness also harmonizes the other three aspects of the quaternity. It allows us to consciously master the energies of existence, instead of being driven to the verge of our own self-destruction by gigantic powers. It enables us to partake in the raptures and delights beyond the limitations of the past, and to voyage with open eyes in the inner and outer spaces, to see the full panorama of the universal landscapes. The focus-point of the future is therefore a Truth-awareness, and the path towards the future the adventure of a new consciousness.

So when we speak of the *next* future, this begins right now with the opening of ourselves to the new consciousness and reality; with an increasing awareness of how these are emerging in all domains of culture and all walks of life; with an ever more integral and perfect collaboration in which we become the instruments of its manifestation.

### **B) Emerging Lines of Development**

What particular lines of development stand out as central in our present leap beyond ourselves?

The most fundamental courses, along which the Daimon of the new aeon is leading us, appears to be the global, collective and individual lines of human unfolding, as complementary facets of the whole movement toward the next future. Although

these are naturally three-in-one, limbs of one body, still they are limbs with distinctive features, each following its own particular line of development.

### C) The Global Line

The global line is articulated most clearly by all the various future-oriented international organizations and research-projects, which are working for a global management, progress and unification, for an actualization of the possibilities and resources of humanity and the earth as a whole.<sup>1</sup> These organizations and attempts, which are taking birth and expanding in a growing number and with an increasing effectiveness and diversity of action, are all united in their central purpose: the establishment of human unity and the expansion of all aspects of life towards a planetary culture.

In the present global situation the emergent new reality shows a Janus head with two faces: we are confronted with transnational problems which demand urgent solutions on one side, and on the other the pressure lies upon the actualization of the miraculous potentialities and possibilities which today are opening themselves to us. As we know only too well, work and education for all people, abolishment of poverty, truthful and just distribution of the terrestrial riches, social justice, ecological harmony, balanced population-growth, international peaceful co-operation, furthering of human self-development, are among the problems which humanity can no longer evade. The dawning Truth-awareness forces us to face our shortcomings, the remnants of our animal past, the superfluous luggage which has become too great a burden for our further progress. To outgrow this egocentric and ignorant past and to evolve the consciousness of human, terrestrial and cosmic oneness, of unity-in-diversity, is the imperative task Nature has given to man. Therefore, to believe in the next future, to be receptive to it and in touch with it, implies a firm and courageous faith that we will live up to this task and transcend ourselves. The evolution of a higher awareness which is ecologically and socially sound, destruction-proof, and creative in all will provide a solution to our global problems. The next future is the growing and expanding of a unitive consciousness and its creative outflow in humanity.

This emergent new consciousness and reality is now manifesting on a global scale in the tremendous resources, possibilities and powers which in this century have come into being in all fields of life. We can expect the next future to be still more abundant in new discoveries and revolutions. All areas of life are becoming more closely interrelated, and this prolific interaction between all the aspects of culture catalyzes our evolutionary progress. The interrelatedness, the flow forward and feed back between all the areas of human existence, has unified all these without abolishing their

<sup>1</sup> Among these organizations we find, to name just a few: the Club of Rome, the World Institute, Buckminster Fuller's World Game, World Union International, the various global institutions sponsored by the U N. The research-projects include the *World Order Models Project*, *Changing Images of Man*, the diverse U. N. programmes.

diversity, but on the contrary even enhancing their variety. The consciousness of unity-in-diversity, which we have seen to be as *conditio sine qua non* for finding solutions to our global problems, is visibly growing in the whole range of culture and life, expressing itself with increasing clarity and abundance. Already, all the requirements for the practical realization of a unified planetary culture and its varied self-expression on a national, social and individual level are at our disposal. However, a global awareness is needed, and an understanding of the actual nature of the reality, in which we live today, and of the deeper significance of the wave of progress which is deploying itself in all areas of life. We have, so to say, in our Weltanschauung and life-style to catch up with the real nature of the world we inhabit, planetarizing and universalizing our perceptions in order to become aware of the emergent unity-in-diversity everywhere.

Both our global problems and potentialities are expressions of a new dimension of consciousness and existence. The more we at large awaken to this reality, the more we shall find our problems solved and potentialities fulfilled.

#### D) The Collective Line

In the second line of development, the collectivity of tomorrow is foreshadowed in the experiments of the planetary communities and cities of dawn which have begun to form themselves in different parts of the earth as pilot-projects, dedicated to our future social evolution.<sup>1</sup> The community, society and city of tomorrow are the basic laboratories and workshops for the evolution of a planetary culture on the psychological as well as practical level. Here, human beings attempt a self-aware transformation of collective and social life as models of the future planetary humanity. In the free and experimental fashion made possible by the relatively small scale of the projects, in trial and error, the seeds for our global destiny are sown.

What the nascent planetary communities have in common, and what gives them their lofty status as forerunners of a new culture, is that they found themselves on a new consciousness and seek to express the dawning new dimension of reality. Since unity-in-diversity on a cosmic, terrestrial, collective and individual scale is an acknowledged basis, the stress lies on making this vision real in the consciousness and existence of the community-members, actualizing it in the collective atmosphere, implementing it practically in all areas of culture and all walks of life. Collective trusteeship, work and service as means of development of consciousness and creative self-expression, the harmony and love of international brotherhood, equality and liberty, the peaceful and constructive use of all powers for progress in all fields of human advancement, a new dimension of illumined education and self-realization, self-giving to the future; these are the avenues, from which the whole variegated network of human life and culture is approached creatively. Thus,

<sup>1</sup> Prominent collectivities are, for example, Lindisfarne, a pioneering American educational centre, Findhorn, the New Age Community in Britain, and Auroville, the international and interdisciplinary model society for a new humanity in South India.



all movements of life and culture are sought to be synthesized, and transformed into an integral expression of the truth.

### E) The Individual Line

In the individual domain, educationists and consciousness researchers from all over the world seek to tap the enormous latent resources of the human personality, opening ever fresh vistas of self-actualization. The most bold and vast attempt in this line lies in the integral development and fulfilment of all the facets of human personality and depths of human soul.<sup>1</sup> The image of perfection which appears on the horizon of the future, is an integral new man, aware of his soul and spirit, and master and creator of his environment, terrestrial and cosmic, inner and outer. The coming into existence of such a *homo novus* requires the realization of the spiritual, occult and material human potentials in an all-inclusive manner through the unfoldment of our physical, vital, mental, psychic and spiritual nature on complementary and simultaneous lines. The need for this synthesis has begun to be seen and accepted today in an unprecedented measure, and well-documented endeavours to achieve this synthesis are under way. Evolving nature, ever driven to progress and to transcend its achievement, is advancing to a new and more conscious expression of her secret potentials, manifesting a new dimension of being. We are called to the great adventure of exploring and expressing these, our latent potentialities.

### F) The Future Calls

The global, collective and individual lines of development are the three fascinating faces which the goddess of the future reveals, showing us the paths to release the Divinity in man.

ALEXANDER BRODT

<sup>1</sup> This aim motivates, for instance, India's largest, most innovative and future-oriented spiritual centre, the Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

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## UDAR REMEMBERS

I HAVE to make two small corrections.

In the February 21st, 1977 issue, I have written that when I heard Sri Aurobindo dictate *Savitri* to Nirod it came sometimes in such a flood that Nirod had difficulty in taking it all down. It now seems that it was not so. Although often the lines came in a flood, Sri Aurobindo did not express them hurriedly but very solemnly and calmly and so Nirod had no difficulty in noting down what He spoke.

The other correction is for the March 1977 issue. It was the Mother's grandmother—on Her mother's side—who had the name of Pinto, and not Her mother.

# THE WORDS OF POETRY

## I

DEGAS, the famous painter, once said to Mallarmé, the famous poet: "How is it that though I have plenty of ideas I still can't write poetry?" Mallarmé replied: "My dear man, poetry is not written with ideas, it is written with words."

This statement may seem at first to poke fun at Degas, archly pointing out an obvious truth to the rather dense painter. Mallarmé, no doubt, had often his tongue in his cheek, but he never lost a chance to comment on the essential nature of poetry. Coming from an indefatigable theoretician of aesthetics, the statement is a bit of literary criticism rather than a piece of academic witticism. It is meant to endow poetry with a special function of words, by which it would stand in particular contrast to what is written with ideas.

Prose no less than poetry employs words, but its eye is primarily on the substance to be conveyed and this substance is ideative and the conveying has to be expository—that is, clear and connected, with intellectual judgment ruling and shaping it even when it is eloquent, moving, image-coloured. Prose deals fundamentally with thoughts; words to it are a means to an end; the same thoughts can be expressed by it in many different combinations of words. When it discharges its office with skill and charm and power, it attains the status of literature; but its basic character remains unchanged: it is written with ideas and its verbal form does best its job as a go-between. The thought-substance, which can assume various forms, is intended to stand out: the particular words employed fall into the background.

The words of poetry are not simply a means to an end: they are an end in themselves. Poetry begins when words carry as much importance as what they express, and the words of poetry in the main are not vehicles of ideas. At times they may appear ideative, but that is because the intellectual mind has been made a medium, not because this mind is their source. The source is something significant without being itself intellectual. Mallarmé attempted to cut out the intellectual medium altogether. That is why he is often accused of obscurity and he went himself to the extent of making a cult of the obscure. With the puckish that was seldom away from the high-priestly in him, he once asked for the notes taken down by a student during a lecture of his. "I want," he said, "to put a little obscurity into them." But we must not mix up the Mallarméan obscurity with heaviness, clumsiness or haziness of expression. He was obscure not from failure to endow with proper form what he had to say or from confusion of mind. He was so because the things he said were themselves not easily seizable and he desired them to come forth in their own right without intellectual elucidation or representation. Strange symbols quivering up from the subconscious or glimmering down from the super-conscious, elusive dream-shades or swift vision-lights—these were the stuff with which his words got filled, these were the inner movements to which his language corresponded and with which it grew rhythmical.

The way Mallarmé moulded language to mirror and echo unknown depths

of man's consciousness or of the outer world rendered his words conspicuously void of the elements of the thinking intellect: his verse carried nuances in marked opposition to what is meant by "ideas". But all poetry, by springing from an ultra-intellectual source, need not be Mallarméan. Always to rule out a recognisable thought-content is to take too narrow a view and make poetry the pleasure of an esoteric coterie. A wide circle is no less legitimate than such a coterie for the poet's audience. Symbolism, whose dedicated mouthpiece was Mallarmé, is itself inclusive of several modes of poetic utterance.

Superb symbolist verse of the esoteric coterie is the opening of Mallarmé's *Le Cygne (The Swan)*:

Le vierge, le vivace et le bel aujourd'hui  
 Va-t-il nous déchirer avec un coup d'aile ivre  
 Ce lac dur oublié que hante sous le givre  
 Le transparent glacier des vols qui n'ont pas fui!

This may be Englished with a mixture of faithfulness and freedom:

Virginal, vivid, beautiful Today—  
 Will it tear with a stroke of drunken wing this lone  
 Hard lake where haunts mid hoar-frost's overlay  
 The transparent glacier of flights unflown?

Challenging mystery and revelatory violence are here; but can we deny that poetic symbolism is splendidly active also in those lines of Yeats from *Coole Park and Ballylee*—lines which, unlike Mallarmé's, have an intellectual atmosphere, an explicitness of reflection and meditation?—

At sudden thunder of the mounting swan  
 I turned about and looked where branches break  
 The glittering reaches of the flooded lake.  
 Another emblem there! That stormy white  
 But seems a concentration of the sky;  
 And, like the soul, it sails into the sight  
 And in the morning's gone, no man knows why;  
 And is so lovely that it sets to right  
 What knowledge or its lack had set awry,  
 So arrogantly pure, a child might think  
 It can be murdered with a spot of ink.

True poetic audacity and subtlety meet us in spite of the undeniable mentalisation, the play of ideas. Symbolism at its highest spiritual level—supra-Mallarméan

as well as supra-Yeatsian—can still employ the intellect as its channel: the speech of the intellect is transformed but not effaced and what we get is the sheer poetic revelation for all the philosophical manner adopted, as in the passage from Sri Aurobindo's free-verse *Ascent*, where too the swan-symbol occurs. This symbol comes as a crowning disclosure after the "spirit immortal" has been asked to soar beyond "the turning wheel", the world of "the grey and the little", and then called upon to outgrow even the Alone and the Absolute and penetrate the Supreme which embraces both Time and Timelessness:

Single and free yet innumerably living,  
 All in thyself and thyself in all dwelling,  
 Act in the world with thy being beyond it...  
 Outclimbing the summits of Nature,  
 Transcending and uplifting the soul of the finite,  
 Rise with the world in thy bosom,  
 O Word gathered into the heart of the Ineffable.  
 One with the Eternal, live in his infinity,  
 Drowned in the Absolute, found in the Godhead,  
 Swan of the supreme and spaceless ether wandering winged through  
 the universe,  
 Spirit immortal.

Yes, the thinking mind is not in itself an enemy of the poetic. As Sri Aurobindo tells us, we must not reject Nature while rising above Nature, since there is the Divine's intention of self-unfoldment in it, and surely Nature includes the thinking part of man. From its poise beyond, our art also must lay hands on the natural world and lay bare its true meaning as a progressive manifestation of the Spirit. The thinker in us has thus a role to play in art too: only, he must act more and more as what may broadly be termed a mind of light, thought-stuff that does not try to seize and shape in its own terms the inner inspired illumination but lets that insight seize and shape it into crystalline concepts.

## 2

Poetry cannot be allowed to become altogether a narrow intensity: at the same time that it is intense it must be immense. Without a comprehensiveness it cannot be great in the ultimate measure. But we have yet to hold on to the essence of Mallarmé's declaration to Degas.

In the first place this essence, as we have already suggested, is in the fact that words in poetry assert themselves, words in prose are merely instrumental. Of course, the instrument has to be fine and forceful, if it means to be art, but it does no more than clear the way for what is to be communicated. Once this work is done, it fades

out of the reader's sight. Quite the reverse happens in poetry: there the form is not subdued to the content. Art in prose is exercised towards a felicitous forgetfulness of form: it is exercised in poetry towards a rapturous remembrance of it.

This distinction does not imply that poetry decks out its language and hangs it with all sorts of ornaments for the sake of ornamentation or that it is "beautified" with a flourish of flowery words. Poetry can be very bare, sparing of epithet and simile, having apparently the gait of a prose of the most functional order, but there is always an intense harmony hidden within it, fusing form and content to an inevitable perfection. Unlike as in prose, it has just one form for its content and no other, and every part of it is equally necessary, equally final, by a close-linked inter-activity.

Bare and direct poetry brings us to what in the second place is the poetic essence. Again, as already pointed out, ideas are not the matter of which poetry is built. Even verse that is simple and straightforward in style and looks like an expression of ideas with little of imaginative colour is yet communicative on a far more deeply significant level than prose. And this level is effective in the very effectivity of the words themselves, it lives in the very artistry of the vibrant form.

To realise this, we may pick out some miniature masterpieces of bareness and directness: Milton's

Fall'n Cherub! to be weak is miserable,  
Shakespeare's

And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,  
Wordsworth's

Love had he found in huts where poor men lie,  
F. T. Prince's

...what no one yet has understood,  
That some great love is over what we do,  
A. E. Housman's

The troubles of our proud and angry dust,  
Sri Aurobindo's

Bear: thou shalt find at last thy road to bliss.

Everywhere the words are irreplaceable and combine into a pattern whose each point has a life of its own, which yet unites utterly with a life of the whole. And through that double life a deeper vision than the ideative shines from the look of a simple and straightforward idea. The inspired technique of Shakespeare's line has been well recognised, particularly for its central intensity—four massed stresses ("this harsh world draw"), three of them on long or lengthened vowels, the clotted consonants in all the weighted monosyllables creating a difficulty in respiration, almost a pain in the chest, at the very articulation of the phrase. But a special complex of harmony in the word-body pervades all the lines.

Consider the art of Wordsworth's declaration. We have the pressure of the voice at the very commencement, with the falling rhythm of the first foot's trochee as if

from a primal and original height Love went down into the world of manifestation. Next is the firm halting of the voice at "found" after a gap of two slack syllables as if the poetic seer had discovered the leap of Love across everything to make its multiple landing at chosen places of the earth. Now follows the picking up of the aspirated *h* of the unstressed "had" and "he" by the same sound in the strongly accented but short-vowelled "huts" as if the revelation from on high was definitely caught there in however narrow-seeming a compass and as if the human seeker became there the fulfilled recipient of the revelation. Then there are the three consecutive stresses at the end, not only hammering into our minds the presence of the "poor men" but also fixing in our hearts their humble yet happily side-by-side living and, by means of the word "lie", driving home into our inmost intuitive self the sense that the "Love" with which the poet's insight had opened is secretly confirmed here through the closing alliteration, through the echoing *l* which affines the down-to-the-ground significance of the weighted "lie" to the pure ether of the ideal-suggestive wonder-loaded "Love".

An art equally admirable is in Sri Aurobindo's verse—with almost the same inspiration of technique basically at work, binding the beginning to the end by the alliterative emphasised *b* and deftly weaving "Bear" and "bliss" into oneness with the middle portion by the *s* and *l* and *r* held together in it. There is even the "find" in the iamb which makes the second foot, to match the "found" in the same metrical place and with the same role in Wordsworth. Only, the whole inner movement is not from the ideal to the actual but the reverse: the human condition starts the line and the divine terminates it. The "plane" is certainly a more fundamentally meaningful one, though the poetic quality as such of the Wordsworth line is no whit less. Now a vast world-cry rings out from profundities of pathos to peaks of beatitude. And both the former and the latter emerge in the ultimate light more momentarily if we add the line which immediately follows our quotation and at the same time cull a verse from elsewhere in Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* to go before the pair. Then the end of the first line would be the beginning of the second and that of the second would commence the third, enriching with a system of word-responses the psychological message and the metaphysical overtone:

To know is best, however hard to bear...  
 Bear; thou shalt find at last thy road to bliss.  
 Bliss is the secret stuff of all that lives.

Each member of the trio illustrates eminently the economical "unbeautified" style that can yet constitute great poetry—the form and the content so fused in a connotative music as to transcend any possible words of prose passing on to us a burden of valuable thoughts.

(To be continued)

K. D. SETHNA

## THE POET

THE poet stands  
At the crossroads  
Where daily  
All meet and part,  
Exposed  
To sun and moon  
Wind and rain,  
Naked.  
His clothes, the words,  
Have flown away,  
To clothe somebody  
In beauty.

MARTA GUHA

## TO A. K.

I HEARD a poet speak  
with nothing in his veins  
but gentleness and joy.  
It seemed my skin  
had slithered off  
so softly did his soul  
suffuse my flesh.  
The bragging tongue  
that batters through  
the arches of my mouth  
when I would lean across  
the lines I write  
and blast them nervous  
in the air, was shocked  
as if a field's dew  
had slid its vapours through  
my soul, and mind  
with open eyes was full  
of some untroubled place  
where I and me  
could not be found  
only this gentle poet  
with his doors all open  
letting love go free.

KEVAN MYERS

## A SHEAF OF SYMBOLS

(Continued from the issue of April 24, 1977)

9

“THE woods are lovely, deep and dark”—indeed;  
And fain would I like to stop here for a while  
Amongst this brotherhood of elms and yews,  
And ‘dreamy—gloomy—friendly’ trees of Trench  
For an interchange of gifts, uneven, with them,—  
And drink in their loveliness to the peg’s last dreg,  
Or just ‘stand and stare’ as one of my tribe enjoins,  
Or ‘see into the heart of things’, as another said!...

But I have ‘miles and miles’ to go ahead,  
And promises to keep for honour’s sake—  
And bide by my dated tryst with Destiny,  
And reach my destination, alive or dead!...  
Ere I can ever stop for dreaming so,  
Ere I can ever think of doing so—  
Long ‘miles and miles’ before my vision stretch,  
Coil after coil of unfolding tape rolls out,  
Entangling my aching feet in networks dark,  
Dragging my numbèd knees deep down aground—  
And I can hardly keep my reeling eyes  
Fixed on the Polestar of my Pilgrim-stake—  
One Lone Star beckoning, watching, enheartening from afar!

10

*“When the materials are ready, the Architects will appear.”*

Walt Whitman

\*

So said a Yankee with uncanny vision-wit,  
And we might well adapt and extend the dictum yet:  
“When the stage is set, the Actors will appear.”  
But can you guess which ‘stage’ is meant hereby,  
And who the actors are, and when they’ll at all appear?...  
And can you right-assess what labour hard  
Precedes the ‘show’ behind the curtain dark?—



What sleepless nights on pricking beds of nails  
 Both gods and titans in collaboration pass?—  
 How the Grand Master racks his brain and nerves  
 For a Grand Idea worked out in song-and-script?—  
 How the several Maestros work week-in, week-out,  
 For a sweet, concerted, consummate effect?—  
 How the Stage-Director, holding all strings in hand,  
 Presses for blueprints of perfect shots in time?—  
 And how appointment-disappointment's rounds  
 Melodramatic interludes in-weave,  
 Before the all-alerting Bell rings up,  
 And scene after scene of Stance and Dance unrolls,  
 Enacting acts before an audience dazed  
 Which, spell-bound, can hardly spell out the Idea, right or wrong?

CHIMANBHAI

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## BEYOND THE BRAIN

THE listening brain broke down,  
 A grand prey that knew no escape  
 From the iron-grip of Demon-thought—  
 Cast into a helpless whirl of dead grey desires,  
 Obsessed by its self-created sweet follies,  
 Lost in a never-ending trap of the illusive senses,  
 Fretting and foaming repeated forever,  
 Life after life the vain cycles of bubbling births.  
 Then for a while a mystic change soft-stole  
 Through the deafening silences of the soul—  
 A nameless power forced the fierce white flame  
 Into the dumb heart of things. ..  
 An unseen hand now gently gathered all shattered strings  
 And revived the golden notes of an old charm,  
 Re-echoing the marvel-song sought by each fragrant flower.

VINAY

# FOOTNOTES TO THE FUTURE

2

## PURUSHOTTAMA YOGA\*

I

SRI AUROBINDO'S Yoga may be described as the Yoga of the Future, the Yoga of Transformation or the Purushottama Yoga. By transformation we do not mean in any way either the escape from Matter or its de-materialisation. For, in such a case, it would only be a transformation of consciousness from one level to a higher or, at best, at the cosmic level a withdrawal of the material universe into its original *form* of formless essence. By transformation is meant a re-materialisation of the Supreme Reality, a re-concretisation, a re-formation, a re-condensation of the infinite Consciousness-Force into a new form of Matter which will not only reveal but also manifest the several other concealed or involved dimensions of Reality—its many other luminous levels of consciousness in and through the physical-material, without in any way jeopardising the capacity of the material to manifest and uphold the individual consciousness. From the phenomenal standpoint, looking above from below, this process may be described as the re-spiritualisation of the physical-material to accomplish in stages the secret purpose of creation. The primary purpose of the physical is not simply to individualize the supreme Brahman, not merely to hold and uphold the individual aspect of the Divine, but also to manifest the Universal and the Transcendent. The physical as it is now structured and constituted has no doubt served its purpose most successfully and wonderfully well; it has been able to reveal, manifest, uphold and establish the nature and truth of individual existence. But by its very present composition, structure and process, it is incapable of manifesting the higher dimensions of Reality which it conceals. Upon seeing the human form among the several forms arrayed before them, did not the gods joyously declare to the Supreme Spirit:

They said to Him, "Command unto us an habitation that we may dwell secure and eat of food"...He brought unto them Man, and they said, "O well-fashioned truly! Man indeed is well and beautifully made." Then the Spirit said unto them, "Enter ye in each according to his habitation."<sup>1</sup>

And this vision of the *devas* can be realised only through the process of transformation as worked out by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. This transformation requires the re-constituting, the re-structuring and the recomposition of the material physical

\* Based on a Talk given at the daily *Satsang* on December 15, 1976 at Sri Aurobindo Ashram (Delhi Branch).

<sup>1</sup> *Astereya Upamshad*, 1.2.(i) & (ii) (Sri Aurobindo's Translation).

in such a way that it is ideally suited to reveal, to manifest and to establish the universal and the transcendental dimensions of the Supreme Being without in any way overshadowing, handicapping or obliterating the fundamental and hidden purpose of the manifestation or creation of the physical universe. This is possible only through the process of descent of a higher consciousness into the lower, the ascent of the lower into the higher and a constant integration of the lower levels with the higher evolutes. The only key to this alchemy of integration and transformation lies with the psychic being, *chaitya puruṣa*. It is this alone that has the power to integrate all the parts of human nature and the levels of consciousness with the ascending emergents; it is in direct contact with the Transcendent and has at its disposal the inexhaustible resources of the supreme energy, consciousness and joy at that highest level.

To seek for delight is "...the fundamental impulse and sense of Life; to find and possess and fulfil it is its whole motive".<sup>1</sup> This principle of Delight, *ānanda*, which is omnipresent in the cosmos manifests and fulfils itself in the action of the universe through the psychic being. The psychic is itself a subordinate principle of *ānanda*, a joyous flame of the Godhead always alight within the human individual—the luminous inhabitant of the Ignorance missioned and commissioned to turn it eventually towards the Knowledge. It is that imperishable entity in us which endures from birth to birth and, standing behind the physical-vital-mental being in us, supports our body, life and mind and profits by their development. "It is the concealed Witness and Control, the hidden Guide, the Daemon of Socrates, the inner light or inner voice of the mystic."<sup>2</sup> The seat of the immanent Divine is in the secret heart-cave, *hṛdaye guhāyām*; there in that luminous cave is our formed soul, the silent inmost being, the inner oracle-yogi. It is this that when liberated can soak our instrumental nature in the manifold splendour of the Divine and make earth the bliss-substance of God. It is not the Atman, the unborn Self; it is only its deputy, luminous delegate in the forms of Nature, the individual soul. While the Atman presides over the individual's existence and is also always aware of its universality and transcendence, the *chaitya puruṣa* takes form in us as the evolutionary nucleus and progressively puts forward a psychic personality. It is this that undergoes change, evolves from life to life; it is the traveller of the infinite moving between birth and death, and between death and birth. The outer personality, the mind-life-body complex, is only its changing vesture. The inner mental, inner vital and inner physical are themselves likewise presided over respectively by the *manomaya*, *prāṇamaya* and *annamaya puruṣas*. These beings of our central being are also veiled in their true workings; they put forward provisional or shifting personalities which compose our external individuality. These three puruṣas presiding over the three levels of our phenomenal existence enjoy their autonomy or self-authority over their respective areas. The psychic being as such is able to exercise only a partial and indirect action on mind, life and body. It is these outer parts of Nature that have to be developed and perfected as its instruments of self-expression. Commen-

<sup>1</sup> *Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library*, Vol. 18, p. 219.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 225.

surate with its secret purpose it takes with it the essence of all experiences through the cycle of births in the Ignorance to form a centre of soul-growth in the nature; all the rest is utilised as material for the development of the instruments until they become capable of expressing the Divine fully and perfectly. Prior to the supreme and final victory it is the outer desire-soul, the pseudo-psychic entity that mostly reigns over our existence.

As a precedent condition for transformation the *chaitya puruṣa* has not only to inform these three puruṣhas of the need of their luminous expansion and fulfilment through their direct contact and complete surrender to it, but also through these three respective rulers take complete control of the innumerable photons comprising and constituting these three domains so as to accomplish its secret purpose without minimising the authority of the puruṣhas. It is only with the establishment of such a self-rule of the psychic being over and within the entire triple existence of the physical, vital and mental that *svarājya siddhi* can be obtained. The *chaitya puruṣa*, being the individual soul in Nature, can help the individual to effectively open himself only to the divine ranges of his being—the inmost depths of his personality. We need another, a higher transformation from above—the spiritual—to help us to possess our self in its universality and transcendence. Often it so happens that the psychic being at a certain stage of its evolutionary endeavour becomes content to create a formation of truth, goodness and beauty and makes that its station. If not, at a farther stage, it tends to become “a subject to the world-Self, a mirror of the universal existence, consciousness, power, delight, but not their full participant or possessor”.<sup>1</sup> In the former state in spite of its union with ‘the cosmic consciousness in knowledge, emotion and appreciation through the senses’, it becomes purely recipient and passive, and as a result is far removed from any mastery or dynamic activity in the world; in the latter, because of the realisation of its identity with the static Self behind the cosmos, it enjoys losing its individuality in it and as a result loses all its initiative, its will and the power to lead Nature towards its divine realisation, which in fact is its ultimate mission; and so separates itself inwardly from the world-movement.

As the psychic being comes into Nature from the Self, it can as well turn back from Nature to the silent Divine through the silence of the Self resulting in a spiritual immobility. Again, being an eternal portion of the Divine, inseparably united with the whole ‘except in its frontal appearance, its frontal separative self-experience’, it may choose to plunge back into it and apparently merge its individual existence. Or, through the luminous affluence of spiritual influx this small nucleus of divine Delight might enlarge itself and embrace the whole world in an intimate oneness. Or it may even choose to live forever in the loving presence of its ‘eternal Companion and Lover’ in an imperishable union and oneness. “All these,” says Sri Aurobindo, “are great and splendid achievements of our spiritual self-finding, but they are not necessarily the last end and entire consummation.”<sup>2</sup> Much more is possible.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 227.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 228.

It is the spiritual Mind in man that realises these different states; these are the many movements of mind's self-transcendence, but on its own plane, into the realm of the Spirit. Because of its very nature mind treats each of the several aspects of the Supreme Being as the whole truth of the Being and finds in it its own perfect fulfilment. "Even it erects them into opposites and creates a whole range of these opposites, the Silence of the Divine and the divine Dynamis, the immobile Brahman aloof from existence, without qualities, and the active Brahman with qualities, Lord of existence, Being and Becoming, the Divine Person and an impersonal pure Existence; it can then cut itself away from the one and plunge itself into the other as the sole abiding Truth of existence. It can regard the Person as the sole Reality or the Impersonal as alone true; it can regard the Lover as only a means of expression of eternal Love or love as only the self-expression of the Lover; it can see beings as only personal powers of an impersonal Existence or impersonal existence as only a state of the one Being, the Infinite Person."<sup>1</sup> In its spiritual achievement too the mind structurally cannot escape these dividing lines. These opposites and partialities disappear only in the experience of the supramental Truth-Consciousness. "It is this that is the aim we have conceived, the consummation of our existence here by an ascent to the supramental Truth-Consciousness and its descent into our nature. The psychic transformation after rising into the spiritual change has then to be completed, integralised, exceeded and uplifted by a supramental transformation which lifts it to the summit of the ascending endeavour."<sup>2</sup> It is the supramental Consciousness-Energy that alone can establish a perfect harmony between the two terms of spirit status and world dynamism in our embodied existence, even as it harmonises and integrates the divided and opposed terms of manifested Being.

The fulfilment of the psychic being, the consummation of its movement, lies in finding its corresponding truth or source-term in the supreme Reality. This is also true of the other parts of our being—the mental, vital and physical; they will have to realise their divine source, the corresponding terms in Sachchidananda. These three as well as the psychic being succeed in their endeavour by the power of the Supermind, for it is the Supermind "which links the higher and the lower hemispheres of the One Existence. In Supermind is the integrating Light, the consummating Force, the wide entry into the supreme Ananda: the psychic being uplifted by that Light and Force can unite itself with the original Delight of existence from which it came: overcoming the dualities of pain and pleasure, delivering from all fear and shrinking the mind, life and body, it can recast the contacts of existence in the world into terms of the Divine Ananda"<sup>3</sup>.

The Indian spiritual tradition speaks of four different kinds of *mukti*, namely, *sāṃp̄yā*, *sād̄h̄śyā*, *sālokyā* and *sāyujyā*. These relate themselves to the individual soul's realisation of its nearness to the Divine, of the constant vision of the Divine, of eternally living in the domain of the Divine and of its identity with the being or

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 228.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 229.    <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 230.

consciousness of the Divine. But these are only first and initial forms of liberation, not final and integral. According to Sri Aurobindo, "A Divine unity of supreme Spirit and its supreme nature is the integral liberation."<sup>1</sup> Liberation from the lower nature, *aparā prakṛti* of the three gunas, into the peace and silence, consciousness or bliss is not the aim of Integral Yoga; it is liberation into the luminous Consciousness-Force of the Supernature, *parā prakṛti*, liberation in the Purushottama that is sought for—an union with the Supreme at once *sāyujya* and *sādharmya*, *svarājya* and *sāmrajya*, identity in being and a dynamic identity in nature. A double liberation in the divine consciousness, *chit*, and in His Force, *tapas*, in His ineffable silence and in His Cosmic action is the essence of our Yoga—the liberation both of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*.

Three are the fundamental realisations of this Yoga: (i) the psychic change that comes from within, which brings the right vision, right impulse and right movement into the mind, life and the physical respectively, resulting in a complete devotion to the Divine in a constant union with Him; (ii) the spiritual change that descends from above, which is the established descent of the peace, light, knowledge, power, bliss from the higher levels accompanied by the awareness of the Self and the Divine and of a higher universal consciousness and also the turning of the whole being towards that; and (iii) the supramental change which enables the experience of the One and Divine infinitely everywhere and the living in that infinite consciousness. The first is the realisation of the psychic being and consciousness as the divine element in the evolution; the second the realisation of the cosmic Self which is one in all, and the third the realisation of the Supreme Divine from which both individual and cosmos have come and of the individual being, *jīvātmā*, as the eternal portion of the Divine.

(To be continued)

V. MADHUSUDAN REDDY

<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo, *The Synthesis of Yoga*.

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# THE CHARACTER OF LIFE

(Continued from the issue of April 24, 1977)

## CONSCIOUSNESS APPROACH TO SHAKESPEARE

5

### The Character of Life in *Othello*

As a representation of life, *Othello* contrasts markedly with *Macbeth*. As we have seen in *Macbeth*, the story is of universal dimensions, a conflict of cosmic powers expressing itself in a particular time and place through particular individuals. Human character plays a substantial role in forging man's destiny. The scale is grand, the figures are kings, the stakes are a country's future. *Othello* lacks the atmosphere of universality and the clear indication of cosmic forces at work. Character is active but does not appear as the major determinant. Though the figures are great, the setting is personal. The casual reader feels relieved and satisfied with the fall of Macbeth, while the conclusion of *Othello* leaves him uneasy and pained.

A.C. Bradley has identified some of the sources of these impressions, of which we shall mention three. First, the suffering and death of Desdemona appears to be without cause and contrary to all sense of justice. Second, the role played by deception and intrigue seems to reduce the dependence of the outcome on character and will. Third, the part played by accident in the catastrophe accentuates the feeling of fate. We have noted Bradley's comments here because in analysing the play it is essential that some intelligible explanation be given for each of these points. If Desdemona's suffering does not arise from her own character and action, if Iago's intrigues are not a response of life to her and Othello, if key movements in the action depend mainly on inexplicable chance, then we must conclude that in *Othello* Shakespeare's vision has not been true to the real world, for all of these suppositions are in contradiction to the character of life.

These difficulties arise from an inadequate comprehension of the forces of life active throughout the course of the play. We tend to overlook the real significance of Othello's elopement with Desdemona, the marriage of a black Moor to the fair daughter of a Venetian Senator. We are distracted by the presence of Iago, his bitterness at the appointment of Cassio as Othello's lieutenant, his desire for revenge and the beginnings of his intrigue. There is a tendency to hold Iago fully responsible for the catastrophe that follows without seeing the relationship between the elopement and the fatal consequences of intrigue. But on close analysis we will discover a connection between all the events which follow. In addition we shall find that the characters themselves possess a keen insight into the underlying movement and even a foreknowledge of its fatal conclusion.

When the play opens Othello and Desdemona have just eloped a few hours earlier. But we learn first of Iago's bitter resentment of Othello's selection of Cassio as his lieutenant and we fail to see that the marriage is prior to the first stirrings of

Iago's intrigue. Later we shall see that the elopement is not only the primary object but also the primary cause of Iago's plotting and its fatal consequences.

Iago arouses Brabantio with news of the elopement. "An old black ram...a barbary horse" has stolen away his daughter. Brabantio's response is instinct with knowledge. "Thou art a villain." Had others only known it as well!

Brabantio is a man of fixed mental attitudes, who will not listen to anyone or change his mind. He does not think of his daughter's happiness, only her desertion and betrayal.

And what's to come of my despised time? (I.i.162)

He enters the council chamber shouting, "My daughter, O, my daughter!" The response of the Senate is prophetic, "Dead?" Brabantio describes Desdemona as a quiet, bashful, sensitive girl who could never fall in love with "what she fear'd to look on!" unless the cause is witchcraft. Much later we learn that the handkerchief given by Othello was sewn by a sorceress and charmed. After hearing Othello's story, Brabantio asks his daughter to refute it:

If she confess that she was half the wooer,  
Destruction on my head, if my bad blame  
Light on the man! (I.iii.174)

After hearing of her willing consent to the elopement, he refuses the Duke's suggestion that she stay with him while Othello is at war. "I'll have it not so." The last words we hear him speak are half warning and half curse :

Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see:  
She has deceiv'd her father, and may thee. (I.iii.293)

By the end of the tragedy just after Desdemona's death, we learn that her father has died of grief.

Thy match was mortal to him. (II.iii.205)

Clearly the elopement was the cause of Brabantio's death and his intense bitterness is a sanction and force for the catastrophe that follows. His "bad blame" does fall on Othello. We need only recall two statements. There is the Duke's warning to the grief-stricken father:

To mourn a mischief that is past and gone  
Is the next way to draw new mischief on. (I.iii.203)

And there is his comment on Othello's assignment to Cyprus when he calls opinion "a sovereign mistress of effects." We can safely assume that Brabantio's attitude was shared by others. The Senators' subconscious awareness—in that initial "Dead?"—



of Desdemona's ultimate fate is indicative that the action has touched a deep level in the social atmosphere of Venice. A fair Senator's daughter marrying a black Moor is a "gross revolt", an act to "incur a general mock."

Desdemona is an exceptional woman. Besides the beauty and charm for which she is revered, she possesses a marked degree of mental idealism and emotional purity. Her love of Othello appears as a mental decision rather than a vital infatuation. She fell in love with the idea of a bold, courageous, romantic adventurer and her heart fully consented. "She lov'd me for the dangers I had pass'd." (I.iii.167) This is shown clearly in her response to the Duke's inquiry:

I do perceive here a divided duty: (I.iii.181)

Her words are of the mind, not the heart :

I saw Othello's visage in his mind,  
And to his honour and his valiant parts  
Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate. (I.iii.253)

Hers is primarily an act of mental forethought and will, not an emotional attachment, vital-physical attraction or subconscious response. Throughout the story there is this air of purity and absolute loyalty which come only when the heart is uplifted to follow an ideal. Her character approximates Sri Aurobindo's description of mental love:

There are a number of women who can love with the mind...the heart too can be dominated by the mind and moved by mental forces...there can be a mental love. It arises from the attempt to find one's ideal in another or from some strong passion of admiration and wonder...By itself that does not amount to love, though often it is so ardent as to be hardly distinguishable from it and may even push to sacrifice of life, entire self-giving etc. But when it awakes the emotions of the heart, then it may lead to a very powerful love which is yet mental in its root and dominant character.<sup>29</sup>

But there is another aspect to Desdemona's character that requires comment. In many ways she shows a likeness to her father. Just as he thought only of himself when she ran away and was ready to give her up forever, she seems never to have considered the grief her elopement would cause him. There is an unconscious cruelty in her action born out of indifference or self-forgetfulness which parallels her father's unpardonable curse on the marriage. The same trait of mental fixation is there in her. Her idealism is doctrinaire and being so it is incapable of seeing how others are affected by her action. Having initiated such action she becomes vulnerable to other forces which rush in to take advantage of the situation. This blindness applies not only to her father, but to her own subconscious nature and the social environment of Venice.

The general morality of Venice is far from pure and idealistic. We catch a glimpse of it in the jesting conversation between Desdemona and Iago on their landing at Cyprus. We do not even doubt Iago's comment to Othello though we know it is said with another motive behind it:

I know our country disposition well;  
 In Venice they do let heaven see the pranks  
 They dare not show their husbands; their best conscience  
 Is not to leave 't undone, but keep 't unknown. (III.iii.201)

In a climate of weak morality, Desdemona has chosen a high idealism. When one tries to move far above the general level of life, the society responds negatively to cancel the movement. It unleashes forces of resistance which are expressed unconsciously in the Senator's cry, "Dead?" As Bradley says, "She met in life with the reward of those who rise too far above our common level."<sup>30</sup>

The resistance of the society finds a correspondence in the deeper layers of her own personality which share that heritage. Her decision is mental but it lacks the full support of her physical, vital and emotional nature. To quote Bradley, "...she made nothing of the shrinking of her senses."<sup>31</sup> Brabantio calls Othello "what she fear'd to look on." Iago reminds Othello how "she seem'd to shake and fear your looks" and he replies, "so she did." Othello describes her decision as "Nature erring from itself." Desdemona herself reminds Othello of "so many times when I spoke of you dispraisingly" before the marriage. For any act to succeed, a certain harmonious support is required. If the mind overstrains without sufficient emotional or vital support, the act which results is a violence against the lower nature and it has the character of cruelty. Such an act evokes a violent response from life.

Brabantio's bitterness, general social condemnation, and the revulsion of Desdemona's subconscious nature are negative forces active in the events which follow. Iago's own intrigue is not primarily an addition to this list but an instrument or channel through which they express themselves in life. Nevertheless the reason for Iago's involvement must and will be considered in the course of our discussion.

The chain of events following the elopement is highly significant. The news of war, the council meeting, Othello's departure, the storm and the landing at Cyprus follow in quick succession. It is as if life were hurriedly taking Othello and Desdemona away from Venice. The social consciousness of the society has virtually ejected them. In this light it is not surprising that Lodovico's arrival at Cyprus as the Venetian Senator's representative coincides exactly with Othello's decision to kill Desdemona. He is unknowingly present to witness the retribution. The violence of the elopement—it is in the nature of an attack on the sanctioned social consciousness of the country—expresses itself as a father's anger, the threat of war and a violent storm. Iago was right, "it was a violent commencement, and thou shalt see an answerable sequestration." (I.iii. 348)

When the storm subsides, it takes an inner turn leading to fatal consequences. In *Hamlet* also the threat of foreign war appears serious and suddenly resolves when the inner conflict begins. This chain of correspondence reveals the line of causality leading from Desdemona's character and action to her death. It is not a mere dramatic device of the past but a movement of forces flowing through the channels of individual and social character and finding expression in life events.

Othello is a man of the world, a soldier and adventurer. He has lived a life outside of civilisation and has a "prompt and natural alacrity" for hardness and warfare. He is past youth and has an air of maturity and calm strength which comes from innumerable experiences and recognition by those around him. In addition he has a tendency to romance in the broadest sense of the term. His speech and imagery express a colourful vision of life. He sees himself and others see him as a great romantic hero. His personality is supported by a tremendous vital energy. It is the energy of a warrior not that of a civilised man:

...for I am black  
And have not those soft parts of conversation  
That chamberers have... (III. iii. 262)

He is a man of passion who has gained a certain self-mastery but frequently his self-control reaches its limits:

My blood begins my safer guides to rule. (II.iii.205)

Only Iago seems to have seen beneath Othello's romantic image the rough, crude energies of a man of nature expressed in such statements as "my heart is turn'd to stone," "I'll tear her all to pieces" and "Arise, black vengeance." Everyone else is surprised and confused. Lodovico asks, "Is this the nature whom passion could not shake?" and Desdemona, "My lord is not my lord; nor should I know him." Iago recognises his weakness and sums it up well:

If the blance of our lives had no tone scale of reason to poise another of sensuality, the blood and baseness of our nature would conduct us to preposterous conclusions. (I.iii.329)

In Desdemona, Othello has found a perfect complement to his romantic self-image. The warrior is fulfilled as the lover. His romanticism is matched by her idealism. His passions can find expression in the intensities of sexual love.

Othello's reunion with Desdemona on Cyprus is the ecstatic fulfilment of his life, beyond which he can imagine no greater joy. His words are prophetic:

If it were now to die  
'Twere now to be most happy, for, I fear,  
My soul hath her content so absolute

That not another comfort like to this  
Succeeds in unknown fate. (II.i.191)

and

I cannot speak enough of this content;  
It stops me here; it is too much of joy. (II.i.198)

Othello has achieved the highest intensity of satisfaction which his being can sustain. As when the soul achieves the purpose for which it took birth and then quickly retires. Othello has exhausted the potentialities of his nature. As John Bayley writes, "having achieved his desire, Othello turns naturally to the idea of death as the only fit and comparable peer of love. How can the tension otherwise be kept up and the lover remain at the summit of his happiness?"<sup>32</sup> There is a subtle awareness in traditional societies like the Indian that somewhere an act must be incomplete for it to continue. If the force behind the act fully realises its goal, the tendency to repetition is lost, the force dissolves. If the full joy is received from an act, the act comes to an end. For Othello not only is the act of union fulfilled but his entire life as well. He knows within himself that both must soon end. We recall his words before the Senate, "Come, Desdemona, I have but an hour/Of love, of worldly matters and direction,/To spend with thee..." (I.iii.299)

By itself this does not explain the consequences which follow. Othello may as well have been called off again to war or died in a storm or been murdered by Iago. But his fortunes are linked here with his wife's and the outcome is an expression of both their natures. Desdemona overlooks her father's feelings in marrying Othello. The result is Brabantio's death. Correspondingly Othello overlooks Iago in selecting Cassio as his lieutenant. The result is that Iago plots a revenge which falls on Desdemona and Othello. According to Othello, it is Desdemona who first comes forward to hear his story. In Brabantio's words, "she was half the wooer." It is his "bad blame" which follows them and his warning to Othello, "She has deceiv'd her father, and may thee," that is the seed of tragedy. Desdemona's initiative in the elopement is a sanction for her suffering. Their marriage is a forceful coming together, a transgression of the social moorings of Venice, and thus it leads to a violent end.

(To be continued)

GARRY JACOBS

#### NOTES

<sup>29</sup> Sri Aurobindo, *Letters on Yoga* (Cent. Ed., Vol. 24), p. 1526.

<sup>30</sup> A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy*, p. 165.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 164.

<sup>32</sup> John Bayley, *Casebook on Othello*, edited by John Wain, Macmillan Co Ltd. p. 181.

## DIALOGUES

(Continued from the issue of April 24, 1977)

### *Synopsis:*

*After the customary arduous training in Moscow, the soul as Ika, child of a remote Central Asian tribe, achieves brilliant success as a Bolshoi prima ballerina.*

*Her career is a long and illustrious one ending only as she approaches her sixties.*

### Chapter XVI

THERE were tears at the farewell Tatiana's fellow artistes and workers gave her, for she had been a central figure in the company for four decades. But the ones she shed herself were tears of warmth and gratitude, of love and a profound and mellowed satisfaction. Indeed Tatiana, now simply Ika once again, had no regrets as she walked out of the Bolshoi for the last time to her faithful Piotr who was as ever waiting for her outside. He was in his seventies now but still unchanged, the same dear Piotr—as good, as patient and unassuming as always—and Ika felt a deep contentment in knowing that she had nothing left to do but to spend the last years of her life looking after her old and beloved companion.

Yet it was difficult immediately after her retirement for Ika to relapse into utter idleness, or what seemed to her to be idleness after the life from which she had come. Piotr had realised, even before, that the restless energy that had been kindled within her would not take to inactivity so easily. He therefore had his questions ready the next evening. Would she like to take a tour of several months towards the south? Would she be interested in revisiting the country, the cliff-side haunts of her childhood? So much had happened since then—a progress of millennia perhaps—that surely it would be interesting to see them. At first she demurred, unsure of herself, unsure of the great world outside the lesser world of the Bolshoi to which she had almost exclusively belonged, and wondered if she could do all the things that ordinary people did. Walk in the streets. Sleep late in the morning. Cook a leisurely meal. Relax with a book in the evening. Travel for pleasure like a tourist. All without having to practice. Without having to perform. Without having to create. Momentarily the prospect terrified her and, as though he knew even the intricacies of what she was thinking, Piotr reached out and put his hand on hers.

“Don't worry, darling. I'll arrange everything. I'll look after you. I always have, haven't I?” And he winked at her through the wrinkles of his smiling blue eyes. She stared back at him not knowing whether to laugh or cry.

“And I was the one who was going to look after you!”

“What, a little girl from the steppes, like you? Nonsense, nonsense.”

She wondered afterwards if she ever truly appreciated how fine he had been all

through that journey south, how uncannily, intuitively thoughtful, how quiet and true and gentle. Like a cat transporting a kitten, he lifted Tatiana Irinova from the man-made brilliance of the Bolshoi to the vast natural splendour, the silence, save for the wind, of the steppes, and she had felt nothing but the painless movement of the transition.

Nor did they ever make the return journey north. Once they reached the ancient home of Ika's people the old couple never left it again. What had once been the tribe now inhabited a small modern township some distance from the old rock face, for the government agencies had occupied themselves fully over the past forty years with their work of human reclamation. Yet a number of aging individuals still remained who remembered Ika as a child, and Piotr as a young teacher, even a few surviving brothers and sisters, not to speak of a young, unrecognizable generation of nephews, nieces, their children, and their children's children who had only heard of their illustrious family member through the newspapers. Under the circumstances it was easy for the two to settle down, easy to decide that they would remain here rather than return to Moscow. Eventually, Ika even agreed to take on a few dancing students, while Piotr occasionally visited the local school and gave lectures on the history of the region, which he had studied so assiduously.

But sometimes on rare occasions, Ika and Piotr would escape all their involvements and hike the distance to the cliff face. There in utter solitude and tranquillity, they would dream of nothing and everything. Eventually, however, it did not fail to impress itself on Ika that each time they made the trip it took Piotr a little longer to complete the walk, longer to recover his breath, frighteningly long to climb the steep paths, and then to force his feet home. Still she refused to speak, for by so doing she would deny him access to the life and activity he loved and that she felt he still had every right to live.

Rather it was Piotr who spoke as they sat upon their favourite ledge on the cliff face that day.

"Ika dearest, you know this must be my last time here." She said nothing but leant her head against his shoulder. "And you know too that I will be going soon now."

"If only we could have gone together," she whispered.

"No—you have still so much to do."

"I have nothing left to do, Piotr."

"Oh, I'm sure you do—just a little something to keep you going. After all, you're still so young and beautiful, who knows what you have left in store for you." His eyes were twinkling as they always did when he joked.

"Really, you are incorrigible. I suppose you'll have something to say even to God when you confront him."

"Of course, 'Well, well,' I'll say. 'I'm a communist and according to us you're not even supposed to exist.'"

"In which case God will answer, 'Then I'm sending you straight back where you

came from to tell the rest that they're wrong.' "

"We'll see about that when I get there. Meanwhile, we'd better get home."

They started back immediately but it was a painfully long walk and Piotr was near prostration when they finally reached the haven of their door.

A month later, he died quietly, Ika's hand in his, his last words still on his lips, "Look after yourself, Ika darling." And then suddenly he was gone.

Ika's desolation was complete. Only gradually were her friends able to soothe her grief and help her accustom herself to a life alone, until at last she of her own accord found her feet again and her own inner strength. Then she knew that Piotr had been right. She did indeed have something left to do, something best done in solitude. She had to find within herself once more that divine being who had so sustained her all the years that she had danced, and whom she had subsequently pressed into the background these last ten years for Piotr's sake.

Now once again she returned to the cliff face where she had been born, to the very embrace of the great Mother. She sought out as she had not been able to do with her companion all the spots she had worshipped as a child, the trees—not all of them still alive and standing—the rocks, even the stone image now covered with undergrowth to which her people had prayed for protection against desert storms.

At first it appeared that the Divinity would no longer return to Ika or to anything at all that had once been its domain. It was only after some time that the vast and beautiful being began to re-emerge and to reveal herself again to her seeking child. Indeed it seemed to Ika as though the great one came to her out of coverings of gradually shredding mists. To begin with, the mist would hang all about her, and then slowly, with the dancer's grace that she knew so well, fly apart and leap away to be swallowed in sunlight. At that moment, the naked presence would be revealed dominating the empty stage of the sky and earth—immense, splendid, and infinitely gentle. The firmament would be filled with it, the entire outstretched desert, the cliff face where countless generations had clung to life and then departed and where now only the shadows of souls wandered among the sacred trees and rocks and graven images.

It was there, beside the doorway to Ika's own ancient rock dwelling with the faint painted patterns of the traditional totem images still visible on the stone, that she had her last conversation with this—the spirit of her ancestors, indeed, the spirit of all things, all men, the great Mother who had given birth to the whole universe and now secretly guided it on its blind, unsure way.

"At last, my Mother, I have found you again after losing you all these years. Or is it you who left me for some divine work of your own? Such a work that I could no longer see you or feel you about me?"

"You know I never leave you, child. In fact, I could not for I am existence itself, which is omnipresent. It is man who leaves me in his mind."

"Then you must be angry with me?"

"Ika darling, I am never angry with you. Come let me take you in my arms."

“Ah, those had often been Piotr’s words.”

“And yet you did not see me standing behind him and speaking through his voice?”

“But how could you, great Mother? Piotr never knew you, did he?”

“The knowledge or ignorance of my children does not affect me. I live through them all. The human mind is a passing thing of many conceits, my child. You must not seek me there, for sometimes I must reside behind the surface mask of the being.”

“If only it were otherwise. Will it ever be so?”

“Ah yes, one day, little Ika.”

“Soon, please soon,” she whispered. “Because I have meant to tell you for a long time—perhaps it is this Piotr meant when he said I still had something left to do—it was to tell you that this time I want to truly die, great Mother. Do not let me awaken again, I beg you. See, my body is already stiffening as it lies there on the rock beside our door. But I want to ask you please, before I leave it altogether—do not give me another like it ever again. For now I have played myself out; somewhere within me I have seen the whole earth, the whole experience of man as I could ever have wished to experience it. I have tired of censure and applause, good fortune and ill, knowledge and ignorance. Take me in your arms then, once and for all...”

“Child, come to me, cling no longer to that small body so perfectly fashioned by the gods that gave the world so much of their beauty. Leave also this little human heart and mind that so justifiably seek their rest. You have truly done your long and toilsome work on earth, yet you wish to depart without your earned reward.”

“Your presence is my reward, great Mother.”

“But what if my presence should live on earth, as now it does for you here? Look there into the distance and tell me what you see—”

“I see, I see people...men and women, thousands upon thousands of them all made of gold. Yes, golden people, calmly pure, steady, resolute, light as ether, beautiful as the eyes of God. But waiting, great Mother. What are they waiting for, and for how many ages have they stood so?”

“They have gathered gradually, child, and now their time is nearing, ever nearing. They will one day inhabit the earth, when it is ready for them. But meanwhile they wait.”

“Those beings? Upon that earth from which I have just come? But—”

“Ah child, that is why they must wait, standing there with their infinite, godlike patience. Because the earth is still as you know it. But when it changes, and change it must, for the Divine has willed it—they will be ready. Go there and stand among them—there at the edge. Don’t worry, they will welcome you.”

“But, great Mother, look at me, I am not made of gold. I have not been fashioned from the elements of some unreachable divine realm. I am myself, Ika, made of ordinary earthly clay.”

“Cast off your clay crust then. Remember that it is from my golden heart that you were born...”



“Oh yes, Mother—your golden heart...somewhere deep within me...perfect, unalloyed. But how do I deserve to transcend my earthliness, to become that, to exchange my time-bound weariness for a new order of life and being?”

“Because you have earned it, child. And also because I bestow upon you the boon of my grace. Take it as a gift to one whom I wish to reward. For, all your life did you not strive with all your force and all your love to transcend your human limits? To float where others walked? To take flight and soar where others stumbled and clutched helplessly at the passing wind? To pour out all the beauty that flowed into your heart from mine, while others spoke only of trivialities and fretted their lives away? Yes indeed, little Ika, Tatiana Irinova—you have earned your place among the golden people. Go.”

And her delicate form drifted away from the divine Mother’s embrace towards the waiting multitude, gradually transmuting to gold as it went.

*(Concluded)*

BINA BRAGG

## GEODE

O HAMMER-WIELDING Goddess, till your light  
 Can enter and set free my shrouded glow  
 The world and I myself will never know  
 That though my surface is rough stone, a bright  
 Crystalline chamber sealed from outer sight  
 Is carved within, occult intaglio.  
 Strike swiftly, cleave me with one sudden blow  
 And with your sun dispel my inward night.

How came those jewels to be imprisoned there?  
 Opal and amethyst and pale rose quartz  
 And, in the centre, more divine than they,  
 A void that is an in-globed everywhere,  
 A bounded chamber made for boundless sports,  
 A place where the embodied Child can play.

PETER HEEHS

*(From the author’s forthcoming book of poems, Image of Adoration)*

## BY THE EARTH'S DANCE

### A LETTER OF LOVE FROM "PEACE", AUROVILLE, CITY OF DAWN RISING IN SOUTH INDIA

DEAR fellow builders of our One Earth of Light,

It's 3 a.m. of the third Night Watch at *Matrimandir*, evolving "soul" of Auroville as the Mother, founder of the City of Dawn, has called it.

Come, take it with me the Watch  
at the Becoming city becoming as we build  
ourselves into and from our soul  
by the Earth's dance evolving.

We start out from the low keet and bamboo roofed construction office hut. Facing from the East we see its vast curving rib-structure reaching up through the darkness like arms of a living mystery. It will be in the form of the Earth's body emerging from its own material depths, a crater dug by many hundreds of hands from stone-hard and Adam-red earth using only primitive tools of Tamil Nadu land, *mumpti* and *chetty*-pan, crowbar and spade. A spheroid flat at either pole, to be sheathed as a globe in a material yet unknown, it is supported by four pillars—aspects and powers of the World-Mother that guide the terrestrial play: her divine Wisdom, world-shaking Force, compelling Harmony, exact Perfection in all things. Tonight it is an Earth-form embryonic, shrouded in black wooden scaffolding towers and mist like a chrysalis.

—Will it rotate when it's finished? ask visitors  
gaping at the Becoming globe — Will it revolve?  
For like a new planet outer space and time-ship  
unfinished in dock it seems restive, to tug at its moorings  
impatient to dance over the ocean of consciousness  
to be on the Way with us to our discoveries Within Beyond.

From ground-level zero looking up to its equator level, floor of its Inner Chamber, you can see the shape of a tower peaking to the Ring that joins the four pairs of structural ribs. The night arc lamps light its concrete purity starkly, austere from here. But from a distance the becoming Earth-form appears lit from within like a chalice by an inner crystalline light. There is the physical "seat" of the soul, psychic being of the planetary city that *belongs to humanity as a whole*<sup>1</sup> set in the case of its heart-chamber.

—Place of union where self meets Self,  
 spiritual heart centre at the core of our being  
 and its becoming That which we are in reality  
 on our way to *That's* Reality, ours;  
*Hridaya* heart in Sanskrit meaning *identical with*,  
 the heavenly heart with our body Earth  
 this lotus the Inner Light say the Yoga-Sutras.

This Inner Chamber will be a great silent Hall, the Silent Place, the Place of Concentration. Having concreted its sub-floor slab and floor itself 12 metres in radius to the corners of its 12-sided wall (the floor was cast in a concreting that lasted two days, November 17th and 18th of '76), and the first section of that dodeca-wall, we are preparing the steel reinforcement and steel shutterings now for the next concreting—Aurovilians' work-offerings at concretings are silent festivals of concentration. You can see the tall steel verticals laced by horizontal rods of the base beam, here from below. Sometimes you can hear them in the night wind

singing over the construction site—Do you hear them?  
 Because you too are building the new creation with us  
 wherever you are in dream state or work in your Light  
 centre opening to the new Force Truth  
 Consciousness by the Earth's dance to manifest.

We go down the zig-zagging earth-stairs of the excavation to concrete-mixer level and peer below to the foundation tank. Yesterday we came together to empty it of accumulated old earth soil, wood and wire, scrap and tools and nuts and bolts and scaffold clamps that have fallen during monsoon rains and periods of water-curing fresh concrete. Fellow builders from Findhorn and Arcosanti joined Aurovilians, a chain of hands and hearts passing up from the depths the chetties of mud.

—We are passing flowers Peter said handing up his  
 Toni one of those in big rubber boots below feeding  
 the chain that emptied our heart's-cave of the past  
 seasons of tears our monsoons of ego cyclones  
 of envygreedanger our own rained down churning  
 with dropped and forgotten twisted wire thoughts  
 and tornaway rusted desires broken tools  
 that no longer could serve our longed for oneness

—I saw a chain of Light, she said zig-zagging  
 up the ancient stairway of humanity our Aztec  
 past—Or Egyptian or Sumerian Chaldean or remotest

or forgotten pasts of our Earth before history  
 said another over the Kottakarai buns of the present  
 in *Unity* kitchen in close communion breaking the brown  
 bread—This is my body, said Mother Earth  
 —and yours Transform it to Light.

Ascending the earthen stairway out of the crater we patrol the construction site. It is as peaceful as the white cow of Kantaswami, Tamil Aurovilian working as carpenter on *Matrimandir* wooden shutterings. In calm meditation chewing her cud of the day's bounty she muses through the night over her calf and the strange plank-forms white in the moonlight, a cow sacred in her serene and perfect surrender to her Provider.

Musing too we walk on to the Machine Workshop. Dark forms of steel loom up from ironpipe frames. Flashing a torch over the welded sections of ramp, one tries to imagine the hundred-metre long spiral ramp that is to wind from pier staircases into the sanctuary above, the Inner Chamber, the Silent Place. I muse over things Piero has said about the ramp, his way of seeing the ascent into *Matrimandir*. Auroville architect in charge of its execution, Piero from Florence with his aspiring love for *harmony and beauty of the mind and soul and in every outward act and movement, harmony and beauty of the life and surroundings*, and spirit of perfection, serves the aspects of the Mother Mahalakshmi and Mahasaraswati who give *the intimate and precise knowledge, the subtlety and patience, the accuracy of intuitive mind and conscious hand and discerning eye of the perfect worker*.<sup>2</sup> And it has occurred to me that he is representative—as each of us here in this laboratory is differently in his own configuration—of the Italian soul which spoke through Pico della Mirandola in the days before Columbus, searching for the Passage to India, discovered the New World of their Age.

—let a certain holy ambition invade our souls  
 so that not content with the mediocre we shall pant  
 after the highest and—since we may if we wish—  
 toil with all our strength to obtain it  
 to hasten to that which is beyond the world  
 and nearest to the Godhead, said young Pico  
 24 years old at that time of his rebirth.

Builder of a new earth, Pico had heard God tell red-earth Adam,—According to thy longing and according to thy judgment thou mayst have and possess what abode, what form, and what functions thou thyself shalt desire....Man collaborator with the Divine in his own evolution!... His Earth his laboratory, he has full freedom of choice as maker and molder of himself to fashion himself in whatever shape he shall choose.—Thou shalt have power to degenerate into the lower forms of life which

are brutish. Thou shalt have the power, out of thy soul's judgment, to be reborn into the highest forms, which are divine.

*Open your soul, says Sri Aurobindo, to the Divine Shakti to the Supreme Power circling and sweeping upwards through the maze of the Ignorance to a supernal Light.*

*Follow your soul and not your mind your soul that answers to the truth not your mind that leaps at appearances; trust the Divine Power and she will free the godlike elements in you and shape all into an expression of Divine Nature<sup>3</sup>—by the Earth's dance in the steps of her Mother-Might dance to perfection*

—Visualise the walk up the ramp through the *Matrimandir* to be a long purification, said Piero—a pilgrimage out of the binding past through free architectural forms and spaces. At 12 metres above the ground you will arrive at the Silent Place, the Place of Concentration...the mystic dodecagon built of our aspiration to the heights, and for the manifestation of union with the Divine...response to man's aspiration.

For the symbolism of the spiral is that of the pilgrim's journey...the spiritual seeker's leaving behind of the known, his daring steps onto new ground, his moving upward into the wholly unknown, and then—the reversal, complete change of direction and view at a higher level. Again the departure from the newly found, step by steeper step ascent of the spirit's climb. A universal movement of growth towards the light, it is as well the evolutionary movement, ascent of the Serpent Power, kundalini energy rising, turning of the spiral nebula, DNA of the chromosome, spin of the nucleus

and the Earth's dance round an Inner Sun

the pilgrim's spiralling progress a Way  
and a transmutation death of our old  
red-earth Adam into our being of Light

by the climb to the Supreme by the World-Stair

*Built by the aspiring soul of man to live  
Near to his dream of the Invisible...*

our Earth is married to screened eternities<sup>4</sup>.

This machine shop on the construction site preparing the spiral ramp is then part of the Transformation Work-place at our Centre and central collective being. The spiralling Way to transcendence of our human nature and its limiting imperfections is a daily, hourly work...under a tropical outer sun...with all the hazards, risks and ordeals that have always besieged the traveller of the upward path, the razor's edge, the bath of fire as much an adventure of danger as one of consciousness and joy it is the road into the new age. Symbolic is the evolving plan of the township itself—that of the spiral nebula of a new world... *Matrimandir* its soul is also its point of birth as a city *at the service of Truth*. This point will be visible in the Place of Silence as a single Light-ray striking the centre of a crystal globe. *A gold supernal sun of timeless Truth/will pour down the mystery of the eternal Ray Through a silence quivering with the word of Light./On an endless ocean of discovery.*<sup>5</sup>

—A temple of the supramental Sun, the Mother said once to a sadhak—I understood from her, chief architect Roger said to the workers, *Matrimandir* will be a receptacle for spiritual energy Force Instrument of the evolving supramental consciousness so that the city may be guided by Truth in all its aspects education industries arts agriculture architecture life all—all developing according to Truth the Unseen Sun of the Earth's dance by It evolving,

We turn from the dark-looming spiral-ramp forms in the workshop to patrol the steel yard with its stacks of long rods like elements of the World-Stair waiting to be assembled...Detour around the heavy black iron tubular pipes to be carried to the construction, hoisted many metres high, coupled and clamped together at dizzy heights to provide scaffolding for the dodeca-wall concretings... Section by section they will be taken up, up, then taken down again, placed and replaced as the Inner Chamber materialises... Steel shutterings hung and rehung in place, arduous work with drill gunning holes for the white marble wall-facets, work demanding perfection of measurement, spirit-level applied with exactitude at each level of the ascent...the crossing of rivers of sweat, fording of streams of fear...to break through and pass beyond self-preoccupations of ego as the human temple is built into the divine.

—*The supramental change is a thing decreed and inevitable in the evolution of the earth-consciousness, said Sri Aurobindo, for its upward ascent is not ended...mind is not its last summit. But that the change may arrive, take form and endure, there is needed the call from below with a will to recognise and not deny the Light when it comes, and there is needed the sanction of the Supreme from above. The power that mediates between the sanction and the call is the presence and power of the Divine Mother. The Mother's power and not any human endeavour and tapasya can alone*

*rend the lid and tear the covering, shape the vessel and bring down into this world of obscurity and falsehood and death and suffering Truth and Light and Life divine and the immortal's Ananda*<sup>6</sup>.

It is 5 a.m. of the Night Watch. From a nearby village rises that call...the poignant human cry to the Supreme for Truth and Light. In other villages neighboring The Centre, *Peace*, Kottakarai and all the Auroville settlements, the Divine Power is called to as *Amma*, the Mother, and known by many different names in Tamil...*Mariamma*, *Draupadi-amma*, *Ellaikali-amma*, *Elamkali-amma*...so villagers in the area of the rising City of Dawn feel close to *Matrimandir*, temple of the Mother in Sanskrit. The World-Mother is theirs even as she is universal, the World-Energy, the divine Shakti power of the Supreme. Here the powers of harmony, wisdom, consciousness of truth, perfection of work, strength of the sovereign will to bring down love, divine ananda into the darkness and lead the world-play of life to the dawn. Already its hints of splendor, rose and gold, touch the low roofs of the construction workshops and sheds. We have patrolled the future concealed in the night's silence. Now the work begins of making what already exists on the eternal plane manifest on the material. We have learned that the Power acting in us is not our force: how could amateurs at construction-work from so many different cultures, even *amatores* of the Divine, by themselves raise this Mystery? Something is at work that moves us, acts through us; that we have experienced. That Something is at work all over the world, we learn from one another as we come from Europe, the Middle East, India, the far East, North America, South America, Africa. Something new. And we learn it from the visitors following the ineffable Sun-tracks....

She gave her card the *Reverend*...bewildered on the site she looked about her looked up at the Mystery—I am a minister without a church, she said—in California I received the inner guidance—go to the centres of Light around the world Elderly and bewildered shoes hurting searching for a place to sit down out of the burning sun a Golden Ager gray hair touched by Its gold her card read—*New Age Spiritual Counsellor & Therapist* Moved by the Earth's dance to the Divine from her sea cliff perch in the West Moved in her tight new shoes towards the new world.

6 a.m., Night Watch ended, we walk back to the construction Camp remembering others who have come and gone, but not really gone, moving with us on the cables of light that carry us, builders together, wherever we should go...once we have taken that first step towards the New and the Unknown.—*To say the truth*, the Mother has told us, *just now there is upon earth an opportunity which presents itself only after thousands of years, a Conscious help with the necessary Power*. When she came to India first in 1914 she saw it as a *veritable work of creation we have to do: to create new activities and new modes of being, so that this Force, unknown to the earth till now, may*

*manifest in its plenitude....We shall unite our efforts; the whole individual being will concentrate itself in a constant appeal towards the knowledge of the way of manifestation of the Force, and Thou, supreme centre of the being, Thou wilt fully emanate the Force, so that it may penetrate, transfigure and surmount all obstacles. This is the pact Thou hast signed with the worlds of individual life. Thou hast made a promise, Thou hast sent into these worlds those able and that which is empowered to fulfil this promise. This now calls for Thy integral help, so that what has been promised may be realised.<sup>7</sup>*

*Truth come manifest a child chalked on the concrete pillar wall of the foundation near the OM stone Come! descend into us, Truth lift us to You by the Earth's dance shaping the vessel making it ready and apt to receive Your Ananda which flows from a supreme divine Love healing the gulf between the highest heights of the supramental spirit and the lowest abysses of Matter.<sup>8</sup> Come! manifest*

with love  
at the service of Truth,

SEYRIL,  
Peace, Auroville, South India

#### REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup> Auroville Charter
  - <sup>2</sup> *The Mother*, by Sri Aurobindo.
  - <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*
  - <sup>4</sup> *Savitri*, by Sri Aurobindo.
  - <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*
  - <sup>6</sup> *The Mother*.
  - <sup>7</sup> *Prayers and Meditations of The Mother*
  - <sup>8</sup> *The Mother*.
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## BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

**Champaklal's Treasures**, Editor : M. P. Pandit. Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1976. Rs. 18.00.

Mr. Pandit has done once again a splendid job of work in culling from Champaklal's records the inexhaustible Treasures he seems to possess. This volume, like its predecessor, *Champaklal Speaks*, is marked by evidence of that painstaking labour, minute attention to detail and careful, logical arrangement which made the earlier compilation so eminently readable. The valuable matter it contains, the perennial interest of the Mother's and Sri Aurobindo's Words, will, one feels sure, make this second volume as much of a success as the first. Not a small part of the success will have been due to the loving care bestowed by the Editor in making it so attractive.

Two special features of this second volume add to its interest. It contains, as part of an Appendix, some Notes of Sri Aurobindo's informal talks to disciples and others who called on him, before his Retirement in 1926. Many of us are familiar with the nature of these talks, from the elaborate records published by A.B. Purani; some fragments compiled by others have also appeared serially in *Mother India*. They touch mainly on points connected with *sādhana* and contain some references to current events. One remark (if noted accurately) might perhaps come as a shock to many: "The motor car is a devil incarnate... There is something in the very speed of the car that invites all possible forces and movements and brings about all the accidents etc." One may hazard a guess that it was partly in order to make this new instrument of murder less murderous in its intent that the Mother used to go out on long drives at one time and had her car driven at high speed. Road accidents still take a high toll of human lives, here in India and in the West. But we have got so used to them that hardly anyone cares.

The other notable feature of this volume is provided by the letters written by Sri Aurobindo between 1920 and 1932. Some of these letters bring out so poignantly the economic difficulties which the Mother and Sri Aurobindo had to face in meeting the barest needs of the Ashram at the time; the reluctance with which money seemed to flow in is almost incredible now. These letters also help dispel to some extent the "haze" that still persists as to what Sri Aurobindo was doing between November 1926 when he "retired" and the beginning of the mid-thirties when an avalanche of correspondence with disciples in the Ashram kept him awake the whole night, "writing, writing, writing", for years on end, with hardly a day's break. The letters in this volume show him taking the same meticulous care about the welfare and progress of his disciples in the Ashram as well as outside, the same compassion, and the minute practical hints that mark his later and more voluminous correspondence. The letter to C.R. Das, written in 1922, is of particular interest; for it states in precise terms that "it is the mission of India to make this great victory for the world," namely, to develop a new consciousness for man, so that he may get out of "the futile circle the race is always treading."

This volume, like the earlier one, is naturally full of the Mother, for Champaklal was always so full of the Mother. In 1953, the Mother wrote, says Champaklal in the earlier volume, "Let me foretell all that will be done...." Here, in this volume, we get a full chart of the programme She set for herself in 1937. The programme is long and comprehensive, including practically everything that man may hope or wish to have; it includes "eternal youth, constant growth, uninterrupted progress." Once the Supramental Manifestation took place, she asks of the Lord, "Is it that the mission of this form is ended and that another form is to take up the work in its place?" Was she getting tired? Was she deciding to withdraw? Would it help her work better to act from a subtle plane? These are intriguing questions. "Those who are ready for the transformation can do it anywhere, and those who are *not* ready cannot do it wherever they are," She writes in November '71. A year later, in December '72, She says, "I am no more living an active life. If you are open, help is bound to come."

Thus the *Treasures* end. But there is no end to the treasures.

SANAT K. BANERJI

*Delayed in transit but now available*

## THE MOTHER: PAST—PRESENT—FUTURE

by

**K. D. SETHNA**

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“In a small circle of young eager hearts,  
Her being’s early school and closed domain,  
Apprentice in the business of earth-life,  
She schooled her heavenly strain to bear its touch”

“She held their hands, she chose for them their paths:  
They were moved by her towards great unknown things,  
Faith drew them and the joy to feel themselves hers;  
They lived in her, they saw the world with her eyes.”

*Savitri*, Cent. Ed., Vol. 29, Book IV Canto II, p. 367.

## **SRI AUROBINDO STUDY SEMINAR**

June 3 to 7, 1977 (five days)

Tapogiri, Ramgarh Talla, Dt. Nainital, U.P.

Subject:

### **The Mother’s Marvellous Ways with the Disciples**

THE Mother’s Birth Centenary comes off next year, on February 21, 1978 and we think of Her ever more. The Mother’s personality was a rich and varied personality; a wide, a deep and a high personality; and we learned to appreciate, admire and avail ourselves of the various dimensions of Her personality as we ourselves grew a little in those directions.

In an overt way, the Mother was a spiritual Master, an educationist, an artist, an organiser and administrator, a creator, all of a kind and quality Her own. But, as seekers and disciples, we perhaps knew most intimately and admired most heartily Her marvellous ways of handling us, of guiding us on the spiritual path. Always sweet, always encouraging, always compassionate, always original, unique and individual; kind and compassionate even in Her refusals; we were always thrilled with Her different ways with the disciples, all so different, in all the big and small situations of life. There were surely occasions when, at the moment, we felt She was harsh, but later on we always found She had been kind. Today, there is a special joy in recalling, in particular, the chidings that some of us at times received. Since She physically left us, Her ways with us have become more subtle and these constitute a field of study by themselves. It is even more interesting to know about them.

At the next Seminar, we intend to think of the Sweet Mother primarily in this intimate aspect of Her personal dealings with the seekers and the disciples. A few

papers, readings from *Savitri*, the Mother's music, Her correspondence in the original, Her sketches, a slide-show of the Mother's pictures, quiet hours in the adjoining reserved forest, visits to "Mountam Paradise" and "Madhuban" are all in contemplation.

Shri Prem Malik (Pondicherry), Dr. (Mrs.) Aster Patel (Pondicherry), Dr. Indra Sen and perhaps some others will be attending the Seminar and we hope to have a good gathering of the aspirants in the North for a larger common benefit.

### Miscellaneous

The bus for Ramgarh Talla starts from Haldwani at about 9.00 a.m. and from Kathgodam at 9.15 a.m. (reaching there at 12.30 noon) and another is available from Bhowali, leaving at 5.00 p.m. and from Ramgarh Talla at 5.30 p.m. (reaching there at 6.30 p.m.). For Bhowali and Ramgarh Talla, there are many buses during the day from Haldwani and Kathgodam. Direct buses are now running between Delhi and Nainital. Delhi and Ranikhet, Hardwar and Nainital and possibly between some other places and Nainital too. One can come by any of these and take the Ramgarh Talla bus from Haldwani or Bhowali or beyond Ramgarh Talla to Nathuakhan and halt, on request, right in front of the Tapogiri Ashram.

A second through-bus for Ramgarh Talla is also likely to be available, which would leave Haldwani at about 3.00 p.m.

All interested are welcome. Board and lodging to cost Rs. 5/- a day. Longer stay before and after the Seminar also possible.

Prem Malik	Mrs. Aster Patel	Indra Sen
Sri Aurobindo Ashram	Sri Aurobindo Ashram	
Pondicherry-605002	Pondicherry-605002	"Tapogiri", Ramgarh Talla Dt. Nainital, U.P. 263158

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