

MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

JULY 1977

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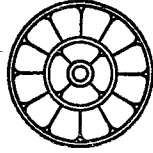
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All correspondence to be addressed to:

MOTHER INDIA, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry-605002, India.

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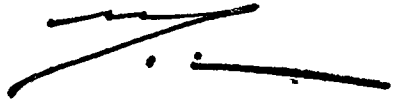


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XXIX

No. 7

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail."

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WORDS OF THE MOTHER

THE diamond is the symbol of pure spiritual light. No hostile force can cross it. If you put that light on a hostile force, he simply melts away. But the diamond's light cannot be used indiscriminately in all cases, because human beings who shelter these adverse forces get very dangerously affected. Of course, I am not speaking of the material diamond.

*

The serpent is the symbol of power, the power of will, the power of progress, but terrestrial power ascending towards the Divine in a serpentine way. It does not represent the descending power.

*

Water signifies many things such as fluidity, plasticity, suppleness, the purifying principle. It is the driving force and marks the beginning of organised life. Water corresponds to the vital, air to the mind, fire to the psychic, earth to matter, and ether to the Spirit.

*

It is only the Mahasaraswati aspect that can remain with you. It is She who looks after each detail. Sri Aurobindo has said that She does not forgive unless you try to change yourself. It is impossible to keep Mahakali with you. She comes like lightning and goes like thunder.

Generally people do not worship Mahakali, Mahalakshmi or Mahasaraswati. They are satisfied with Kali, Lakshmi and Saraswati. For them the worship of Lakshmi is like marrying a rich woman.

.

IN DIFFICULTY

EXTRACTS FROM TWO TALKS BY THE MOTHER

I

“*What do you mean by these words: ‘When you are in difficulty, widen yourself’ ?*”

I AM speaking, of course, of difficulties on the path of yoga, incomprehension, limitations, things like obstacles, which prevent you from advancing. And when I say “widen yourself”, I mean widen your consciousness.

Difficulties always arise from the ego, that is, from your more or less egoistic personal reaction to circumstances, events and people around you, to the conditions of your life. They also come from that feeling of being closed up in a sort of shell, which prevents your consciousness from uniting with higher and vaster realities.

One may very well *think* that one wants to be vast; wants to be universal, that all is the expression of the Divine, that one must have no egoism—one may think all sorts of things—but that is not necessarily a cure, for very often one knows what one ought to do, and yet one doesn’t do it, for one reason or another.

But if, when you have to face anguish, suffering, revolt, pain or a feeling of helplessness—whatever it may be, all the things that come to you on the path and which precisely are your difficulties—if physically, that is to say, in your body-consciousness, you can have the feeling of widening yourself, one could say of unfolding yourself—you feel, as it were, all folded up, one fold on another like a piece of cloth which is folded and refolded and folded again—so if you have this feeling that what is holding and strangling you and making you suffer or paralysing your movement, is like a too closely, too tightly folded piece of cloth or like a parcel that is too well-tied, too well-packed, and that slowly, gradually, you undo all the folds and stretch yourself out exactly as one unfolds a piece of cloth or a sheet of paper and spreads it out flat, and you lie flat and make yourself very wide, as wide as possible, spreading yourself out as far as you can, opening yourself and stretching out in an attitude of complete passivity with what I could call “the face to the light”: not curling back upon your difficulty, doubling up on it, shutting it in, so to say, into yourself, but, on the contrary, unfurling yourself as much as you can, as perfectly as you can, putting the difficulty before the Light—the Light which comes from above—if you do that in all the domains, and even if mentally you don’t succeed in doing it—for it is sometimes difficult—if you can imagine yourself doing this *physically*, almost materially, well, when you have finished unfolding yourself and stretching yourself out, you will find that more than three-quarters of the difficulty is gone. And then just a little work of receptivity to the Light, and the last quarter will disappear.

This is much easier than struggling against a difficulty with one’s thought, for if you begin to discuss with yourself, you will find that there are arguments for and

against which are so convincing that it is quite impossible to get out of it without a higher light. Here, you do not struggle against the difficulty, you do not try to convince yourself; ah! you simply stretch out in the Light as though you lay stretched on the sands in the sun. And you let the Light do its work. That's all.

August 29, 1956

2

The noise made by all the words, all the ideas in your head is so deafening that it prevents you from hearing the truth when it wants to manifest.

To learn to be quiet and silent...When you have a problem to solve, instead of turning over in your head all the possibilities, all the consequences, all the possible things one should or should not do, if you remain quiet with an aspiration for goodwill, if possible a need for goodwill, the solution comes very quickly. And as you are silent you are able to hear it.

When you are caught in a difficulty, try this method: instead of becoming agitated, turning over all the ideas and actively seeking solutions, of worrying, fretting, running here and there inside your head—I don't mean externally, for externally you probably have enough common sense not to do that! but inside, in your head—*remain quiet*. And according to your nature, with ardour or peace, with intensity or widening or with all these together, implore the light and wait for it to come.

In this way the path would be considerably shortened.

November 5, 1958

A VISION

THE Mother says:

“Just see. Look at me. I am here, come back in my new body,—divine, transformed and glorious. And I am the same mother, still human. Do not worry. Do not be concerned about your own self, your progress and realisation, nor about others. I am here, look at me, gaze into me, enter into me wholly, merge into my being, lose yourself into my love, with your love. You will see all problems solved, everything done. Forget everything, forget the world. Remember me alone, be one with me, with my love....”

NOLINI

*
**

“Lo, from within our heart, O Mother, thou hast come forth in this wonder-form of yours!

“I gaze and gaze and my eyes turn not aside.

“Lo! The door of thy golden temple is flung wide open, O Mother!
What a wonder-form I behold before me!

“I gaze and gaze and my eyes turn not aside.”

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

THE MOTHER AND THE INDIAN HERITAGE

(4)

BUDDHIST DISCIPLINE

(Contd.)

The Aim

THE *Dhammapada* text, as it has come down to us, is not a systematic treatise, like a work of philosophy or a manual of ethics. The chapters do not follow a logical sequence, and there are certain chapters where all sorts of things have been set together; the Mother herself has occasion to refer to one of them in these words: "All manner of different things have been put in here under the same title."¹ Nor are the teachings all at the same level; to state it more precisely, the tone and the wording vary to suit the needs of the particular audience to whom they are addressed. "It would seem," as the Mother explains, "that he [that is, the Buddha] had to alter the words of his talks in accordance with his audience; and if he had to do with people who were altogether raw and without any education, he spoke to them in a most matter-of-fact language, using analogies of an entirely practical and concrete nature, in order that they might understand."² How very much like the Mother's own discourses!—one would at once exclaim.

This makes it all the more important that we grasp the main objective the Buddha had in view, and have a clear picture of the essentials of the method he prescribed to attain the aim.

It is rather surprising that the *Dhammapada* refers as if incidentally to the great sermon on the Eight-fold Path which contains the gist of the Buddha's teaching. The explanation seems to be that the entire text is built around this sermon. The Mother, however, gives the sermon its due importance, by devoting a Talk entirely to a summary exposition of it, and brings out some of the implications in clear and precise terms, as is her wont always.³ At the same time, as she is always doing while commenting on the text, she offers an alternative, a better alternative, to the suggestions made in the text.⁴

To put an end to man's sufferings for good: this was the high aim the Buddha set before himself. The aim was Nirvana.

The concept of Nirvana has been given different connotations in later Buddhist thought. Here, in the *Dhammapada* text, the Mother explains, "the word Nirvana is not used, as you can see, in the sense of an extinction, but in the sense of an eternal existence, as opposed to life and death such as we know in the present state of existence on earth, and they are contraries of each other: life is the contrary of death and death is the contrary of life... it is an eternal existence which is beyond life and death,—the true existence"⁵

One or two points need comment.

In one passage of the text, Nirvana has been described as “the supreme felicity”.⁶ The Mother says in this connection something that may come as a surprise to the aspirant for Nirvana. “The Buddha has said, or they have made him say, that when one was free from all desire, one would enter necessarily into the infinite beatitude. It is perhaps a beatitude that is a little dried up.”⁷ She offers an alternative that is not so dry. But that is another matter. And why this drying up is likely has also been explained by the Mother, but that would take us far afield.

She has also made the point—and this is of capital importance—that even those who aim at this “dried-up beatitude” may not after all get it. “What happens is this,—and this is remarkable,—that those who have done it have at the last moment received something like an intimation that they have to come back to the world and do their work. It is as if they reached the gate, and then, ‘Ah, no, not yet. Go and work. When the world will be ready, then it will be all right.’”⁸ This probably explains why, in later Buddhism, the ideal of the Arhat, the aspirant to solitary salvation, gave way to the ideal of the Bodhisattwa who took the vow of never entering Nirvana until the world was rid of suffering. The Mother is probably referring to that.

Principles of the Method

Nirvana, or anything even approaching it, cannot obviously be attained by mortal man in a day. It needs long years of preparation and a systematic effort. Certain broad principles characterise this effort in the Buddha’s scheme. These we must grasp before considering some of the details.

Nothing in excess—and sincerity: these are the keynotes. “It was wisdom on the part of the Buddha when he said: the Middle Path, not too much like this, not too much like that, not to fall into this, not to fall into that,—a little of everything and a balanced way... but pure. Purity and sincerity are the same thing.”⁹

The necessity of an absolute sincerity needs no emphasis; it is there behind all that the *Dhammapada* says. “It is hypocrisy that the *Dhammapada* reproaches very severely: to pretend that one wants to live the spiritual life and not to do it, pretend that one wants to seek the Truth and not to do it, make a show of the external signs of consecration to the divine life,—here symbolised by the yellow robe,—and inwardly keep busy with oneself, one’s egoism and one’s needs.”¹⁰ This is easy enough to understand, however difficult in actual practice. And “nothing in excess” is certainly a wise counsel.

But what the Mother considers as the essential idea behind the Buddha’s attitude to life may take many by surprise. “In its essence, the teaching of the Buddha did not turn away from a realisation in the world, but from what is false in the conception of the world and in the activities as they are carried on in the world. So, when he teaches that one has to escape from life, it is not escaping from a life that would be an expression of the Truth but from the life of illusions that one ordinarily lives in the world.”¹¹

What needs to be removed is the Ignorance. "Ignorance has been considered as the central, the essential defect that has to be corrected, urgently. And what has been called Ignorance is not an ignorance of the superficial things of the world and the superficial knowings of the world, but a forgetting of the essential *raison d'être* of existence, the Truth that has to be discovered."¹²

As the Mother explains elsewhere, "The Ignorance about which the Buddha spoke consisted not at all in not knowing that if you take a poison, you get poisoned, or if you keep your head under water without breathing, you are bound to get drowned. It is not even the absence of knowledge as to how the atoms are constituted. For him, Ignorance consisted in thinking that the world was real and that life could be good if you had the chance of living in favourable conditions; coming into the world, that is the Ignorance."¹³

A way therefore had to be found to get rid of this Ignorance by the most direct means possible; it had necessarily to be a way of Knowledge, *jnana-marga*. But so long as one did not have the full knowledge, and had to live in the world and have contacts with people, something had to be done to make these contacts as beneficent as possible—beneficent to oneself and beneficent to others. Hence there are two sides to the discipline: a severe training of the mind's power of thinking, and a close control over one's moral nature. Self-mastery is the primary object, a constant vigilance and an unremitting practice of what one has learnt from the mainstay of the method. There is an immense stress on the need for personal effort.

Some Details of the Method

The *Dhammapada* begins with mind-control, because, to it, "the mind is all-important". That is to say, the Mother explains, "the ordinary human life, such as it is in the world today, is governed by the mind, and therefore, the most important thing is to control one's mind." In this control, "there are four movements which are generally consecutive and can finally become simultaneous: first, observing one's thoughts, second, keeping a watch over them, third, controlling them, and fourth, mastering them.... All this, in order to rid oneself of a poor mind, because we have been told that a man who acts and speaks with a poor mind is pursued by suffering...."¹⁴

The object of this mental discipline, for most Buddhist sects all over the East, is to silence the mind. "They remain seated, for a certain number of hours during the day and even at night and they make their minds quiet. For them, it is the key to all realisation,—a quiet mind, a mind that can remain quiet, without moving, for hours.... They do not concentrate on any thought, they do not try to understand better, know more; no, for them the way consists in having a quiet mind, and sometimes they spend years and years of effort before getting at this result."¹⁵ The Mother naturally endorses the necessity of a quiet mind and recommends that everybody should devote a certain time every day and "try to make his mind

quiet, even, immobile. And it is an undeniable fact"—and this is a point of capital importance—"that the more one is developed mentally, the quicker one gets it".¹⁶ This is the rationale of the Buddhist meditation.

Certain things help a great deal, and the Mother singles them out for special note. Among the most significant is "moderation of language", what in the enumeration of the Eight-fold Path has been described as "right speech"; that is, "never to speak unless it is useful, and scrupulously avoid all malevolent speech".¹⁷ The Mother has dwelt at length, here as well as elsewhere, on the necessity of controlling one's tongue, for everybody and not only for those who practise yoga. One of the great benefits that accrue is that "one comes to master quite naturally a great number of one's difficulties of character, and one also avoids enormously the frictions and misunderstandings".¹⁸

A frequent cause of these misunderstandings is that we are often so very critical of others. One of the "very wise recommendations", as the Mother puts it, is "not to concern oneself with what others do, nor with the faults they commit, but rather concern oneself with one's own faults and negligence and correct them". Lest, one should not be distressed too much by the observance of one's own faults, "the *Dhammapada* gives one this consolation in the form of an image: the purest lily can come out of a heap of rubbish on the road-side. That is to say, there are no things ever so rotten out of which cannot come the purest realisation." And the Mother adds her own word of encouragement: "Whatever be the past of the faults committed, or the ignorance in which one has lived, one carries deep within the supreme purity which can change into a marvellous realisation."¹⁹

Perhaps no better illustration could be given of the Buddha's compassion for the errors of men.

Heaven, Hell, Gods, Mara

The *Dhammapada* speaks of heaven and hell, of gods and the spirit of evil, Mara. What exactly is meant by these terms and what practical bearing do they have on the discipline?

Taken in their superficial sense, certain passages in the text would seem to suggest that they accept certain popular ideas. "But," the Mother explains, "that is an altogether superficial way to understand; because, in a deeper sense, that is not how the Buddha thought. The idea on which he insisted always was that one creates, by one's conduct and by one's states of consciousness, the world in which he lives."²⁰

Mara stands for "all that is contrary or is opposed to the spiritual life; in some cases, it represents death,—not so much the death of the body, as death to the Truth, to the spiritual being".²¹ And the "gods" are not the gods of popular religion. "They are beings who have the divine nature; they may live in human bodies, but free from Ignorance and Falsehood."²²

The Buddhist discipline, as we have suggested above, has two complementary aspects: the mental and the moral. The principal aim of the moral precepts is to show the way of escape from the clutches of "hell", the moral suffering caused by the spirit of evil, Mara. To help develop the god-like in man is their positive aim.

These precepts are too elaborate and too numerous to be given in detail here. The Mother has summed them up in a few sentences which need to be engraved in memory.

"When one is a being of justice, truth, harmony, compassion, perfect good will, this inner attitude, the more it is sincere and total, the more it reacts on outward circumstances. Not that it necessarily diminishes the difficulties of life; but it gives to those difficulties a new meaning that enables one to face them with a new force and a new wisdom. Whilst the man, the human being who follows his impulses, who obeys his desires, who is little embarrassed by scruples, who comes to live in a complete cynicism, mocking at the effect his life may have on others and the more or less nefarious consequences of his acts,—such a man creates an atmosphere of ugliness, selfishness, conflict, bad will, which necessarily reacts more and more on his consciousness and gives to his life a bitterness which ends up by becoming a perpetual torment"²³

The Relevance Today

It is surprising to see how often the details of the Buddhist discipline find an echo in the Mother's Words. It is true that the goal she has set before man is farther and wider, perhaps much more difficult to achieve than was conceived by the Buddha or was even considered possible at the time. But this does not detract from the supreme importance of the Buddhist discipline.

While answering a question as to why she was giving so much attention to the *Dhammapada* in her Talks to the inmates of the Ashram who are supposed to prepare themselves for the higher and more difficult realisation, the Mother explained: "I have taken up this text because I consider that at a certain phase of development, it can be very useful. It is a discipline that has been crystallised in certain formulae, and we use these formulae for our benefit. That can be very useful, otherwise I would not have taken it up. As for the amount of the benefit,—that depends on each. That depends on whether he can draw the benefit or not."²⁴

The Mother on her own part seems to have drawn the fullest benefit from these ancient teachings. She has used them to help us move a step farther. That is no small tribute to the Buddha.

(To be continued)

SANAT K. BANERJI

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LOVE'S COMPLETENESS

GIVE me a love my mind cannot deny,
 A seeing love, a love that needs no urging,
 But wells out freely like a geyser surging
 From trembling earth with a triumphant cry;
 That gives itself without demanding why,
 Like fire that mounts up on the altar, purging
 The offered substance of all dross and merging
 With its flame-mother blazing in the sky:

A love that having seen your face of beauty
 Must fall in adoration at your feet
 And having felt your tenderness and sweetness
 Submits itself with gladness—not from duty,
 Or cold obedience; a love complete
 Self-given to the source of its completeness.

PETER HEERIS

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

EACH OF US ON EARTH...

EACH of us on earth has a short span of dreaming and doing. But the human life which we live, whether individual or collective, is not all that is ours. Through and beyond our dreaming and doing, a larger life is being dreamt and done. Our hearts and minds have a movement which we vision as our own concern. But there is a soul in us which moves to a superhuman issue.

This soul gives us our rare strange spells of agonising self-exceeding and ecstatic self-giving. Sudden flashes are the acts of our soul—they seem to come as if from nowhere and to disappear as if into nothing. Often we see very little concrete result. But actually through these fugitive flashes the luminous body of God is being built, cell after golden cell, a supreme beauty that is eternal in itself but evolutionary in its disclosure through us.

We think we are living our own absorbing lives: we hardly are aware of the Great Life that is growing along with us. Some shadow of it we perceive in those adventures that pull us a little out of our humanly happy grooves—the adventures of art, philosophy, science, social experiment, religion, selfless love. But the true glory of life lies precisely in carrying out more and more these adventures. And the culminating glory is what may be called the quintessence of them all, when the secret soul comes forward in its own proper reality, takes hold of our hearts and minds and with wide-open eyes understands that the building of God's body on earth is the whole purpose of existence. Then we get the *via mystica*, the Inner Life, the pursuit by the Hound of Heaven, God-intoxication, Yoga—but all this with a view to earth's transfiguration and not earth's rejection.

So different in its intensity from our habitual aims is the first flush of the soul's self-recognition that frequently we forget that our souls are here in bodies and that by communing or uniting with the Super-soul we are meant to evolve a tangible palpable Divine Shape, a cosmic structure of expressive visage and active limb.

Inasmuch as we participate in this evolution of a universal divinity through our small humanity, we live beyond our doom of transience. We become enfolded in all Time, persist through all individual catastrophes—caught up in God's light and liberty. And we are thus caught up because even within our brief lives we have tried our utmost to exceed ourselves and give ourselves to the mighty Will and Wisdom that are our origin and that work to make us realise we are their immortal children. To feel at every moment our lives as at once streaming out of, and leaping towards, a Divine Mother-Father is the single task we all have in common. If the dreamings and doings of each of us stand apart from those of others instead of joining together in an harmonious effort, we shall fall short of the demand and the delight of Eternity's Body glowing through our days. Our source and goal are one: one also should all of us endeavour to be.

AMAL KIRAN

UDAR REMEMBERS

XII

IN 1972 the Government of India decided that as part of Sri Aurobindo's Centenary Celebrations they would finance the visit abroad of two persons, one eastwards and one to the west. The Mother chose me to be sent out west and I began to get ready for the long tour to Europe, America and Canada which would be for about 3 to 4 months. Then when I was ready to leave I informed the Mother of it and She suddenly asked me how I felt about going out. I answered that I was happy to do so because She had given me this task and it was always a joy to me to do such things the Mother Herself had asked me to do. But She insisted that She saw some hesitation in me all the same and I tried to deny it but She went on insisting and I had to admit in the end that it was so.

The Mother then asked me why I had this hesitation and I had to give the real reason which was that ever since I had come to Her, more than 30 years back, I had never left Her for so long a time and this made me a bit sad. The Mother said at once: "I suspected as much and so I insisted." And then She added in a very serious tone: "Udar, I give you my solemn promise that wherever you are and whenever it is I shall be closer to you than I am now, sitting in front of you." Then when I was in the U.S.A. She sent to me by post, of Her own accord, a card on which She had written "13.10.72.—Always with you Udar—with my love and blessings.—(Signed) The Mother."

Now this promise, which She made to me in person and later confirmed by Her card, was not only for my tour abroad. She had said: "Wherever you are and whenever it is..." and also in Her card She had written "always..." So I know that the promise is for always and that means even now. This promise the Mother is keeping wonderfully well. She is always with me, very, very close and, if I do not realise that sometimes, I have only to call Her and I feel Her presence at once. I have a very strong feeling, too, that the way it all happened shows that somehow the Mother must have been aware that the next year (1973) She would leave us physically and She took this occasion to show how She was not leaving us really but, on the contrary, making it easier for Her to come to us instead of us having to wait to go to Her.

I am also sure that this promise of the Mother is not to me alone. It is to all Her children. She just used me as a means to let Her children know of this and this is what I am now showing in this article.

I should add that the Mother's presence with each of us does not mean that whatever we do is to be taken as directly inspired by Her. We are still capable of folly. But the fact I have underlined creates the clear possibility that if we are sincere She is always there to inspire our actions

THEY ARE ALWAYS AT WORK

A LETTER

SOME people have lately expressed doubt about the presence and guidance by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother in these times. I should like to put on record a few recent experiences of mine.

A number of months back, when I was in very bad health and there was nobody near me to help me, I was lying on my bed and praying to the Mother for her help. I told her that if I died in this condition nobody would even know I was inside my room and they would have to break open the door to find out.

As I said this, suddenly I found that a powerful golden light had descended near my bed. I thought my neighbours had switched on their electric lamp but on opening my eyes I saw that it was about 11 a.m. and there was no electric light anywhere. I closed my eyes and prayed again, and the same experience repeated itself.

After this I have seen a beautiful white light near me (especially at night) and on March 29 it came right down to my feet.

Once I also saw a solid white light in front of me, but as I looked and made my "pranam" to it it was covered over with a black curtain which came from both sides as in a theatre. I call the light solid because it was just like that, and not transparent as on other occasions. Whatever the curtain may temporarily do, the Mother's light is most concretely among us. No one need despair.

LALITA

O ACHIEVER...

O ACHIEVER of the highest good,
Come, mount the flame-stairs of thy intense self-sacrifice;
And in the immobility of thy mind see
Crystal-clear thoughts that cross the crammed corridors
In mute and featureless forms of hope and desire—
Then listen to the loud laughing heart-throbs
That blissfully sing in pure passionate notes—
The wonders of a drunken god who created,
In one of his playful moods,
The splendid game of our marvellous mortality.

VINAY

TOWARDS THE HIGHER LIFE

(Continued from the issue of June 1977)

CHAPTER I (Contd.)

SADHANA—A CALL TO BATTLE

Now we shall pass to the contents proper of this chapter. As the battle that begins in my life from this period has many facets it will be well to deal with them under different titles. I begin with concentration and purity.

As stated earlier, with the experiences I had in 1951 after the passing of the Master, there shone a kind of light of living faith in the heart. I saw and felt a glow there, almost incessantly for months together. At the time it seemed my feet were lifted from a lower towards a higher level of consciousness. But it proved a vain chimera. The Mother warns:

“The world will trouble you so long as any part of you belongs to the world. It is only if you belong entirely to the Divine that you can become free.”

A slight shock of the world and all vanished. The ladder up which I was to climb suddenly tumbled down. The light with which my heart was elated all those days withdrew. Perhaps the being was not ready for more and needed time for assimilation. It also afforded me an opportunity to peep into myself only to discover hundreds of weaknesses hiding in a corner like cockroaches.

When the easy flow of meditation stopped I resorted to concentration. Till 1951 I had not felt the necessity of concentration nor had attached any importance to it.

In the beginning there is always a struggle with all that opposes an onward march and perhaps it is necessary but I seemed to have passed that stage. Now begins another phase of my struggle. The keenness of the battle was felt more acutely after 1956 than in the earlier stages.

Reading *The Synthesis of Yoga*¹ I got the impression that until the mind was stilled the Secret Peace could not be revealed.

Sometime after, I came across the lines in *Bases of Yoga*:

“The first thing to do in the Sadhana is to get a settled peace and silence in the mind. Otherwise you may have experiences, but nothing will be permanent. It is in the silent mind that the true consciousness can be built....

“The forces that stand in the way of Sadhana are the forces of the lower mental, vital and physical nature. Behind them are adverse powers of the mental, vital and subtle physical worlds. These can be dealt with only after the mind and heart have become one-pointed and concentrated in the single aspiration to the Divine....

¹ Sri Aurobindo, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, 6th edition, Part II, Ch.IV, p. 292-99.

“The important thing is to get rid of the habit of the invasion of troubling thoughts, wrong feelings, confusion of ideas, unhappy movements. These disturb the nature and cloud it and make it difficult for the force to work....”

A mastery of the mind such as would bring about this peace and silence in it was for me an arduous struggle. In meditation that is spontaneous there is little scope for personal effort as was the case with me during the years when there was correspondence with the Master. In such meditation gradually one gets so absorbed as to lose all sense of breathing.

Concentration might help an easy flow of meditation because here the whole energy was to be centred on one point and this should not be difficult, I thought.

But I found that even when the Mother's force was active in the parts below the navel, the mind was subject to an unending stream of thoughts and I was often swept away by its currents. This showed that the inner part was not yet strong enough to dominate.

Here begins the inner war—with my own self, my mind, my vital and all that is dominated by the lower nature.

Our being is a mass of warring elements each trying to get over the other. Until the being becomes a harmonious whole, this inner war cannot come to an end. There are relevant lines in *The Life Divine*:

“The Life is at war with the body.... The body... is in constant dumb revolt against the demands made upon it by the Life. The Mind is at war with both.”¹

This war is more difficult, more fierce than any outer. For us heroism is not emotional chivalry but, in the words of the Mother, “to be able to stand for the Truth in all circumstances.”

Off and on our life-moods change causing unnecessary tension and friction. Who pulls us from behind?

When we are under the influence of *Sattwa*, we are noble and gentle, sweet in our manners and dealings with others; when dominated by *Rajas* we grow violent, loose-tongued; but we feel dull and depressed, sink into a debris when the reins of life pass into the hands of *Tamas*. The complexities do not end here.² The very cells of our body are in constant battle among themselves. Besides this, we are easily influenced by the hostile forces and they make a hell of our life. Why? The reason is:

“The hostile forces... make use of the lower nature, pervert it, fill it with distorted movements and by that means influence man and even try to enter and possess or at least entirely control him.”

But why does not the Divine come to our help and save us from all that? There is a reason here also:

“The Divine allows the play of these forces so long as you do not yourself want

¹ *American Edition*, p. 197.

² “There has been almost a continuous war in the world. Man is a quarrelling and fighting animal and so long as he is so how can there be peace?” — SRI AUROBINDO

anything better. But if you are a Sadhak, then you do not accept the play of the lower nature, you turn to the Divine Mother instead and ask her to work through you instead of the lower nature. It is only when you have turned entirely in every part of your being to the Divine Mother and to her alone that the Divine will do all actions through you."

Every inch of ground has to be fought and won against terrible opposition, for each part in us wants to go its own way and resists to the last. Even to step out of the realm of thought one has to wage a fierce battle despite bleeding wounds.

Why do we receive blows? The Mother's simple answer is: "You receive blows because of your defects. If you are not able to receive blows and continue to 'pocket' them you will not go far." Stressing the point she repeats: "Unless you are resolved to begin the same thing over again a thousand times if needed, you will arrive nowhere."¹

"It is by thought that we dissipate ourselves in the phenomenal; it is by the gathering back of the thought into itself that we must draw ourselves back to the real."

Defining the powers of concentration, the Master writes in *The Synthesis of Yoga*:

"By concentration of our whole being on one status of itself we can become whatever we choose; we can become, for instance, even if we were before a mass of weaknesses and fear, a mass instead of strength and courage or we can become all a great purity, holiness and peace or a single universal soul of Love..."²

My being took the above as the key principle of my sadhana. By concentration anything can be achieved—this put new heart into me.

Purity and concentration go together. Purity brings with it the joy of concentration. The greater the purity, the easier the concentration. The easier the flow of concentration the purer the vessel. The following may serve to show how the obscured vision changes with the purification of the *adhar* and new doors of perception open.

Formerly Upanishadic utterances appeared too high for my intelligence. When on May 16, 1963 I chanced upon the line—

अमृतस्य देव धारणो भूयासम (ते १.४)

Amṛtasya dev dhāraṇo bhūyāsam

"O God, may I become a vessel of immortality!"—

not only did it fill my heart with an inner elation but the whole being joined in uttering the prayer in a joyous mood.

Let me illustrate the point by another event:

One of my friends looked upon the Hymn to Goddess Durga (*Chandīpatha*) with great reverence. He read it not only in times of difficulty but almost every day. Finding me in difficulty he sat before me and started reading it out. Till then a

¹ *Bulletin*, April 1960, p. 53.

² Sri Aurobindo, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, 6th edition, p. 293.

change had not come to my notions about the gods. I got so agitated that I threw upon him some half-drunk water. He was struck dumb at my behaviour. Such crudities were there in my nature.

He was deputed to attend on me when I was in the General Hospital in 1959. In accordance with his conviction, in order to give me relief he started reading the same book which he had brought with him. Ah, it appealed to me as if nectar were dripping from its every word. And in a vision I saw its every letter written in bright white-blue light. This experience is still vivid in my memory.

The same kind of vision I had about Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* too, in a dream. This is the one book of the Master which I have read twice from beginning to end, two pages a day, and many times here and there. In the beginning I could not follow even five lines in a page.

The zeal to read *Savitri* was fired by what the Mother had said to Norman Dowsett on his birthday in 1953:

"For the opening of the psychic, for the growth of consciousness, and even for the improvement of English it is good to read one or two pages of *Savitri* each day."

Such was the case also with *The Life Divine*. It took me more than two decades to glimpse its depths.¹ When the book revealed to me something of its contents I found it to be a perennial well of interest, sweetness and inspiration.

There run the lines in *The Life Divine*:

"When there is a complete silence in the being, either a stillness of the whole being or a stillness behind unaffected by surface movements then we can become aware of a Self, a spiritual substance of our being...spreading itself into universality... It is these liberations of the spiritual part in us which are the decisive steps of the spiritual evolution in Nature."²

Silence of the mind I could understand. But how could there be any silence in the whole being? December 4, 1965, being a Sunday I thought of devoting as much of my time as possible to concentration.

I often remember the Balcony Darshan time, 6-15 a.m., and till 1973 I never failed to give myself to concentration at the time. One Sunday I remained seated till 8 a.m. There started a kind of cooling sensation in the crown of the head which made the concentration blissful; there was not a trace of thought to hamper its intensification. During the day three or four times I resumed the concentration till I went to bed at night.

At 2 a.m. when my eyes opened the mind was still in the same state of silence. This induced concentration once more. No sooner did I close my eyes than the mind got so steeped in silence that words fail to express it. Whenever there is peace in the mind its influence usually spreads to other parts too. This time there was a new feature: some parts below the head also participated in the experience. Then the passage

¹ "This head, the little brain cannot understand. But as soon as you have the experience, you understand, not before." *Bulletin*, April 1960, p. 57.

² American Edition, p. 761.

quoted above flashed before my eyes. The experience, though it lasted a few minutes, had a wide range.

In my experience peace has different shades. The silence in the mind I had on the 4th was quite different from what I had on the 7th. On the 4th the stillness was very strong in its circuits and not a single thought could peer in. The very stuff of the mental being was all still. For me those were the moments of deep spiritual significance.

But the one I had on the morning of the 7th was quite different. Here thoughts persisted in their entry. I saw a silent battle between the surface and inner mind and it lasted quite a few minutes before the inner prevailed over the outer and filled the whole mind with a pale flame-hued light. For a time it looked as if only the light existed in place of the head.

Always we bear in us a magic key

Concealed in life's hermetic envelope. (I.4)

The key to unlock the riddle of life is indeed within ourselves. But it is not easy to find the right key. Even if it is obtained, we may fail to turn it in the right way: the door will never open, however we may try. Had the secret hand of the Mother not come to my help at every crucial hour, the whole of this life would have passed in sheer struggle. When I went beyond struggle then I realised where lies the charm in Sri Aurobindo's Yoga.

One of the outstanding features of this Yoga is that without depriving us of the normal comforts of life, it affords us an opportunity to have an access to the realms of consciousness beyond the reach of mind, provided we are earnest to the core. Age-long tradition all over the world is to renounce, renounce all that adds a bit of beauty and joy to life. Sri Aurobindo's Yoga holds: "we miss the true knowledge, government and enjoyment of life in the world"¹ due to ignorance. So it is ignorance that is to be replaced by "the divine government of the will in life".² It can best be done, not by resorting to severe austerities, but by changing the consciousness. When the consciousness is awakened, there dawns a new rhythm in life, one rises into a new dimension.

Despite the Mother's invisible help, what price I had to pay to subdue the restless mind which was the first cause of trouble and to usher in a new life, the readers will know as we proceed.

I adopted different methods given in the *Bases of Yoga* and in other sources but nothing could halt the waves of thought. Unable to make any progress, except on rare occasions, I hit upon the idea to empty the mind at least for one minute; this also I could not do, even after fifteen years of battle with my rebellious mind and turbulent vital. Still I went on and did not leave off the attempt, for I had tasted the joy of absorbing peace, time and again, before 1938.

Concentration is a cardinal point that faces a spiritual seeker. It needs an elabo-

¹ Sri Aurobindo: *The Life Divine*, American Edition, p. 584.

² Sri Aurobindo: *The Synthesis of Yoga*, 6th edition, p. 615.

rate treatment, since mostly upon it hinges the success or failure of our Sadhana. To arrive at one-pointedness, according to the Mother, the prime need is unification of the being. In this respect there are many factors to be considered. "The next thing to be acquired," says the Master, "is the purification of the heart which brings the Divine Touch and in time the Divine Presence." So this will form our next study.

(To be continued)

DEVOTION AND THE DIVINE

I

WHAT is devotion?
 To know not
 Two masters
 Is devotion.
 And to know
 The Supreme alone as master
 Is the devotion of all devotions.

2

God, make me a juicy fruit,
 Extract juice from it
 And drink it.
 That shall give me joy.
 What greater joy can there be?
 What greater fulfilment for life?
 God, going into You
 I shall dance in You,
 A perpetual smile on Your lips.

GIRDHARLAL

REALISATION KNOCKING AT YOUR DOOR —ASTROLOGICALLY

LONG back I saw my horoscope in a vision, and an indication of certain lines I was to follow. I had no knowledge of Astrology then. I was getting a number of experiences at the time and did nothing more than noting (mentally) what I saw. In the consciousness in which I lived then, the “seeing” of the horoscope was not so important.

About a year or so after this I met an Astrologer in Gujarat. He was the head of an Educational Institute (High School) and its proprietor also, a very highly qualified man. He drew my map and forecasted that I would certainly die in a year’s time! This was too much for me. More so because I knew I had the Mother’s Protection. However, I got interested. I met a friend and learned the rudiments of Astrology from him. When I cast my horoscope I could see that the map I drew was exactly similar to the one I had seen in the vision. I began dabbling in this occult Art/Science.

After some time I met the Gujarati Astrologer who had predicted that Sri Aurobindo might leave his body in December, 1950 at his own will and about whom Sri Aurobindo had remarked: “He has caught hold of some truth.” (Refer Nirod Baran’s article “I am there! I am there!” and Amal Kiran’s “The Passing of Sri Aurobindo—Its Inner Significance and Consequence”.) I learnt some principles from him and he recommended to me a good author.

I went to East Africa, and began learning Astrology and practising it professionally. From time to time, I would look into Sri Aurobindo’s horoscope (this was after his passing) and try to see how the principles enunciated by Astrology were exhibited by his map. Whenever I saw his map I would feel a Peace and Joy such as I feel while reading *Savitri* or *The Life Divine*. Also I began learning Astrology directly from his map by reading the values and significances of planets, houses, aspects of planets and directions and transits of planets observed at the important events in his life. I could see that this was the highest possible map and could not be improved upon.

Sometime before the end of the year 1955 while travelling on a double-decker bus in Mombasa, I saw the transits of planets of 1956. Certain positions of importance were occurring in Sri Aurobindo’s horoscope, and I very strongly felt and saw that in the February/March 1956 an event equal in importance to what had happened on 24-11-1926 would occur in the Ashram/World. (Subsequently I saw on 29-2-56 a silvery white light pouring on earth, but did not know its significance till I learnt it in about mid-May from the Mother’s Announcement on April 24. The rest is history.)

At this time I was also interested in chance-money or financial windfall through lotteries, racing and football pools. I collected maps of those who were lucky in these matters and saw that there was a definite pattern. It was too obvious according to the method I was following to be true and my files and calculations were kept in hiberna-

tion till 1972. In 1972 a poet in Bombay won four lakh rupees in one day at the Bombay races in the Jackpot. Through a common friend I obtained the necessary data of birth of this lucky man. I worked out the positions on the day which had proved so favourable to him and was astounded to see that he had won at the same configurations I had established in my hypothesis. I did some more statistical work and was stunned when I could establish that every man or woman has a certain number of chances in his life to win big money. But was it possible?

Thinking and deliberating on my past experiences of Astrology I came to the conclusion: "Yes, the chance exists, people do not know about it, and do not expect it, they do not think themselves to be so lucky." However, I saw and knew certainly that such a windfall is as much the due of every man as are education, career, property, etc. And this is proved by what is happening for example every week-end in England where a number of people get huge amounts in football pools every week-end, the year round. Think of it. The chances do exist and I succeeded in trial cases, taking horoscopes of a few friends as "guinea pigs".

But this does not bring realisation knocking at your door as the title of this article suggests and as the "Yogi" reader, I feel, is thirsting to find.

What is true about money and wealth is also true about Sadhana. If one examines Astrologically the important events in the lives of Yogis, realised persons, Mahapurushas and Avatars—events such as meeting a Guru, coming across Literature on Yoga and various other steps leading to realisation, and the timings of various realisations—one discovers that these events happen under certain planetary configurations. There is a map and secondary and primary directions and transits at the time of the event. Now all maps are mixed maps, some with more and some with less of harmonies in them. A spiritual event will be found to be happening under certain circumstances. Further on the journey to Perfection powerful configurations of different types occur and there is one more step to be taken in the life of a Yogi. Now similar combinations do occur in many other maps of you and me and Tom, Dick and Harry but they pass away giving little results—spiritually speaking. Surely a man a little alert can find a better atmosphere or a minor good-happening on these days. But why does he not get the more powerful, valuable experience? Because he is not preparing for it, he is not expecting it, or he has not the needed faith and, most important, the required readiness. This also explains why many times exactly alike results are not observed in exactly alike maps. That is why the ancient "knowers" of Astrology in India have given in their texts that "one must predict after learning about the country, state, caste and family of the man". The events are relative to the man. The greater the man, the more the realisations of results indicated in a horoscope.

However, as stated above, something does occur during a favourable planetary configuration in any map. There is a stir—unknown perhaps to the native, *i.e.*, the one whose birth sets a particular horoscope. In a life-time such points come and go, and they bring results according to the native's stage of 'being conscious'. In

Sadhana too, a time comes to conquer and be illumined; a time also of difficulty and darkness (both these can be indicated Astrologically); and the response, attitude, prayer, call for help to the Guru and how one utilises the opportunity for establishing more in Sadhana are important. When a similar situation appears again in the course of life, the response and benefit would be according to how one responded on previous occasions.

The difficult indications in a horoscope are not bad events but situations when one faces what is not established and has to be overcome. This happens repeatedly and one learns and grows in life after life.

It is the combination of horoscope-studies at birth and the way in which one "grew" in one's life, that is transferred to the next life. One may not realise all in a single life, but may realise that he is on the way and sure to succeed. Finally the problem of birth and rebirth is solved by liberation and transformation.

Now we are at the door of Realisation! The observations made above make it clear that the boon of Realisation is offered (Astrologically speaking) to all men born on earth. Indeed the Grace of the Guru and the Divine affects and moulds and changes for the better the life and events indicated in a map. This is true for happenings on all planes.

For us it has been made much easier. Pavitra (Philippe Barber St. Hilaire), himself a keen student of Astrology, remarked to me: "Everything has been prepared. Only we have to change our habits."

INDU N. PATEL

ASURAS AND DURGA

OH, termless ecstasy and deathless dream,
 Motionless and based on a celestial fire,
 "Are we moving towards the shores of Heaven?"
 Is the question unique and overwhelming.
 We want to clasp your divinity
 In a fathomless white desire.
 Lead us not to a lesser entity,
 For it is only you for whom we aspire.
 Let the dark night vanish in your spiritual light
 Because we take shelter in your deathless might.
 We the children of Asuri flock and combine into Durga's team,
 Serving the zero hour of victory and utter calm,
 For we also love to be white and true
 And to sip spirit's honey beneath the measureless blue.
 We adore the Divine's Hour.

AMIYANGSHU

FOOTNOTES TO THE FUTURE

3

“...yet Another”

To Brahma comes Ashwalayana as a disciple, says the Kaivalya Upanishad, and asks of him knowledge of the Highest, *Brahmavidyā*, the knowledge that goes beyond the triple Brahman to the Purushottama. Purushottama is higher than the Highest, the Highest being *turiya*; *turiya* is *śivam*, *śāntam*, *advaitam*, *sachchidānandam*. But the goal sought for is that “which is beyond *śivam* and *asivam*, good and evil, *śāntam* and *kalilam*, calm and chaos, *dvaitam* and *advaitam*, duality and unity. Sat, Chit and Ananda are in their Highest, but He is neither Sat, Chit nor Ananda nor any combination of these. He is all and yet He is *neti, neti*. He is One and yet He is many. He is Male and He is Female. He is *tat* and He is *sah*. This is the Higher than the Highest. He is the Purusha, the Being in whose image the world and all the Jivas are made, who pervades all and underlies all the workings of Prakriti as its reality and self”.¹ It is this supreme Purusha that Ashwalayana wants to realise.

The Upanishads declare an Unknowable that manifests itself to us in a double aspect of Personality and Impersonality. They call it *tat*, That, which includes the universal and transcendent Personality. Subjectively, it is the supreme Self, the one Being of whom all existences are Becomings; it is this that has to be realised in ourselves and in all things and beyond all things. Objectively, it is the Lord who both contains and inhabits the universe. It is the abstract and impersonal aspect of infinite Existence that is referred to as “That”; whereas the self-aware and self-blissful Existent is referred to as “He”. Neither is entirely complete. Brahman, the Unknowable and Indefinable, is beyond both; and excludes all definition, determination and description. Both the pure infinite relationless immutability and the infinite totality of objects are mutually complementary expressions of the same unknowable Brahman. The Immmutable and the Impersonal is ‘the still and secret foundation of the play and the movement’, extended equally in all things, *samam brahma*; It is pure Self-awareness, without form, without imperfection, unaffected by change, unmodified, eternally pure and free—whereas the Mutable, the Divine Personality reveals Himself in various names and forms to the individual soul, and also helps to realise their underlying Oneness. “It is He that has gone abroad,” declares the Isha Upanishad, “That which is bright, bodiless, without scar of imperfection, without sinews, pure, unpierced by evil. The Seer, the Thinker, the One who becomes everywhere, the Self-existent has ordered objects perfectly according to their nature from years sempiternal.”²

It is this Brahman, the pure Self which is identical with the Lord, the Purusha,

¹ Sri Aurobindo, *The Upanishads*, Cent. Ed. Vol. 12, p. 417.

² *Isha Upanishad*, verse 8 (Sri Aurobindo’s Translation).

that is also the Inhabitant of all forms as well as the universal Purusha. The Upanishadic rishi joyously proclaims: "The Purusha there and there, He am I".¹ It is He the Self-existent and sole Existent-who becomes all things and beings; He is the Master and Enjoyer of all He becomes.

Finer beyond fineness, He hath hidden him
in the midmost of this hustling chaos, He
hath created this universe by taking many
figures and as the One He encompasseth it
around and girdeth it....²

There is a supreme Unity that transcends every conceivable variety, an indescribable Oneness underlying all multiplicity and an immeasurable Stability behind the flux of phenomenal existence. This eternal unchanging and immutable Something is the sum and substratum of all. It is conditioned neither by Space nor by Time nor by Causality: It is absolute and transcendent; yet it is the existence of this supreme Presence which gives order and stability to the multitudinous movement of the universe. Brahman exceeds, contains and supports the world of Space, Time and Causality. It is the transcendental, universal and individual—Lord, Continent and In-dweller. As the transcendental It exceeds all, as the universal It contains in itself past, present and future, contains all possible formations as well as eventualities and potentialities, and as the individual It supports the play of Being in the separative Ego and its consequent self-unfoldment. The world of Space, Time and Causality; though not real in itself, is nonetheless real in consciousness, but only symbolic of the supreme Being who is beyond it and is also its source and basis; it is the becoming of the pure omnipotent self-awareness of the Absolute.

Although the Upanishads emphasise the unknowableness of the Absolute Brahman, *neti, neti*, they again and again declare that Brahman is the one true object of knowledge: Brahman as the infinite and transcendent is certainly unknowable to the intellect, but in Its manifest aspect of the phenomenal and the noumenal universe it is perfectly realisable. The universe of manifestation includes not merely the universe of gross matter, but also the universe of subtle matter, and a third universe of causal matter which includes both the subtle and the gross. Brahman who is the source, whence all these three universes take their derivation, is essentially identical with the human self; but in the world of phenomena these universes are different. Their identity *is* an experienced and ascertained fact in the reality of things even as their difference *is* an equally experienced and well-ascertained fact in the appearance of things. The world of phenomena is itself in its essence a seeming which is made possible because of the more fundamental seeming difference between the individual self and the Universal Self. The essential truth of their identity is lost as the manifes-

¹ *Ibid*, verse 16 (Sri Aurobindo's Translation).

² *Shvetashvatara Upanishad*, IV, 14 (Sri Aurobindo's Translation)

tation of Brahman proceeds and becomes even inconceivable at the level of gross matter. Dualism, therefore, becomes the truth of phenomenal existence, although it is not the truth of the ultimate nature of things.

The Transcendent Reality, the Absolute and the Unknowable, viewed from the transcendental standpoint, as a first step towards manifestation produces in itself, as Sri Aurobindo calls it, "a luminous Shadow of Its infinite inconceivable Being"—the *Parabrahman*. This Supreme Spirit, Parabrahman, can be spoken of subjectively as Sachchidananda. The first Trinity of the Upanishads, Sachchidananda is Absolute Existence, which is also Absolute Consciousness and Absolute Bliss. And the second Trinity is merely the objective expression of the first, because Truth (*satyam*), Knowledge (*jñānam*) and Endlessness (*anantam*) are respectively the subjective ideas of existence, consciousness and bliss viewed objectively. All phenomenal things other than the Pure Being are only relatively real; they are known indirectly through the use of a medium and are circumscribed by Space, Time and Causality.

The ancient Indian seekers, through a process of spiritual dialectics based on their growing inner visions and experiences, discovered the method of Yoga, and by Yoga realised the fact that the One and Immutable Brahman is the one reality behind all phenomenal appearances, the one true Self of all things and the one Truth that transcends all temporality, *nityonityānām*, the One Eternal in a world of transience. They realised too that this transcendent absolute Self is also the Self of all living beings, and the Self of man—that it is the One Consciousness in many forms of consciousness, that even the non-consciousness of the inanimate is only a seeming; for it is yet another form of the Supreme Consciousness. And finally they realised that the transcendent Self in the individual and the same in the universe are identical and equally complete; this means that the one who knows his Self knows also the universe. This essential truth is enshrined in the two Vedantic formulas, *so'ham*, 'He am I', and *aham brahmāsmi*, 'I am Brahman'. Brahman is subjectively Atman; It is the pure Self or immutable Existence of all that is in the universe. All things that exist are therefore the becomings of the one Self of all; all are this one self-luminous indivisible Existence, self-concentrated in consciousness, in force and in delight. Atman represents itself to the consciousness of the individual in three states, *kṣara*, *akṣara*, and *uttama*,—mutable, immutable and the supreme respectively. As the *kṣara*, Atman secretly supports, controls and enjoys change, division and duality, but apparently becomes their victim; as the *akṣara*, it is a witness to the movements of Nature, never moves, and is always above them, and is the secret freedom of the *kṣara*. As the *uttama*; it contains and enjoys both the movement and the freedom from movement and is beyond them, limited by neither of them. It is the all, the Beyond,—the *yet Another*. He is "the Master and King of the Gods; in Him the worlds have their abiding place".¹ In His manifestation He always exceeds it and in His unmanifestation He is utterly outside and beyond the universe:

¹ *Ibid.*, IV. 13.

When darkness is not and day dawneth not
nor night cometh, nor reality nor unreality, but
all is Shiva, the Blessed One pure and absolute,
that verily is the Imperishable....¹

He is the mighty Force which creates and envelops all this universe; He is the mighty Unity which as the Unmanifest is the source of all existence, and as the Manifest governs the universe.

We see Him to be the beginning, the Informing Cause whereby all standeth together; He dwelleth above and beyond the past, the present and the future and Time hath no part in him. Worship ye the Adorable whose shape is the whole universe and who hath become in the Universe, worship ye the Lord, the Ancient of Days in your own hearts who sitteth.²

The rishi, filled with the joy of the vision, continues:

He is other than Time and Form and the Tree of Cosmos and He is greater than they, from Whom this world of phenomena becometh and revolveth... He dwelleth in the Spirit of man, the Immortal in whom all things have their home and dwelling place.³

He alone is the supreme Source, the One Consciousness in all consciousnesses; He has made all and knows all for He is the timeless womb out of which all existences arise. He is the One Cause and reason of all things; He is the One without form or hue: yet he wears many forms and hues because of his *yoga-sakti*. He is the Supreme Master, the Lord Adorable; He is pure absolute Existence—purely Himself. The sun is but the shadow of His infinite splendour. The Upanishadic seer sings of Him:

There the Sun cannot shine and the Moon has no splendour and the stars are blind; there our lightnings flash not, neither any earthly fire; all that is bright is but the shadow of His brightness and by His shining all this shineth.⁴

V. MADHUSUDAN REDDY

¹ *Ibid.*, IV. 18.

² *Ibid.*, VI. 5.

³ *Ibid.*, VI. 6.

⁴ *Ibid.*, VI. 14.

I DEMAND MY BIRTHRIGHT

It's not in vain I invoke Your grace,
I have every right to Your love;
In Your image was fashioned my face,
I demand all a son can deserve!

You are a shoreless sea of compassion,
Fill my heart with ruth;
You pervade each cosmic mansion,
Let me live in touch with Truth.

In Your Omniscience You ever enjoy
With Your aspirants hide-and-peek;
O may I partake of the game and employ
Bright fuses for a snare you cannot break.

You are as You were, and will ever remain
The Perfect Being, the Ocean of Bliss;
Let me too rise above mind's domain,
Calm, radiant, free of time's abyss

I demand my birth's own right;
Can I not claim You in every way?
Of Your solar effulgence infinite
Let me become at least a ray.

M. P. JAIN

I WON'T LET YOU GO

A FREE TRANSLATION OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S

JETE NAHI DIBO

It was noon. The carriage stood ready at the door.
From the vertical cusp poured down the glare
Of the autumn solar rays and, below on its wings,
The wind swirled the dust of the lone village road.
Under the cool shade of the banyan tree
Asleep lay an old beggar in her tattered clothes.
So silent was Nature all around,
Simmering in the solitary vastness of a midday—
An epitome of midnight with its pervasive calm.
My house was the only exception—it knew no rest.

The month of Aswin was over, and over too
My Puja Holiday. I was to return—fated as it was—
To my place of service far-off—a wide hiatus
Sizzling with the pangs of separation.
Servants were busy in packing my luggage—
The whole house was bustling with action.
The mistress of the house—eyes glistening in tears
And heart laden with pain—had no time to spare
Even to shed tears of solace in a lone corner.
The longer the sojourn, the more frightening grows
The huge heaps of bags and baggages.
An assortment of contents: edible niceties—
Fine rice, charming sweets, mango pickles—
Bedding, boxes, wares, medicines, odds and ends—
Blessed items of the huge utility-pile
Bearing the stamp of her heart-revealing intimacy
To mollify the rigours of my stay abroad.
Protest failed, and the heap grew into a hillock.
However, the time to depart came, and I looked
At the clock and then at the beloved face,
And whispered, 'Goodbye, mon ami!' At once
Her face she turned and, her head down,
Concealed her tears of bad omen from my sight.

Other days saw our darling daughter asleep by this time
After bath and lunch. Today she had neither—

So busied were the moments of her mother since early morn.
 Me she had followed today like a shadow
 And watched in silence the multi-preparations
 For my departure and, when quite tired,
 She seated herself on the main door-sill,
 Passage of my egression from inside.
 As I said, 'Goodbye, my little mummy!'
 Her gloomy look she cast at me and replied,
 'I won't let you go.' She remained where she was,
 She didn't stir at all nor did she bar the door—
 Only her right of affection she pronounced,
 'I won't let you go.' But, alas, time waits for none,
 And my departure she couldn't postpone.

O my daughter, what an innocent gaby you are!
 What's your worth at all? Whence did you get
 The strength to be defiant and pronounce,
 'I won't let you go'? Where's the source of it all?
 Pert slip of a girl, whom would you withhold
 With your arms, so small, so helpless?
 Whom would you fight with, O weakling,
 With your little quantum of love ephemeral?
 In fear and shyness, out of a grief-laden heart
 A yearning at its omega point may rise aloft,
 'I've no desire to let you go, my darling!'
 But who can vaunt, 'I won't let you go'?
 Well, Nature in a japery dragged me away
 Against your vain utterance of affection!
 Defeated, you like a statue kept seated
 With tears in your eyes. My own tears wiped,
 I had to depart to complete the double defeat.

As I journeyed on, on both sides of the way
 There came to my view the autumnal corn-fields,
 Profusely rich, lazily basking in the sunshine.
 Indifferent stood the rows of trees along the highway,
 Their shadows ingathered at their bases.
 The Ganges, full to the brim, flowed on
 With a strong current. The white clouds lay idle
 Suspended in the bright void of the meridian.
 I heaved a deep sigh at the sight of the earth,
 Laid bare in the scorching sun and wearied

Through the aeonic rotation in the celestial sphere.

Alas, the entire sky and the entire earth
 Seem to have plunged deep in the ocean of sorrow!
 As I move on, all along comes to my ear
 One heart-rending refrain, 'I won't let you go.'
 The region between the earth and the sky
 Rings out in solo voice through eternity,
 'I won't let you go'—an anodyne of delusion.
 Even the grass, so tiny—the mother Earth,
 Hugging it to her bosom—voices aloud,
 'I won't let you go.' Even the lamp's feeble beam
 Some force tries to withhold in form
 From the gulp of darkness and cries amain,
 'I won't let you go.' The world of *homo sapiens*
 Sends up the most ancient and painful cry:
 'I won't let you go!'—A cry vain, crass and inane.
 Alas, willing or not, one has to depart
 When the curtain drops and the drama is over.
 None can withstand it...none can be withheld.
 Stark is this truth from time immemorial.
 The current of creation flows ever and anon
 Towards the formidable ocean of dissolution—
 All, all have to drift there at a terrific speed
 In spite of their lachrymose outburst
 With arms open and eyes burning in defiance,
 'I won't let you go. O never! O never!'
 But none listens...no response from anywhere.
 The ceaseless pitiful wail out of the universal heart
 Pierces my ear from all corners of the globe
 Through the voice of my ignorant daughter of four.
 The obstinate demand behoves a child—a child
 Not yet out of tutelage, highly sentimental.
 It ever loses whatever it receives. Nevertheless,
 The grip it never does loosen. What an illusion!
 With a fretful clutch at the elusive physical,
 The pride of its undiminished love always exclaims,
 'I won't let you go. O never! O never!'
 The face is gloomy, eyes are tearful, and
 Pride gets a lunge each moment of its breath—
 Still love refuses to yield to Fate ineludible.
 It revolts and repugns in a muffled voice,

'I won't let you go. O never! O never!
 But the defeats recur—and the dissident cries occur;
 'Can my idol most lovely whom I adore
 Ever go away from me, my redolent love?
 Earth cannot vindicate her claim to show
 Anything more animating, more powerful
 Than my heart's deep desire, my longing,
 That defies all bounds, that transcends all.'

It asserts in pride—an empty flourish—,
 'I won't let you go. O never! O never!
 But the very moment it sees in helpless pathos
 Its dearest ones being blown out sans mercy
 Like the dry trivial dust in a swirl.
 With an effusion of tears, it falls to the ground
 Pride-broken and crest-fallen, battered and bruised
 Like a tree, uprooted by a blast sudden and severe.
 Nevertheless, love proclaims, 'God can never
 Dishonour His own word of honour.
 His great assurance—deed of possession eternal
 That bears His own signature—is with me.'
 And this incites the frail tender human love—
 Its ego swelled—to stand before the sovereign Death
 And declare, 'Death, thou art not.'
 Such insolent words! Death the leveller smiles.
 The seemingly eternal love, beleaguered by Death,
 Envelops this world with a shroud
 Like a veil of tears upon the gloomy eyes—
 Love ever tremulous in apprehension,
 Ever condemned to the yawning gape of Death —
 Ever shaken its fiducial basis by moments ephemeral.
 The hope, assailed and wearied by its negation,
 Draws down a misty curtain of melancholy
 Over the whole panorama in its purview.

Today I visualise, two arms encircle the globe
 With a futile clasp and lie there before me
 Immobile but inconsolable in strange antinomy.
 A motionless shadow has befallen the yonder river
 In full motion—the scene, a magical texture
 Of a cloud that rains out her tears of isolation.
 So do I hear bemoaning used rhyme

In the murmur of the greeneries...The dry leaves
 So meaninglessly the hot midday wind plays with
 In idle indifference...The day in slow pace wears out
 Lengthening the shadow of the banyan tree.
 The flute of the Boundless plays a bewailing note
 In rustic tune on that vast terrain,
 Extended to the horizon beyond the vision.
 The Earth, resigned and dishevelled, lies on her back
 In the light of golden-yellow beauty of the setting sun,
 With her sari drawn over her bosom,
 On the ever-stretching expanse of corn-fields
 On the bank of the Ganges, immortalised in spiritual lore.
 Lips mute, gaze on the blue, ears attuned to the flute—
 A picture of a loving mother but ever helpless
 Before the baffling riddle of a blind Destiny!
 And, a surprise! I observe her face resembles
 The face of my daughter of four summers,
 Seated all alone on the door-sill and struck dumb
 By the descent of an eyeless void within.

ROBI DAS

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A SHEAF OF SYMBOLS

13

KING Janaka, Samrāt by dint of being Swarāt,
Had uncanny ways of testing spiritual stuff
And training souls in true spiritual sense.
Once he declared in an open court of saints:
“Lo, here are a hundred cows with gold-filled horns:
Let the spirit-wedded of you fetch them away!”...

None stirred, abashed; all gasped for breath to see
How the Dilemma-horns could be grappled by any at all;
Not so Yājñavalkya—compeer of King—
He stepped boldly forth, and led the kine away!
He stopped not to hear dark mutterings at his back
As to how one spirit-wedded could grab cows and gold:
To *him* the cows were embodiments of Light,
And gold was spirit-emblem matter-concretised:
And were not both made sacrosanct for once
By Divinity-touch at Gokul and Bethlehem?
And how could gold or cows (or even ‘palaces’)
Stand in the way of spirit-sādhanā true?
Rather, could not they (or all, for matter of that)
Be utilised for furthering SPIRIT-EMPIRE *here*?

That’s how we have now his watchword before us a-fresh: “At Both Ends, sure!”

14

Haroun Al Rashid, on his usual stroll,
Once saw a carver with dreamy deep-sunk eyes
With all his quaint and cryptic carver wares
Lying unsold before him in his narrow cell;
The officious Caliph could not help impart
A piece of his gratuitous mind to him:
“On simpler themes, my Friend, thy skill apply—
That folk would follow, and bring thee wherewithal
To feed thy body and cure thy famished brain!”
The carver obeyed: ‘But the artist—that was lost!’...

And when half-beast and half-god that was Pan
Went about breaking and bruising a thousand seeds

To find a fitting pipe to mate his lips,
 And blew sweet music through it, passing sweet,—
 The great Gods sighed to note perfection-cost,
 And someone quipped: “Too perfect: it must end here!”...

So man is here to do what none could do—
 Not carver nor Caliph nor Pan nor Gods—
 To make ends meet on several scores at once:
 Ideal, Real, Life, Art, Achievements, Needs,—
 And how shall he do that, except the Grace Divine help him not do in a
 Perfect Graceful way?

CHIMANBHAI

THE INDIAN SHAWL

How blue! and deepening
 You flow, spreading, seeping
 Through interstices
 Filling empty spaces
 With blueness, O dusk....
 The rich scent of flowers,
 Beginning to bloom
 At night, is still faint,
 The essence of mildness,
 You blur harsh outlines
 And blot out ugliness.
 O merciful, how soft
 Your touch when you meet pain.
 Now darkness falls like rain,
 And the hands of shadow
 Throw over the shoulders
 Of even the poorest
 A shawl studded with stars.

MARTA GUHA

THE WORDS OF POETRY

(Continued from the issue of June 1977)

5

It is the intuitiveness that constitutes the poetic *karana sharira*, "causal body", the poet's inmost core capturing artistically the inmost core of a thing and its manner of pulsation. But there are many levels of being, and poetry can start on any of them, according to the peculiar psychology of the poet. Every great poet need not live on the Aurobindonian level in order to be supreme in his art. What he needs to do is to act intuitively on his own level: this will render his words incarnative of the causal body. Sri Aurobindo himself has instanced dialogue after dialogue from Shakespeare for a sovereign operation of the intuitive mind, creating the *ne plus ultra* of poetry. And yet, according to Sri Aurobindo, Shakespeare is the poet of the "plane" of the life-force, the mind borne on a surge of sensation and emotion, throwing up ideas in plenty but not for their own sake, least of all for any sum of philosophical vision: they arise to enrich sensation and emotion with ideative correspondences. An outburst of royally intuitive poetry from Shakespeare that Sri Aurobindo has cited has not even any marked ideas carried on the crest of the sensational and emotional being, except in the introductory line—and still all is intensest incarnative language:

Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;
To lie in cold obstruction and to rot;
This sensible warm motion to become
A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit
To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
In thrilling region of thick-ribbed ice;
To be imprisoned in the viewless winds,
And blown with restless violence round about
The pendant world...

Set these lines beside Eliot's, which we have already quoted, on a perilous toiling through endless-seeming years—

Across a whole Thibet of broken stones
That lie fang-up, a lifetime's march—

and you will immediately perceive a difference in the degree of poetic inwardness, in the intensity of the imaginative word and of its power to bring out the imponderables by the sound-suggestion. Eliot achieves a poetically pointed statement with

an original image, but it is an effect that is a little self-conscious, the "Thibet" which introduces the most telling associations has also slightly the colour of a striking contrivance. The sole phrase comparable to Shakespeare's lines is: "broken stones/ That lie fang-up"—and there too it is the last three words that emerge from the very heart of the *enthousiasmos*. The terror and horror raised up by Shakespeare of the strange half-physical half-supraphysical states and places has a fascinating and compelling intimacy of vision and voice which Eliot as a whole falls short of. Throughout the nine verses Shakespeare has revelatory music of the plane on which he functions. Eliot's two lines do not hold in each part of them the intensest possible on his own plane.

We may, however, be asked: "You have said that before both the subtle and the causal incarnateness are won, the transmissive use of the language must be a background portion of the poetic moment. This implies that 'thought' is present in Claudio's speech on death even if the elements that overwhelmingly impress us are 'sensation' and 'emotion' experienced through an inner seeing and hearing of both the outer and the inner. How would you make out as more 'thoughted'—implicitly if not explicitly—the line

In thrilling region of thick-ribbed ice

than Tennyson's

The mellow ouzel fluting in the elm?

As for Seumas O'Sullivan's

And many rivers murmuring in the dark,

it seems surely a more ideative effect for all its sensation-content than anything in Claudio's speech, even a most intense phrase like

To be imprisoned in the viewless winds."

Our reply must read: "There is more complexity in the Shakespearean sensation. And not the least of it comes from the greater presence of emotion than in the two other lines. Emotion always involves a certain attitude and it is because emotion has a more direct play in the Seumas O'Sullivan than in the Tennyson that you find an ideative effect there and pick it out for a 'clincher' against the supposed presence of 'thought' in that very intense phrase in the Shakespearean passage. The line from Claudio pitted against the Tennyson has a strong subjective tone: the nerves of mental sensation—to quote a phrase of Sri Aurobindo's—receive an impact through it; one feels in the mind's 'entrails', as it were, the thing described, whereas the ouzel

causes no such emotion-quiver, it conveys just a happy superficial caress on the emotional being. O'Sullivan is not so much of the surface: a felicitous pricking of it occurs and a concept faintly looms out; but where in it is the keen penetration that gives us in

To be imprisoned in the viewless winds

the feeling of the soul caught and confined within an invisible airy nothing that is yet a tyranny and a torture—the feeling which carries with it a living idea of being a helpless and anguished exile for all eternity from human pleasure, human volition? A shuddering heart-deep pessimism, which can either burn to the bone or freeze to the marrow, keeps thinking through sensation and emotion in the entirety of Claudio's excited confrontation of death: this excited confrontation is also a spontaneous contemplation. No doubt, the contemplation is not philosophical, it is the vital mind and not the intellectual at poetic activity here. Shakespeare contemplating is different from Milton or Wordsworth or Shelley or even the mature Keats: still a beat of thought, along with a beat of sensation and emotion, is communicated through the quick core-piercing phraseology and the profoundly ringing rhythm, which make Shakespeare's body of poetry a 'causal' complex rather than a 'gross' compound or even a 'subtle' congeries."

But this thought does not disengage itself from the sensation-emotion and the latter is one with the energy and pattern of the words. Possibly, Shakespeare in such passages is the example *par excellence* of the words which Mallarmé spoke of to Degas as constituting what ideas are incapable of producing: poetry. And Shakespeare in general too strikes us most by his largesse of words, his imperial way with words. Not only is his vocabulary the most varied among poets—nearly 23,000 different words—but also he has an inexhaustible eagerness for words, a constant adventurousness with them, a godlike delight and superabundant creativeness of idea-exceeding yet significance-seizing sound.

(Concluded)

K. D. SETHNA

THE CHARACTER OF LIFE

CONSCIOUSNESS APPROACH TO SHAKESPEARE

(Continued from the issue of June 1977)

The Character of Life in *Hamlet*

PROBABLY more has been written on *Hamlet* than any other literary work in history. Our purpose here is not to re-examine the area already well covered and add a further opinion to the enormous variety already expressed. Our primary concern is not with the character of Hamlet, the reasons for his delay, the morality of his action or other such topics. Rather it is to study the character of life as expressed in the circumstances and through the characters of the play. Nevertheless, it will be necessary to consider many of these questions in some detail for their bearing on our central pursuit.

There is a single broad movement of life connecting the entire story from beginning to end. It begins thirty years before the present action when Hamlet's father, then King of Denmark, was challenged by Old Fortinbras, then King of Norway, to combat. Old Hamlet slew Fortinbras and won dominion over all his territory. On the day of their combat young Hamlet was born (V.i. 163). Thirty years later the King's brother Claudius murders Old Hamlet, marries his wife the Queen and becomes his successor. Again there is a challenge of war from Norway, this time from young Fortinbras, the old King's son, but it quickly subsides. Young Hamlet takes up revenge of his father's murder and finally succeeds in killing Claudius though he is himself killed in the process. Young Fortinbras arrives to claim his right over the kingdom, ending a cycle begun with his father's challenge.

In viewing the context in which the characters live and act, immediately certain interesting observations strike us. There appears to be a relationship between young Hamlet's birth and the first war with Norway, Old Hamlet's death and threat of war with Fortinbras's son, young Hamlet's death and Fortinbras's rising to power. This relationship expresses the life forces active in Denmark during the course of the play and it is in this context that all the characters and events must be understood.

We may begin our study with a close examination of Old Hamlet's character and the state of Denmark under his rule. Our first question will be, "Why did Old Hamlet die?" He is a heroic figure of strength and courage, a firm and powerful ruler beloved by his subjects and feared by his enemies. During his reign both Norway and England are subservient to Denmark. For thirty years after his conquest of Norway, there has been relative peace and stability in the land. Of his purity and righteousness we are less sure. When his ghost appears it mentions "foul crimes done in my days of nature" and "all my imperfections on my head."

The Ghost reveals to Hamlet the adulterous affair between his wife the Queen

and his brother Claudius which led to a break in his marriage—"a falling off"—and then to his murder by Claudius. His Queen is a weak character of low consciousness seduced by words and gifts, too ignorant to suspect Claudius of murder, unashamed of her hasty remarriage. The Ghost's concern is for revenge against Claudius, but he warns Hamlet not to harm the Queen. The old King is a doting and uxorious husband fully attached to a weak impure woman even after her true character is fully revealed. He is not angry with his wife but infuriated because he is replaced by "a wretch whose natural gifts were poor to those of mine!" It is his vital pride which demands revenge, the same "most emulate pride" which pricked him to accept Old Fortinbras's challenge thirty years earlier. When he appears as a Ghost he had

A countenance more in sorrow than in anger. (I.iii.232)

He is more sorry for his wife's betrayal than he is angry for being murdered.

Old Hamlet is poisoned by his brother. The immediate outer cause is Claudius's ambition. The inner sanction is his attachment to his wife. Old Hamlet is a powerful warrior with this single vulnerable spot through which he is attacked and his kingdom taken away. While awaiting the Ghost's appearance, Hamlet refers to this fault in general terms which apply equally well to himself:

So, oft it chances in particular men,
That for some vicious mole of nature in them,
As, in their birth—wherein they are not guilty,
Since nature cannot choose his origin—
By the o'ergrowth of some complexion,
Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason,
Or by some habit that too much o'er-leavens
The form of plausive manners, that these men,
Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,
Being nature's livery, or fortune's star,—
Their virtues else—be they as pure as grace,
As infinite as man may undergo—
Shall in the general censure take corruption
From that particular fault: the dram of eale
Doth all the noble substance of a doubt
To his own scandal. (I.iv.23-38)

Immediately following these words, the Ghost appears and it is apparent that the description fits Old Hamlet very well. He is a man respected by his subjects—

Hor:he was a goodly king.
Ham: He was a man, take him for all in all,

I shall not look upon his like again— (I.ii.186)

with “one defect”, a strong man with a weak attachment to a woman of low character. After listening to the Ghost’s story, Hamlet calls him “old mole”; referring at once to his movement underground and the “mole of nature” which led to his demise.

The king represents the central will governing the kingdom. His personal strength and the obedience given him by his subjects establish an order or equilibrium of forces in the kingdom. Old Hamlet’s “one defect” is not merely a character weakness. In the plane of life it is an opening for hostile forces to attack. What Norway failed to accomplish by war, Claudius achieved by intrigue. A man whose front is fully armoured has left open a chink at the back through which he is slain.

The murder of the king is a very powerful action releasing powerful currents of reaction. It creates a huge disturbance to the balance of life forces in the kingdom, a power vacuum. Had Claudius been a more powerful man than his brother, or one with greater support from the people, he might have been able to subdue these forces and reestablish the old equilibrium. But Claudius is no match either in strength or popularity for his dead brother. The result is that his action is quickly answered by reactions from life around him. When a king falls, he

Dies not alone; but, like a gulf, doth draw
 What’s near it with it: it is a massy wheel,
 Fix’d on the summit of the highest mount,
 To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things
 Are mortised and adjoined: which, when it falls,
 Each small annexment, petty consequence,
 Attends the boisterous ruin. Never alone
 Did the king sigh, but with a general groan. (III,iii.16-23)

When the play opens Old Hamlet is dead and his brother is on the throne. There are numerous signs that the stability and health of the country is suffering . Francisco, a soldier on the watch, is “sick at heart”. When Bernardo asks, “What, is Horatio there?” Horatio responds, “A piece of him.” (I.i.19) The ghost’s appearance is said to indicate “some strange eruption to our state.” Reference is made to the supernatural events in Rome just before the murder of Julius Caesar. Marcellus sums up the impression:

Something is rotten in the state of Denmark. (I.iv.90)

At the same time we learn that Denmark is busy with war preparations in response to news that young Fortinbras of Norway is threatening to reconquer the lands lost by his father. Claudius’s first act as king is to deal with this foreign threat. It is not uncommon for a new king to be so challenged as a test to his capacity and the integrity

of the country under his rule. Life immediately presents Claudius with a test of strength which he appears to handle successfully. But in fact the outer challenge from Fortinbras subsides only when young Hamlet decides in earnest to revenge his father's death. As in *Othello* the threat of war with the Turks vanishes only to be replaced by Iago's intrigues, so here Norway retracts her threat to Claudius's rule only when Hamlet resolves to end it himself.

There is an imbalance of forces in Denmark resulting from the king's murder, Claudius's usurpation of the crown intended for Hamlet, and an incestuous and hasty marriage to the queen. Life forces react to the disequilibrium and move for a new order which is finally achieved with the death of Hamlet and Claudius and the rise of young Fortinbras to power.

The key figure in this movement from beginning to end is Hamlet and the movement can be understood only when Hamlet's role in it is fully grasped. We have noted that Hamlet's birth and the battle of his father with Old Fortinbras occurred on the same day. Though on the surface the two events appear completely independent, the laws of life reveal a deeper connection. Simultaneity in life is an expression of interrelationship. The vibration or consciousness of an event attracts other events which are similar or are in reaction to it. In the present case Hamlet's birth is associated with a challenge to Denmark's sovereignty and the outbreak of foreign war. He is born on the day of victory and throughout his life Denmark is master of its neighbors. At the moment of his death, the balance shifts and young Fortinbras rises to power uncontested. In some way which we need to discover, Hamlet represents a powerful force in Denmark whose birth coincides with conflict abroad and whose death is associated with conflict and destruction at home.

As we have seen, Old Hamlet is a powerful and able ruler in the traditional sense. He is the vital hero who commands by force and maintains his kingdom by his strength. Peter Alexander observes that "when father and son meet in the closing scenes of the act, not merely two types, but two ages confront one another."¹⁷ Young Hamlet has some of his father's courage and nobility but in other ways is a completely different man. He is predominantly a mental character. In Sri Aurobindo's words, "Hamlet is a Mind, an intellectual, but like many intellectuals a mind that looks too much all around and sees too many sides to have an effective will for action. He plans ingeniously without coming to anything decisive. And when he does act, it is on a vital impulse. Shakespeare suggests but does not bring out the idealist in him, the man of bright illusions."¹⁸

Hamlet is born into royalty and as such is destined to rule Denmark. He lives in an age where vital strength is the sole criterion for survival. The king must be first a warrior ready to discipline his people and fight his enemies. In this society the role of mind is to support vital strength, not to have free play in creating and acting out its own possibilities. In Hamlet, mind appears as a new development of consciousness. There is no integration of mind and emotion and vitality which is the case in individuals and societies where mental culture is of long standing. Hamlet's is a

nascent mentality in a vital society. All those around him are of the old strain and he stands out in opposition.

We see that the nature of Hamlet's mind is to enquire into and question everything. His keen insight penetrates the surface appearances of people and events around him and threatens the conventional society with a greater self-consciousness than it can bear. He sees through the smiles of Claudius, the affectations of his mother, the platitudes of Polonius, the spying of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and everywhere he strips naked their underlying motives or makes folly of their pretense.

In addition to keen insight, his mental development has made possible a refinement of the emotions and sentiments which Bradley terms moral sensibility or moral intelligence. His affection for his parents and his friends is uncommonly deep and genuine. So is his disgust for anything ugly—his uncle's drunkenness, his mother's shallowness and sensuality, the courtiers' lies and pretenses, etc. This characteristic of his intelligence makes the impact of life's disillusionments not only a repulsion in his mind but also a severe blow to his heart's emotions.

Knowledge and will are the two powers of mind. Observation is the first born which moves through stages from confusion to illusion to insight. Only when knowledge is established, mental will can become fully active. Hamlet's mind is in the stage of observation. He sees through the illusions and false appearances but his vision ends there. It is a negative perception valid in its own right but incomplete. Hamlet ponders the nature of deceit, disease and death, but fails to grasp the positive values of life, love and truth. His understanding provides no basis for action, only for endless questioning and thoughts of suicidal escape. The mental will is undeveloped and ineffective. This explains why he is prone to constant mental agitation which does not translate into action. He acts only when mind is brushed aside and the vital is free to move unimpeded—that is, when the gap between mind and the vital is temporarily filled. It also explains why he finds it so difficult to revenge his father's murder. Revenge is a vital motivation. It can activate mind only to the extent that mind is subservient to the vital. Left to itself mind finds no interest or satisfaction in it.

The situation in consciousness expresses literally in life. Hamlet has grown to manhood, his faculty of knowledge is developed, but he is excluded from the throne which is the true power for action. In this respect he is not merely an individual but a representative of a growth in the society as a whole. He is part of and represents the royal house of Denmark, the central will ("head") of the state. Not only is his birth a new development in the society, but it threatens the existing social consciousness and evokes a response of fear and hostility from it. In other words, his birth marks the appearance of a greater possibility, a greater power of consciousness, to rule Denmark. Because it is a higher development it has a power over the existing society and also poses a threat to it. But because it is young and not yet integrated with the present achievements of the civilisation, it is awkward, unbalanced, weak and its appearance creates a temporary disequilibrium or gap in the consciousness of the society.

This gap is a weakness which invites a challenge. The challenge comes from Norway as war. But the vitality of Denmark embodied in Old Hamlet is strong and the result of the threat is an expansion of Denmark's sovereignty over a far greater area. In life, a new emergence usually brings with it an upset, accident or temporary difficulty. But where the basis is firm and the new element positive, the net result is an expansion and progress. In this case Hamlet's birth marks the rise of Denmark as a greater international power.

(To be continued)

GARRY JACOBS

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FROM SATIRIST TO SATELLITE

THE REAL ILYA EHRENBURG OF JULIO JURENITO

The following article by T. R. Fyvel appeared in the British periodical Tribune during the latter part of the Stalin era. It is worth reading even today for two reasons. First, it brings to light a forgotten work not unworthy of comparison with Voltaire's Candide. Secondly, it reveals the real genius of an author: Ilya Ehrenberg, who sprang into spurious prominence with his novel of World War II, The Fall of Paris, which is not more than mediocre journalism, of a piece with the rest of his syndicated vituperations against Western Europe. This book suggests to the unwary reader a dyed-in-the-wool Communist doctrinaire rather than the great satirist that Ehrenberg had it in him to be. His masterly earlier book, Julio Jurenito, about which Fyvel has written, flays whatever was seen as defective in the Soviet Union à la Stalin, and it makes a fantastic contrast to the subsequent Stalinist paeans which the world was accustomed to hear from Ehrenberg and take as the "Voice of the Soviet Union".

It is not easy to know why Ilya Ehrenburg should have remained prominent for so long as an official Moscow spokesman. By background and education, he is a typical Russian-Jewish intellectual. In the parvenu circles of the new Communist officials, "cosmopolitanism" is today something of a crime, but Ehrenburg is essentially a cosmopolitan: he has his memories of Russia before the revolution; he has a wide knowledge of Jewish life; he has lived for many years in Paris, and his early satirical writings did not spare the Soviet Union.

Over the last ten years, the tide in Moscow has flowed fast against men of his type. So how does he feel in the atmosphere of crude Russian chauvinism and militarism which has so successfully reasserted itself in Moscow? Or what does he think when he looks at the Soviet encyclopedia and discovers that it has been entirely re-written, so that for example a "cosmopolitan" in the 1935 edition was "one who asserts he belongs to no single nationality, but regards the whole world as his home," while in the 1949 edition he has become "a person of anti-patriotic, bourgeois opinions who asserts hypocritically that the whole world is a single fatherland and refuses to defend his own country"?

The question arises because Ehrenburg was once a writer of distinction. From a literary standpoint he should not be judged by his present output. His current articles syndicated in the European Communist press, in which he vituperates against Western culture, are dreary rubbish, and his war-novel *The Fall of Paris* was a very ordinary piece of journalism which but for the official support of the Communist clique would today be forgotten. But some clues to the real outlook of Ilya Ehrenburg may be gathered from his early, and far superior work, *Julio Jurenito*, which he wrote in the early nineteen-twenties, when he was still living in Paris.

Since the Communist Parties have seen to it that it should be out of print in all its various editions and translations *Julio Jurenito* is difficult to come by (I myself have a German translation at hand) and even its name is not very well-known. Fewer readers still will know that it is one of the wittiest political satires written since 1918, and often reads remarkably like a predecessor to George Orwell's *1984*.

The full title of the book is *The Remarkable Adventures of Julio Jurenito and His Disciples*, and it represents Ehrenberg's attempt at a modern *Candide*. Julio Jurenito, mostly referred to as "The Master," is a fanciful character, a highly educated Mexican revolutionary, tired of successive Mexican revolutions and even of revolution for mere narrow political and economic aims. He is engaged in a grander, nobler project: a revolution against the entire false fabric of contemporary civilisation, and against the Leviathan of the modern state: only after their overthrow can there be progress towards a better life. The opening scene of the satire is set in 1913; the forces of self-destruction are already at work; Jurenito, the Master, is therefore acting only as *agent provocateur*, talking and preaching to speed up the inevitable historic process.

At first, he picks his disciples. First, the narrator, a character to whom the author gives his own name, Ilya Ehrenberg, a young Russian-Jewish poet, author of mediocre verses, waiting in a Paris café for some acquaintance to pay for his cup of coffee—an engagingly ironical self-portrait. The second disciple is Mister Cool, a blinkered musical-comedy American of uncertain morals and unlimited wealth, out to organise Europe for the bible-and-dollar as inseparables. The third disciple is Aysha, a Senegalese Negro, a former hotel groom, carrying with him three gods carved from wood whom he worships. The fourth is Alexei Spiridonovich, a typical, ineffectual Russian nihilist straight out of current Russian literature. The fifth is Ercole Bambucci, a handsome Roman street-lounger, an expert in spitting, eating, sleeping, begging, and an enemy of every authority that would interfere with his noble life. The sixth is M. Delhaie, a middle-class French businessman enthusiastic about the art of French good living—French cooking, French cheese, French mistresses, and French opportunities for profit. The seventh and last is Karl Schmidt, a young German fanatic for organisation, in whose bedroom hang pictures of Karl Marx, the Kaiser Wilhelm, Kant, and a Herr Aschinger who owned 270 well-organised restaurants in Berlin.

With these seven disciples, and Ehrenberg as his Boswell, Jurenito, the Master, travels through Europe, the Mediterranean, North Africa, talking, preaching, accelerating the process of history.

The eight pilgrims are caught by the war, variously involved and mobilised, separated, united again. When the French threaten to shoot them as spies they are saved by M. Delhaie, who has got himself a comfortable niche, with good food and wine and a new mistress, in the French military burial organisation; and when the Germans threaten to shoot them they are saved by Karl Schmidt, busily employed in introducing proper German order and organisation into the shooting of civilians.

Throughout their pilgrim's progress Jurenito, the Master, discourses incessantly; on love-making (a great deal), on the hypocrisies of marriage, on money, on the state, the Jewish question, the Negro question, and what have you.

It is all highly diverting satire, and it is written with a remarkable insight into the shape of things to come. As I said before, in some ways *Julio Jurenito* reads like a precursor of *1984*: the Ilya Ehrenberg of 1924 and the George Orwell of 1948 might well have found several points of agreement. For example, Ehrenberg saw clearly that the date of August 1914 was the decisive historic watershed, introducing a new, different, dark era of history. Here is Jurenito's grim prophecy:

"Those who started the war, the diplomats, the Chiefs of Staff, the big industrialists, the Kaiser, the doubtful financiers, can no longer end it. This war will last decades, perhaps centuries. Don't laugh at me: in its pauses you may have peace treaties and all kinds of bucolic interludes. Like a stream which at times runs underground, this war will change its form and sometimes assume a loathsome resemblance to sentimental peace. This war will no longer be a proper war: it will skilfully infiltrate into our hearts; every city wall, every garden-fence, every doorstep will become a new front...."

There is telling satire in the chapter where the disciples attend peace meetings in neutral Holland, only to discover that there is no such thing as "peace", but only an Allied peace or a German peace, each with its supporters; and where Ehrenberg makes fun of those who seek to "civilise" the mass slaughter by proposing a ban on inconvenient weapons. (Shades of the atom bomb!). There is an extraordinary passage where Ehrenberg makes Jurenito prophesy that the horror and misery of the war must inevitably bring as aftermath a new, blind persecution of the historic scapegoats, the Jews. "Jewish blood will flow, the guests invited to the performances will applaud, but according to ancient precedent, such bloodletting can provide no medicine for a sick world, but can only poison it more bitterly." Again, Ehrenberg knew his Germans. There is the passage where Karl Schmidt, the Master's German disciple and in 1917 a German military judge, protests that he doesn't like having people shot and loves children as much as anyone. But, Schmidt says, foreshadowing Himmler:

"Whether you execute one single lunatic or a million people for the benefit of humanity—that is only a quantitative difference. But unless you start executing, all people will continue to lead stupid and senseless lives.... That's why I would not hesitate an instant if, for the benefit of Germany tomorrow and of humanity the day after tomorrow, I had to order the sinking of all 'Lusitanias' and the liquidation of hundreds of thousands of people. On that basis, is there still any point in talking about cities or churches? Though, of course, their destruction is rather a pity."

But the climax of the satire comes with Jurenito's fraternal visit to revolutionary Soviet Russia. Shouting "Down with freedom and beauty!" at a workers' conference, the Master and his trembling disciple Ehrenberg are at once arrested, and brought before a Communist investigating judge, a sort of prototype of Vishinsky. They are told that because of an amnesty proclaimed to celebrate the arrival of a Siamese Com-

munist delegation they will now not be shot out of hand. And the Communist turns to Jurenito with this question—strange, ironical wording from the pen of Ehrenberg:

“Are you now still so blinded by your hate against the republic of workers and peasants that you cannot see the obvious nor grasp the simplest truth—that the U.S.S.R. is the true realm of freedom?”

Even more ironical, and significant, are the paragraphs that follow. Smilingly, the Master disclaims any blindness, and goes on:

“You Communists are destroying freedom; therefore I greet you.

“You are the greatest liberators of mankind, because the splendid yoke you are placing on its shoulders is not of gold, but of solid iron, and properly organised. The day may come when the word ‘freedom’ will resound as a genuine revolutionary call before which the garments of the world being created today will scatter to the winds like feathers. Today, however, the idea of ‘freedom’ is a counter-revolutionary concept.... If I greet you Communists, it is because in the course of a year you have so ruthlessly knocked the notion of ‘freedom’ out of the head of every idler, dreamer or lickspittle....But that you are not aware of this process, that’s not at all funny.”

At this, the Communist judge flies into a rage, opens the Alphabet of Communism, reads out a passage on surplus value, and exclaims: “Now, I trust, you have understood that we have progressed from the realm of serfdom into the realm of freedom.”

But Jurenito, unconvinced, replies;

“Dear Comrade, I don’t doubt that the reign of freedom will dawn one day (though perhaps only when the last men have been exterminated). But at this moment we are entering straight into an age of naked slavery in which political rape will no longer be disguised by the benevolent smiles of English gentlemen. I implore you Communists: don’t beautify your whips with violets. You are charged with a grand and complex mission so to accustom men to their chains that they will regard them like a mother’s tender embrace. To this end, you have no need to approach men cautiously, hiding the chains behind your back. No, we must create a new pathos for slavery. In spite of your intellectualism and your weakness for quotations you appear to be an efficient and energetic man. Therefore, let the syphilitics in the cafés of Montmartre chatter about freedom, while you get on with what you will do in any case.”

At this, the Communist judge shouts that since Jurenito is evidently incapable of grasping that the Communists form the advance guard of freedom, he and Ehrenberg are to be sentenced to forced labour in a concentration camp, where they may come to see the error of their ways.

The sentence is carried out: but once again the Master and Ehrenberg are saved, this time by the intervention of disciples who have become Communist Party members.

But the end is near; the Master feels that his personal mission for the destruction of civilisation is nearly concluded. In the small Soviet town of Konotop he deli-

berately commits suicide by a novel method. He goes alone into a park, wearing brand-new boots; half an hour later he is found shot—without the boots.

The pilgrims break up; the sorrowing disciple Ehrenberg leaves the U.S.S.R. and returns *via* London to his beloved Paris and his beloved café-table at the Rotonde in Montparnasse, there to reflect on Jurenito's greatness and on the sad fact that the Master would have been considered a traitor and criminal by all the courts of the world, "including the wisest native judges of Africa or the Revolutionary Tribunal of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics...."

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That roughly, is the outline of *Julio Jurenito*. Since the time of writing, Ehrenberg has changed camps. It is he who is today decorating Communist whips with his violets, it is he who is today, like the Communist judge of his sature, proclaiming that the Soviet Union is the true realm of freedom and that its opponents are blinded by their hatred of the regime of workers and peasants, etc

What psychological quirk has been responsible for his conversion to Stalinism? This is a question which no outsider can answer. In the meantime, it is a pity that *Julio Jurenito* is not available in print in English translation. Though not a great book it is a first-class political satire in its own right—a badly neglected book.

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EUROPE 1974

A TRAVELOGUE

12

This royal throne of kings, this scepter'd isle,
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-paradise,
This fortress built by Nature for herself
Against infection and the hand of war,
This happy breed of men, this little world,
This precious stone set in the silver sea,
Which serves it in the office of a wall,
Or as a moat defensive to a house,
Against the envy of less happier lands,
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England...

SUPERB poetry, and coming from the greatest bard in the English language, these lines must be supremely soothing to the English ear. The lines are equally prophetic. If Shakespeare could write in this vein in the sixteenth century, when he had known only half of the great events of English history, what would he have written if he had lived in the nineteenth century rather than in the sixteenth? He had known of the first charter of liberty signed by the English king, the Magna Carta. The Magna Carta is the foundation stone of English democracy, which was to draw admiration from all the four quarters of the globe and was adopted in spirit if not in all its forms by many a nation. The poet had known of the creation of the Houses of Parliament which in another generation were to become a powerful check on the Government. Oxford and Cambridge, the world-famous educational institutions, had already gained enormous prestige. Shakespeare had known of the brilliant Plantagenets, the glorious Tudors. He had seen the Armada blown to pieces. What language would he have used, what imagery, what rhythms if he had seen Blenheim where John Churchill (created Duke of Marlborough by Queen Anne), the illustrious ancestor of Winston Churchill, smashed the magnificent army of Louis XIV! How would he have expressed his admiration if he had known of Plassey and Trafalgar and Waterloo, heard Napoleon grinding his teeth and muttering, "If I had the command of the English Channel only for twenty-four hours I could teach the English a lesson"? Shakespeare did not see the English people build an empire where they say the sun never set "Rule, Britannia, rule the waves", prayed the English people, and their Goddess heard their Prayer. We are all too familiar with her image sitting with her shield and sword in hand, one leg stretched forward. We saw her image even on chocolate Guineas during Yuletide.

We disembarked at about five-thirty in the morning. The most interesting part of it was to watch the cars being driven out of the ship's belly. There were about eight of them coming from Europe, and belonging to people who were voyaging along with us. Once again on *terra firma* we were at once taken to the Customs Hall, a spacious chamber with a wall-to-wall carpet and comfortable seats along the walls. We had expected the British Customs Officials to be stiff and gruff, but they were extremely polite. Formalities over, we drove off to the greatest Metropolis in the world, London. Incidentally, they say that Tokyo's population now exceeds that of London. But that hardly affects London. For London is still London.

Visiting foreign lands is always a pilgrimage. We sat back comfortably on our seats watching the countryside and listening to Amelita Galicurci's *La Paloma*.

A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

It would take us four hours to reach London. Kent, the county through which we had to pass, is one of the most beautiful regions of England. This part is called the Downs, yet it is not all "downs", for it is an undulating plain; it is all "up the hill and down the dale." The hills are covered with rain-drenched velvety turf, strewn with sweet-smelling flowers. Almost a cloistered peace reigns everywhere. There is something mystic about the English countryside. Trees are few in this area but if you happen to pass by some, you can almost hear a whisper of the soft breeze gently blowing through the leaves. Apple and cherry orchards abound here. The store-houses look like fairy towers brought down to earth. There seems to be a perfect understanding between man and Nature, an unusual thing. The huts and the castles, the church steeples and the fields, the brooks and the hills are all in perfect harmony, and at peace with one another. No wonder Constable could paint such serenely beautiful Nature-themes and the English poets sing such paeans to Nature. Everything is friendly and yet dignified and aloof. The brooks are so sprightly that we were at once reminded of:

I come from haunts of coot and hern,
I make a sudden sally
And sparkle out among the fern,
To bicker down a valley.

I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles,
I babble into eddyng bays,
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret
 By many a field and fallow,
 And many a fairy foreland set
 With willow weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
 To join the brimming river,
 For men may come and men may go,
 But I go on for ever.

*
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Yes, men have come and men have gone and that is how the English race was formed. The Picts and Scots, the Jutes and Saxons and Angles, the Vikings and Danes and Romans and Normans have all left their mark on the English and their culture. When the Romans came the English people rose in arms under their warrior queen Boädicea, the uncompromising princess fierce like a lioness.

When the British warrior Queen
 Bleeding from the Romans' rods
 Sought with an indignant mien
 The counsel of her country's gods,

Sage beneath the spreading oak
 Sat the Druid hoary chief.
 Every burning word he spoke
 Was full of woe and full of grief.

Boädicea bleeding from the Romans' rods—did she ever dream that within a few centuries her tormentors would be vanquished, and her people one day build an empire equal to that of the Romans? It would have comforted her greatly if she had known that one day on her throne would sit a princess who would have the title of Empress.

The culture of the English people at the time of Queen Boädicea was Druidic. The story runs that Pope Gregory the Great out on a stroll on the river Tiber happened to pass by the slave market of Rome. He saw some very beautiful boys with blue eyes and golden hair all "mingled with the sun and breeze". He was charmed, and enquired where these boys had come from. On being told that they were from some island far away called Britain and were known as "Angles", he exclaimed, "Not Angles but Angels", and instantly decided to send his priests to convert these fine people. The next four hundred years of English history give us the tale of how Christianity spread in England and, before its arrival, how the Romans built towns and

baths and bridges, roads and walls and towers. But we had seen a lot of Roman towers in Italy. Now we wanted to see the English towers. We wanted to see "many-tower'd Camelot" Where was Camelot?

On either side the river lie
 Long fields of barley and of rye,
 That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
 And thro' the field the road runs by
 To many-tower'd Camelot.

Where were the lists in which the jousts were held and year after year Sir Lancelot of the Lake won the diamond for the Queen? Where was the garden through which Queen Guinevere roamed drunk with beauty and love? For she was the only daughter of King Leodogran and was the most beautiful woman in England at that time. Where was the great banquet hall that Merlin the sage had built for Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table? The British archeologists, we heard, are still trying to find the spot where Camelot was.

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By the time that the Roman Empire was tottering to its fall, King Arthur appeared like a rising sun. No English-speaking child, or children brought up in the English tradition, could miss hearing the tales of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. If ever there was a legend that inspired courage, nobility, and sweetness of thought in young minds it is the legend of King Arthur. Posthumous child of king Uther Pendragon, Arthur was born on the very night the king died wailing for a son and heir. England was then divided into innumerable small principalities and their chieftains became so powerful that they had no scruples in calling themselves king as soon as they had become sufficiently strong. Bleys, Merlin's instructor, had a wonderful dream about Arthur's birth. Now doubly sure, Merlin hid the child in his hermitage. When Arthur was a boy Merlin gave him to Anton, another chieftain, and a friend of Pendragon so that Arthur might learn the arts of statesmanship and war.

In due time Merlin presented Arthur to his people and declared, "This is your king." The Lady of the Lake had already given Arthur the famous sword Excalibur in a most mysterious way. Young Arthur was walking on the shores of the Lake one day when suddenly an arm

Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful...

With this marvellous sword King Arthur fought twelve great battles which brought England under his sway. A warrior, statesman and unifier, he set before his people his Knights of the Round Table, inspiring men by their deeds of courage and nobility.

But the world is always unready to receive great men and follow their ideals. Arthur's own nephews, Modred and Gawain, grew jealous of his favourites, especially Sir Lancelot of the Lake, and sowed discontent among so excellent a group of knights. Arthur got involved in a war where it became difficult to distinguish between friend and foe. He was mortally wounded but not before he had slain his last foe. He was taken to an Abbey by his most faithful knight Sir Bedevere. The king ordered Sir Bedevere to take Excalibur and return it to the Lady of the Lake. Bedevere, dazzled by the beauty of the sword and the jewels on its hilt, hid it under the rushes and lied to Arthur. The King guessed what had passed and rebuked Bedevere. Three times Bedevere disobeyed. Finally he flung Excalibur headlong on to the water. It cut across the air like a meteor and when it was about to dip into the lake, an arm

Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful

to receive the sword. The Lady of the Lake took back the sword. King Arthur's life-mission was over. A barge appeared on the lake with three queens to look after the wounded Arthur. He was taken to the island of Avilion to rest. People believe that King Arthur is still there hiding in a wonderful cave all flooded with golden light. He is sleeping there with the Knights of the Round Table in his battle dress and with a golden crown on his head, waiting for his nation to call him back when it needs him.

There are in the main legend of King Arthur innumerable other stories beautiful and instructive. Perhaps the most fascinating one is the story of the Holy Grail. Long ago, the English saint, Arimathæan Joseph, travelling in the eastern countries had found and brought to England the cup that Jesus drank from at his last supper. It was kept in an Abbey, but evil days fell upon England and the Grail disappeared. Heaven took it away, they said. The Grail had the power to heal anyone who saw it. One night, the Grail appeared in a vision to the Knights of the Round Table as they were banqueting in the hall. The roof was rent asunder and a great light appeared and there was the Grail. The knights all knelt down promising to go out and search and bring back the Grail. They travelled far and wide but no one could find it. Sir Galahad saw it every now and then in a vision. He prayed and fasted to make himself worthy so that the Grail might appear in its concrete form. Sir Lancelot too had a vision of it in a mysterious fairy castle. But the Grail had disappeared forever

(To be continued)

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The Path of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother (In a Nutshell) by *Har Krishan Singh*. Published by Har Krishan Singh, 16, Rue Saint Louis, Pondicherry-1. Price Rs.3.90. -

THE book under review is a concise summary of the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother by Har Krishan Singh who is well-known to the readers of *Mother India* as the author of *The Grace of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother* (Part One) and *How The Mother's Grace Came to Us* (Parts One and Two). These three books, though of slender size, are the significant episodes and experiences of disciples, heard from them, collected and re-written by the author. The literature on the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother consists of *The Mother*, *The Yoga and Its Objects*, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, the three volumes of *Letters of Sri Aurobindo* and all the writings of The Mother. To summarise such a huge corpus of yogic literature into a slender book is not an ordinary affair unless the author has considerably read and lived the life of a Yogi.

There are twelve short chapters in the book which are broadly divided into the Yogas of the Past and the Yoga of the Future. He names the Yoga of the Future the Yoga of Life and equates it with the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother.

The Yogas of the Past, no doubt, map the various paths to the Divine in their own characteristic way, but they all aim at realisation and not at transformation. Transformation is altogether a new phenomenon in the spiritual field, even not known to the Vedic Rishis, and is an unparalleled contribution to spirituality by Sri Aurobindo and The Mother. The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother is the Yoga whose objective is to divinise the entire being of man, including his very body.

The book will be appreciated by the beginners as well as by the aspirants who have already read sufficient literature of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother.

A philosophical explanation of the various processes of the Yoga of Transformation is also given in the book, thus facilitating a clear understanding of the various steps of Yoga.

To add to the beauty of the get-up of the book, we have the author's painting of a view of "The Island" and "Le Faucheur" Gardens of Sri Aurobindo Ashram on the cover page.

V. MANMOHAN REDDY