

# MOTHER INDIA

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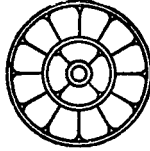
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.

---

#### AN APPEAL TO OUR WELL-WISHERS

*Mother India* has again to call for financial help. Our last appeal brought a very good response and we are deeply thankful. Costs have been steadily rising in everything. Our immediate need was to stock paper. We have paid over Rs. 7,000. This has made a big gap in our resources. So we badly require donations of any amount that can be spared by our well-wishers.

The scheme of Life-Membership is still in force. If attended to, it can also help. Advertisements too can be a good contribution. Tariff cards can be had on application.

Increase in the number of subscribers is always welcome.

We shall be grateful for help in any form, and particularly in the form of donations. The donations will be tax-free if sent ear-marked for us through the Ashram Trust.

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# MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XXX

No. 10

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

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## WORDS OF THE MOTHER

THE psychic inspiration alone is true. All that comes from the vital and the mind is necessarily mixed with egoism and is arbitrary. One should not act in *reaction* to outer contact, but with an immutable vision of love and goodwill. Everything else is a mixture which can only have confused and mixed results, and perpetuate the disorder.

March 1961

\*

I have always the same thing to say, quiet confidence and courage is the only way of getting out of difficulties.

\*

Peace of mind must be acquired not through favourable circumstances but through inner transformation.

18-3-1960

\*

If you are not satisfied with what you are, take advantage of the Divine's help and *change*. If you have no courage to change, submit to your destiny and be quiet.

But to go on complaining about the condition in which you are and do nothing to change it is sheer waste of time and energy.

The cure from all difficulties can come only when the egoistic concentration upon one's desires and conveniences ceases.

12-3-1958

## SOME NOTES ON THE MOTHER'S *PRIÈRES ET MÉDITATIONS*

*(Continued from the issue of September 1978)*

(2)

May 24, 1914

THERE was a big gap in my Notes till they come to this date.

“Consciousness”, the Mother explained, is one, but it takes different forms according to the limits it assumes. When one lives in the ego, it is the consciousness of the ego that one feels. One can identify oneself with others, with the nation or country to which one belongs. One can become one with the earth, with the whole universe, with That which surpasses the universe.

Each country, each nation has a soul which expresses an aspect of the Truth. The earth, too—that is, the physical globe which we inhabit—has its own consciousness, and so has each of the planets and stars. One can identify oneself with any or all of them.

May 25, 1914

“Many nooks in the shadow.” When you lump up all sorts of things in an almira and do not let them be seen, they hide “in the shadow”. You hide many things within yourself in this manner, in the dark shadowy corners of your being, lest they should be exposed to the light. What you have to do is to bring them out into the Light that the Divine may change them.

One is “a pure crystal without stain” when one is sincere and has a transparence through which the Divine Light can pass and illumine everything right down to the deepest levels. When one is not sincere, there is a sort of veil that comes in between and that disturbs the passage of the Light.

“The whole earth aspiring to be this pure diamond, perfect reflector of Thy supreme Light.” As the Mother was meditating, she lost all consciousness of her body; she felt as if she had no body, no head that belonged to her body. She felt as if the whole earth, with its rocks and plants and soil and men, was her own body. The feeling was concretely physical.

“Aspiration of...the modest plant.” Trees have a very fine radiance about them; and they are so kind and friendly to men that one has merely to sit under them with a calm mind and one feels their benign influence enveloping the whole being and giving it strength and peace. When you are tired, just go and sit with your back against a tree. Remain quiet, and you will feel the sap mounting up and a current of strength and peace flowing up your spine. Many vital beings of the dead come to the trees for



shelter and protection and peace. That is why trees should not be cut down at random.

When the Mother was about twelve, she used to go to an old forest (Fontainebleau). There were magnificent oaks that had lived some two thousand years. She would sit down under one of them, close her eyes, and sit quietly in "meditation"—though, of course, nobody had told her how to meditate. She would feel a peace flowing into her and little birds and deer would come and gaze at her without fear.

May 26, 1914

"On the surface is the storm, the sea is in turmoil." This is a perfect description of the outer being which is tossed about and agitated, while deep within is the true being which watches all the time in peace and quiet and puts in a word now and then to calm down the surface being.

May 27, 1914

The "three modes" spoken of here are the three principles of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*: the inertia of *tamas*, the violence and agitation of *rajas*, and the calm reflecting attitude of *sattva*.

The "triple divine consciousness" of *Sachchidananda* is there behind all the planes of being, down to the material. The problem is to get in touch with it and remain in that consciousness while acting through mind, life and body. There is a poise or status of being, from which one can act upon and through these instruments and at the same time remain in touch with and have the inspirations from the higher domains. This comes through the practice of yoga.

The first thing to do in yoga is to become conscious of the different parts of the being. We are formed of a number of different personalities, and they are by no means harmonious. Some pull in one direction, others in another direction. Our first business is to grow conscious of all these contradictory movements.

When we become thus conscious of these movements within ourselves, we find that there is a great disorder. Our next task will therefore be to put them all in order and group them around the central being. Once this unification is complete, we are ready to consecrate ourselves entirely to the Divine, for offering ourselves single and whole to His service.

The Divine Consciousness is there wherever there is a smile.

June 21, 1914

What has been described here are the two states of consciousness: one below that aspires, the consciousness in which we ordinarily live, the other the consciousness that is one with that of the Supreme. When one is in that higher conscious-

ness, of eternity and infinitude, one sees that the story of earth is an eternal progression and there is no need for hurry because everything "is", and all the progress down below is simply an incident in that eternal existence.

There is a Consciousness that stands above—very far and very high. It knows, It decides, It wills, *qui sait, qui veut*. All things happen in accordance with the decision of this Consciousness. The great secret is to accord one's will with this Will; then one always does the right thing. The little human mind may plan and the petty human vital may want this or that. But they are of no avail against the Will of this Consciousness.

You cannot consciously enter into It and know Its Will for certain so long as there is in you the slightest trace of vanity. It takes years and years to get this vanity out of one's system. In the meantime one's only safety is to do whatever one does or has to do as sincerely, as perfectly as one can, leaving the results in Its hands. If you do that, the Will itself will guide our steps along the right path.

How does one know what is the thing one has to do? If one is truly sincere, one will know it automatically. We are told things by our parents that we should do this and not that. We get suggestions from friends who prompt us to do certain things. We are not to accept these, but follow the promptings of the heart, and then whatever we do will be the right thing for *us*.

For those who have come here, to live in the Ashram, there is no problem. There is a predestination, that is, even before they were born, there was a decision taken from on high about their future and about the part they were to play in the Great Work. Even those who are not aware of their role in this Work will be drawn into it without their knowing it. Those who have come together for the Work have so come together not because of any affinities of human attraction but because they were destined to come together and take their part in the Work.

June 22, 1914

The Supramental has never yet manifested on earth. When it does manifest, through persons who are not yet born or through persons who are already on earth, it will be like a new birth, a sudden appearance; and the world will watch with wonder.

The Supramental is here, but has kept itself hidden because matter is not yet ready and capable of manifesting it. Before it can manifest, it has to prepare the material base, it has to make it more plastic.

There have been disciplines which enable you to lift your body up from the ground at will. But that is simply rudimentary compared to what the Supramental would do. It would not only enable the body to defy the laws of gravitation; it would also enable it to change and modify its form at will; there will be a luminosity about the body.

The change will appear as if all of a sudden, like a chick breaking out of the egg-

shell. But that is a purely external view. This will have been preceded by a long period of inner preparation.

When one comes for the first time face to face with the psychic being, there too is a feeling as if a veil has been removed. But there too it is the result of a long period of preparation.

June 30, 1914

“An enterprise at once absurd and unrealisable.” This was meant to be a little joke at the expense of the Illusionists and others like the Buddhists who would flee the world because it is in such a state of disorder. This is an absurd attitude, because the world has been created in order to manifest the Divine here and to realise the Divine Perfection here. The world will continue till this Perfection is realised, and since there is no end to perfection, it will continue for ever.

The object of individual existence is to put one's house in order. Everyone has been given the capacity to do this; and the capacity is measured out in exact proportion to the difficulty of the problem to be solved.

July 4, 1914

“The hour of Thy fulfilment is near” does not mean a few days, a few months, or a few years. This may be disconcerting to the human view, but there it is.

*(To be continued)*

SANAT K. BANERJI

# OUR LIGHT AND DELIGHT

(Continued from the issue of September 1978)

II

## The Most Difficult Year and Chamanlal's Interview

I HAVE already written about the crucial year 1955 and recounted how the Mother saved my sister-in-law Mina from the consequences of a terrible accident. Now I may put on record a peculiar situation which arose at the end of the talk the Mother gave about that year at the Playground on December 31, 1954. The situation is partly connected with a much-publicised interview the journalist Chamanlal had with the Mother in February the same year.<sup>1</sup>

Chamanlal reported, among other things, the Mother as saying that 1957 would be a very significant year. India would start playing a glorious spiritual role in the world—and two features of great importance would be: (1) the complete dissolution of Pakistan by inner dislocation, (2) the serious possibility of a World War owing to America and Russia falling out over India. The Mother, according to Chamanlal, quoted Sri Aurobindo as having predicted these features.

When She had concluded her talk on the eve of 1955, a few questions were put to her by one of the brightest students of our Education Centre: Manoj Dasgupta. He asked: "You have said that in 1955 the hostile forces will try to give a tremendous blow. If we prove incapable of getting the victory, will the transformation at which our Yoga aims be considerably retarded?" The Mother replied with a grave face: "It will be retarded for many centuries. It is just this retardation that the hostile forces are attempting to bring about. And in spiritual matters up to the present they have always succeeded in their delaying tactics. Always the result has been: 'It will be done some other time.' And the other time may be hundreds of years later or even thousands of years. Now again the same trick is being tried." Then Manoj obviously remembered Chamanlal's report of the Mother's statement: "Yes, I feel there is a serious possibility of a Russo-American war and if the war does come in spite of our efforts to stop it, our spiritual work will be finished." Prompted by his remembrance, Manoj asked: "Will the crisis of a possible World War which, in Chamanlal's interview with you, you have put in 1957 arrive in 1955 ahead of time or is it something quite other than the attack of the hostiles in the coming year?"

Hearing that she was said to have envisaged a World War in 1957, the Mother asserted in a firm loud tone: "Jamais! Jamais!" ("Never! Never!"). Everybody was amazed. Chamanlal's whole report had been declared by the Mother at the time as authentic. I recall Nolini bringing her written confirmation authorising Chamanlal to broadcast the interview in any way he liked. Here was a stunning contradic-

<sup>1</sup> See *Mother India*, March 1954, pp. 1-3.

tion: how were we to reconcile that thorough approval with this downright refusal to accept responsibility for one of the momentous items?

After the Playground sessions I walked to the Ashram in the company of Nolini and Amrita. I reminded them of what the Mother had clearly pronounced to be genuine reportage. Amrita's memory seemed very vague. When I turned to Nolini who had transmitted to us her pronouncement, he also appeared unable to recollect. "Was it like that?" he asked. "Most certainly," I answered. There was no further conversation. But the next morning I took to Nolini a copy of Chamanlal's interview and made him read the passage in question. There was no ambiguity now. So I requested him to bring the matter to the Mother's notice and ask for a clarification.

When he had seen the Mother, as he daily did, I inquired if the issue had been raised. He said: "No." Evidently he did not wish to face the Mother with the glaring contradiction. I told Amrita that Nolini had not carried out the work I had proposed to him. Amrita remarked: "How can he dare to ask her anything after she had so forcibly said 'Jamais!' twice?"

What then was to be done? I used to be at times a little "pushy" with the Mother and she accepted this trait in me on several occasions while putting it down in no dubious manner on some others because of a wrong attitude on my side. I decided to write a frank letter, but with the right attitude so that the situation would be fully presented to her and yet no directly critical accent smacking of any uppishness would come into my words. My letter ran:

"Once when your in-laws made some unfavourable remarks about you at a dinner, André who was a little boy at the time got up to his full diminutive height and announced: 'Ma mère est la vérité!'<sup>1</sup> I have the same conviction as André. But I believe there can be circumstances in which you may make certain statements without being fully aware of the context involved. Thus, I am told that sometimes you go suddenly into a trance in the middle of a transaction. Something is being read out to you and for a few moments you somehow switch off your attention and plunge inward. A sentence or two of the matter being read pass unheard. Nobody realises the gap and you too do not have the impression of having missed anything. At the end of the sessions you give your approval to the whole matter. Something of this kind must have happened when Nolini read to you Chamanlal's report of his interview with you. For, as you may see from the quotation I am making from it, you are definitely said to have mentioned a World War as very possible in 1957. There is also no uncertainty about the fact that you authorised the entire interview as correct. We are all greatly puzzled. Since you deny having said what Chamanlal has noted, you could never have uttered the words concerned. Will you please help us to grasp the true posture of things?"

I took my letter to Nolini and told him: "I don't want you to get into any embarrassing position, but if you take a letter from me and simply read it out at my

<sup>1</sup> 'My mother is truth!'

request, whatever unpleasantness may come about will be directed at me. Will you kindly do this job on my behalf? It surely does need doing." He consented and the deed was, as Christopher Smart would have phrased it, "determined, dared, and done".

Nolini brought no verbal or written reply. I thought the Mother might require some time to frame an answer and I might have to wait for a day or two. But actually she answered me the same evening at the Playground. When my turn came to receive the usual quota of groundnuts from her hands, she held my fingers, looked up from her seated position and said with a smile: "The fellow has made a big confusion. Several things have been mixed up. But, since it has been said in that way, it may even come true, though we shall try to stop it."

Actually, in 1957, the U.S.A. and Communist China, which at that time was none else than Russia under a mask, came within an ace of armed conflict because of a bold yet necessary action by the former over the island of Quemoy between mainland China and Taiwan which was in the hands of Chiang Kai-shek. The crisis was averted. India did not come into the picture at all.

As for Chamanlal's "big confusion" which escaped scrutiny when it was formulated, we may clear it with the help of some hints by the Mother. Her real stance may be summed up as follows. We may take her as saying:

"I did not speak of any crisis as coming in 1957. In Chamanlal's account several points that were separate have been run together. A three-stepped series of possibilities has got jumbled and the different steps fused. There is first the crisis coming before 1957: that is to say, in 1955, as I have told you. Then there is the clearing of the crisis: the victory. As a result of the victory, there is the beginning of a new period in 1957: that year marks the completion of what has gone and it ushers in a time in which India will have the splendid opportunity of being the Guru of the world. It is because of the decisive commencement of this glorious future in 1957 that 1957 is as important in India's history as in their own ways 1757, the year of the Battle of Plassey which brought India into British hands, and 1857, the date of the so-called Indian Mutiny against British domination. Now you have the correct sequence of the possibilities in front of you.

"A World War such as I have spoken of in the interview is not ruled out: its threat is part of the anticipated difficulties in 1955. This threat has not been put in 1957 by either Sri Aurobindo or myself. That wrong impression should be dispelled from the mind, no matter how things have been expressed in Chamanlal's report."

In fact, it is impossible for the Mother to have alluded to a global conflict in 1957, for she was expecting a great spiritual event in 1956—the event which proved to be the manifestation of the Supermind's light, force and consciousness in the subtle-physical layer of the earth. In the wake of such a tremendous outburst of the Divine the possibility of a World War would be extremely meagre, if not even nil.

While in relation to both 1955 and 1957 I am about the topic of Chamanlal's interview, I may dwell a little on some other statements attributed in it to the Mother. These statements concern Pakistan as it was in 1954. The Mother is reported as saying: "When India was partitioned I asked Sri Aurobindo what he thought of the future of Pakistan. I asked him how long it would last. Without hesitation Sri Aurobindo said, 'Ten years.'" When Chamanlal, after discussing the menace of a World War, asked: "How will the dissolution of Pakistan come about if there is no war?", the Mother answered: "It may be by inner dislocation."

Unlike as with the subject of a World War, the Mother never denied having made the above pronouncements for 1957. But they have puzzled people a great deal in view of the apparent non-fulfilment of the prophecy ascribed to Sri Aurobindo. Inquiries came to Nolini in 1958 from all quarters and no definite reply went out. There was a general playing of variations on the theme the Mother herself had set immediately after the words about "inner dislocation". She had added: "Occult forces must not speak about how the things will happen." Now it was suggested that too much talk and publicity had been made and in consequence hostile forces had queered the pitch. One of those who were most worried was a pious old man named Acharya Abhaydev who was in sincere sympathy with Sri Aurobindo's work. On a visit to the Ashram in 1958 he talked to Nolini and sent through him a question to the Mother about the "failure" of the prophecy. The Mother with that divine levity which always went hand in hand with divine gravity in all her acts answered: "Surely, the Divine, like everybody else, has a right to change His mind."

Poor Abhaydev scratched his head all the more. In desperation he presented himself one morning at my personal *Mother-India* office. This office was located in a large beautiful garden-environment which had led me to abbreviate the description of it as "Editor's den" to the designation "E-den". The prelapsarian atmosphere had little effect on Abhaydev. His face, usually extra-emaciated, looked now super-sad, as if what oppressed him was not that Adam had fallen but that there seemed to be a Fall of God Himself. How could a prediction by Sri Aurobindo cited so emphatically by the Mother be confronted by a Pakistan appearing to stand quite solidly even though 1957 had passed? Was nothing to be said on behalf of the Divine Consciousness? Would nobody elucidate the situation and render the non-fulfilment more understandable in concrete terms?

When Abhaydev poured out to me his tale of woe, I startled him with the quiet affirmation: "I have an answer." He pleaded for a disclosure of it. I said: "I shall first have to put it before the Mother. If she approves of it and agrees to my showing it to you, I shall call you again to receive it." I typed out my view and sent it to the Mother through Nolini. Nolini conveyed to me the Mother's permission to acquaint Abhaydev, as well as any other inquirer, with it. No doubt, the ultimate occult key to phenomena is beyond our range, but a certain plausible pattern of outer movements suggestive of it on the world-stage can sometimes be traced if one looks keenly and closely with the aid of whatever light from within is available. What I saw may now

be safely published after an interval of twenty years, in order to focus a strange historical phase in the context of Sri Aurobindo's vision as revealed in the Chamanlal-interview. The exposition I submitted to the Mother was, in brief, simple and straightforward terms:

"It should be evident even to the most disappointed observer that during 1957, Pakistan passed through foundation-shaking vicissitudes. For, instead of politicians being at the helm, the military assumed power.

"To drive home the profound significance of the change-over, I shall cite the testimony of Pakistan's strongest supporter, the U.S.A.

"Owing to distrust of Russia, America had been doing her best from 1947 onward to build up Pakistan economically and militarily to stand up against any possible Soviet strategy. Americans had been seriously interested in the non-dissolution of Pakistan. But we get a bit of a shock when we read what the most widely circulated American weekly newsmagazine, *Time*, said on July 22, 1957, in a special article on Suhrawardy, who was then in power in Pakistan.

"*Time* (p. 10) called him in a headline 'A Confident Leader of a Chaotic Land.' In the course of its write-up, it commented: 'The nation is bedevilled by bad planning, corrupt bureaucracy, absentee landlordism, heavy defence spending.... Seasoned Western diplomats often wonder whether anyone can bring order out of Pakistan, even call Suhrawardy Pakistan's last chance.'

"On October 13, 1957, the 'confident leader' went out of office under a vote of No-confidence. Pakistan's 'last chance', according to 'seasoned' Western diplomats, was gone. The already 'chaotic land' had no more hope of order and hence of an organic form of effective existence.

"On October 28, after Chundrigar became Prime Minister, *Time* (p. 26) again declared: 'Chundrigar promptly pledged Pakistan's continued loyalty to the anti-Communist Baghdad and SEATO Pacts. But few observers in Karachi believed that his rickety coalition could muster the strength to deal with the nation's slide toward economic chaos. A reliable U.S. ally appeared to be getting weaker and, because of this weakness, less reliable.'

"Keep in mind the words 'chaos' and 'chaotic'. Can any others define the essence of dissolution better? To all intents and purposes, Pakistan dissolved and thus it did in the last few months of 1957, ten years after Independence. The mere shell of it kept standing.

"The mere shell would itself have disappeared if India had played its part properly. On the strength of private information given to me by Surendra Mohan Ghosh, I can say that 'feelers' were sent out to India from Pakistan for some sort of overall arrangement which would undo the stark partition of 1947; but they were altogether discouraged. Had they been accepted, Sri Aurobindo's unhesitating prophecy would have come true *in toto*. Even as things are, we can assert that it came true in essence."

To round off the picture of what happened we must record a few events that occurred after I had written to the Mother.



The grave disturbances to which Pakistan was subject are reflected not only in alert journalists' opinions. *Time's* reference to "diplomats" points us beyond them; and we discover that official America did sit up and take notice of the developments. The disturbances were so persistent in spite of efforts by the Army to stem them that even a year later there was keen self-questioning by members of the American Senate. Thus, the prominent Bombay daily, *The Times of India* (p. 5) of October 11, 1958, carried a report from New Delhi: "Senator Fulbright, known for the fellowships named after him, said here today that the large U.S. military aid to Pakistan was a 'mistake' and events had proved that it was a case of 'misjudgment' by American leaders who are new to business."

Two days earlier the same Bombay paper had reported on the moves made by the Pakistan Army after the collapse of the politicians. The moves had been initiated by Major-General Iskander Mirza who had now become President. *The Times of India* said (p. 1):

"The President's proclamation, running into 2,000 words, traced in detail the political events of the last few years and emphasized the chaos in national politics, the chronic instability in Karachi and the proven inability of successive regimes to solve the basic ills of the country. President Mirza concluded that the present constitution 'so full of dangerous compromises, is unworkable.' 'Pakistan will soon disintegrate internally if the inherent malaise is not removed,' he stated.... To save Pakistan 'from complete disruption,' he decreed that the Constitution of March 23, 1956, would be abrogated, the Central and Provincial Governments would be dismissed with immediate effect and, until alternative arrangements were made, Pakistan would come under martial law."

On October 11, *The Times of India* (p. 1) again quoted President Mirza's "own reluctant conviction over the past year that the country was headed for disaster through a 'bloody revolution from below.'" The Bombay paper went on to report General Ayub Khan, who was then the Chief Martial Law Administrator: "Talking about the take-over, he reiterated that the alternative to it was disintegration of the country."

Before the end of October, Ayub snatched the reins of government from Mirza. On October 31, *The Times of India* (p. 1) cited him as saying "about his military regime that this was Pakistan's last chance to escape complete chaos."

Thus we have, in the course of 1958, two Presidents of Pakistan providing the very evidence we need. Not only do we hear of "chaos," "complete chaos," on the heels of events in 1957—expressions echoing the judgment of expert American observation. We also hear of Pakistan about to "disintegrate internally" and needing to be saved from "complete disruption," Pakistan heading "over the past year for disaster," for "complete disintegration of the country." There we actually get synonyms for the Mother's words: "complete dissolution of Pakistan...by inner dislocation."

Conditions directed towards the fulfilment, to the exact letter, of Sri Aurobindo's prophecy as set forth by the Mother, materialised in 1957. What then prevented the

fulfilment as if by a hair's breadth? At first glance, one might point to the strong hands of Iskander Mirza and Ayub Khan who, as it were, held the fragments of Pakistan together. But there are facts which demonstrate, first, that they could come upon the scene only because India did not rise to the occasion of those destructive conditions which would lead to reunion and, secondly, that even they were not sure—as we might guess from Senator Fulbright's hint—of holding by their own strength the country's fragments together and required an *entente* with India, the beginning of a reunion.

Let us glance at the revealing facts. When the Pakistani politicians found their country toppling, they made attempts—as we have already noted in short—to read the mind of the Indian Government on the idea of a loose federation. At the same time, perhaps partly inspired by a suspicion of these subtle antennae, rumours were afloat in Pakistan that India, in order to bring about an end to Partition, was at the bottom of the inner dislocation. Countering these rumours and keeping those antennae in view and representing Indian political thought in general, Nehru made the sweeping announcement that even if Pakistan were to ask for reunion he would refuse it. It is this wide-spread official attitude that stood in the way of the "dissolution" predicted in the interview.

Nehru's announcement was in the beginning of 1958. But a short time afterwards the "feelers" were no longer secret. Ayub, who had not yet superseded Mirza as President, paid an unexpected visit to Delhi and proposed joint defence for India and Pakistan. Here was the clearest sign of Pakistan's insufficiency and call for a fresh start pointing towards ultimate reunion. The Aurobindonian prediction, so far as Pakistan herself was involved in fulfilling it, succeeded in entirety. But again the Indian Government failed to co-operate. It replied to Ayub in effect: "Joint defence against whom?" India in that period was doing "Bhai, bhai" to Red China and looking upon Soviet Russia as a close ally. If Soviet Russia was our dearest friend and Red China our beloved brother, we could militarily be in no danger at all. What other Power was there to pose a military threat to us? These were our only neighbours and they struck us as sure defenders rather than possible offenders. A joint defence pact with Pakistan might be construed by them as distrust on our part of their love for us. So the door was none-too-politely shut in Ayub's face in 1958. The next year (April-May 1959) the press was again astir with the same impasse. What 1957 had led to—namely, the break-up of Pakistan and the cry for reunion—was thus set at nought by the political myopia of our own country two decades ago. How could the great marriage, whose child would be a new world of the Spirit, take place if the bridegroom refused the bride?

A God-given opportunity went in vain. We may add that Pakistan's recovery, its wooing of Red China and the growth of the latter's subsequent menace to us followed our negative responses.

(To be continued)

AMAL KIRAN

## THE YOGA OF THE FUTURE

It always makes me wonder what it is that so fascinates man about his past that he will put to use the best of his capacities to unveil it, and yet so fills him with feelings of insecurity and often fear, when he is invited to look into his own future. Our academics spend their talents and most of their adulthood in lecturing and writing about the dream-stuff of yesterday. And this is well, as it goes to the making of our cultural refinement and develops the sensitivities. It is good to take review of our structure already based, in order to learn how far we got on with the work called "life on earth" so that we may further and better it. Why should we not then give the same enthusiasm to our future and put our best abilities in that direction?

Similarly, amongst the spiritually inclined, too many will be enamoured of the idea of finding out about past lives and flock to anyone who professes to tell them or to hear predictions relating to little incidents of the immediate future. Religious and social authorities have behaved no differently. Any upholder of a new idea, who dared to probe into the unknown, has posed an intolerable threat to the authority of the "known" and was persecuted as a result, whilst exponents of its past were given full support.

This tendency is not without a reason. There is a certain element in nature which is unplastic, rigid and resists anything new and is afraid of change—a state of darkness fearing the light that may penetrate it. This is Inconscience, the Force of Ignorance and Denial. Denial of Truth and therefore a Force of Falsehood; in its reign nothing is True but as seen "through a glass darkly". It is a power known to the physicist just as to the subtle-physicist. It is this force which compels man to hug the known and trodden way, be it tenebrous and trouble-ridden, and filled with false images, rather than take a move towards the new and the uncharted. It is this power which retards progress and results in fear, inertia, inability of action, rejection of any alteration, and our whole society is bound up with it. Customs, traditions, fossilized beliefs are all products of it and withhold the flight that the "psychic being"<sup>1</sup> would make. Coupled with innumerable "vital" wants,<sup>2</sup> this aspect of Nature holds us firmly in bond. But our business is growth and unfoldment of our Higher Nature's capacities.

There are positive signs that the opposite tendency is being awakened in man. The emergence of science and research, the breaking away from traditions, the questioning of everything—a novel orientation is afoot which cannot be compared with the sluggish tendency of the past. All at once there is a fresh impetus given to everything. The old form is disrupted, disunited; the secret of the atom and the structure of the cell have been found; we have ventured far beyond our previous limitations and even entered into outer space. Marvellous! Now on to the next stage being pre-

<sup>1</sup> Individual soul, a term used by Sri Aurobindo.

<sup>2</sup> The passions, desires, etc. of the life-being as distinguished from the body-being and mind-being; also the lower senses.

pared for us. We shall enter the inner space this time and take the entire man with us into this adventure, not just the outer physical, vital and mental man. And here we have a sign of a slowly infiltrating subtle consciousness. It gives everything a burst of stimulus and a daring, a venturing forward movement in all fields. And what a splendid challenge it represents. We are already moved to press towards a New Way of Existence. Now to acquire the science of its mode, to gain the spiritual knowledge is the soul's unfoldment with which all movements of life are linked. Those who are ready to become its dedicated pioneers, for whom the heavy chains of yesterday's failures are no longer tolerable, are the ones who first give themselves unconditionally and with full faith to this royal science of spirituality. And here we come to it, first taking stock of what is already learnt and what is not. The ritualistic orthodoxies of the past have already fossilized the essence of Truth and dried up our fountains of spirituality. Shall we, out of habit or tradition, carry our pitchers to the same spot, or search for fountains sprung anew?

When we speak of Yoga we mean that spiritual science which offers the means to inner unfoldment. All schools of Yoga and their methods have perfected aspects of this process. Greater souls than we can comprehend, having forged their own path towards their divinity, have united with its Consciousness and left us with the wealth of yogic knowledge about it. It is because of their revelations and direct communication received that our lives are enriched. The teachings they left behind were beacons of light in darkness and link us to our own divinities, hidden and screened from our view. Without these luminaries men could have made no progress but would have succumbed entirely to the Forces that oppose the descent of Light. We must therefore take our present stance from the state from which they lead us on and make our progress from it.

We have arrived at the intermediary stage where one period, not yet quite past, still contains us, and the next already beckons but is not yet reached. For our forward stride the integration of all our capacities is needed and a process that can draw out all undesirable elements from our nature that are unfit to enter into the New Existence; this process is Transformation. Its mode was termed "Integral Yoga" by Sri Aurobindo and it involves the integration and transformation of all the elements that play a part in earth's evolution.

As we stand now the issue is this: transform or perish. Change, by whatever strength you are capable of, or let it be done by force. It has come to that on the cosmic scale. But the aim of the Divine is not to destroy, though, as we know, destruction was necessitated several times in human history. We know it as Pralaya. Not so this time; so we are told by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, who came as Avatars to lay a foundation for the New Creation, whereby this otherwise inevitable stage would be averted. The object is transformation of the lower Nature into the higher divinised Nature. As we are at the onset of a new mode of existence the old has to give way to it.

It was Sri Aurobindo who opened up for us this matter: that the earth is in the

power and hold of the Asuric Anti-Divine Forces and that the time has come for the Divine's intervention to save it—save and lead it towards its superior self, out of Darkness towards the Light, from the reign of Falsehood towards Truth-Consciousness. And what is Truth-Consciousness? It is that power which is Absolute Law and Light and Wisdom unto itself. When this capacity will be freed in man, he will no longer be governed by the ungratifiable whims of the vital Nature, nor be misled by its chief collaborator, the Mind. "The Mind was the ensnarer, the Mind will be the redeemer," said Sri Aurobindo. The emergence of the Mental Man was but one stage in evolution, but he carries the divine portion within him and, when he will identify with it, he will be guided to reach the Supramental state, and himself become Godlike.

To further evolve him towards that state is the Divine Plan. Not by abandoning earth or nature, which nurtured us to this stage, not by escaping from it into higher states of existence, but by manifesting the divine aspects here on earth. Not to forsake but to uplift and to transfigure the state which is now at hand. To evolve lower Nature into Supernature and to replace Mind by Truth-Consciousness is the next stage of evolution. But this is not a fast process, the Supramental state is too far in the future. The creation of an intermediary being will precede it; there will be the emergence of Supermen. "The first few of these will seem to man what man seems now to the animal," said the Mother. Plastic-bodied, not subject to disease or death, unmarked by sex-differences, conscious, superior. Here is a concept surely beyond our imagination. How can it be otherwise since it is not within the faculty of the mind to interpret?

Sri Aurobindo expounded that in the Supramental or, as he otherwise put it, the Gnostic state the Force of Maya no longer reigns, as it does partially in the states below it, even in the highest spiritual level so far realised. He also said that this state is by no means the last step in evolution, but the first accessible one for humanity to reach in its transition to an authentic divine manifestation. All past aspects of Yoga sought union with the Divine, but none sought to bring the Divine down and divinise the earth thereby. To reach and channel the Supermind is a vast scheme assuredly, and the way towards it is in the way of living. A preparation and a moulding of lower nature is necessary that it may be fit to receive when the Higher Force will superimpose itself. Therefore it is crucial that we understand what our lives and the events surrounding them are about. How we live now is the basis of our existence tomorrow and we must become gnostic. The art is to be learnt and applied; the science of Yoga will have to be lived, not merely studied. The onlooker must become the conscious practitioner.

This has always been the chief issue, the quality of life; one's preferences and aspirations are the determining factors. Once the issue is understood, the stand taken, the yogic path is open. An inner strength is born that looks difficulties and hardship in the eye and laughs in the face of adversities. Nothing can move the devoted from his goal, no price is too high for his aims. Immeasurable are the

gains to which he dedicates his being. The determination of choice will eventually come to a few, then to more and more until it will spread gradually and become the order of existence. Men will recall those who, before them, first saw the light and moved towards it. They will remember and understand them and will be helped by that knowledge and remembrance. They will know that what was possible for these will also be possible for them. A resolve will be born out of that knowledge and become an aid upon their path... as it always has been, as it always will be, till the work that began as a thought in the Mind of God becomes reality in the manifested world.

The Mental Man will become the Truth-Conscious Man, the Earth-Man the Spiritualised Man, not away from earth but on it. He, the temporary orphan of heaven, will be king of his domain here, on this long-suffering planet. The Supreme Hand that plunged him into the deep of Matter that enclosed him, so that it might be known, experienced, then transformed, can and will uplift him again and install him head and leader of the New Creation. Then will the High come down and that which was low rise. The Golden Bridge now fashioned remains a traversable, permanent link; heaven and earth will embrace in Bliss as lovers long separated. The captive of Darkness will be freed by the Prince of Light.

It is worth taking the leap now, when the Forces of alteration are at work. They can alter destiny. Do not linger or it may pass you by, or else sweep you away with the onrush of its mighty tide that will clear the path of all that resists it. "Are you ready?" was the Mother's New Year's message in 1969, and "Blessed are those who take a leap towards the Future" in 1971—what challenging calls, these! To move toward this splendid future the master resolution "Surrender" is necessary.

The Yoga of the Future is founded on Surrender. Surrender all that is base and ignorant in the lower self to the Transforming Power. Be willing to let go of the self-esteeming erroneous Mind and all the vital games. Place yourself entirely in the hands of the Divine Power that alone can direct this difficult process and lead it to success. Become a trusting, obedient child of the One Mother, or how else can it be done? Without her aid and skill nothing is possible, and Her Powers work within us through the Psychic Being, "God's representative in incarnation" as Sri Aurobindo called it.

Let the Inner become teacher and guide of the outer: this is to be Truth Conscious. Let its Light change and mould your Nature so that its ungratifiable demands may no longer lord it over you. Nothing can change effectively until the entire Nature has been changed. In the Integral Yoga all things must undergo this process because, if any of the old ways is left behind, it will drag progress back from no matter how high.

A sincere desire to change, an unshakable determination for the task to be done is essential if we set our course towards progression. This, individually or collectively, as in the affairs of nations! Progression is a permanently altering movement. One must never stop at what is already known, or else repetition and dogmatism may

occur each time. Learning is alive with new discoveries, the student must become the practitioner instead of a self-indulgent tamasic listener.

Go spiritual, not educational. The Yoga of the Future will come to man through the direct transmission of the Source that transmits it to the Inner Being and not through the Mind, though the Mind may act as receiver and translator. Mental learning will be expanded into Inner Knowledge, direct and true—perception into Consciousness which will overtake the Personality, because of the Transforming Might acting upon it.

Forget the past, its consequences are governed by Forces you cannot influence or alter. The future must be our only concern now. This we can influence and construct step by step to build into stairways for our growing soul's ascent. Create the climate in which your spiritual being can best grow, do not delay, because it is the spirit which is the breath of life, all else but a suffering and death compared to it. "Everyone must come down finally on one side or the other, on the side of the Truth or against it. The supramental realisation cannot coexist with the persistence of the lower Ignorance; it is incompatible with continued satisfaction in a double nature."<sup>1</sup>

The descent of the Grace, a Cosmic Power, was much emphasized by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. We live in the Season of this Grace, what he called "the Hour of God" at which time all things are possible. But the self-effort and the self-opening of each is essential for its reception.

Let each hear and call and follow it and awake the Incarnated Soul to rise and receive and bring down Heaven's Light to earth.

"The transition from mind to Supermind is a passage from Nature into Supernature. For that very reason it cannot be achieved by a mere effort of our mind or our unaided aspiration. Overmind and Supermind are involved and hidden in the earth-nature; but, in order that they may emerge in us, there is needed a pressure of the same powers already formulated in their full natural force on their own super-conscious planes. The powers of the Superconscience must descend into us and uplift us and transform our being."<sup>2</sup>

... and here lie our future work and way.

GEORGETTE COTY

<sup>1</sup> *Letters*, 1928, Sri Aurobindo.

<sup>2</sup> *The Future Evolution of Man (The Life Divine)*, Sri Aurobindo. Quest Book, p. 93.

# SOME VISIONS OF CHAMPAKLAL

## IN TAPOGIRI

I HAD had many visions while in Tapogiri, but I do not remember them all. Out of them, two were very very interesting, and they present themselves before my eyes as soon as the memory of the place awakes. Both of them were visions on the same night—17 June 1978.

### First Vision

I was passing along several zigzag and intricate paths. I shall not describe them.

On the way I saw many different figures which were neither men nor animals nor birds. All of them were very very busy. Some of them were even wanting to devour me. At some places, it was not possible to understand what they were doing, but all the same it appeared that they were much engrossed in their work. Some of them were entering the ground straight away. How they were managing to do so was beyond my understanding.

Further on I still met figures, but quite of a different character and their hues were also of various shades. Beyond them I came across some places, beyond which the road was barred by big mountains. These mountains too were so high that their peaks were invisible. The mountains were of various colours. Some of them were quite black and some of mixed colours. They looked very beautiful.

But the road further was blocked and therefore many a time I had to turn back. After long long wandering there, a place came at last, but it was all dark. One could see from here that there was an illumined place far far away. In this dark place, sometimes the heart-beats got accelerated, so much so that I could even hear their sound.

From here I saw several people moving at a great distance. They were disappearing into light.

I kept on walking. At last I reached a place full of light. Nobody of that place could be seen distinctly; there was only the feeling that some individuals were there. One person from them came, caught my hand and led me further on.

I do not know what happened afterwards.

### Second Vision

Tapogiri is such a large place that ordinary sight cannot distinctly see across its long distances; but I was able to see all the scenes as if they were just in front of me.

In order to have a view of those scenes, special seats were artistically erected on suitable trees. Among those who were the spectators, I could only see Pranab, the other individuals were unrecognisable, or perhaps they did not want themselves to be recognised, as was my impression.



I saw there many Sadhus, Sanyasins, Tantric Kapaliks, Vairagins, Avadhuts, Jain Sadhus, Aghoris, etc.; even family men as well as Sufis were present, all engrossed in their particular sadhanas.

Others were doing such penances as were never heard of or about which nothing was read anywhere. Some of them were beyond imagination. What was seen in the beginning is even beyond the scope of writing.

Some were sitting on the ground, some on water, some even in the air were meditating in Padmasana. Some were doing all sorts of Asanas. Some were meditating on slabs of ice; some were lying on beds of nails. Some were simply sitting in Padmasana. Some were standing only on one leg. Some were dancing with song and music, while some were silently doing the same. Some were hanging with tree-branches clasped between their legs, with fire blazing below them. Some were naked, moving about. They had big tridents in their hands.

In one place, there was a fierce fire burning, around which many Digambers (naked sadhus) were seated and they were cutting their own limbs and offering them as oblations in the fire. The strange thing about this was that whereas bad smell comes out of limbs when they are thrown into the fire and blood flows from them when they are cut, nothing of the sort happened in this case, and there was great peace in the atmosphere. There were also some Tantric sadhaks and Bhairavis (women sadhaks) doing their Sadhana. Some individuals remained buried in pits with only their heads outside. In one place, a Mahayajna, a big sacrifice, was on.

One of my maternal uncles was dedicated to the Veda. His voice was very sweet and I was very fond of his very sweet Vedic chanting. Wherever I received news of a sacrifice, I used to run to it, and it was thus that I was able to witness many sacrifices.

There used to be Vedic recitation in chorus also and at that time two parties were formed, who in turn did the recitations. There was also one individual devoted to the Veda and he used to chant the Veda in a continuous rhythm, and I liked it very much and even now I have love for it.

This Yajña at Tapogiri was in many ways extraordinary, for nowhere else have I heard such Vedic recitations.

In between, there were the exclamations "Swāhā, Swāhā" uttered melodiously by priests. They were very delightful to the ear. They filled all the limbs of the body with quite a new experience. Along with the performance of the sacrifice, the divine music of The Mother was constantly heard. The Mother's music I have heard many times, but what I heard now was unique and unheard before. This music gave divine joy and since I cannot express its divineness in words I simply say that it was marvellous and quite apart from all other music.

I saw the day of the final and full offering of the sacrifice also. Such a day is extremely delightful and interesting. One really feels exhilarated.

It is truly very elevating. It is the day on which all the officiating priests show all their capacity or rather their capacity automatically finds its full expression. This

is what I had experienced about the priests in my North Gujarat.

The Vedic recitation of the priest in the sacrifice at Tapogiri was wonderfully unique. After the Vedic prayers, was heard in sweet and sonorous voice the chanting of:

असतो मा सद्गमय  
तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय  
मृत्योर्मांश्मृतं गमय

From non-being to true being,  
From the darkness to the Light,  
From death to Immortality.

OM. Peace! Peace! Peace!

With this a supernal peace spread around everywhere.

Then was heard Sri Aurobindo's sweet yet sublime resounding voice:

तथास्तु      So be it.

For one moment swayed both Earth and Heaven.

And in a moment all suddenly became full of Peace and Joy divine.

I saw before me the sacrificial flames rising impetuously and uniformly up and up. Their end was not visible. These golden flames were spreading their light everywhere above, below, in all directions and penetrating the earth also. All the priests were seated in this light.

Then they began straight away to rise above, but somewhere in the middle some of them settled down, while some rose and rose and were lost in the golden light.

Indrasenji was the chief of the priests of this sacrifice. My eyes looked at some distance from that place and saw there some individuals. I was not able to see what they were doing, for a sort of veil was around them. One could only feel that there were some persons. In the meanwhile I saw that they too were rising up into the golden light.

I too thought of going up but some individual forcibly caught my hand and the vision ended. Only this much I can say about that individual that he was my all in all.

### AT MOUNTAIN PARADISE

I was meditating in Bhai Arjun's room.

I saw The Mother seated with a small child on Her Lap. The child would sit there for a while and then get down.

When the child would sit on Her Lap, its figure would change. It did this many times.

At last I saw Bhai Arjun seated in front of The Mother. His face became quite

hanged at that time. He got up and put his head on The Mother's Lap. The Mother placed both Her hands on his head and I woke when She lifted them up.

### IN MADHUVAN

A small lamp was burning. Then it went on increasing along with all the expanses all around.

I saw it going up and up. The flame of the lamp began with many colours and as it rose it turned into a completely golden flame. It touched the sky and entering : disappeared.

CHAMPAKLAL

(Translated by Pujalal from the Gujarati)

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## OUR TROUBLES AND THE MOTHER'S INSIGHT

ONE morning I asked the Mother from within, "What brings about so often such a lot of difficulty in one's outer day-to-day life? Is it some fault for which one is thus punished—or is there some other reason? I have asked this question to you many a time but you have not given me an answer yet. Please tell me why one has to suffer here?"

I looked at the Mother's big photograph that is always on my table, and she was only smiling sweetly as usual.

Then I took up the book *Questions and Answers* 1953 not with any hope of finding an answer there but simply to distract my troubled mind. I opened it at random. I lighted on page 159 and my eyes fell on the long paragraph which is given below in part:

"If you come to the spiritual life with a sincere aspiration, sometimes an avalanche of unpleasant things falls upon you..."

"It is for very sincere people that the thing takes such a form. Fundamentally, the avalanche of troubles is always for sincere people. Those who are not sincere receive things with the most beautiful bright colours just to deceive them, and then in the end to enable them to find out that they are mistaken! But when someone has big troubles, it proves that he has reached a certain degree of sincerity."

I was much heartened to read these lines, and I am giving them to *Mother India* that all who may be in one kind of trouble or another may read them and take consolation.

"Is this your answer?" I asked the Mother in the photograph. But she was only smiling in her usual sweet way as much as to say, "What else can it be?"

LALITA

## HAIKU

I HID my secret  
In an irised air-bubble—  
Unable to hold it, it burst.

The bee kissed the rose.  
That kiss got crystallised  
Into honey.

Last night I saw a shooting star  
Heading towards the earth.  
Is that why my garden glitters this morning?

The young girl danced in the rain.  
The rain danced with the young girl  
In her tears of joy.

A happy tune floated in the air,  
I looked out eagerly for a bird:  
I found it in my heart singing for joy.

The sun and the rain  
Had a rendezvous.  
The rainbow came forth to announce it.

The whale scared the waves  
Which rushed towards the shore  
Shouting for help.

Strength commands in a loud voice,  
Sweetness whispers in a tender tone,  
Modesty remains silent.

God created angels on earth  
But He cut off their wings  
Lest they fly away.

The moon lost her sun-dream  
Amid the glittering stars.  
Each night she wanders in quest of it.

The little untrodden path  
 Stopped short suddenly.  
 It seemed as if it had lost its way.

The thief crept stealthily through the winter night,  
 Not knowing that the snow  
 Had stolen his footprints.

The breeze tried to elope with the flame  
 But the flame  
 Remained faithful to the candle.

The cows grazed well in the green pasture  
 Complimented by the tinkling bells  
 Garlanding their necks.

TULSA

## SONNET TO A NEW AUROVILIAN

### **Akasha Comes to the Centre of the City of Dawn Rising in India**

O WISE beyond your fuzzy crown of gold,  
 etheric one with heaven still in your eyes  
 you've hardly touched on earth, and yet so old  
 you seem to be, between your smiles and sighs

as if you knew the work for which you've come,  
 to raise your kin—a cityful at that!—  
 up to the shining heights you've left; and dumb  
 but gallant, robed in tender flesh, red hat

from the Free Store, no doubt: complete disguise  
 shielding your glory from our mortal eyes,  
 questioning, probing our forgetfulness  
 of where we're bound: that State of Conscious Bliss

you live in, aureoled with Dawn, as free,—  
 yourself its citizen from eternity.

# TOWARDS THE HIGHER LIFE

(Continued from the issue of September 1978)

## CHAPTER V

### Descent into the Inconscient

The great Gods use the pain of human heart  
As a sharp axe to hew their cosmic road: *Savitri*, VI, 1.

Bear; thou shalt find at last thy road to bliss. *Ibid.*

(3)

THE day I was taken from the Ashram to Madras, I was not in my senses, rather I was entirely in an unconscious state. Deep within me there was a feeble impression, "Ah, I am alive, yet they are taking me to the cremation grounds." After a good distance had been covered, it was in utter amazement that my eyes opened to see where I was being taken. The scene of the far-off hills on the way aroused a sense of freshness. Later I heard from my friend that as soon as he saw me open my eyes he communicated the fact to the Mother.

I was carried on shoulders like a corpse and put in a car escorted by three people. On reaching an orchard in Madras I chose a quiet corner. Finding me enjoying the cool refreshing breeze under a Neem tree they softly tiptoed away.

An hour after their departure I was whisked off to a room similar to a prison cell and kept locked up within iron bars. The moment I entered the cell my eyes fell on a tin mug. The mug and the cell at once called up their associations with Sri Aurobindo and the Alipore Jail. Gone were all my troubles with the very remembrance of his great name and I got into a consciousness simply indefinable.

After twenty-two agonising wakeful nights a gentle drowsiness stole upon me. The relief I obtained by the sweet enfoldment of sleep is indescribable. In that deep slumber I was overtaken by something which was certainly more than a dream. All of a sudden I found myself very close to Sri Aurobindo. Slowly I felt so merged in him that only he remained in my thoughts to the exclusion of everything for not only an hour or two but all through the night. I have a faint recollection of only one event. I kept on reading in sleep a big article written by him, as one reads consciously during the day, and it is strange that the words had his accent. Was I admitted to his consciousness that memorable night? Was I so lucky? This experience was not like a gust of wind that came and passed away. It would mould my future.

Perhaps at the request of my wife—for she had undertaken to bear all the expenses of my stay outside—I was removed to a special ward. The following is the story of

my second night in the hospital but the first one in the special ward. The day passed unnoticed without any sense of suffering after a month-long confinement to bed.

I was placed under the treatment of a highly qualified doctor. By his sweet manners and amiable nature he brought out many things from me. He put a volley of questions. I did not feel the least hitch in talking all sorts of nonsense to him. Perhaps he wanted to ascertain the root cause of my mental disorder: was it due to a family trouble or was it hereditary? I had come to know that my birth had given so much joy to my mother that she could not contain herself and lost her mental balance for a time. Regarding myself the doctor declared, "It is good the patient has been brought in the initial stage of his complaint." Dr. Sanyal on whose advice I had been sent out had also held the same view.

But quite different was the dealing of the doctor who came to see me in the evening. He was the same who had attended on me the previous night in the cell. The moment he entered he inquired impatiently: "What was the matter with you last night? We could not make out what was wrong with you? From the time you entered the room why were you lying in one posture all through the night like a dead man? You didn't even care to touch the food kept for you by your friend?"

When I refused to take the sleeping mixture, he lost his patience and spoke in a threatening tone: "If you disobey us and don't take the medicine, I shall forcibly inject it into your arm. Last night you gave us so much trouble."

An hour after the departure of the doctor the scene changed. Swift and easy is always the downward pull. One unguarded moment, and the whole labour comes to naught.

A whisper lures to evil the human heart,  
It seals up wisdom's eyes...<sup>1</sup>

There came up before my eyes, a number of goddesses of blooming youth. I, who had passed so many tests, failed miserably today. Their advent roused no spirit of reverence. The head did not bend in gratitude, rather a contrary vibration occurred, and not only did the Grace withdraw but there rushed in an army of opposing forces. And the nightlong trouble they gave me was a horror of horrors. It can be guessed from the sharp remark of the nurse who was on night-duty and who also had a very bad temper and often used harsh words. Once she shouted at midnight: "Why do you keep on tossing on the bed so violently? You neither sleep yourself nor allow others to sleep."

Next morning when I woke up, it was so surprising that I did not find myself in a state of extreme exhaustion. The mind was clear, all fear had disappeared, even in the body there was no feeling of weakness. One great fact of which I was aware was that Sri Aurobindo was within me. I was so wrapped up in his consciousness that the "I-ness" in me did not exist. I seemed to live in him and breathe his atmosphere. I clearly experienced the partial eclipse of my personality. At the time when I was

<sup>1</sup> *Savitri*, 2nd Vol., p. 93, VI. 2.

deadened by torments beyond my power to endure and waiting for the touch of death, to make me forgetful of myself was itself a God-sent boon. It was this that invigorated my awfully strained nerves and gave me the much-needed inner strength.

Thus we are not left to our fate. Sri Aurobindo has not kept himself aloof nor is he unaware of our life-needs, life-problems. He knows the correct moment when to intervene. He did not allow me to remain crest-fallen, did not wait till I invoked his compassion.

Nolini Kanta Gupta has very lucidly explained what is meant by becoming Sri Aurobindo:

“I learnt that you want to know something about Sri Aurobindo and the Mother from me. But then there are three lines of approach: you may want to know about them, know of them or know them. Of course the last is the best. Indeed if you want to know truly something you have to become it. Becoming gives the real knowledge. But becoming Sri Aurobindo and the Mother means what? Becoming a portion of them, a part and parcel of their consciousness—that is what we are here for.”<sup>1</sup>

To this might be added these significant words of the Mother:

“But now I must tell you that it is exactly the condition in which you are, which is the best to find the Supreme Lord. He is always there, close to those who suffer and feel lonely.”<sup>2</sup>

By this time the body had developed its own consciousness—one of the salient features of the Mother’s teachings—to act on its own without any kind of influence or imposition of the mental or the vital being. Surprising as it may appear it was kneaded and thrown into a veritable furnace but it never protested or rose in revolt. Rather there shot forth a happy feeling, like the blossoming of a rose over the thorns—“I am born to do sadhana in the body.”

At this juncture memory goes back to the days when there was correspondence with Sri Aurobindo. Usually even one word from his pen produced a repeated thrill as it did when he wrote “Yes” to my question: “Are my experiences genuine?” But when he wrote “Yes” in reply to my question heard in a dream: “I am born to do this Yoga”, my sceptic mind came up and started a flood of questions: “How could one whose body was full of *tamas*, heart virtually a coal-mine, mind like a market-place, allowing free access to anyone, be considered fit for this Yoga?”

At another time I heard in a dream the Mother saying: “I have chosen you as my instrument.” Sri Aurobindo’s one word “Yes” still vibrates in my being but at the time I could not believe my eyes and ears: “How could one be her flawless instrument in whom there is not a single shining quality?”

To resume. Sri Aurobindo came to teach the world how to turn the poison of life into nectar. He is still active and guides our destiny in a subtle way from behind the scene. Events that touch the soul do not fade. Not only did he give me full protection but he took upon himself all my sufferings, making me completely free from

<sup>1</sup> *Collected Works*, Vol 5, p 35

<sup>2</sup> *White Roses* (Letters to Huta), Part III



agony. So long as I was in his consciousness I turned into a new man. There remained no trace of anguish. Even today when I recall all this the heart rushes to bow to the dust of his feet.

It should be evident from the above that Sri Aurobindo's Yoga cannot be done unaided. It needs his constant support and inner guidance.

The chief physician used to pay a visit daily at about 8 a.m. On the morning, to which I have referred earlier, when he had left me I took to an easy-chair and, while reclining in the cool shade of a lovely tree in front of my verandah, I passed into a dream-state. In that completely indrawn condition I found myself musing:

"Sri Aurobindo has not left his body, he has gone to *Patala*, the deepest depth of the Inconscient, to conquer the devilish power of the underworld—*Mahiravan*. Till the demon is conquered in his own domain, Sri Aurobindo's work cannot come to a victorious end. Without that conquest there can be no birth of a new world....

"It was to achieve this he offered his own body at the altar. By his sacrifice he shook the very foundation-stone of Ignorance and broke the monopolistic rule of the Inconscient."

Such novel ideas made me sink more and more into his consciousness. But to my bewilderment, quite contrary was the reaction of his intervention when I lay racked and shattered after the terrible vision of *Pralaya*, accompanied by an attack of two dreadful diseases. In order to recoup my health I had just started to walk slowly on the lawn in front of my friend's house, trying all the time to keep my thoughts turned to Sri Aurobindo. As the thoughts deepened I felt that some part of me wanted to be lost in his consciousness but there was a great resistance. The higher elements in me made repeated attempts to merge themselves in him and wipe out the feeling of individuality but there were other elements that opposed vehemently. One of these parts refused to change. "No more, no more!" it cried. To put it in other words, I clearly felt that the human in me wanted to remain human and declined to grow divine. For, we feel safe in the shell of Ignorance.

Several times the Mother and Sri Aurobindo tried to lift me up but those were the days when I had to pass from one ordeal to another. I was in the body but I had no control over my body. I could give no response. The unregenerate part in me trembled with fear at the very touch of Sri Aurobindo's consciousness. "The bright hour flies back" because the insincere elements get upset by the calm gaze of the Spirit. So the higher persists for a short duration only—to be followed by its opposite.

That day I remained in touch with the Mother and Sri Aurobindo alternately in different ways for more than an hour and that proved a tough hour. For, I was so much gripped by the element of fear and anguish that I could not seize the opportunity to resign myself completely to their will. Again and again there rose an inner cry for the *status quo*: "No strength to bear, no capacity to rise to that height; let me be restored to normal level", and the like. It is not easy to cut asunder the snake-snare of the forces of the nether regions.

Another reason, in the words of Sri Aurobindo though written in another

context, may be hazarded here:

“To fix the consciousness within, to keep it concentrated on the Divine alone is a great difficulty for all, it is what makes Sadhana a thing for which a long time and a slow development of the consciousness is usually necessary.”<sup>1</sup>

By putting on record these self-contradictory strange episodes I am exposing myself to criticism but one is free to call them superstition, wild imagination or a product of the mental factory. It is not necessary for me to array proofs in support of these life-events. It will be a mistake also to seek sequence and coherence in these anecdotes. They are actual happenings of different levels of consciousness. A certain ripeness of the *ādhāra* is needed to discover the connecting link in them. To deny, to ignore the heavenly touches and glimpses or to decry the pouring of the Mother’s Grace would amount to a crime. Not to put them on paper also does not seem proper. These things, I suppose, will be better understood by those who will come after me when the time is ripe for the flowering of Sri Aurobindo’s ideal.

There is another side of the picture, showing how I was deceived in the name of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, for the hostile forces came in disguise and “spoke as with the very voice of God”.

Great was my astonishment when there was a spontaneous flow of meditation while travelling, which grew so deep that I had not the least sense of the movement of the train or of the coming in and going out of the passengers at every halt.

At Basti, a friend of mine, a Rajkumar of an Estate, having come to know of me from my escort, came to the station to take me to his place. Both tried hard to make me break the journey but I did not stir an inch from my seat. After their repeated calls I simply opened my eyes. At this both felt greatly displeased and disappointed. My love for meditation could not be broken by the temptation of being an Estate guest.

No sooner did the train move again than I fell into the magical charm of the previous condition. When that hypnotic state was at a high pitch the figure of Sri Aurobindo stood before my eyes. And a lightning suggestion forced itself into me that I was being helped by Mahakali in reaching a stage that might lead to transformation. Of this foolish suggestion I remember only these words, “Transformation of the cells.” Oh what a cruel taunt and mockery it was!

So far as I remember I was asked to rise to a certain height, which I could not do, and thereupon the whole fire and fury of the demons burst upon me. Now begins the story of my being baked alive and feeling the torture inwardly. I say inwardly because no one around me could know how tremendous was my suffering within.<sup>2</sup>

When such a flawless meditation was there, blessed with the vision of the Master, enveloped in light, how could an ailing innocent fellow have even a shadow of a

<sup>1</sup> *On Yoga*, Tome II, p. 542.

<sup>2</sup> “Anyone allowing himself to be taken hold of by these beings [of the Intermediate Zone] who often take a divine Name, will lose his way in the Yoga”

doubt that he was caught in a spider's web which was spread out for him, and that a devil was there in the guise of the Divine? How can a wandering elephant sense the holes dug for him beneath stretches of green grass in a plain?

The moment I failed to do their bidding I heard a threatening voice saying: "You dare disobey Mahakali? You must suffer for it." I felt horrified and the consciousness began to drop as one slips downhill.

A little later I entered the latrine in the train. I saw an all-black figure of the Mother in a sari, sitting in a chair with fiery eyes, very close to me, saying: "You dare disobey me?" "Disobeying thee, Mother?" I answered, stunned and unnerved as if all my blood had frozen.

With my hands on my ears I began to sit and rise every time imploring the Mother with as much earnestness as I could to forgive me. It should be noted that pain in both the knees had returned with all its ferocity, of which there had been no trace during the meditation.

My companion Prof. Agarwal knocked and knocked at the doors of the latrine but I did not care at all and went on praying for forgiveness unceasingly. After doing that for about half an hour, when not an ounce of energy was left in me and I was about to fall flat, I opened the door and came out utterly vanquished. Five years later I realised how the dark forces exult when seekers err and fall. In their view the wound inflicted was not enough: the climax was not yet reached.

To add one more event in this chain of incidents. Before leaving for Lucknow I felt the need of something that would be my unfailing Protection. Hence I longed for something touched by the Mother. Accordingly, my people placed before her my ring and brooch bearing the figures of Mother and the Master for her touch. And in her infinite Grace she not only touched the things but herself carefully put them in the case and asked the office to send it for me to my destination, Lucknow. While on my way to Shillong for a change of air, Prof. Agarwal took off the ring from my finger and kept it under his care lest I should throw it away in a fit of absent-mindedness. This proved fatal. I was as if taken out from the lines of safety.

To reach Shillong from Gauhati we had to travel by bus. At the time I did not know whether I was at Gauhati or Shillong. Making me sit comfortably Prof. Agarwal put the ring again upon my finger. Had the ring not been removed from my finger I would not have been exposed to the tricks of the Dreadful Power. The Professor attached more value to its material aspect than to its spiritual. How could he know that it was not a mere ring but a Protecting Shield which could ward off storms and thunderbolts? To attach spiritual value to it might appear to be a devotional outburst. But let me cite some facts.

For more than two months, from the time I was separated from the Ashram atmosphere, I lived "Like one who feels on his neck an enemy's breath." My wearing the ring spelt the stilling of the hurricane enabling me to enjoy a new facet of life.

All thought and feeling of agony was gone and instead I was lost in ecstasy. The weather was radiant and the meditative atmosphere of the mountain-ranges was

simply enchanting. The hilly slopes of Assam, serpentine routes spiralling up the hills, were a treat to watch. It seemed I was moving up the heights where only gods dwell. Strange ideas, strange thoughts, some of course foolish fancies, occupied my mind. I felt as if soaring above the common level and being on the way to walking with immortals. This blissful change from extreme agony to a breath of the celestial air was due to my contact with the ring given by the Mother. I wished Prof. Agarwal to share my joy because he had taken such pains for me. Hence I passed on the ring to him. But one medicine does not suit all.

Arriving at the Shillong centre of Sri Aurobindo Ashram I had a bath and a meal and then relaxed in an arm-chair, feasting my eyes on the grandeurs of the Himalayan ranges. Time seemed to pass merrily.

Before going to bed I got into the latrine. All of a sudden I felt I was throttled to death. I fell flat on the floor. Sitting on my breast and pressing my throat was some being whose voice thundered: "Now, say Kali, utter the name of Kali." My whole body lay a senseless mass of matter except for a tenuous current of life-force somewhere in the mind. A slight jerk and this too would perhaps pass out.

I succumbed to the aggressive suggestion of the force that since I had failed to carry out the behests of Mahakali I had committed an act of disobedience. Seated in bed, forlorn and helpless, I went on patiently praying to the Mother, bending my body as much as I could for forgiveness.

All this happened because I did not use the power of discrimination, which has an important place in the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo. Experience confirms that all that is said in our Puranas is not fantastic. The story we hear about amulets is not a myth. This time I was deceived in the name of the Mother.

Long after, when I read the following letter of Sri Aurobindo I remembered my case:

"The more intense the experiences that come, the higher the forces that descend, the greater become the possibilities of deviation and error. For the very intensity and the very height of the force excites and aggrandises the movements of the lower nature and raises up in it all opposing elements in their full force, but often in the disguise of truth, wearing a mask of plausible justification. There is needed a great patience, calm, sobriety, balance, an impersonal detachment and sincerity free from all taint of ego or personal human desire. There must be no attachment to any idea of one's own, to any experience, to any kind of imagination, mental building or vital demand; the light of discrimination must always play to detect those things, however fair or plausible they may seem. Otherwise, the Truth will have no chance of establishing itself in its purity in the nature."

*(To be continued)*

## UDAR REMEMBERS

THE Mother often spoke to me about India and the role She has to play in the world. This role has been chosen for her by the Divine and, however blind India may be to her true destiny, circumstances will eventually force her to it. But there may be oppositions and struggles and great suffering which can be avoided if India consciously moves to what the Divine has willed for her.

The Mother has said very strongly and frequently that India must be a leader among the nations of the world instead of being just a follower as she now is. Also she must not just copy what others have done but initiate new things—things which are her Swadharma.

India has a great spiritual strength in the very core of her being though it may often be veiled. This spiritual strength must ally itself with a strong material force and then together they will be invincible and most effective. This material force will come from a country highly developed in that area. India and that country must join and join closely. Then they can really lead the world towards its new phase of evolution in a conscious and deliberate movement.

Once the Mother said to me that the two darkest areas of human existence were those of money and politics, the area of the latter even darker than that of the former. It is for this reason that all spiritual disciplines, by rule and practice, always kept far away from both these fields; and so these fields continue to be dark and grow darker all the time. But, the Mother said, in Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga no area should be left untouched and that at the right time His Force, His Action would enter all areas.

The Mother told me all this and much else besides because, She said, I was one of the chosen instruments for Their work. Otherwise it is difficult to understand why the Mother gave certain commands to me when there are others here who, I am sure, are much more capable than I in those areas of work. I have some little experience of business but of politics none at all. The Mother asked me to enter business again which I have done by incorporating "Commerce under Sri Aurobindo's Guidance (Private) Ltd." or CUSAG for short.

With regard to politics the Mother asked me in 1973, the same year in which She left Her physical body, if I was ready for politics. I fell at Her feet and begged Her to spare me this. Anything else, I said, but not politics. I shudder at the very sound of it. But the Mother was adamant. She said, "Udar, there is no escape for you. When the right time comes you will be called and you must jump to it. I will not ask you. I will command and you will obey."

The Mother rarely spoke so firmly to anyone and I consider it a great privilege that She spoke so to me. I answered that I would be ready to follow Her commands.

On another occasion the Mother explained to me how politics would develop under Sri Aurobindo's own Guidance and Control. The present democratic set-up is, as the Mother explained several times, only a result of human thinking and India

has copied it from other countries. Nevertheless, the Divine Force can use the system as it is and act powerfully. A new political party must be formed, a Spiritual Party, with only one objective: "Service to the Divine." Not even service to man or to humanity but only to the Divine. The Mother said that the Divine would look after the interests of man and humanity much better than we mortals could.

Then She went on to say that if I tried to start this in any other country, particularly in the West, the people would laugh at me and call me mad. In India also the so-called intellectuals and the Westernised people would laugh at me. But the masses would jump at it and cry, "At last! At last it has come!" They are hungry for this though they do not know it yet and when it is announced they will jump with joy. It will sweep the country. But we must wait for the right moment to launch this new party.

Then, further, the Mother said, and at a time when the Congress (R) was very firmly in power, that there would be a political chaos in the country and people would be lost and not know where to turn. At that time we must come out and, if this true lead is not given, this wonderful country, India, would take a wrong turn which would darken her soul and bring her much misery for many years. So we have a great responsibility.

Now, one more thing. In 1972 when I was to go to Europe and America to give talks on Sri Aurobindo during His Centenary Year, the Mother said to me, "Udar, I give you my solemn promise that, wherever you are and whenever it is, I will be closer to you than now, sitting in front of you." Then She sent me Her confirmation in writing: "Always with you, Udar, with my love and blessings."

Now always is always and not just the years that She was with us physically. Always means even now and the Mother is certainly keeping Her solemn promise. She is constantly with me, very close. I have only to call Her and She comes at once. Sometimes She comes of Her own, without my calling Her. So She came to me recently and told me: "Udar, the time for the spiritual party to be launched is now very near. Be ready." Again I pleaded my complete ignorance and again She assured me that Sri Aurobindo and She Herself would be with me guiding me fully and giving me Their Force and also arranging circumstances to bring about what They want. All I had to do was to be ready, and I am ready.

Before I end this remembrance I must make it clear that whatever I write about what the Mother said to me when in Her physical body or now, in Her subtle form, is for me to heed and follow. It is not at all compelling on anyone else and particularly the Sri Aurobindo Ashram is in no way committed by all this. This is an *ādes*h for my own future. I have to be ready and I am ready and prepared.

"Lord! Thy Will be done."

# THE MARRIAGE OF SUNDERAMURTI

## A POEM

*(Continued from the issue of September 1978)*

3

THE sun was past the zenith when they set forth.  
The royal chariot was of carved teak  
Inlaid with Javan gold and ivory  
And drawn by a pair of swift Arabian steeds.  
Beneath its silk-embroidered canopy  
That, as they moved, ballooned and fluttered in the breeze,  
Sat Narasingha on a high-raised seat  
And by his side his youthful protégé.  
Behind, the scarcely less magnificent  
Conveyances of Shiva's ministers  
Were borne aloft by slaves; and with them came  
The temple elephant, whose massive limbs  
Kept effortlessly a majestic gait,  
Most like a woman's, on whose hips is placed  
The full jar as she walks home from the well;  
His sides were scored with bright auspicious streaks  
And on his forehead was the Great God's sign.  
Next, the king's underlords in high-wheeled cars  
Came opulently in an ordered line;  
Heroic Kshatriyas whose lives were pledged  
Religiously to his in peace and war.  
A blare of conch-shells and a crash of drums  
Accompanied their progress; slowly turned  
The ponderous wheels, at a much different pace  
Than when, with a whinnying of loose-reined steeds  
On the alarm-resounding battlefield  
In an illusion of excessive speed  
They seem to move backwards in spokeless fear.  
The merchants followed and the men of trade  
And with them voyagers from foreign lands:  
Ambassadors from China, envoys sent  
By Delhi's sultan, cunning pale-skinned Franks  
And travellers from the Archipelago.  
These formed the vanguard. Slow behind them came

The women, segregated from all the rest  
 In a well-guarded train of palanquins.  
 Behind a mystery of silk gauze veils  
 The queen, her ladies and their retinue  
 Amused themselves with gossip and with games  
 As they moved on in splendour. Last of all  
 Rolled on in overcrowded bullock carts  
 The palace servants and the husbandmen  
 Who ploughed the king's own lands. Long after him  
 Would they arrive in torchlit gay Puttur  
 To take their portion of the wedding feast.

Sundarar sat in pomp beside the king  
 Beneath the canopy, on the high-raised seat.  
 The tall compactly muscled charioteer,  
 Around whose great forearms were twined the reins,  
 Stood erectly in their front. The horses pulled  
 With all their force against the thongs, enraged  
 To have to trot along at an elephant's pace,  
 Till, at a shout from the impatient boy  
 And a nod from the king, the driver shook them free  
 And with a clatter of rapid hooves that raised  
 A billowing dust-cloud, covering their escape,  
 They soon had left the others far behind.  
 Before them stretched the rarely travelled road.  
 Its sides were lined with stately banyan trees,  
 Whose wry fantastic aerial roots hung down  
 From boughs whose shadowy green extremities  
 Were burdened with red clusters of ripe fruit  
 And loud with a lyric songbird ecstasy.  
 Across dark tracts of freshly cultured earth  
 Were fan-palms standing in a long straight line  
 And eucalyptuses, whose graceful limbs  
 Swayed in the wind with an animated dance of leaves.  
 Green were the fields of paddy as they passed by,  
 Green like nothing else upon the earth is green,  
 Peridot spears, whose glow, emitted from within,  
 Intermingled with the happy crystal light  
 Of a sun whose disk of rayless liquid fire  
 Shone down from a sky of lapis lazuli.  
 There was a wealth of water everywhere  
 For the monsoon had been good, and all the tanks  
 Were filled to overflowing, and not far



Did the empty goat-skin bladder have to fall,  
 With a cry of pullies and a whirr of coir,  
 As the bullock lumbered down his dusty trail  
 Around the well, until he was whipped back again  
 And the bag came up and the liquid, gushing out,  
 Delivered Parjanya's bounty to the soil.  
 The villagers, whose supple bodies gleamed  
 Like statuettes of polished ebony  
 As they stooped ankle-deep in the black mud  
 To plunge the young shoots in the flooded squares,  
 Looked up as the bannered chariot rumbled near.  
 Led on its way by the music of shenais and drums.  
 "It is the king, it is the king," they cried,  
 As, standing with devoutly folded hands  
 And smiling faces, the spontaneous signs  
 Of happy, uncoerced obedience,  
 They revered their well-beloved lord,  
 Vicegerent on the earth of the Great God.  
 "It is the king and seated by his side  
 Is Prince Arurar, Sadaiyanar's child  
 And the king's favourite and foster son  
 Who will be married in Puttur today."  
 Sundarar waved back to the simple folk  
 As the white stallions galloped swiftly on  
 Over the breast of the recumbent earth.  
 How limitless the ancient goddess seemed—  
 An immense expanse of stable fearlessness  
 No temporal excitement could disturb—  
 Illimitable, for every curve revealed  
 Form-crowded vistas never seen before  
 That fed the craving of his restless eyes.  
 The king looked fondly on the boy, whose face  
 Was always turned excitedly away  
 To gaze at each new thing on either side.  
 He wondered what was passing through the mind  
 Of the silent wide-eyed child, whose unbound hair  
 Fluttered behind him like the streaming manes  
 Of the sweat-covered steeds whose thundering feet  
 Devoured the distance between them and fate.  
 And even when with a delighted cry  
 He turned, pointing to where a startled bird  
 Flew past, an iridescent flash of green,

The transport of his features gave no clue  
To what was happening within his heart.  
Nor did he know himself. Content, at ease,  
Released from the suffocating atmosphere  
Of the palace, its habitual thoughts and cares.  
His mind flowed on in rhythm with the rolling wheels.  
Like a wanderer without goal or map he roamed  
Down tortuous pathways of sweet commonplace  
And byways of forgotten memory  
In search of something yet unrealised.  
Swift images of childhood mingled as in dream  
With things he was seeing now for the first time:  
A bush, a buffalo, a bell-shaped flower  
Burning in lonely splendour amid the leaves  
Of a great tree and branding his naked eye  
With yellow's pale intensity; tilled earth  
And fallow earth and houses of red baked clay  
And palm-thatched roofs—before the threshold of each  
Was traced in chalk a wheel of auspicious lines,  
Filled in with colours, that brightened the clean swept yards,  
Where every tool and vessel was neatly kept  
In its own place. Laden papaya trees  
Marked off the boundaries of the groundnut fields  
And plantain groves and patches of sugarcane.  
Here was a pair of asses clumsily  
Hobbling together like man and woman tied  
Each to the other by habit's chafing cords.  
And here was a young calf tugging its mother's teat  
In quivering-kneed excitement. Calm she stood,  
All white her body, but her dewlap's fold  
Was stained by festive powder a pale rose.  
Beyond stood one magnificent russet bull,  
Splendid sides vibrant with ingathered power:  
Head lifted high, two giant upturned horns,  
One laquered red, one green, and from the end  
Of each dangled a little copper bell.  
All this was woven on the ceaseless loom  
Of his slow-shuttled, half-attentive brain,  
Embroidered with imagination's thread  
And freaked with fancy's mad caprice to make  
A fabric to adorn a special day,  
The day he would be married to Pavai.

The pungent wet aroma of threshed grain  
Heralded open country. Uncultured lands  
Were intermingled now with the paddy fields  
And soon were omnipresent. Wider views  
Opened before him; an undulating plain  
That showed, across a distance that grew near,  
A temple-crested mountain, at whose feet  
There lay, outstretched, supine, a rippling lake.  
All human traces slowly disappeared  
From the primeval bosom of the earth,  
The ancient goddess; only a few remained  
To accentuate the mystic loneliness:  
A solitary hut in the deep shade  
Along the jungle's edge, an abandoned shrine  
Beneath the gnarled boughs of an ancient tree,  
Where none but the ash-smeared sannyasins came,  
Sky-clad renunciates of life and world,  
To meditate and sing the names of God,  
Until they entered superconscious sleep,  
Made one with the everlasting and supreme.  
And in the distance the majestic hills,  
Fantastic piles of careless boulders heaped  
By the Asuras of another age,  
In silent majesty stood sentinel  
Over the peace of Narasingha's land.  
"This land beloved of Shiva," the boy mused,  
His mind of thought becoming disengaged  
A moment from the swollen stream of sense  
In which he wallowed like a happy child,  
"And of his slaves, Sambandhar and Appar,  
And unnumbered other God-drunk Nayannars,  
Made holy by their wandering pilgrim feet  
And filled with grace by their immortal hymns.  
Country of Kanchi and Chidambaram,  
Where on his thousand-pillared porch of gold,  
The Lord of Dance, in silent ecstasy,  
Moves to the rhythms that at once preserve,  
Destroy and recreate this world of form.  
This land washed by a hundred sacred streams,  
The southern Pennar and the Coleroon  
And Kaveri slow-pacing towards the sea,  
Whose holy waters give to those who bathe

Even once in them eternal purity  
And liberation from the rounds of birth—  
Kaveri on whose banks Thanjavur stands,  
As farther southward, the stone figures that crowd  
The sculptured temple gates of Madurai,  
Where Shiva came to wed the fish-eyed maid,  
Gaze down upon the Vaigai—sacred streams  
That water a black-soiled alluvial plain,  
Whose mountain sheltered fertile breast extends  
From the domains of the Karnatic kings  
To where the eastern and the western seas  
Become each other at the Virgin's feet:  
"This holy land, my land, the Tamil Land!"  
And even as the wide-extended earth  
Stops not at any boundary, whether made  
By gods or men, but rolls on limitlessly  
Towards some unmapped horizon, so his mind  
Rolled on, including in its vast embrace  
The Deccan kingdoms, Lanka and the lands  
Across the ocean, where the Tamil race  
Had carried its banner towards the rising sun,  
And all of Bharatvarsha to the north,  
Across the Vindhya, the great Aryan plain,  
Where first the Vedic mantras were intoned,  
The land of Ganga, Kashi and Kailas—  
Kailas, the home of Shiva—how he longed  
To see his beautiful blue-throated lord!  
Perhaps he still would save him. But after all—  
For now remembrance of Pavai returned—  
It was not too intolerable a fate  
To have to marry the most beautiful girl  
In all the Tamil country. Languidly  
Awhile in unexpressed delight he dwelt,  
With thoughts not uninvaded by desire,  
Upon his image of the dark-eyed child,  
Creating a domain of fantasy  
Where he and she would always be content.  
But then another mood declared itself.  
As if the features of a vaguely seen  
Forgotten friend that he had always known,  
The outlines of a sense transcending sense  
Appeared upon his soul's peripheries

And waited undemanding, gathered up  
 Into an unasked question, and each thing  
 Whose beauty up till now had been complete,  
 Became the shadow of a partial sign  
 Of something too familiar to be known  
 But too unlikely to be held as true.  
 It did not come in a triumphant rush,  
 But an insistent gentle whispering,  
 The repetition of a often told tale  
 Whose obvious concealed significance  
 Had never been completely fathomed. Mute  
 He strained as towards an unremembered dream  
 With useless instruments of thought and word  
 But could not seize it. Then his mind fell still,  
 Mystically silent, like untroubled air,  
 And in an unreflecting flash he knew—  
 Knew this, that there was something to be known,  
 Some sound to hear, some vision he had to see,  
 Some thing or person that he had to find  
 That he had known long long ago—so near,  
 Nearer than self, yet unattainably far.  
 His blind devotion stumbled after a name  
 For this, the Being that was all that was,  
 The Absolute, the Limitless, the Real,  
 The Beautiful, the living body of Love...  
 Then, from the silent depths of his wild heart,  
 Five syllables broke forth; it was the prayer  
 That he repeated every morning; now  
 It came as if pronounced by someone else,  
 And carried an occult significance.  
 NAMOSHIVAYA was the simple strain,  
 Hail Shiva! Hail to the Auspicious One!  
 Sole Lord of Being, Hail to the Great God!  
 Hail Shiva!... and then the mighty echoings  
 Of the seed syllables broke out in fruit.  
 For when his eyes again were turned outside  
 The universe he saw was not the same;  
 For something in his heart had been transformed  
 And all the world bore witness to the change.  
 All things were now the outward drapery  
 Of some deep universal loveliness.  
 Beautiful in themselves, they veiled a face

Of one who was the source of Beauty. He—  
For it was no abstract impersonal  
But a more-than-human Personality—  
Looked out with infinite compassion on  
The world he governed by the power of love.  
And even when the total vision passed  
A magic residue remained behind:  
The green trees were the cloth about his waist  
The dark soil was the body that was clothed,  
The trailing clouds the intertwining snakes  
Around his blue-stained throat. The flaming sun  
Was the effulgence of the mystic eye  
That blazed upon his forehead. All was he.  
He was the wheels, the chariot, the road,  
The fields and every tree and bush and flower.  
The granite hills were each carved Mahadev  
Lifting his massive everlasting face  
Above the plinth of the recumbent earth.

The land around changed imperceptibly  
As they rolled onward through red countryside  
Unknown to them. Then, crossing a sluggish stream,  
They saw before them in the blinding glare  
The walls and temple towers of Puttur.

*(To be continued)*

PETER HEEHS

# “DON'T SPOIL THE PLAY”

## A SHORT STORY

JUGGLERS had come to Madhumati City. Today was their first performance. They had invited the king and his retinue. The time was from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. It was a custom that nobody could give a present to the jugglers unless the king had already given a present to them.

The king and his retinue came and at 9 p.m. sharp the play began. The juggler's wife was beautiful, but with a magical terrible beauty. Now the king was not a paragon of virtue. He began to devour her and began to undress her with his eyes. He had no eyes for the play. The play went on. It was about 12:30 a.m. now—the king had not given any present. The juggler's wife divined the mind of the king. She showed signs of weariness and did not play her part well. On seeing this the juggler who was acting as a prompter whispered to his wife:

“Much time has gone, a little remains to pass away.

Minutes tick by of that little—Beloved! don't spoil the play.”

Hardly five minutes had elapsed after this when the prince threw his diamond ring as a present, the king's aide-de-camp threw his dagger with a golden handle, a merchant's wife threw her pearl-necklace and a Jain sadhu threw a shawl worth Rs. 125,000.

On seeing this the king was enraged. How dare these people give presents to the jugglers before he had done so?

First of all, the prince was called upon to answer. He said:

“Sire and king! You know you are 75 years of age. I am 50. You are not abdicating the throne in my favour. I was very eager to be a king. So we—myself and my friends—had conspired that today while going home after the play you should be done to death. But on hearing the line, ‘Much time has gone, a little remains to pass away’, my thoughts took a turn. I said to myself, ‘Father is 75, how many more years is he going to live? Why be a murderer of your own father?’ So I decided to abandon the plot to murder you. And as I was prevented from committing a heinous crime by these words of the juggler, I gave the present. Do what you like!”

Next the aide-de-camp was summoned to explain. He replied:

“Hear me, my master! I was a co-conspirator of the prince. And mine was the hand that was to deal the fatal blow to you. But on hearing this line I said to myself, ‘You have served the king faithfully all these years, he implicitly trusts you. How many more years is he to live? Why be a traitor?’ So I decided not to deal the fatal blow to you. And as this line had saved me from being a traitor I gave up my dagger. Do what you desire!”

Next the merchant's wife was asked for an account. She answered:

“My lord! Hear my story. Some fourteen years ago my husband went on a sea-voyage, promising to return within a year. Even though he had promised to re-

turn in twelve months, he has not come yet. All these fourteen years I have awaited him eagerly and I have remained chaste and faithful to him. I have observed all the discipline that the Shastras have enjoined upon a woman like me. But this morning I was tired of awaiting my husband any more. So I decided to run away with someone after the play. But on hearing that line I said to myself: 'You have waited for your husband all these fourteen years. He will be surely coming within a short time. You have remained faithful to him throughout such a long period. Why be unfaithful to him now?' So I decided to abandon the idea of running away. And as I was saved by the words of the juggler I gave the present. Do what you want!"

Lastly the Jain sadhu was questioned. He explained:

"Well, king! Hear me attentively. You know that you won this kingdom by defeating the previous king and killing him. At that time the queen of the late king was pregnant. She ran away from your clutches and took shelter with a Jain sadhu and she became a Jain sadhu. I was born there and when I came of age I also became a Jain sadhu. I observed all the austerities prescribed by the Jain Shastras, but I could not resist the lures of worldly objects. At that time I was 25 years old. I asked the permission of my Guru to renounce the ceremony of renunciation, *dīkṣā*, and to live a worldly life. My Guru said, 'You have been a Jain sadhu all these years; for my sake stay here for ten years more and if, after that, you want to go, you may go.' So I lived with my Guru for ten years more. Still the desire to live a worldly life remained and I told my Guru that I was going. He said, 'I cannot detain you, but, before going, it behoves you to get permission from your mother.' Hence I went to my mother and asked her permission to give up Sannyasa and live a worldly life. My mother said, 'You remained for ten years a sadhu at the bidding of your Guru. Will you not remain a sadhu for another ten years for my sake?' I agreed and remained a sadhu for another decade. When the period was over and I yearned to enter the worldly life I went to my mother and asked her permission to go. On hearing this the guruni of my mother said, 'You remained a sadhu for ten years because your mother asked you to remain such; could you not remain a sadhu for ten more years for my sake? After all I am your mother's guruni: won't you respect my wish?' So I stayed for ten years more. When the period was over, I asked the permission of my guru, my mother and her guruni to renounce *dīkṣā* and lead a worldly life. None was in a position to object. At the time of my departure my mother gave me the shawl worth Rs.125,000. I decided to come to the capital and find out whether friends of my father were living and willing to help me and win back the kingdom by killing you. I arrived here today and, when I heard that the jugglers were giving their performance, I came to see it. Upon hearing the words, 'Don't spoil the play', a reversal of consciousness took place in me. I said to myself, 'You have been a Jain sadhu all your life and you were on your way to become the king of your soul. You are 55, you have observed all the austerities of a Jain sadhu; how much longer are you going to live? Why hanker after worldly pleasures? What guarantee is there that even if your father's friends are living, they



will help you and what guarantee is there that you will succeed? Why not go back and win the kingdom of the soul?’ Therefore I decided to go back. And as the juggler’s words had awakened me I gave the present. Do what you wish!”

All present were spellbound to hear the stories of the four.

The king resigned the throne in favour of the prince the next day. The aide-de-camp was amply rewarded. The merchant-husband came the following morning. The Jain sadhu returned to his Guru and embraced *dikṣā* again. The jugglers were munificently rewarded by the retiring king.

VALLABH SHETH

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## TWO POEMS

### A BIRD

It caught just a drop  
in its beak;  
just a hop—  
it caught the sun  
in its eye —  
a quick shuffle of wings  
and all is sky and song.

### MY POEMS

THE moody harmony  
dappling this whiteness,  
the patterns wrung out  
like the sunset sky,  
absorb every arc  
of my wayward thought  
and memories  
that trampled my heart.

ANANDA REDDY

## POLITICAL ISSUES IN SRI AUROBINDO'S PLAY *THE VIZIERS OF BASSORA*

THE important fact is often forgotten that Sri Aurobindo was a political revolutionary before he set out on his spiritual quest. The very title of the play *The Viziers of Bassora* should suffice to prepare us to witness the power-game in which the great ones are involved. Almuene Bin Khakan, second vizier of Bassora, connives at the offenses committed by his son Fareed, and is determined to eliminate all those who enter into conflict with him or even have the audacity to oppose him. This is hardly surprising in a man who is described by the blunt-spoken Turk captain of police, Murad, and is subsequently discovered by the reader to be, a "brutish amalgam of gorilla and Barbary ape". Since he is the King's man—and who would dare find fault with the King?—no criticism of his misdeeds can be made without grave risk. What makes this vizier's tyrannies all the more unendurable is his overpowering desire to saddle his people with his son's misdoings too, "who is as like him as the young baboon is to the adult ape."

Alfazzal Ibn Sawy, Almuene's senior, chief vizier of the king, has a son, too, called Nureddene, who, unlike his deformed counterpart, is a "wild handsome roisterer". His father, however, hopes that, after sowing his wild oats, he will ultimately make good—which, in effect, he does. Meanwhile there are other pressing matters which we cannot skip. Almuene is so power-drunk and so sure of the King's support that, instead of improving himself and exercising a better control over his ruffianly son, he charges Murad and the police thus:

A city gang the other day  
Battered my little mild Fareed most beastly  
With staves and cudgels. This fellow's bribed police,  
By him instructed, held a ruffian candle  
To the outrage. When the rogues were caught they lied  
And got them off before a fool, a Kazi.

This is indeed a glaring example of how one in authority would resort to rationalization to put everybody in the dock and declare his scallywag of a son "not guilty." Nor is he willing to listen to others, including his wife, who as a mother has a better understanding of the young scapegrace's character. Very frankly she tells this right to his face:

You have indulged the boy till he has lost  
The likeness even of manhood. God's great stamp  
And heavenly image on his mint's defaced,  
Rubbed out, and only the brute metal left...

But all this has no effect on the doting parent who keeps using such choice terms of endearment as "my gamesome goblin", "you leaping madcap," "my amorous wag-tail", and who continues to condone all his wrongs: "Ay, you have broken seals? you have picked locks, my burglar?"

One who is destined to lord it over other men, Almuene soliloquizes, should be no finicky moralist, "no scrupulous fool, no ethical malingerer." He should be of that metal of which the imperial people, the colonists and conquerors, are made:

Rude, hardy stocks  
Transplant themselves, expand, outlast the storms  
And heat and cold, not slips too gently nurtured  
Or lapped in hothouse warmth.

He expects his son, albeit a hunchback, to be like them and in his conduct he shows what power can achieve without being bothered about the claims of fair play. Neither father nor son is averse to carrying away forcibly the girl of the slave-market. However, no sooner does Almuene see his senior bidding for the same girl than he begins to behave in a sheepish fashion. How revealing of the inner inadequacy of all those who hector and bluster until someone stronger than themselves appears on the scene. Another interesting feature of this power-game is that two powerful rivals often enter into a pact with a view to serving their mutual interests as the two viziers temporarily thought to do.

That the political and the personal cannot be strictly kept apart, that they spill over into each other, comes out vividly in this play. The policies one follows and the decisions one takes are often the result of confabulations that have been held in the secrecy of home. "Why are you the vizier, if you cannot do your will?"—so remonstrates son with father, exemplifying how the dependents of one in authority instigate him to certain actions. Conversely, one who holds high office becomes in course of time a dreaded person even for those close to him. Since Khatoon has bandied words with her husband Almuene, the latter issues a threat of physical violence to her:

Termagant,  
Some day I'll have you stripped and soundly caned  
By your own women, if you grow not gentler.

The problem of the headstrong and erring son presuming too much on the power and influence which his parent wields has been dramatized in *Nureddene* also who after having been given a free hand in public affairs soon becomes a threat to domestic peace. Ibn Sawy perceives this in his son's career:

Offences we have winked at, when they knocked  
At foreign doors, how shall we look at close  
When they come striking home?

Nothing, he realizes, should be done further to pamper him. He shows detachment enough even where his own son is concerned to foresee the disastrous consequences that continued indulgence on his part is going to entail on his son himself:

If we excuse such gross and violent fault  
 Done in our house, what hope to save our boy,  
 Oh, not his body, but the soul within?  
 It will petrify in vice and grow encrusted  
 With evil as with a leprosy.

All this idealistic tall talk and the father's pretence to punish his son, of course, end up on a hilarious note because the son, despite appearances to the contrary, is generous, true and bold. But if the case is otherwise, we are told by implication what needs to be done.

Many iniquities are perpetrated by the underlings in the boss's name. Ibn Sawy, admirable as he is, cannot resist the temptation of buying the Persian beauty at the slave market in the name of the king, thereby avoiding higher bidding. But a far grosser abuse of delegated authority is shown in Shaikh Ibrahim, superintendent of the Caliph's gardens in Baghdad. This non-pareil hypocrite, claiming that Haroun Al Rasheed's gardens are his own property, wants to take advantage of the unsuspecting Anice-Aljalice, Nureddene's Persian slave-girl.

But the source of corruption that flourishes in Bassora is the king himself—Mahomed Bin Suleyman of Zayni, Haroun's cousin. Cutting himself off from the people he rules over, he most readily lends his ears to the sycophants and all those who ingratiatingly hover around him. That is why the wily and scheming Almuene finds it so easy to direct the fury of destruction at the house of his senior, the moment the latter has gone on a diplomatic errand to Roum. He gets his house besieged by a swarm of creditors, incites his nephew Ajebe to liquidate Nureddene, turns all the erstwhile family friends into enemies and finally gets Nureddene implicated in a criminal case of assault on himself. Although he is supposed to uphold the dignity of law and order he does not scruple to violate it if by doing so he can promote his selfish interest. Most outrageously he wants to take forcible possession of Anice-Aljalice when she is put on sale the second time to pay up her husband's debts.

The king shows little gratitude to his cousin Haroun to whom he virtually owes his throne; in fact, he conceives a treasonous scheme in his mind. He is so susceptible to flattery that Almuene can easily turn him against his personal rivals by concocting false charges against them and by poisoning his ears against them. The king does not care to check on the information that is supplied to him. Almuene succeeds in provoking the king's anger against the chief vizier and his son on the pretext that if the father has cheated him behind his back the son and his slave-girl have talked of him very irreverently. The king gets so worked up that he forthwith decrees death and damnation for them:

Trail them with ropes tied to their bleeding heels  
 .....into my persence here.  
 What, am I grown so bare that by-lane dogs  
 Like these so loudly bay at me? They die!

Such a passionate outburst is clearly the expression of an inflated ego. No wonder, under the regime of such a one, people are slain unheard, and acts of vendetta are performed unabashedly.

Haroun Al Rasheed is meant to serve as a foil to the king, for he goes disguised to find out the facts for himself. People, like him, who are not corrupted by power are few and far between indeed. Without losing magnanimity he knows how to administer condign punishment to the guilty in order to amend the flaw in them. This is the sentence he pronounces on Ibrahim, a wine-bibber and lecher at an advanced age: "Jafar, have a man with him constantly and wine before his eyes; but if he drink so much as a thimbleful, let it be poured by gallons into his stomach. Have beautiful women constantly before him and if he once raises his eyes above their anklets, shave him clean and sell him into the most severe and puritan house in Bagdad." The predicament of Tantalus could not have been worse. The purpose, nevertheless, is to reform an old rake.

Haroun keeps himself in touch with those who are aggrieved and has the tremendous tolerance to hear their frank opinion about him. The angry voices never come to him through the distorting media of his flatterers. Anice-Aljalice fearing that her husband has been killed through Haroun's negligence tells him that on the judgment day her frail voice shall ring more dreadful in his hearing than doom's own trumpet. Unruffled by what might have been regarded as her impudence, Haroun takes the swiftest possible action to avert the crisis.

There is one question of larger significance. When the great ones are settling their scores, what should the small ones be doing? In the mediaeval world in which the dramatic action takes place, women essentially are frail vessels. Nonetheless, they take decision and initiate action. Khatoon will not be browbeaten by her husband Almuene:

...my rank's as far above your birth  
 As some white star in heaven o'erpeers the muck  
 Of foulest stables....

Doonya can quietly ignore her uncle's injunction and arrange a meeting between Nur-eddene and Anice-Aljalice in order to reform her cousin. It is the two slave girls, Balkis and Mymoona, who through their concerted effort stay the hand of Aljebe against Nureddene. These girls are not content to be passive spectators only. They jump into the fray, unmindful of their limited power, and contribute in no small measure to the improvement of the political situation. And finally, there is Anice-Aljalice, remarkable for her beauty and wit alike. She will not let the law of the land be

violated and she declares firmly to Almuene, "I'll not be sold to you." Furthermore, it is her dialogue with Haroun that saves her husband's life and makes him king of Bassora, ushering in a new age. She surely displays an uncanny insight when she says, "Kingdoms have toppled in ten days."

In *The Viziers of Bassora* Sri Aurobindo has focussed on the dangers which are a menace to political life: self-aggrandisement, nepotism, the overpowering ambition to succeed better than others in the power-game, lack of scruple, susceptibility to flattery, and the corrupting influence of high position. But can we cure the pestilence-ridden world simply by fleeing it? What Sri Aurobindo is trying to say is that the world of politics—brazen and sordid and devoid of value as it might appear—cannot and should not be written off as lost. But we all have, even the most insignificant among us, a moral obligation to discharge: to make the good prevail over evil. In the face of things falling apart it is unpardonable to look askance and keep one's gaze averted.

P. P. SHARMA

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# THE IMAGE OF MAN

## HIS FOUR FACETS

(Continued from the issue of September 1978)

### Facet IV: The Spiritual Personality

If man's aspects as rebel or as romantic or even as frustrated individual are realities, even more real is his image of spiritual personality. Those three other aspects reflect facets of his personality which, though complete in themselves, are portions of his integral and satisfying whole as a Man. In the rebel, man seeks to raise himself beyond the given condition; in the romantic he dreams, he waxes heroic over love, spends himself in sacrifice and views the world through the eyes of the lover or the poet, the dreamer or the emotional being; in the frustrated individual he sinks exhausted into dejection and reaches the nadir of his existence.

Materialism, hedonism or abstraction are not all that man is capable of. He has his aspect which aspires for truth, extends his vision towards the future and attempts to fulfil his destiny in realisations of Self, World and God.

So far in literature, specially Western literature, we have discovered no trace of the image of the spiritual personality. A Blake, a Thompson or a Gibran might appear as a supernatural phenomenon or as an oasis in the desert of non-spiritual writings. But these poets, whatever their achievements, do not or have not painted for us a tangible personality which we could term spiritual.

The Mahabharata has offered us a Krishna, the Ramayana, a Rama, Ashwa-Ghosa a Buddha, the Bible a Christ. But Vyasa's Krishna, except for the Gita, is a mixed personality, with various interpolations; we get a moral character in certain sections, an unscrupulous and heedless lover in the Bhagavad, a King in the Shanti Parva, an intriguer in the earlier books, a man of action, thought and wisdom in others.

The Ramayana offers us a character of ethical rectitude in Rama. He is not spiritual in the strict sense of the term. Though there is a constant hint of his being an incarnation of the God Vishnu, the presentation seems to belie the fact, with his griefs, doubts, his vacillating nature specially when he banishes his wife and seeks to resort to the "fire test", *agni pariksha*, to prove her purity.

Ashwa-Ghosa's life of Buddha is a simple chronicle and together with the various Jatakas can at best be taken as a myth. The spiritual content is meagre, the ethical element frequent, and miracles the only reminder of Buddha's supermanhood.

The Bible, or rather the New Testament, chronicles the life of Christ. But except for his Sermon on the Mount, we get a mass of supernatural miracles mixed with ethical dogmas. On his inner life, his experiences, his realisations the Bible is silent.

What holds good for the Bible is valid for other scriptures as well. Thus, in the Puranas, miracles are the only pointers to spirituality, if at all we can discern spirituality.

There is a good deal of controversy and difference of opinion regarding spirituality. Most people, even the sophisticated intellectuals, take abstractions, philosophical ideas or moral doctrines to be spiritual. Lacking any guide-line, we have to fall back upon Sri Aurobindo, who gives the definition: "Spirituality is in its essence an awakening to the inner reality of our being, to the spirit, self, soul which is other than our mind, life and body, an inner aspiration to know, to feel, to be that, to enter into contact with the greater Reality beyond and pervading the universe which inhabits also our own being.... the union, a growth or waking into a new becoming or new being, a new self, a new nature." (*Dictionary of Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy*, ed. by M.P. Pandit, p. 246)

This being our tenet, few works would fall under this category. Perhaps only two creations of the Master fulfil the esoteric specifications: the Rishi in the short poem of that name and Satyavan in the epic *Savitri*. The others are either purely romantic or else half-spiritual entities, specially in his dramatic works. It is in these two figures that Sri Aurobindo has given us portraits of spiritual personalities, and the images are well-defined. *The Rishi* is a poem in a new kind of terza-rima and consists of about six hundred lines. The whole is a dialogue between Manu, a King of the ancient Aryans seeking spiritual knowledge, and the Rishi who inhabits the cold Arctic region which was inhabitable in a far-off age. In it Sri Aurobindo has unfolded his central teaching and, in the process, outlined the personality of the Rishi.

The Rishi here represents a self-realised person. He is both a symbol and an actuality. Symbolically he stands for the perfect man, the realisation of the dreams of earth-nature and is a link between the man of the future and the present humanity. Sri Aurobindo defined the Rishis as "men with a great spiritual and occult knowledge not shared by ordinary human beings." (*The Centenary Edition*, Vol. II, p. 4)

The image of the Rishi has a double purpose, with a difference. The first is to bring home the Vedic image as an overt symbol, but hidden behind stands the image of Sri Aurobindo; for it is doubtful whether the Rishi of the Vedas or the Upanishads would have voiced the goal of human transformation, of calling down the Sun of Truth into the abysses of matter and saying:

Then rise above,  
Taking mankind with us to the abode  
Of rapturous love. (*Ibid.*, Vol. 5, p. 310)

In actuality the Rishi is not a recluse or an escapist. If he has shunned the external life, it is to discover a greater truth of existence and find the secret key to all enigmas and contradictions.



His external renunciation is the symbol of an inner severing of all human ties, relations, affinities and attachments. The aim is not a personal attainment to peace and joy and serenity. The Rishi on the contrary aimed to discover the root of human ignorance and strike upon an effective means to eradicate it so that mankind as a whole may rise to a higher consciousness.

This does not mean that Sri Aurobindo is advocating *sannyāsa* as the goal of life. He is only pointing out an effective way, which again is meant not for the weak or the escapist but for the warrior who can rise beyond all needs, both external and internal, so that the seeker may live exclusively in the spirit.

The Rishi is a typical personality, the best in man, rising to transcend all he was and is.

Coming to the poem itself, Manu addresses the Rishi thus:

Rishi who trance-held on the mountains old  
 Art slumbering, void  
 Of sense or motion, for in the spirit's hold  
 Of unalloyed  
 Immortal bliss thou dreamst protected! Hear... (*Ibid.*, p. 298)

This reminds one of Shiva in trance. But the Rishi awakes and exclaims:

Who art thou, warrior armèd gloriously  
 Like the sun?  
 Thy gait is an empire and thine eye  
 Dominion. (*Ibid.*)

The King introduces himself. The Rishi has already been aware of the King's presence on earth as a great ruler and, furthermore, he knows the purpose of his visit. "Thou," he says,

For men perplexed  
 Seekest in this dim aeon and forlorn,  
 With evils vexed,  
 The vanished light. (*Ibid.*)

Then he goes on to confess that he, the Rishi, too was a king, that he was dissatisfied and came to this forbidding place as a recluse.

He had sought God in war, in action, in compassion, in bliss; he had found God only for a moment, and the revelation had been fleeting.

Vexation came. Everything appeared meaningless, the beauty of the rose, of the sun and stars. He came to the Arctic regions where the chill/"Made me meek, Cooled my unease": Not only that: a tranquillity settled in him.

Manu's curiosity is roused. He asks if in that place he found the key to the mystery not found in the glory of war, among men, amid nature.

The Rishi's reply is enigmatic but thought-provoking:

The many's voices fill the listening ear,  
Distract the head:  
The One is silence: on the snows we hear  
Silence tread. (*Ibid.*, p. 300)

Manu cannot seize the import. He asks what the Rishi has found. The Rishi claims that a power within the body conquered death and he arose, "Questing for God".

Then the Rishi goes on to describe his adventures in God's quest, the worlds in space, the gods, the angels and even the triune deities, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, who, it seemed, knew not the Supreme.

Manu is puzzled. The Rishi, before coming to the point, meanders intentionally to awake his consciousness so as to make the king ready to receive the ultimate secret.

But, disgusted, Manu exclaims,

In vain thou hast travelled the unwonted stars  
And the void hast trod. (*Ibid.*, p. 302)

Slowly the Rishi reveals that nothing was in vain. To be in God's arms, he says he abandoned everything and perceived, "the Law/The Truth, the Vast" that created space and the primal tide of things of which human lives are echoes.

Manu asks then if matter, life and mind were the seats of God. No, not even in thought but in the heights and depths where

Light is not, nor our darkness, nor these bright  
Thunderings. (*Ibid.*, p. 314)

There dwells God, concludes the Rishi. Manu's doubts are dispelled and he asks whether we could hope even to gaze on the One

Who lights the world from his eternity  
With a few rays?

"Thou art he," replies the Rishi, coming to the heart of the question. All things from the reptile to man and all acts are He and His. We love and hate ourselves, pain, joy, weaknesses all are His. He is the silent witness.

Doubts again assail Manu. All things then are vain, and are meant for a vain audience: the youth, the beauty, the meditations, the wars and the labour.

Everything has a purpose from the little weeds that float to “the majestic round/Of the suns”. Even our dreams are substantial. God himself is the poet and dreamer whose dream is the creation—the stars, earth, oceans and men. A single word emerging out of Him created all this. He then loses himself in his creation and this creates the veil between the creature and the creator. But “through many veils/This Spirit gleams”, and

The dreams of God are truths and He prevails.  
Then all His time  
Cherish thyself, O King, and cherish men  
Anchored in Him. (*Ibid.*, p. 307)

Next Manu asks if this creation is annihilated when God’s voice and fiat is stilled.

The Rishi replies that behind this physical world stands another subtler world, more real. All our thoughts and deeds, the music, the beauty, come from this source. Even our bodies engulfed in inertia come from it, this dream-world which is more real than the physical one.

Our effort is to express, manifest and move towards this Beauty, Harmony and Thought. Seizing a little of them in our lives is a rewarding experience. In that world all opposites are reconciled.

In this fashion, we attempt at progress, a very slow movement towards the expression of this seemingly elusive world. The progress is marked by stress, revolution, anguish and disaster. Our ships founder or else are left in a mid-world of twilight calm. This is our life, and the attempt continues till the predestined goal has been reached. Not to end in a tragedy of failure did our journey begin. Even if we fall, we shall arise anew. The thoughts and the dream and the perfection must become manifest. The One living within us is untouched by error, storm and fall, all of which only strengthen Him and delight Him.

Even above the mind resides the Day, the Source from where we have strayed; in fact our beings are replicas of this Godhead above. This Godhead is above joy and grief. Only when we have stilled the mind into a perfect trance can we rise to this sphere, away from the bondage of the gross material sheath. There the guardians of joy will open the golden doors into our own home, our heaven.

To bring heaven down upon our earth is our mission. Then as the last step we must rise up with all humanity to this altitude, to God.

Therefore the Rishi’s message may be summed up: “Shrink not from life with all its good, evil, sin and virtue. Play your part like an actor, the world your drama, work not for any fruit but as a sacrifice. Love all things, fear not to love or to enjoy. Death is only a passage. The goal is the greater existence, Love alone is the higher joy.”

Manu, awakened fully, says,

But Him I seek, the still and perfect One—  
The Sun not rays. (*Ibid.*, p. 311)

The Rishi replies,

For thou art He, O King, Only the night  
Is on thy soul  
By thy own will. Remove it and recover  
The serene whole  
Thou art indeed, then raise up man the lover  
To God the goal. (*Ibid.*, pp. 311-12)

What the Rishi is revealing is the core of Sri Aurobindo's teaching. But the method he employs is one of gradual illumination. He goes from the outer to the inner, from the traditional to the spiritual. In the presentation Sri Aurobindo adheres to the Vedic concept of revelation where "there is no suggestion of the miraculous or the supernatural. The Rishi who employs these faculties has acquired them by a progressive self-culture. Knowledge itself was travelling and a reaching, a finding and a winning, the revelation came only at the end, the light was the prize of a final victory." (Cent. Vol. 10, p. 8)

(*To be continued*)

ROMEN

### A Correction

By an unfortunate oversight the book *Lift Me High* by Lalita was priced in several issues of *Mother India* at Rs. 4 instead of Rs. 5. We regret the inconvenience caused thereby to *SABDA*, our slip having provoked some puzzled or annoyed inquiries from prospective buyers.

# THE CHARACTER OF LIFE

## CONSCIOUSNESS APPROACH TO SHAKESPEARE

(Continued from the issue of August 15, 1978)

### The Yoga of *King Lear*

#### IX. The Death of Edmund, Cordelia and Lear

EDMUND is mortally wounded by Edgar. Goneril and Regan return to their tents. There follows a long interval in which Edgar, Edmund and Albany discuss the sufferings of Gloucester and Lear. During this time Edmund mentions nothing about Lear and Cordelia though he knows fully well he is about to die. Bradley is unable to find sufficient justification for the interval of nearly 100 lines between the time Edmund knows he is going to die and the moment he reveals the murder plot. Then news comes that Goneril has murdered Regan and killed herself. Still Edmund says nothing. But as soon as the dead bodies of the sisters are brought before him, he reveals the plot against the king and his daughter:

I pant for life. Some good I mean to do,  
Despite of mine own nature. (V. iii. 242)

The fact that Edmund is unable to act so long as Goneril and Regan live substantiates the dominating influence they had over his consciousness. Once they are gone he is reduced again to human proportions and takes a positive initiative to save Cordelia and the king. The influence they had on him was mainly in the nature of a vibration or atmosphere of evil, but it was also related to Edmund's desire for social recognition and achievement. The two daughters both saw Edmund as the one suitable man to defeat the French invasion and rule the kingdom as their mate. Their attraction was anything but emotional; it was the respect for strength and the recognition of a similar capacity for evil. But to Edmund, the attention of the two princesses, even if they were monsters, is a life-fulfilling achievement. He who is a bastard and outcast destined not even to inherit property or a title is by a rapid twist of events made Earl of Gloucester and given the hope of becoming King. How close he comes to achieving it were it not for Edgar's intervention. Edmund dies recalling with pride that Regan and Goneril killed each other over him:

I was contracted to them both. All three  
Now marry in an instant. (V.iii.228)

and

Yet Edmund was belov'd.  
The one the other poison'd for my sake,  
And after slew herself. (V.iii.239)

The death of Cordelia is hard to reconcile in our emotions but here too Shakespeare is true to life rather than to our human expectations or theories of tragic catharsis. It is easy for us to see the intrusion of Lear's vitality into the sphere of affection. It is more difficult for us to feel the full power and determination behind Cordelia's assertion of virtue and honesty. But her words to her father and her sisters in the first act are filled with the very same pride and wilfulness which Lear is cleansed of through great suffering. Shakespeare does not reveal to us the inner ordeal through which she passes in her palace while Lear was braving the storm on the heath, but when we hear of her next it is apparent that she too has suffered immensely, mellowed and begun to shed that which provoked her father to folly and suffering.

Kent. Did your letters pierce the Queen to any demonstration of grief?

Gent. Ay, sir; she took them, read them in my presence,  
And now and then an ample tear trill'd down  
Her delicate cheek. It seem'd she was a queen  
Over her passion, who, most rebel-like,  
Sought to be king o'er her.

Kent. O, then it move'd her.

Gent. Not to a rage; patience and sorrow strove  
Who should express her goodliest. You have seen  
Sunshine and rain at once : her smiles and tears  
Were like a better way. Those happy smilets  
That play'd on her ripe lip seem'd not to know  
What guests were in her eyes, which parted thence  
As pearls from diamonds dropp'd. In brief,  
Sorrow would be a rarity most belov'd  
If all could so become it.

(IV.iii.9-24)

The description reveals a greater softness in her being which can only come when the passions subside and the heart emerges.

The war was an individual initiative by Cordelia to undo the harm caused by her earlier assertion. Normally in life the agent of misfortune lacks the power to reverse or correct a movement unleashed by his action unless he reverses himself not only in behaviour but at the level from which the original act was initiated. In this case Cordelia acted from vital egoism. For her to become an agent for her father's salvation, she must first overcome in herself the same point in consciousness which Lear is moved to transcend through his sufferings. But Cordelia is still very young and though she has suffered greatly in exile, the inner growth required is beyond her. Her personality cannot compare with Lear's in power or greatness, though his kindness and goodness of heart are far more evident in his daughter. Cordelia possesses a stoical fortitude and self-control, but not the strength required to achieve in life, to conquer or to save. What appeared as refusal and assertion in her may be more accurately des-

cribed as incapacity or inability, the incapacity to satisfy her father's need for affection and the inability to bring forth from her heart a power of love sufficient to save him.

Cordelia's last words following their capture by her sisters reveal that she has yet to fully realise her initial error and to renounce her lower egoism. She is yet young and life has not been so compelling in its pressure for that change. There is still the pride of virtue and the stoical self-righteousness of a warrior concealing the fullness of her heart:

We are not the first  
Who with the best meaning have incurr'd the worst.  
For thee, oppressed King, am I cast down;  
Myself could else out-frown false Fortune's frown. (V.iii.3-5)

Cordelia's assertion against her father in the court was the starting-point for all the evil and suffering which followed. She was the first to respond to the movement initiated by Lear and she is the last to die as a consequence of it before Lear himself dies. She possessed the strength of character to suffer quietly but not the self-mastery or power to save her father from the results of his own acts. Yet her heart's love and affection was deep enough to bring about their reunion and in her willingness to sacrifice herself for him, it is she who is killed by the executioner instead of her father. Her final act does save him from that end but it cannot save him from the burden of age, suffering and grief which take his life a few moments later.

The growth Lear had to undergo is of the nature of a new birth, a rising out of his center of vital consciousness of power, authority, passion and vengeance into the consciousness of his emotional being. Such a growth or transformation can only be effective when it is total and absolute. It cannot be that one moves fully to the higher poise while still retaining vestiges of the lower, for if even a strand of lower habit is reserved for the old way the higher may emerge and show itself for a time but it will be made impure and degraded by the intrusion of the lower consciousness and finally be reduced by that impurity to only a modified version of the old. The transition cannot be completed until there is a death of the old.

Lear undergoes the process of shedding his former self and bringing out the richness of his emotive being. What he seeks to reject rises irresistibly and asserts itself until it is worked out. We see him in transition approach the final stage many times only to have the old passions reassert themselves and throw up all sorts of impurities—impurities of excitement, hatred, self-pity and revenge—which effectively neutralise for the time being the higher expression. He has initiated an inner movement to which the forces of life have responded and which they are leading to completion. Each blow to his vanity, pride and ego is an aid life offers to the process. Each time the old personality reasserts itself in action, speech or thought, instantly life conditions arise to root out the deeply seeded habits and make way for higher ones to spring forth. Because the transition is very difficult and painful it is nearly impos-

sible for Lear to consciously complete what he began. Life fosters the movement and brings him to the penultimate step. We quote at length a passage from Bradley which gives masterly expression to this fact:

The old King who in pleading with his daughters feels so intensely his own humiliation and their horrible ingratitude, and who yet, at fourscore and upward, constrains himself to practise a self-control and patience so many years disused; who out of old affection for his Fool, and in repentance for his injustice to the Fool's beloved mistress, tolerates incessant and cutting reminders of his own folly and wrong; in whom the rage of the storm awakes a power and a poetic grandeur surpassing even that of Othello's anguish; who comes in his affliction to think of others first, and to seek, in tender solicitude for his poor boy, the shelter he scorns for his own bare head; who learns to feel and to pray for the miserable and houseless poor, to discern the falseness of flattery and the brutality of authority, and to pierce below the differences of rank and raiment to the common humanity beneath; whose sight is so purged by scalding tears that it sees at last how power and place and all things in the world are vanity except love; who tastes in his last hours the extremes both of love's rapture and of its agony, but could never, if he lived on or lived again, care a jot for aught beside—there is no figure, surely, in the world of poetry at once so grand, so pathetic, and so beautiful as his. Well, but Lear owes the whole of this to those sufferings which made us doubt whether life were not simply evil, and men like the flies which wanton boys torture for their sport. Should we not be at least as near the truth if we called this poem *The Redemption of King Lear*, and declared that the business of 'the gods' with him was neither to torment him, nor to teach him a 'noble anger', but to lead him to attain through apparently hopeless failure the very end and aim of life?<sup>26</sup>

In the final scene Lear enters carrying the body of Cordelia, bemoaning her death and cursing humanity, "A plague upon you, murderers, traitors all!" He meets his loyal servant Kent but is too absorbed in Cordelia to fully understand Kent's words. Albany proposes to resign and return absolute powers to the old king. But Lear has not come so far to return to his old life. No longer can power attract him. His one and only concern is Cordelia. Suddenly he thinks her lips are moving and she may yet be alive.

And my poor fool is hang'd! No, no, no life!  
 Why should a dog, a horse, a rat have life,  
 And thou no breath at all? Thou'lt come no more,  
 Never, never, never, never, never.  
 Pray you undo this button. Thank you, sir.  
 Do you see this? Look on her. Look, her lips.  
 Look there, look there!

(V.iii.305)



In the agony of his loss and that ecstatic hope, he dies. The agony he feels is the pain of the ordeal he has undergone, the disillusionment with power, the death of his old self and the loss of everything he valued. But the ecstatic hope is not a false one. It is his intuition of the new self he has become and the promise of the fulfilment it will bring, now or hereafter.

Note the similarity to Edgar's description of Gloucester's death. In death as in life the parallel between the experiences of Lear and Gloucester reminds us again of the wider movement of which Lear was a part and a representative.

Edg.	But his flaw'd heart— Alack, too weak the conflict to support!— 'Twi'xt two extremes of passion, joy and grief, Burst smilingly.	(V.iii.196)
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It is not simply an individual growth that Lear made. In some measure all those around him make a marked progress in consciousness indicating a universal aspect to the movement. Ultimately what Lear loses is his pride, vanity and love of power and what he gains in their place is a true capacity for love. Gloucester loses his ignorance and precipitance and gains knowledge and patience. Edgar loses his fear and self-preoccupation to become ruler of half a kingdom. Kent loses his rashness and uncontrollable plainness to become quiet, supportive and inconspicuous in his loyalty and service. Holloway writes, "The forces of life have been persistently terrible and cruel, but have also brought men back to do the things it is their part to do."<sup>27</sup>

Along with them the kingdom itself has evolved. With Lear's passing, Albany, Edgar and Kent remain. Kent refuses to accept authority and wants only to follow his master. The other two among all the leading figures of the drama possess in some degree the qualities Lear was trying to attain. Passion, anger and vengeance are foreign to their natures. Mild gentleness and goodness predominate. Albany is wiser and stronger from his confrontation with Goneril. Edgar has gained confidence and shed the fear of his youth. The country itself for a time comes to be led by men of heart rather than men of power. But as with the individual, so too with the country. The lower tendencies which have asserted and been defeated will not remain dormant forever. It is certain they will rise again, not once but innumerable times, for many ages to come, until the consciousness of the country has completed the evolutionary growth which Lear achieved on his passing.

*(To be continued)*

GARRY JACOBS

#### NOTES

<sup>26</sup> *Shakespearean Tragedy*, H. C. Bradley, Macmillan & Co., 1965, p. 235.

<sup>27</sup> *Casebook: King Lear*, edited by Frank Kermode, Macmillan & Co., 1969, p. 223.

# *Students' Section*

## **THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION**

SPECIAL FORTY-FIRST SEMINAR

**In Celebration of the Mother's Birth Centenary  
18th-19th February 1978**

*(Continued from the issue of September 1978)*

### **WHAT I HAVE LEARNT FROM THE MOTHER**

#### **Speech By Shyamali Ghosh**

I DID not have the privilege to have a direct contact with the Mother as many of the Ashram sadhaks had when She was very actively with them in their day-to-day life.

I came to the Ashram long after She had very much curtailed Her daily contacts with the sadhaks. I met Her personally only once a year—on my birthday. That special and sweet meeting lasted three to four minutes. We spoke of nothing. There were no words or only a few monosyllabic ones which She uttered. But She poured into my heart the sweetness of Her fathomless smile. Sometimes She looked at me with a firm burning look; perhaps She was burning the impurities in me or kindling the fire in me which would itself burn the impurities in time.

For me, therefore, there were no direct tangible lessons from Her. But I do not think that I have missed much because all that She had to teach us She has written in Her books for us. It is up to us to learn Her lessons and live according to Her ideal.

Anywhere I go—to school, "Knowledge", library, laboratory or any Ashram department—I come across quotations either from the Mother or from Sri Aurobindo which have served as guide-lines in my development. For instance, the laundry black-board keeps a permanent quotation of the Mother which runs thus : "Let us work as we pray, for indeed work is the body's best prayer to the Divine." In the main dining-hall there is another quotation but this time from Sri Aurobindo: "Always behave as if the Mother was looking at you; because she is, indeed, always present."

Since I come across these quotations often, I have got them by heart and I recall them now and then. When suddenly, like a flash of lightning, it comes to me: "Always behave as if the Mother was looking at you...", at once I become conscious of myself and my wrong movements, and I try to behave according to my best light. But the sad thing about it is that I am not always conscious of the Mother's Presence. So I do not make any sustained effort. Only when I become constantly conscious and sure of Her Presence then I shall have learnt something.

There are a few lessons of the Mother which I have come to learn by hearing them from somebody. I have learnt them once for all because when I heard them they struck at once my heart and mind and to such an extent that I always remember them. To give an example, I shall mention one which occurred when I was only ten years old. One day towards evening, when I was moving about in the school-courtyard, I saw an old sadhak of the Ashram working in the school-garden. I went up to him and asked if I could be of any help. The work was to root out the grasses. He said that I could surely help him, but he added that even if I worked a little I must work perfectly. Saying so he quoted from the Mother: "Whatever work you do, do it as perfectly as you can. That is the best service to the Divine in man." This struck me and so much so that even now when I do any work these words echo and re-echo in my ears. I try to do the work according to my highest ideal of perfection.

I am reminded of another incident which relates to my educational life. I was struggling with a subject and couldn't make up my mind whether to drop the subject or get along with it without any assimilation. To make the decision was giving me mental agony. It was one of Sri Aurobindo's works, which is why I was hesitant. In the midst of the struggle for taking a decision I received a message of the Mother which was being distributed to all the students—this message helped me to make the right decision. It said: "Always do what you know to be the best even if it is the most difficult thing to do." I remembered also another message of Hers where She says: "What cannot be done today will surely be done later on. No effort for progress has ever been made in vain." I made up my mind not to give up the subject. Keeping the words of the Mother in my mind I forged ahead on my path.... Had I discontinued the subject or left my problem unsolved I wouldn't have made any progress nor would I have had the joy of making it. It goes without saying that escaping from a difficulty is no escape, for it comes back on our way sooner or later.

I am reminded of a host of other incidents but it is not possible to mention them all. However, I shall speak to you of one more.

Very often the shocks and blows of life make me very upset and I keep on brooding, unable to come out of the mental whirlpool. There seems no sign of escape but even at that sombre moment the Compassionate Mother's words come unseen to help. I recall Her sentence: "You simply chase away depression with a smile." Then again it so happens sometimes that suddenly the past errors and difficulties rise up from the subconscious and make me feel very depressed, unnecessarily, and impede my march forward. It is a miserable state of mind which I dread most. Whenever I feel that cloudy atmosphere surrounding me, I try to look for help from the Mother and I recall Her words: "We must at each moment shake off the past like falling dust." And, "Think not of what you were, but of what you aspire to be." I repeat Her words like chanting a Mantra trying to concentrate on building up a luminous future.

Apart from learning valuable lessons from books and messages of the Mother, I also learn from my teachers who have themselves learnt from Her. The Mother has taught them regularity, punctuality, cleanliness and many other qualities which some

of the teachers have truly learnt and I try to follow them as concrete examples set by the Mother.

Another thing which I try to learn is what my teachers keep on telling me; they remind me of one thing to which the Mother gave paramount importance. Whatever I may study in school or 'Higher Course', whether I learn English or French, learn to sing or get poems by heart, I must keep one point in view, that is, finally my aim is not merely to develop the faculties of my mind but to give scope for the divine spark in me to grow, widen and illumine my mind and life. Our Mother has clearly said: "It is not brilliant students that we want, it is living souls."

I have the glimpse of what I must do and become. I also make an effort to live according to the Mother's ideal. But I must admit that I am not making this effort continuously, therefore the progress is very slow. It does not matter if the progress is slow but I must be sure that I am moving forward. It will not be quite true if I say that I have learnt something; it would be more true if I said that I am learning something.

### **Speech by Sumita Chakravarti<sup>1</sup>**

Friends,

It is a long time since I last spoke in a Seminar of the New Age Association. However, when I heard of the topic for the Mother's Birth Centenary Seminar, I felt an urge to join in the deliberations and share experiences. It is always good to get back to the Ashram from time to time, re-live the memories of a wonderful childhood and recharge the life-batteries. It is also nice to be back with the New Age Association though many of the faces are new to me.

What have I learnt from the Mother? My spontaneous reply would be "Everything"—for indeed I have learnt the values of life from Her. In fact it is from Her alone that I have learnt to live. I have learnt from Her that "Life is" NOT "but a day, a fragile dewdrop on its perilous way from a tree's summit." I have learnt to understand from Her that life is in fact an Ascent towards Truth—that it is a journey with an aim and that real achievement is to progress towards that goal.

When I was about to leave the fold of the Ashram to join the Indian Administrative Service, I had the extreme good fortune to be personally told by the Mother to keep in mind the real ideal of my life. I realise today that if I had not possessed this ideal, my life, the very process of living would have been reduced to a futile existence; it would have been an existence without seeking, without meaning, without progress. Instead, today I know that I live to seek and progress so as to attain the Goal that is more glorious than all material or intellectual achievements.

This gift from the Mother is extremely precious to me; when I see so many valuable lives being wasted in useless pursuits of so-called happiness, I realise how

<sup>1</sup> The speaker, a former student of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, is now serving in I A S. at Delhi.

fortunate I have been to be guided towards the right direction by Her from a very early age. She has taught me the meaning of my life.

Not only has She taught me this. She has also shown me the way to achieve the ideal. She has taught me that at every step and at every moment Her work can be done if there is proper dedication. This knowledge that even a work that appears to be petty or meaningless can be transformed into Her Work and thus acquire significance is indeed invaluable. It makes even writing on dusty files a purposeful exercise. Notes, drafts, discussions, demi-officials and office memoranda change from mere drudgery to something joyous. I don't mean at all to say that such dedication is easily achieved. But even to know the way is not a small thing. Through constant effort and striving and with the Mother to help, one is sure to progress. The Mother has asked us to keep on striving. She has also assured us that it is when all seems lost that all is saved.

Thus, when I have pitfalls and gloom sets in, I remember the Mother's words and get courage from Her assurance. I learn to throw away despair and self-pity, and feel a new energy and vigour in my being. I gradually learn to evoke a deep happiness and energy from within which help me in meeting difficult forces in my day-to-day life. Interactionism reveals its true significance. There are still some moments when I feel that my efforts and stivings are useless and then I remember what the Mother has so often said that achievements are not to be judged by their quantum or size but by the sincerity of the effort. Who can forget Her acceptance of the smallest offerings with extreme affection and graciousness from the humblest of people? It was the sincerity that was really the offering. In a world where insincerity appears to be always winning, any effort to remain sincere is not easy. But one learns also that in fact an action done sincerely has its own satisfaction which surpasses any dubious gain that hypocrisy or insincerity could ever attain. With sincerity hand-in-hand comes faith. The Mother has said, "Have faith and He will do everything for you." What a magnificent assurance! This is what Sri Krishna taught Arjuna in the Gita, "Take refuge in Me alone. I will deliver thee from all sin and evil."

I know in my heart that He has done and always will do everything for me. Yet, often enough when difficulties loom larger than life, don't I seem to forget this very fact and tend to panic? The Mother then reminds me of the Help that is always there. She makes me aware that with receptivity in me I shall be guided on my way.

As I write this, so many memories come back to me, so many thoughts occur in my mind. The Mother, the manifestation of the Supreme Shakti, is the embodiment of the various aspects of that Shakti. We have been blessed by Her physical Presence amidst us—we have sat at Her feet and received Her loving touch. Tagore had yearned for just such a touch when he had sung:

শুধু তোমাব বাণী নয়গো হে বন্ধু, হে পিয়,

মাঝে মাঝে প্ৰাণে তোমাব পবশ্ৰুখানি দিও

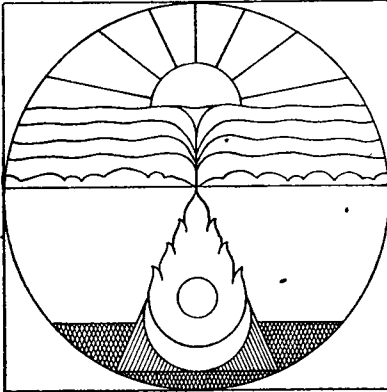
(Let me have not only Thy words O Friend, O Beloved,  
But also sometimes Thy touch in my soul.)

The Mother in Her great love for us has given us the very gift that the seer-poet quested for and through Her touch, without our knowing it, She has shaped our being.

In Her we see not a distant Divinity but a Supreme Administrator, a sympathetic heart, a painstaking and patient Teacher and above all the Mother in whose single heart the whole world could take refuge. There is so much to learn from Her that it would take several lives of sincere sadhana to really learn and live even a small part of it. However, Her action in us—always painstaking, affectionate and compassionate—continues. She is, as we all know, constantly with us, giving us courage and protection and also shaking us up from lethargy whenever necessary. The earth has yet to go far before it can live what She has come to teach. But that day will surely dawn, for:

A flame of radiant happiness she was born  
And surely will that flame set earth alight...

*Compiled by KISHOR GANDHI*



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