

MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

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TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS

The enormous rise in the cost of paper, production and distribution and the change in some other factors have forced us to raise by a small margin our subscription from 1980. We have kept the margin as small as possible because the cost of living is everywhere on the increase. In passing, we may state that the cost to us of each copy of *Mother India* is more than Rs. 3/-. It is only the donations and advertisements that help us out to a great extent.

Among the other factors mentioned above, there is our decision of reverting to the use of envelopes instead of wrappers for posting in India. Complaints have come in that the edges of the copies got crumpled and that sometimes the wrappers got torn so that the copies were not delivered. But the cost of envelopes has shot up from the rate of Rs. 55/- in 1976 to the present rate of Rs. 200/- per thousand (a 300% increment). We have already had them made, and as soon as the wrappers in stock are exhausted—most probably by April 1980—we shall start with the envelopes.

The Indian postage per copy is now 15 paise instead of 10. Posting abroad by sea-mail now costs Rs. 1.50 instead of 50 paise as in 1976.

With a view to simplify our accounts for those whose subscriptions end in months other than December 1979, we shall adjust the period according to the new rate or ask them to pay the extra amount when it is due.

We count as ever on the goodwill of our subscribers.

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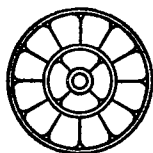
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.

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"Great is Truth and it shall prevail."

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
ONLY ONE THING...	
A MESSAGE BY THE MOTHER	... 661
WHAT WE ARE HERE IN THE ASHRAM TO DO:	
A LETTER BY THE MOTHER	... 661
WORDS OF THE MOTHER:	
1. THE SUPREME MOTHER	
2. "THE DIVINE" AND "THE MOTHER"	... 662
INNER WHISPERS (Poem)	<i>Minnie N. Canteenwalla</i> ... 664
STATES OF PHYSICAL IMBALANCE:	
FROM A TALK BY THE MOTHER	... 665
WE SHALL MEET AGAIN (Poem)	<i>A. Venkataranga</i> ... 666
GIVING UP OF DESIRE: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL GLIMPSE BY THE MOTHER	... 667
AFTER THE RAINS (Poem)	<i>G. Viswanathan</i> ... 668
SOME CENTRAL PROCESSES OF THE YOGA:	
FROM A LETTER BY SRI AUROBINDO	... 669
DEEP IN OUR SOUL (Poem)	<i>Roger Harris</i> ... 672
A SONNET BY NIRODBARAN WITH SRI AUROBINDO'S CORRECTIONS AND COMMENTS	... 673
MIGHTY COLUMNS... (Poem)	<i>Stuart</i> ... 675
THREE VISIONS OF CHAMPAKLAL RELATED BY HIMSELF	... 676

CONTENTS

NIGHT BEAMS (Poem)	<i>Patti</i>	... 680
THE DEVELOPMENT OF SRI AUROBINDO'S SPIRITUAL SYSTEM AND THE MOTHER'S CONTRIBUTION TO IT: SUPPLEMENT— A QUESTION REOPENED AND RECONSIDERED		
	<i>K.D. Sethna</i>	... 681
HIS JOY... (Poem)	<i>Richard Eggenberger</i>	... 691
MY ANIMALS IN BOMBAY AND THE MOTHER'S GRACE: SOME RECOLLECTIONS BY LALITA		
		... 692
TOWARDS THE HIGHER LIFE: CHAPTER II: SPARKS OF SURRENDER		
		... 697
LEVELS OF EXPERIENCE	<i>Indra Sen</i>	... 705
THE THEOLOGICAL PROBLEM IN <i>Paradise Lost</i>	<i>Adarsh Bala</i>	... 710
THE IDEAL CHILD		... 716
INDIAN LIFE IN ENGLISH WRITINGS: PART II: OF LAND AND PEOPLE		
	<i>Romen Palit</i>	... 718
EUROPE 1974: A TRAVELOGUE		
	<i>Chaundona & Sanat K. Banerji</i>	... 724
BOOKS IN THE BALANCE		
HEALTH AND HEALING IN YOGA: SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS AND TALKS OF THE MOTHER		
SRI AUROBINDO CIRCLE—THIRTY-FIFTH NUMBER (SRI AUROBINDO SOCIETY ANNUAL—1979)		
	<i>Reviews by P. Raja</i>	... 727

AN APPEAL TO OUR WELL-WISHERS

Mother India is in need of donations of any amount that can be spared.

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.

AN EXPLANATION TO OUR WELL-WISHERS

The good number of our advertisements must not be taken as a sign of great gain. We pay a very large commission on several of them, and after deducting press-charges our profit is small on the whole.

ONLY ONE THING...

A MESSAGE BY THE MOTHER

WE have only one thing to do, the perfect surrender of which Sri Aurobindo speaks, the total self-giving to the Divine Will whatever happens, even in the midst of the night.

There is the night and there is the sun, the night and the sun, again the night, many nights, but one must cling to this will to surrender, cling to it as through a tempest, and give up everything into the hands of the Supreme Lord, until the day when the sun comes forever, the total victory.

WHAT WE ARE HERE IN THE ASHRAM TO DO

A LETTER BY THE MOTHER

IN human life the reason for all difficulties, all disagreements, all moral sufferings is the presence of the ego, in each one with its desires, its preferences and repulsions. When one has not habituated oneself to overcome one's ego and its demands, and when one does not force it to remain quiet and calm in a corner, even in disinterested work meant to help others, this ego reacts to all that it does not like, producing an inner storm which comes up to the surface and spoils everything in the work.

This work of overcoming one's ego is long, slow and difficult; it demands a constant attention and a sustained effort. For some this effort is more easy, for others it is more difficult.

We are here in the Ashram to do this work together with the help of Sri Aurobindo's knowledge and force, in an attempt to realise a community more harmonious, more united, therefore much more effective in life.

As long as I was physically present with you all, my presence helped you to realise this control over the ego and that is why it was not necessary for me to speak often to you about it individually.

But now it is necessary that this effort should be there at the base of each one's existence; and in them, all the more, who have a responsible work and who have to look after others. The leaders should always show the example, they should always practise the virtues which they demand of those whom they are looking after; they should be understanding, patient, tolerant, full of sympathy and of warm and friendly goodwill, not out of egoism to make friends, but out of generosity to be able to understand and help others.

Forgetting one's self, one's likes and dislikes, is indispensable in order to be a real leader.

And this is what I ask of you now so that you can face your responsibilities the way you should. Then you will realise that where disorder and disunion were felt before, there they will have disappeared, and harmony, peace and joy will be in their place.

WORDS OF THE MOTHER

I

THE SUPREME MOTHER

Sweet Mother, here you speak of the Supreme Mother. Is she the same as the one Sri Aurobindo speaks of in "The Mother"?

YES.

Then the conception of the Supreme Mother is purely human? Or she too in her origins has no gender?

No.

But I have never said that it was purely human. I said that it was the formulation which was human. I haven't said that it was purely human, nowhere have I said that it was purely human. One could say that this explanation is a little too human but I don't mean that she is purely human.

Then in her origin she has a gender?

Beyond the manifestation there is no differentiation, that is, there are not *two*, there is only *one*. It was at the moment of creation that it became two. But before that it was one, and there was no difference; as it was one, it was only one. There were countless possibilities, but it was one, in fact it was one, and it was only in the creation that it became two. The differentiation is not something eternal and co-existent. It is for the creation, and in fact for the creation of this world only. There were perhaps many worlds created in an absolutely different way from this our universe. Not only were they there, but perhaps at this moment there are countless universes with which we have no contact and of which therefore we are totally ignorant and which may exist.

Are there any, Sweet Mother?

I am telling you it is possible. (*Laughter*) We can say nothing about it. We know nothing about it. All that we know, if we know it at all, is our own universe, that's all. But there is no reason why there could not be others—one can't say, "There aren't any others", one knows nothing about it—where all things are absolutely different, perhaps so different that we have no relation.... There will be a new creation, the supramental creation. Well, there's no reason why this creation may not have...may not take a different form from the one which has been here up till now. And as for me, what I say...is that this is the only solution to the problem, that instead of there being this division, it may be a creation, a being... which will unite "conception and execution, vision and creation in one single consciousness and action"—because that's what has produced the differentiation, the fact that there

was the conception and then the execution of this conception, the vision of what had to be and the creation of this vision, that is, the objective realisation of this vision; well, there is no reason why it should be divided; the two things can be done by the same being and therefore there should be only one single being.

Instead of there being two lines, one masculine and one feminine, there should be one single being, and that's what I conceive as the solution of all problems—all problems, not only this one—and as the prototype of the supramental creation.

Sweet Mother, here you have said that the Supreme Mother is the creatrix of the universe. But in India usually it is said that Brahma is the creator.

But Sri Aurobindo has said that the Supreme Mother is the mother of Brahma. She is the Mother of all the gods.

The genders of the gods and goddesses are also human formations?

No, no! Why should they be human formations? I have never said that they were of human formation. The gods and goddesses of the Overmind are gods and goddesses differentiated in their form. It is not man who has created the gods of the Overmind, the gods of the Overmind come of a direct creation, I don't know if they preceded men, but I think so. I think terrestrial creation, the terrestrial formation was made by the godheads of the Overmind, and that in fact there are many godheads of the Overmind who were fashioners upon earth, not incarnated upon earth but fashioners of what occurred upon earth, who gave the ideas, the forms. Sri Aurobindo always used to say that what was formerly called "gods" was a being of the Overmind, that the supreme godhead was a being of the Overmind.

18 MAY 1955

2

"THE DIVINE" AND "THE MOTHER"

Sweet Mother, here it is written: "The Truth for you is to feel the Divine in you, open to the Mother and work for the Divine till you are aware of her in all your activities." Why has he said "the Divine" once and another time "the Mother"?

PROBABLY he considers these the two aspects of the problem. The truth is that there are people who can more easily get into contact with an impersonal Divine than with a personal Divine. For them, for certain minds, certain types of intelligence, it is easier; they understand better or think they understand better.

You see, there are certain...what we could call certain attributes of the Divine which it seems to them impossible to give to a personal being, and so they prefer to have a relation with an impersonal conception of the Divine. So, for them, he says this.

There are others who are able to have both at the same time, one completing the other; but for others still it is an antinomy, a contradiction. So, they prefer to

choose one or the other. I think this is why he has put it like that, so that each one may choose the approach that's easiest for him and the most expressive also. Essentially it is the same thing; in the human mind it becomes different. And then, man's mind fashions man's consciousness; and as for the human consciousness, well, it depends on one's inner attitude and one's tastes. The mind always needs to make divisions, otherwise it thinks that it does not understand. Probably it is to help him in his work so that there may not be someone who says, "Ah, no, I don't want the personal Divine!"—so he says, "It is all right, turn to an impersonal God."

17 November 1954

INNER WHISPERS

I SEEK a word—a sign.
 In vexed sleep, troubled worlds I visit,
 Like a lost soul fumbling through indescribable fright.
 Why? Sweet Mother, a test, for me, is it?
 Of faith in you?—of utter surrender?
 I wait each day, with the psychic eyes closed,
 For these soft inner whispers in my ears—
 Answers, solutions, that none else hears.
 Strike down, O Mother Durga, ugly elusive fears!
 But I know these silent responses to my prayers
 Will continue as long as the mighty sun will shine
 And night will follow each beautiful day
 And the promise of your Light illumine each baffled moment,
 And mortals their dreams at your glorious Feet will lay
 In faith, for fulfilment, and your miracles will forever stay.

MINNIE N. CANTENWALLA

STATES OF PHYSICAL IMBALANCE

FROM A TALK BY THE MOTHER

...THERE are a number of illnesses or states of physical imbalance which can be cured simply by removing the effect, that is, by stopping the suffering. Usually it comes back because the cause is still there. If the cause of the illness is found and one acts directly on its cause, then one can be cured radically. But if one is not able to do that, one can make use of this influence, of this control over pain in order—by cutting off the pain or eliminating it or mastering it in oneself—to work on the illness. So this is an effect, so to say, from outside inwards; while the other is an effect from within outwards, which is much more lasting and much more complete. But the other also is effective.

For example, you see, some people suffer from unbearable toothache. It depends above all... some people are more or less what I call “coddled”, that is, unable to resist any pain, to bear it; they immediately say, “I can’t! It is unbearable, I can’t bear any more!” Ah, this indeed changes nothing in the circumstances; it does not stop the suffering, because it is not by telling it that you don’t want it that you make it go away. But if one can do two things: either bring into oneself — for all nervous suffering, for example—bring into oneself a kind of immobility, as total as possible, at the place of pain, this has the effect of an anaesthetic. If one succeeds in bringing an inner immobility, an immobility of the inner vibration, at the spot where one is suffering, it has exactly the same effect as an anaesthetic. It cuts off the contact between the place of pain and the brain, and once you have cut the contact, if you can keep this state long enough, the pain will disappear. You must form the habit of doing this. But you have the occasion, all the time, the opportunity to do it: you get a cut, get a knock, you see, one always gets a little hurt somewhere—especially when doing athletics, gymnastics and all that—well, these are opportunities given to us. Instead of sitting there observing the pain, trying to analyse it, concentrating upon it, which makes it increase indefinitely... There are people who think of something else but it does not last; they think of something else and then suddenly are drawn back to the place that hurts. But if one can do this... You see, since the pain is there, it proves that you are in contact with the nerve that’s transmitting the pain, otherwise you wouldn’t feel it. Well, once you know that you are in contact, you try to accumulate at that point as much immobility as you can, to stop the vibration of the pain; you will perceive then that it has the effect of a limb which goes to sleep when you are in an awkward position and that all of a sudden... you know, don’t you?... and then, when it stops, it begins to vibrate again terribly. Well, you deliberately try this kind of concentration of immobility in the painful nerve; at the painful point you bring as total an immobility as you can. Well, you will see that it works, as I told you, like an anaesthetic: it puts the thing to sleep. And then, if you can add to that a kind of inner peace and a trust that the pain will go away, well, I tell you that it will go.

Of all things, that which is considered the most difficult from the yogic point of view is toothache, because it is very close to the brain. Well, I know that this can be done truly to the extent of not feeling the pain at all; and this does not cure the bad tooth, but there are cases in which one can succeed in killing the painful nerve. Usually in a tooth it is the nerve which has been attacked by the caries, the disease, and which begins to protest with all its strength. So, if you succeed in establishing this immobility, you prevent it from vibrating, you prevent it from protesting. And what is remarkable is that if you do it fairly constantly, with sufficient perseverance, the sick nerve will die and you will not suffer at all any more. Because it was that which was suffering and when it is dead it does not suffer any longer. Try. I hope you never have a toothache. (*Laughter*)

17 November 1954

WE SHALL MEET AGAIN

So, Death has separated us, by a fate unknown.
 Unexpected was the dreadful hour and sly, unseen.
 Dumb with the agony and the shock and the strain
 In a grief-stricken wilderness I was left alone.

Where was the need for such haste, dear one?
 You could have made Death wait a little more:
 And were you ever so tame and submissive, O when?
 Honest and upright you could stand your ground firm without fear.

You loved well our small world, tended it with care;
 And breathed Her splendid presence, the celestial air.
 Rest in peace, blessed one, in the lap of the Mother Divine
 And through Her grace, one day, we shall meet again.

A. VENKATARANGA

GIVING UP OF DESIRE

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL GLIMPSE BY THE MOTHER

THE Buddha has said that there is a greater joy in overcoming a desire than in satisfying it. It is an experience everybody can have and one that is truly very interesting, very interesting.

There was someone who was invited—it happened in Paris—invited to a first-night (a first-night means a first performance) of an opera of Massenet's, I think... I don't remember now whose it was. The subject was fine, the play was fine and the music not displeasing; it was the first time and this person was invited to the box of the Minister of Fine Arts who always has a box for all the first nights at the government theatres. This Minister of Fine Arts was a simple person, an old countryside man, who had not lived much in Paris, who was quite new in his ministry and took a truly childlike joy in seeing new things. Yet he was a polite man and as he had invited a lady he gave her the front seat and himself sat at the back. But he felt very unhappy because he could not see everything. He leaned forward like this, trying to see something without showing it too much.

Now, the lady who was in front noticed this. She too was very interested and was finding it very fine, and it was not that she did not like it, she liked it very much and was enjoying the show; but she saw how very unhappy that poor minister looked, not being able to see. So quite casually, you see, she pushed back her chair, went back a little, as though she was thinking of something else, and drew back so well that he came forward and could now see the whole scene. Well, this person, when she drew back and gave up all desire to see the show, was filled with a sense of inner joy, a liberation from all attachment to things and a kind of peace, content to have done something for somebody instead of having satisfied herself, to the extent that the evening brought her infinitely greater pleasure than if she had listened to the opera.

This is a true experience, it is not a little story read in a book, and it was precisely at the time this person was studying Buddhist discipline, and it was in conformity with the saying of the Buddha that she tried this experiment.

And truly this was so concrete an experience, you know, so real that... ah, two seconds later, you see, the play, the music, the actors, the scene, the pictures and all that were gone like absolutely secondary things, completely unimportant, while this joy of having mastered something in oneself and done something not simply selfish, this joy filled all the being with an incomparable serenity a delightful experience... Well, it is not just an individual, personal experience. All those who want to try can have it.

There is a kind of inner communion with the psychic being which takes place when one willingly gives up a desire, and because of this one feels a much greater joy than if he had satisfied his desire. Besides, most usually, almost without exception, when one satisfies a desire it always leaves a kind of bitter taste somewhere.

There is not one satisfied desire which does not give a kind of bitterness; as when one has eaten too sugary a sweet it fills your mouth with bitterness. It is like that. You must try sincerely. Naturally you must not pretend to give up desire and keep it in a corner, because then one becomes very unhappy. You must do it sincerely.

9 February 1955

AFTER THE RAINS

THE din of life around
Was caught in pouring pattering feet
Scurrying down the stairs of space;
A drenching drill of water,
Stamping out the ego of routined whirl,
Planted a reign of showers.
When the pumps of ether stopped
The wind dropped and lost its will.
A hush stole with usurping urge
The lyrics of the earth air;
Nature's curfew was in force,
Banning bird-traffic and song.
Even the wheeler of the upper layer
Shunned its soaring sphere, afraid
To wake the pulseless blue.
Then with an ease of stealth,
Dusk sneaked in with twilight fingers
Thrumming to light the anthem of the orbs.

G. VISWANATHAN

SOME CENTRAL PROCESSES OF THE YOGA

FROM A LETTER BY SRI AUROBINDO

I HAVE said that the most decisive way for the Peace or the Silence to come is by a descent from above. In fact, in reality though not always in appearance, that is how they always come;—not in appearance always, because the sadhak is not always conscious of the process; he feels the peace settling in him or at least manifesting, but he has not been conscious how and whence it came. Yet it is the truth that all that belongs to the higher consciousness comes from above, not only the spiritual peace and silence, but the Light, the Power, the Knowledge, the higher seeing and thought, the Ananda come from above. It is also possible that up to a certain point they may come from within, but this is because the psychic being is open to them directly and they come first there and then reveal themselves in the rest of the being from the psychic or by its coming into the front. A disclosure from within or a descent from above, these are the two sovereign ways of the Yoga-siddhi. An effort of the external surface mind or emotions, a Tapasya of some kind may seem to build up some of these things, but the results are usually uncertain and fragmentary, compared to the result of the two radical ways. That is why in this yoga we insist always on an “opening”—an opening inwards of the inner mind, vital, physical to the inmost part of us, the psychic, and an opening upwards to what is above the mind—as indispensable for the fruits of the sadhana.

The underlying reason for this is that this little mind, vital and body which we call ourselves is only a surface movement and not our “self” at all. It is an external bit of personality put forward for one brief life, for the play of the Ignorance. It is equipped with an ignorant mind stumbling about in search of fragments of truth, an ignorant vital rushing about in search of fragments of pleasure, an obscure and mostly subconscious physical receiving the impacts of things and suffering rather than possessing a resultant pain or pleasure. All that is accepted until the mind gets disgusted and starts looking about for the real Truth of itself and things, the vital gets disgusted and begins wondering whether there is not such a thing as real bliss and the physical gets tired and wants liberation from itself and its pains and pleasures. Then it is possible for the little ignorant bit of personality to get back to its real Self and with it to these greater things—or else to extinction of itself, Nirvana.

The real Self is not anywhere on the surface but deep within and above. Within is the soul supporting an inner mind, inner vital, inner physical in which there is a capacity for universal wideness and with it for the things now asked for—direct contact with the truth of self and things, taste of a universal bliss, liberation from the imprisoned smallness and sufferings of the gross physical body. Even in Europe the existence of something behind the surface is now very frequently admitted, but its nature is mistaken and it is called subconscious or subliminal, while really it is very conscious in its own way and not subliminal but only behind the veil. It is, according

to our psychology, connected with the small outer personality by certain centres of consciousness of which we become aware by yoga. Only a little of the inner being escapes through these centres into the outer life, but that little is the best part of ourselves and responsible for our art, poetry, philosophy, ideals, religious aspirations, efforts at knowledge and perfection. But the inner centres are for the most part closed or asleep—to open them and make them awake and active is one aim of yoga. As they open, the powers and possibilities of the inner being also are aroused in us; we awake first to a larger consciousness; we are no longer little separate personalities with limited lives but centres of a universal action and in direct contact with cosmic forces. Moreover, instead of being unwillingly playthings of the latter, as is the surface person, we can become to a certain extent conscious and masters of the play of nature—how far this goes depending on the development of the inner being and its opening upward to the higher spiritual levels. At the same time the opening of the heart centre releases the psychic being which proceeds to make us aware of the Divine within us and of the higher Truth above us.

For the highest spiritual Self is not even behind our personality and bodily existence but is above it and altogether exceeds it. The highest of the inner centres is in the head, just as the deepest is the heart; but the centre which opens directly to the Self is above the head, altogether outside the physical body, in what is called the subtle body, *sukṣma śarīra*. This Self has two aspects and the results of realising it correspond to these two aspects. One is static, a condition of wide peace, freedom, silence: the silent Self is unaffected by any action or experience; it impartially supports them but does not seem to originate them at all, rather to stand back detached or unconcerned, *udāsīna*. The other aspect is dynamic and that is experienced as a cosmic Self or Spirit which not only supports but originates and contains the whole cosmic action—not only that part of it which concerns physical selves but also all that is beyond it—this world and all other worlds, the supraphysical as well as the physical ranges of the universe. Moreover, we feel the Self as one in all: but also we feel it as above all, transcendent, surpassing all individual birth or cosmic existence. To get into the universal Self—one in all—is to be liberated from ego; ego either becomes a small instrumental circumstance in the consciousness or even disappears from our consciousness altogether. That is the extinction or Nirvana of the ego. To get into the transcendent self above all makes us capable of transcending altogether even cosmic consciousness and action—it can be the way to that complete liberation from the world-existence which is called also extinction, *laya*, *mokṣa*, *nirvāna*.

It must be noted however that the opening upward does not necessarily lead to peace, silence and Nirvana only. The sadhak becomes aware not only of a great, eventually an infinite peace, silence, wideness above us, above the head as it were and extending into all physical and supraphysical space, but also he can become aware of other things—a vast Force in which is all power, a vast Light in which is all knowledge, a vast Ananda in which is all bliss and rapture. At first they appear as something essential, indeterminate, absolute, simple, *kevala*: a Nirvana into any of these things

seems possible. But we can come to see too that this Force contains all forces, this Light all lights, this Ananda all joy and bliss possible. And all this can descend into us. Any of them and all of them can come down, not peace alone; only the safest is to bring down first an absolute calm and peace, for that makes the descent of the rest more secure; otherwise it may be difficult for the external nature to contain or bear so much Force, Light, Knowledge or Ananda. All these things together make what we call the higher spiritual or Divine Consciousness. The psychic opening through the heart puts us primarily into connection with the individual Divine, the Divine in his inner relation with us; it is especially the source of love and bhakti. This upward opening puts us into direct relation with the whole Divine and can create in us the divine consciousness and a new birth or births of the spirit.

When the Peace is established, this higher or Divine Force from above can descend and work in us. It descends usually first into the head and liberates the inner mind centres, then into the heart centre and liberates fully the psychic and emotional being, then into the navel and other vital centres and liberates the inner vital, then into the Muladhara and below and liberates the inner physical being. It works at the same time for perfection as well as liberation; it takes up the whole nature part by part and deals with it, rejecting what has to be rejected, sublimating what has to be sublimated, creating what has to be created. It integrates, harmonises, establishes a new rhythm in the nature. It can bring down too a higher and yet higher force and range of the the higher nature until, if that be the aim of the sadhana, it becomes possible to bring down the supramental force and existence. All this is prepared, assisted, farthered by the work of the psychic being in the heart centre; the more it is open, in front, active, the quicker, safer, easier the working of the Force can be. The more love and bhakti and surrender grow in the heart, the more rapid and perfect becomes the evolution of the sadhana. For the descent and transformation imply at the same time an increasing contact and union with the Divine.

That is the fundamental rationale of the sadhana. It will be evident that the two most important things here are the opening of the heart centre and the opening of the mind centres to all that is behind and above them. For the heart opens to the psychic being and the mind centres open to the higher consciousness and the nexus between the psychic being and the higher consciousness is the principal means of the siddhi. The first opening is effected by a concentration in the heart, a call to the Divine to manifest within us and through the psychic to take up and lead the whole nature. Aspiration, prayer, bhakti, love, surrender are the main supports of this part of the sadhana—accompanied by a rejection of all that stands in the way of what we aspire for. The second opening is effected by a concentration of the consciousness in the head (afterwards, above it) and an aspiration and call and a sustained will for the descent of the divine Peace, Power, Light; Knowledge, Ananda into the being—the Peace or the Peace and Force together. Some indeed receive Light first or Ananda first or some sudden pouring down of knowledge. With some there is first an opening which reveals to them a vast infinite Silence, Force, Light or Bliss above them and

afterwards either they ascend to that or these things begin to descend into the lower nature. With others there is either the descent, first into the head, then down to the heart level, then to the navel and below and through the whole body, or else an inexplicable opening—without any sense of descent—of peace, light, wideness or power, or else a horizontal opening into the cosmic consciousness or in a suddenly widened mind an outburst of knowledge. Whatever comes has to be welcomed—for there is no absolute rule for all—but if the peace has not come first, care must be taken not to swell oneself in exultation or lose the balance. The capital movement however is when the Divine Force or Shakti, the power of the Mother comes down and takes hold, for then the organisation of the consciousness begins and the larger foundation of the yoga...¹

¹ *On Yoga II*, Tome Two, pp. 273-279.

DEEP IN OUR SOUL

THE tempests of autumn have set
 A mark deep in our soul,
 A sadness that longings beget
 For a far-off unknown goal.
 And our eyes have laughed through the silence
 Of forgotten night after night,
 But all that remains is a presence
 Burning like a pilgrim light
 And granting us hope in the darkness
 Of lives that unseen pass by,
 Of sighs that have Sundered the silence
 And moments that linger to die.

ROGER HARRIS

A SONNET BY NIRODBARAN

WITH SRI AUROBINDO'S CORRECTIONS AND COMMENTS

Life's joys and sorrows mingle in one wave,

Into

(Under) one melody its pattern cast;

The self-same monotones unending(ly) last

Down to the flickering moment's snow-cold grave.

Brief

(Bright) figures born of passion's flaming thirst

Are broken up

(Break down) like (stranded) boats on a nameless sea.

smile of burning rose

What was love's (blossomed smile of fire) at first

Chills

(Flows) in the veins, like { (faint melancholy).
 } frozen memory

hidden gold

We lose, yet gain our spirit's (freedom bold)

By cruel sacrifice of earthly ties;

life it receive

Even if (it) bleeds, (life) shall (have) the mould

fire

Of the Supreme's (first) touch and heavenward rise.

Nature's impetuous urge behind the call

Leaps the highest

(Leads) to (liberation's) height embracing all.

10.5.37

Guru,

How do you find today's poem. It seems fine to me.

A: It is an English poem and shows that in spite of lapses in detail, you are getting hold of the language and its poetic flair. It is not so original as the first one, but excellent poetry.

Q: Is the 2nd line all right?

A: Well, you can't cast a pattern under a melody.

Q: 2nd line of the 2nd quatrain?

A: Stranded on a nameless sea sounds queer—one gets stranded on a nameless coast.

Q: Originally the stanza ran:

Much that we hold dear breaks like a sheet of glass:
Vain shadows in the world-fair decked with dew;
When a blast of wind sweeps over the *dammed* view
All exhibits fall into the ground in a mass.

I didn't like it, neither did Amal.

A: Especially the exhibits—good Lord!

Look here, sir,—I bar, damn and completely reject repudiate your “freedom bold”. This kind of inversion is cheap bric-a-brac and to be resolutely avoided. Kindly kick it out. Also what's your scanning of the third line “Even / if it / bleeds, life / shall have the mould”—won't do at all. Kindly alter these *gaffes*. Also, Leads to liberation's height, is detestable rhythm and is not poetry, but this I have mended. I have corrected the “bleeds life” line, but I suppose you will have to alter it to suit any new version of “freedom bold”, as the rhyme will go.

Oh damn! I see that fire comes twice. But the Supreme's first touch is a little flat, fire-touch much better. Will have to change the other fire, I suppose.

II.5.37

Q: About yesterday's changes, Amal suggests in place of 7th line:

What was love's smile of burning rose at first

A: Yes, that will do very well.

Q: And for the blessed “freedom bold”, hidden gold.

A: Yes, that is very good too.

Q: I am glad that you called it an English poem; but then, were the others Bengali poems?

A: No, they were supranatural—just poetry.

MIGHTY COLUMNS...

Mighty columns of granite light
That now would crush us all
Descend into beings made ready

Imperishable heaven brought to earth
By the lone will and call and effort
Of the two divine descendants
Whose sole boon is our future victory

But now our vain and small lives
Must be abandoned, yet lived
Our speculations falsely made
Of all there is to be and do
Hold back our higher destiny
Postpone the immortal rendezvous

Wanting that alone must unite us
A gradual growth where nothing counts
But the unimagined end

This impossible truth inevitably comes
Called into life by those who live
As though each day will bring it all
And yet as though one life is but a step

STUART

THREE VISIONS OF CHAMPAKLAL RELATED BY HIMSELF

I

AT GOVIND DHAM ON 30th JUNE 1979

I SAW lofty mountains with their peaks covered with bright snow. They appeared to touch the skies. I walked and walked admiring all these beautiful Himalayan valleys full of different kinds of trees. As I walked on, I felt very happy. I laughed alone. Just then a sadhubaba came. He caught hold of my hand and led me further and further.

After a very long distance, the scene changed. Just on the side of the pathway where we were passing, there was a deep valley with a river running. Its beautiful waters flowed in melodious music. I was so attracted that I wanted to jump into the river. Again and again the idea came to me strongly to jump in and flow away with the waters, whatever might happen to me. Babaji said, "Batchha (child), the time has not yet come for you to do this. You still have much to do—your work is not yet over." I was surprised to hear this from Babaji. Babaji said, "What is there to be surprised at? Nothing is unknown to me. Do you not know this?" While speaking, Babaji held my hand in a strong grip and led me onwards.

Now I observed that the pathway towards the place where we had to go was going higher and higher and looked almost straight up from a distance. When we reached there, I noticed that there was no way—no steps to go up by. It was much more steep than I had thought. I kept on looking at it. Babaji said, "What are you looking at? We have to go to that very place. You remember the Mahimna (महिम्न) Stotra, don't you?" I answered, "Yes, but not fully." Babaji remarked, "It does not matter, you will recite it with me." This time he held my hand in such a strong grip that I felt as if my hand was glued to his. I then heard a very sweet, melodious, high-pitched and elevating voice. I joined him and, to my utter surprise, I took a very high Hanuman-like leap along with him. Now both of us had reached very high—right up, on the top. This place was very wide and extremely fascinating. Everything shone there in a brilliant golden light. I could see hazily some people who were very very far. Sadhubaba kept on holding my hand in the same way. He was leading me on and on. At one place I stopped. I was astonished to see sadhubaba's both hands lifted up—wide-open in space. Even then he kept on holding my hand in the same way. I looked again and again to see whether what I saw was true! How could this be possible? But it was so! He appeared to have three hands!

Babaji, with his resonant and melodious voice, gazed up and up and, turning his eyes, his hands and his whole body in all directions, recited:-

असित गिरि समं, स्यात् कज्जल सिन्धुपात्रे ।
 सरतस्वर शाखा लेखनी पत्रमुर्वी
 लिखति यदि गृहीत्वा शारदा सर्वकाल
 तदपि तव गुणानामीश पार न याति ॥

“Even if the whole of the black mountain is dissolved into the sea as in an inkstand and the Goddess Saraswati, holding the branch of the wish-fulfilling heavenly tree as her pen, writes all the time on the earth-surface as paper, then too, O Lord! She will be unable to fathom your glory!”

The echo of Babaji’s voice resounded in space. As he recited, the expression on his face was marvellous! It was a magnificent sight to see!

The vision ended. All is due to Grace!

2

ON THE WAY TO HEMKUND ON 1st JULY 1979

We were going to Hemkund and had climbed three-fourths of the steps—steps not as in buildings, but arranged irregularly. That is why they went very well with Nature. I did not climb up to the end. But this place was also beautiful and wide-open—most of it covered with bright white snow. One did not like to move away from there. Someone from amongst us remarked, “If this is not Tapobhumi, then what place could it be?” I do not remember the exact wording. This place elevates one and draws one within. I sat there and looked around. Wherever our glance fell, the eyes were as if stuck and did not like to shift their gaze from that scene. We forgot everything and felt as if we were in another world. Everything became very quiet within us. After some time my eyes got closed. I remained there while the others went to Hemkund.

Vision

I saw a grand, majestic and very alluring figure. It was a Digambar’s and appeared to be made of luminous white snow. So bewitching was it that I could not take my eyes off him. He gazed at me with his charming, penetrating and captivating eyes, and said, “Champaklal!” I could not answer. I simply looked at him. He caught hold of my hand and called again—“Champaklal, come!” He held my hand in such a way as to make me get up. We started walking, and walked a long distance. At last we came to wide-open and very fascinating place—the luminous white snow was seen everywhere. Now there was no way. I was led by him. We were going higher and higher and covered quite a bit of the long distance. I enjoyed walking and looking at the beautiful Himalayan scenery. We reached a place where nothing except beautiful water was seen. We had seen beautiful water at Sheshnag (शेषनाग) but the colour of this water was much more beautiful than that at Sheshnag.

The Digamber signed to me to stop. He looked at me from top to bottom, with his powerful penetrating eyes. He bent down and moved his hand all around my feet. As soon as he touched my feet, I started to lift them because I did not like him to touch them, but he signed to me to remain quiet and not to stir. After this I had a feeling that my feet were stuck there. With both his hands he then touched me from top to bottom, front, back and all over. A strange, powerful but very pleasant feeling passed all over and inside my body. After this, I felt as if there was nothing inside my body—no bones, no flesh! The body became very light—so light as if it would be blown away by a little wind! At the same time my legs were very firm and steady. I was very astonished by all these changes.

The Digamber took my hand and gestured to me to start walking. We began walking further upon water as if we were walking on the ground! He had held my hand in his strong grip and every now and then he would glance at me and smile. Without uttering a word, his look was as if he was asking me, "Enjoying yourself? Happy?" Here also we walked a long distance until we reached a place which abounded in many varieties of beautiful flowers of different colours, some of them never seen before. They were in full bloom. One could see nothing but these beautiful flowers. The place was filled with a variety of fragrances. I enjoyed it very much. Here too there was no way, but as we walked we found the way, as if the plants were parting to make way for us. We covered a great distance in this beautiful place. As we walked further, the view changed. Here the colour of the water was dark green or dark blue—what the exact colour was I cannot say. But of the same colour there were big big lotuses fully bloomed, with their large-sized leaves and high stems—all of the same colour. The place was full of the lotuses' fragrance. It made us feel so happy. Again the Digamber made a sign to me to walk on further. Here too, as before, the way showed itself as we walked.

Again the scene changed. Here the colour of the water was deep red—so also everything else in deep red colour—the lotuses, their leaves and stalks. Now there was a different type of fragrance. We walked further and saw everything exactly the same but in yellow colour, and the fragrance was different. Likewise I saw the same view again and again but in different colours and fragrances—after yellow, pink, light blue, snow white, silvery—but here there was a very strange thing—sometimes the water, lotuses, leaves and stalks were all in snow-white colour while at times they appeared in shining silvery colour. It was a beautiful sight indeed! Each place was full of its different fragrance. When we reached the top, everything was bathed in brilliant bright gold—the water, the fully opened large thousand-petalled lotuses, their big leaves, their long stalks. Everything looked so beautiful and magnificent that one cannot imagine it! The place was charged with their sweet fragrance. On the way, in between, I saw a few persons going about here and there, walking upon water as one walks on the ground. But, right at the top, there were only seven persons. They went towards the lotuses, stopped for a while and went on further. The atmosphere there was quite different from that in any other place. It was totally new. I saw all this

with great astonishment and was benumbed!

Digamber Maharaj looked at me and said smilingly, "Dance now as much as you want, to your heart's content! You wanted to come here, did you not? Now I go. When you need me, you have just to call me and I shall be near you." I was about to sit. My eyes opened.

This whole marvellous sight is in front of my eyes as if I was still there. Slowly the scene becomes faint but in my memory it remains a wonderful, magnificent, extremely beautiful, inexpressible and astounding scene. What can one write? It is beyond words!

3

**IN THE MEDITATION HALL OF ŚRĪ AUROBINDO ASHRAM,
DELHI BRANCH ON 5th JULY 1979**

Today is the birthday of Tara Jauhar, one of The Mother's favourite children. Now she resides at the Delhi Ashram branch and does The Mother's work there. No human being can understand The Mother's way of working! She arranges many things by creating certain circumstances which look so natural—and She works out what She wants to do. The Mother has showered Her Grace and Love upon us, and She still continues to do so much more than ever.

At 7 p.m., the meditation started.

Vision

I noticed that the hall was ten times bigger than at present. It was packed with people. The children were in greater number. Some ladies had come even with their new-born babies. Peace was pouring like heavy rainfall. The hall was charged with peace—nothing was felt except peace! Then blue light came down and filled the hall. After some time, bright golden light descended on all and penetrated everywhere. Now I could see the persons sitting there.

The Mother was seen right in the middle of the hall in Her luminous transparent Golden Body. I saw radiant golden Aspiration flowers around Her but they were much bigger in size than we usually see here. They began to increase in number and turned into a huge mountain of beautiful blooms. The Mother was standing on the top of this mountain. It was a magnificent sight. The Mother gave blessings to everyone.

The flowers began to move around, and covered the persons—some just a little, some more. Very few persons were fully covered and amongst them the number of the children was more.

The Mother looked at each and every one with Her charming and compassionate smile. Now I saw a stir in the Aspiration flowers. They started flitting like arrows, into different parts of the bodies of the persons there. In some persons they entered

into one or two parts, in some into more parts, while in a few into all the parts of their bodies. In several persons the flowers went straight inside. In some others they could not get in at all and were thrown back. One after another, they tried all the parts of the bodies but were not allowed in! This process continued for some time but not a single flower could enter the bodies. The bodies rejected them as if they resisted the flowers' entry inside them. It was a very amusing sight indeed. Now the few persons into whom the flowers went right inside, into all the parts of their bodies, could not be seen at all. They became invisible! I do not know what happened to them. It was like magic! There was a movement amongst the people but I could not see or understand what it was.

The vision ended.

NIGHT BEAMS

Arrows from a conscious wideness
 Beam through the dark obscurities of form.
 Even in the blackest rays, the gleam is found,
 Making its way with an upward bound—skyward!

What am I in the mass of darkened hue?
 A silver-winged bow to arch those glimmers forward.
 Use me, Lord, leaping out towards the far Unseen,
 Unleash your strength through me!
 An archer, a marcher—onward!

PATTI

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SRI AUROBINDO'S SPIRITUAL SYSTEM AND THE MOTHER'S CONTRIBUTION TO IT

(Continued from the issue of October 1979)

SUPPLEMENT

A Question Reopened and Reconsidered

IN the first instalment of this series we tried to study how Sri Aurobindo's definition of one of his key-concepts—"Supermind"—had developed. Used interchangeably with the term "Overmind" in very early days—before his arrival in Pondicherry—as a synonym for the higher human intelligence, the Buddhi, it came to denote in his philosophical monthly, the *Arya*, which ran from 1914 to 1921, the whole many-graded dynamic spiritual consciousness above the Buddhi, an ascending scale from the lowest Supermind, so to speak, to the highest supramental divinity. Once in the *Arya* we found "Overmind" doing duty for "Supermind".

During the *Arya*'s seven years Sri Aurobindo's "idea" was "the thinking out of a synthetic philosophy" for "the new age" of a "humanity" considered as "moving to a great change of its life which will even lead to a new life of the race". While enunciating this aim in an editorial in his periodical's fourth year he takes us into his confidence thus: "The spiritual experience and the general truths on which such an attempt could be based, were already present to us, otherwise we should have had no right to make the endeavour at all; but the complete intellectual statement of them and their results and issues had to be found."¹

The entire above-mind ascent had been achieved—but Sri Aurobindo had not marked a radical difference between what he later named the Spiritual Mind and a level beyond it which alone, properly speaking, was the Supermind. He had not distinguished, as in his final nomenclature, the planes of the Cosmic Knowledge belonging to the former—Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuition, Overmind—from the Transcendent Truth-Consciousness that is Supermind or Vijnana, forming along with Sat, Chit-Tapas and Ananda (Existence, Consciousness-Force and Bliss) the ultimate Divine Quaternary.

Our investigation had at its centre the crucial question: "When did Sri Aurobindo draw a line between the summit of the Cosmic Knowledge—Overmind—and the Transcendent Supermind?" Originally he had considered the Higher Hemisphere, *parārdha*, of Reality to start from the first plane above the mind, and the Lower Hemisphere, *aparārdha*, to include all that is below that plane. The *aparārdha* comprised Mind, the Life-Force (or "the Vital") and the Subtle-Physical, as well as the

¹ Sri Aurobindo Centenary Edition, Vol 17, p. 399.

Inconscient in which all the planes of both the Hemispheres are “involved” and out of which our multi-stranded world evolves by the push of the involved planes and by the pressure of the same-principles as they exist in their own free non-involved states. Indeed there is a veil between the mind and what is above it. A line in *Savitri* written long after Sri Aurobindo had distinguished Overmind from Supermind repeats in a certain context the vision of the *Arya*-days when he put the Isha Upanishad’s *hiranmayapātram*, “golden lid”, between the mind and the above-mind and defined it as consisting of mental percepts and concepts shutting out direct truth-sight. The line speaks of “the intellect’s hard and lustrous lid” being “broken”.¹ But the great divide actually comes, according to Sri Aurobindo’s full realisation, at the top of the Overmind.

As *Savitri* itself puts it:

Then stretches the boundless finite’s last expanse,
The cosmic empire of the Overmind,
Time’s buffer state bordering Eternity.²

Again, we read:

There is the Godhead’s universal gaze
And there the boundaries of immortal Mind:
The line that parts and joins the hemispheres
Closes in on the labour of the Gods
Fencing Eternity from the toil of Time.³

The critical newness of Sri Aurobindo’s Integral Yoga, rendering defunct all the old spirituality which in various forms hailed from the Overmind and which, because of the Overmind’s dazzling splendours, could not look beyond it—the critical newness is hit off very strikingly in the verses:

As if a torch held by a power of God,
The radiant world of the everlasting Truth
Glimmered like a faint star bordering the night
Above the Golden Overmind’s shimmering ridge.⁴

However, this newness, although always intuited and sought to be practised, was not made effective in its total force until Sri Aurobindo clearly set aside as non-final all the prizes the Overmind offered. And indeed the prizes were offered as never before in earth’s spiritual career because never before had the manifesting knowledge and will of that creative plane of divinity been brought forward as after 24 November 1926 which is called in Sri Aurobindo’s Ashram the “Victory Day” or the “Day of *Siddhi*”

¹ *Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol* (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1971), p. 25.

² *Ibid.*, p. 660 ³ *Ibid.*, pp. 660-1. ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

(Perfection, Fulfilment).

When exactly did Sri Aurobindo recognise Overmind for what it is and give up looking on it as a subordinate plane of the highest Supermind instead of as the vast, varied, luminous seed of the divisive Ignorance which takes its proper shape when the Many are not only in the forefront as in the Overmind but also lose the background of the One which is still there on that lofty plane of the Great Gods?

The Mother's testimony to the earliest use of the term "Overmind" by Sri Aurobindo in the sense current not long after 24 November 1926 is in her talk of 10 July 1957.¹ She gives an account of the period following his withdrawal into seclusion in the wake of the mighty descent. Her account runs:

"Sri Aurobindo had given me charge of the outer work because he wanted to withdraw into concentration in order to hasten the manifestation of the supramental consciousness and he had announced to the few people who were there that he was entrusting to me the work of helping and guiding them, that I would remain in contact with him, naturally, and that through me he would do the work. Suddenly, immediately, things took a certain shape: a very brilliant creation was worked out in extraordinary detail, with marvellous experiences, contacts with divine beings, and all kinds of manifestations which are considered miraculous. Experiences followed one upon another and, well, things were unfolding altogether brilliantly and...I must say, in an extremely interesting way.

"One day, I went as usual to relate to Sri Aurobindo what had been happening—we had come to something really very interesting, and perhaps I showed a little enthusiasm in my account of what had taken place—then Sri Aurobindo looked at me... and said: 'Yes, this is an Overmind creation. It is very interesting, very well done. You will perform miracles which will make you famous throughout the world, you will be able to turn all events on earth topsy-turvy, indeed',... and then he smiled and said: 'It will be a *great* success. But it is an Overmind creation. And it is not success that we want; we want to establish the Supermind on earth. One must know how to renounce immediate success in order to create the new world, the supramental world in its integrality.'

"With my inner consciousness I understood immediately: a few hours later the creation was gone...and from that moment we started anew on other bases."

The start on new bases constitutes the end of what Sri Aurobindo on 18 October 1934 has designated "the brightest period in the history of the Ashram"² and, in the course of the conversations on 7 January 1939 recorded by Nirodbaran, "the brilliant period of the Ashram".³ But, before we go further, we must clarify a certain point in Nirod's book, which may confuse chronological researchers. On 7 January 1939, when Purani speaks of drawing force from the Universal Vital and says that he had done it while he was in the "Guest House" (that is, 41 rue François Martin), Sri

¹ The Mother's Centenary Edition, Vol 9; pp. 147-8.

² *Sri Aurobindo on Himself and on the Mother* (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry 1953), p. 233.

³ *Talks with Sri Aurobindo* (Sri Aurobindo Pathamandir, Calcutta 1966), p. 179.

Aurobindo remarks: "You mean at the time when the sadhana was in the Vital, that brilliant period." Purani replies, "Yes."¹ The suggestion may arise that the "brilliant period" occurred in the "Guest House". That is an impossibility because the Mother lived there only from 24 November 1920 to September or October 1922 when she and Sri Aurobindo moved to 9 rue de la Marine (south-east section of the present Ashram block),² and during that time she was somewhat withdrawn and was certainly not what she was declared by Sri Aurobindo on 24 November 1926—the explicit Head of the Ashram and the open Guru of the disciples. What is to be understood is that, when the brilliant period was going on at 9 rue de la Marine, Purani was staying in the "Guest House". Actually he continued there, occupying Sri Aurobindo's old room, till early 1928 when I was placed in the same room and he moved to 28 rue François Martin (north-east section of the present Ashram block) where the Mother and Sri Aurobindo had shifted on 8 February 1927 and where they remained for the rest of their lives.³

The Mother's new-based start most probably took place later than 8 February 1927, for "the brightest period in the history of the Ashram" lasted, as we shall soon see, "for several months" after 24 November of the previous year. From the occasion which the Mother has recounted we cannot deduce straight away that it was preceded by the discovery of the precise label "Overmind" for a plane lower than the Supermind. But we can affirm that such a plane was well identified as an entity during 1927. For, in the course of that year we have the composition by Sri Aurobindo of his miniature masterpiece, "The Four Powers and Personalities of the Mother", which together with some letters written in the same year was published in book-form in 1928. There we are told: "The Mother as the Mahashakti of this triple world of the Ignorance stands in an intermediate plane between the Supramental Light, the Truth life, the Truth creation which has to be brought down here and this mounting and descending hierarchy of planes of consciousness that like a double ladder lapse into the nescience of Matter and climb back again through the flowering of life and soul and mind into the infinity of the Spirit. Determining all that shall be in this universe and in the terrestrial evolution by what she sees and feels and pours from her she stands there above the Gods and all her Powers and Personalities are put out in front of her for the action..."⁴ Although contained in two passing phrases, the distinction between the Supermind and the plane of the Gods is clear-cut and the manner in which it is brought in, without any need being felt for an explanation or elaboration, argues that it must have been current for an appreciable time. Can we affirm that it was seen before 24 November 1926 or at least on this date itself?

In my earlier article I submitted that it could not have been seen even then. I dwelt on the name "Victory Day" or "Day of *Siddhu*" (Perfection, Fulfilment) given

¹ *Ibid.*

² *The Life of Sri Aurobindo* by A B Purani, Fourth ed, fully revised (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry 1978), pp. XX and 174.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. XX and 182.

⁴ *The Mother* (Arya Sahitya Bhavan, Calcutta 1928), pp. 43-4.

to 24 November. I brought forward reasons to believe that Victory and *Siddhi* in Sri Aurobindo's Yoga could only have connoted the Descent of the Supermind into the physical being. I further quoted the inspired words of Datta (Dorothy Hodgson) as recalled by Purani, Rajani Palit and Nolini Kanta Gupta. In Nolini's version, which essentially agreed with those of the other two sadhaks, they were: "The Lord has descended, He has conquered death and sorrow. He has brought down immortality."¹ Rajani testified Datta as saying: "The Master has conquered death, decay, hunger and sleep."² Such pronouncements, according to me, had no point unless founded on the conviction of a Supramental Descent. I also analysed Purani's report of talks in the period immediately before 24 November and concluded that the world of the Gods brought down on this day belonged to the Supermind, even if it did not form the highest range of the Truth-Consciousness. Everything culled from the talks, especially when taken in conjunction with V. Chidanandam's record of a certain conversation cited by Purani, appeared to indicate that the event of 24 November was understood as the first touch-down of the Supermind in Matter and that only afterwards, in the succeeding months, was it realised that the Supermind proper had not arrived yet. Even the Mother's readiness to manifest a whole new creation as if it had been the right preliminary to the Aurobindonian work of expressing the Supermind in the physical plane tended to suggest that no gulf had yet been felt by her between this creation and the authentic Supramental epiphany. However, an extremely lively exchange of letters in August 1935 between Nirodbaran and Sri Aurobindo topples my massive structure of seeming certitudes. Here is the exchange:³

MYSELF: Today I shall request you to 'stand and deliver' on a different subject.—what is exactly the significance of the day of your siddhi? Different people have different ideas about it. Some say that the Avatar of the Supermind descended in you!

SRI AUROBINDO: Rubbish! Whose imagination was that?

MYSELF: Others say that you were through and through overmentalised.

SRI AUROBINDO: Well, it is not quite the truth but nearer to the mark.

MYSELF: I myself understood that on that day you achieved the Supermind.

SRI AUROBINDO: There was never any mention of that from our side.

MYSELF: Some people, I think, declared at that time that you had conquered sleep, food, disease etc. Was there any truth in that statement?

SRI AUROBINDO: I am not aware of this gorgeous proclamation. What was said was that the Divine (Krishna or the Divine Presence or whatever you like) had come down into the material. It was also proclaimed that I was retiring—obviously to work things out. If all that was achieved on November 24, 1926, what on earth remained to work out, and if the Supramental was there, for what blazing purpose did I need to retire? Besides, are these things achieved in a single day?

¹ "Reminiscences, IX", *Mother India*, December 5, 1962, p. 31.

² "24 November, 1926", *Ibid.*, p. 28.

³ *Correspondence with Sri Aurobindo* (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry 1954), pp. 89-92.

MYSELF: If you did not achieve the Supermind at that time, how was it possible for you to talk about it or know anything about it?

SRI AUROBINDO: Well, I am hanged. You can't know anything about anything before you have achieved it? Because I have seen it and am in contact with it, O logical baby that you are! But achieving it is another business.

Good Lord! And what do these people think I meant when I was saying persistently that I was trying to get the Supermind down into the material? If I had achieved it on Nov. 24th, 1926, it would have been there already for the last nine years, wouldn't it?

But really what a logic! One must become thoroughly supramental first (achieve supermind) and then only one can begin to know something about supermind? Well! However if I have time one day, I will deliver—for evidently with such ideas about, an *éclaircissement* is highly advisable.

MYSELF: You say that it was something like the descent of Krishna in the material. Some say that the descent took place in you. But you are not matter, are you?

SRI AUROBINDO: Why not? Why can't I be matter? Or represent it at least? At least you will admit that I have got some matter in me and you will hardly deny that the matter in me is connected or even continuous (in spite of the Quantum theory) with matter in general? Well, if Krishna or the Overmind or something equivalent descended into my matter with an inevitable extension into connected general Matter, what is the lack of clarity in the statement of a descent into the material? What does logic say?

MYSELF: By your 'trying to bring down the Supermind', we understand that the ascent is done and now the descent has to be made. Something like one going up to you at Darshan and getting all the bliss, joy etc. and trying to bring it down and not lose it as soon as one steps out. And what is this again? You say you are in contact with it and then again that you are very near the tail of it, sounds queer! Contact and no contact?

SRI AUROBINDO: But, supposing I reached supermind in that way, then under such conditions would it be possible that I should come down again at the risk of losing it? Do you realise that I went upstairs and have not come down again? So it was better to be in contact with it until I had made the path clear between S and M. As for the tail, can't you approach the tail of an animal without achieving the animal? I am in the physical, in matter—there is no doubt of it. If I throw a rope up from Matter, noose or lasso the Supermind and pull it down, the first part of [it] that will come near me is its tail dangling down as it descends, and that I can seize first and pull down the rest of it by tail-twists. As for being in contact with it, well, I can be in contact with you by correspondence without actually touching you or taking hold even of your tail, can't I? So there is nothing funny about it—perfectly rational, coherent and clear."

The three decisive features in Sri Aurobindo's replies are: (1) he and the Mother never declared the Supermind to have descended; (2) Datta's pronouncement was

not known to him and never had his support; (3) his retirement would not have come about if he had believed or proclaimed that the Supermind had descended. The impression on the sadhaks of its descent had obviously resulted from the mention by him and the Mother that there had been the descent of the Divine. What the mention signified was explained in the letter I cited in my earlier article—namely, that Sri Krishna the Anandamaya Being, the supreme Deity, working through the Overmind plane, the plane of the Great Gods, had come down into Sri Aurobindo's body. Sri Krishna's identification with the bodily presence of Sri Aurobindo was taken to prepare the subsequent embodiment in him of Supermind. There was no mistaking the event of 24 November by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother at any time as the initial advent of the Supramental Divinity. This implies that the plane which got the title "Overmind" had already been known as distinct from the Supermind. The only point for which we lack direct evidence from the replies is whether the title itself for the plane through which Sri Krishna had manifested in the past had been fixed upon in the period before the Victory Day.

Nowhere in the "evening talks" copiously recorded from memory by Purani and Chidanandam do we find the designation nor, when the records are scrutinised *as wholes*, do we discover any decisive sign that the world of the Great Gods was categorised as non-supramental. How the latter situation has arisen must remain a puzzle in view of Nirodbaran's correspondence. But, after looking at the correspondence, a careful consultation of Chidanandam's notes paralleling a passage in Purani from the talks in November 1926, prior to the 24th, inclines me to suspend my doubt of the one passage in Purani where the Gods are put below the Supermind. My arguments from some other passages of his cannot still be satisfactorily met, yet Chidanandam's more elaborate record in this context leads me to qualify seriously my negative contention. From the record the following excerpts are the most relevant:

"The Supreme is beyond description. That manifests as Sat-Chit-Ananda (Existence-Consciousness-Bliss). This is triune, but it also forms three worlds. In the world of Sat, the beings are not separately individualised but have a divine universality. There Consciousness-force and Ananda are held back and subordinated in the manifestation. In the world of Chit, Consciousness-force becomes prominent and determines everything. In the world of Ananda, Bliss is the determinant.

"Then there is the Supramental world, with the four Maha-Shaktis, aspects of the Divine Mother: Maheshwari, Mahakali, Mahalakshmi and Mahasaraswati. Below the Supermind and behind the universe of Mind, Life and Matter is the world of the Great Gods. They receive light from the Supramental. It is they that govern our universe. Hindu culture represented these Gods as Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva in the Puranas. What the Puranas describe as the Gopi Rasalila, the play of Krishna with the Gopis who are his devotees, is not a fact of the physical plane but of the higher and deeper planes. In the Puranas we have mental representations of the truths about the Gods, but these representations point yet to the real world of the Gods. These Gods have their Ganas, the hierarchical beings.

“Then comes the lower universe and with it the Devas and Asuras—the Devas or Gods leading the manifestation towards its goal, and the Asuras or Demons obstructing it. It is their interaction that is described in the Puranas as the battle between the powers of Light and Darkness...

“The Ganas of the Gods are partial manifestation of them...”¹

A positive pointer to the Overmind plane cannot help being discerned here. As regards the absence of the name familiar to us, we may suppose that it was not yet coined. In Nirodbaran’s correspondence itself Sri Aurobindo simply writes “Krishna or the Divine Presence or whatever you like” in explanation of the words “the Divine” used by him and the Mother for the Power that “had come down into the material”: he refrains from listing “Overmind” as what he and she could or might have “said”. It is merely on a back-look and not in reference to their *verba impissima* that he mentions “Krishna or the Overmind or something equivalent”. May we not presume that the designation “Overmind” was wanting not only before the Victory Day but also on that very occasion? In fact its earliest available occurrence—I am told—is in an unpublished note of Sri Aurobindo, dating around the end of 1926: “Many things have still to be done before the divine gnosis can manifest in the nature. It is the gnostic overmind in different forms that is now current there, it has to be transformed into the true supermind gnosis...”

It is worth touching, *en passant*, on another facet of spiritual autobiography which the Master’s illuminating banter with Nirodbaran spotlights and which many of his interpreters may miss. Sri Aurobindo realised the Supermind on its own Everest-plane long before he initiated the process of bringing the power of that Mount of supreme vision to the embodied human level. He has to be seen as multi-poised: Sri Aurobindo ever aware far beyond this level, “pinnacled high in the intense inane”, and at the same time Sri Aurobindo here below with the brain-mind and body-consciousness catching the radiance of the sovereign altitude and drawing it more and more into the stuff of mortality—a glorious whole of interconnected luminosities, labouring to render every part an equal acme of Divine Truth. When his correspondence was scintillating, night after night, in answer to the call of Nirodbaran, Dilip, Nagin, myself and several others, all had already been achieved except physical supramentalisation. And towards that last alchemy of God’s Grace he was gradually moving through the dynamic inwardness into which he had plunged after the incarnation of the Overmind Godhead.

To revert to our subject: perhaps our research will one day flash out for us the moment when Sri Aurobindo, in the period before 24 November 1926, parted the highest Cosmic Consciousness from the sheer Transcendent. His own statement on 20 November 1933 certifies that he did it sufficiently when the sadhana came down from the mental to the vital and fully when it was precipitated into the physical.² In other words, when the Overmind lustres were turned upon the world of Life-Force

¹ “Sri Aurobindo at Evening Talk”, *Mother India*, July 1970, p. 332

² *Letters on Yoga*, Centenary Edition, Vol. 26, p. 369-70

and Matter in order to penetrate, purify, enlighten and divinise the energy lost in self-assertive turbulence and the fixity filled with dense unconsciousness, Sri Aurobindo struck with accumulating confidence upon the momentous truth that here was not any genuine prelude of the supreme all-transformative power which in his own ascent "overhead" he had visioned and experienced.

We have an unmistakable indication as to when the sadhana came down to the physical. Referring to "the brightest period in the history of the Ashram", Sri Aurobindo writes how "the Mother was able to bring out the Divine Personalities and Powers into her body and physical being...for several months without break" and "things were proceeding with lightning swiftness" until, "because the lower vital and physical of the sadhaks could not follow", she "had to...come down into the physical human level and act according to its conditions", which meant "difficulty, struggle, illness, ignorance, inertia".¹ From Nirodbaran's record too we hear the same story, but two aspects emerge from the conversation of 7 January 1939 which are not in the letter. One of them corroborates the Mother's talk of 10 July 1957. Sri Aurobindo says: "At the time you speak of, we were in the Vital. People were having brilliant experiences, big push, energy etc. If our Yoga had taken that line, we could have ended by establishing a great religion, bringing about a big creation etc., but our real work is different, so we had to come down into the physical. And working on the physical is like digging the ground; the physical is absolutely inert, dead like stone...The progress is exceedingly slow...You have to go on working and working... till you come to a central point in the subconscious which has to be conquered and it is the crux of the whole problem, hence exceedingly difficult."² The other aspect shows a possibility that could have been realised in spite of the precipitation into the physical. Sri Aurobindo continues: "If the sadhaks had kept the right attitude at the time when the sadhana was in the vital, there would not have been so much difficulty today even in working out the subconscious. For with the force and power gained at that time the Mother could have come down into the physical and done the work with greater ease."³

So much for sadhana on the physical level. What about the beginning of it on the vital? Was the beginning marked by the event of 24 November? If the Overmind, whether still anonymous or not, was known, as we have inferred, for what it is *vis-à-vis* the Supermind before this event, that sadhana must have commenced anterior to that date. There is no statement anywhere that it commenced on 24 November; we are only told that it was going on in the days subsequent to it. The question is: how long before did it commence? The sole hint we possess from Sri Aurobindo's own pen is in the letter of 20 November 1933 where he replies to the query why the Overmind was not clearly distinguished from the Supermind in the *Arya*: "The distinction has not been made in the *Arya* because at that time what I now call the Overmind was supposed to be an inferior plane of the Supermind. But that was because I was

¹ *Sri Aurobindo on Himself...*, pp. 283-4.

² *Talks with Sri Aurobindo*, pp. 179-80.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

seeing them from the Mind..."¹ We may legitimately conclude that the up-look from the vital towards the top ranges of the "overhead" did not occur before January 1921, the last month of the *Arya's* career.

A hint about the up-look is in the report of Sri Aurobindo's words on 6 November 1926, by Purani's chronology. In my earlier article I quoted Purani himself.² Now I may cite Chidanandam's corroboration. The Master tells a disciple about the process of supramental descent: "It is a silent work. Publicity attracts hostile forces. You can do outside work only when it is in you to do so. When you are doing sadhana in the mind you can do it. I wrote the *Arya* at the time of such sadhana. When I came to the vital plane I had to stop all that."³ We may be tempted to attribute the stopping of the *Arya* to one sole cause: the coming down of the sadhana to the vital plane. But it would perhaps be too cut-and-dried a procedure. There may be more than one reason why Sri Aurobindo discontinued his periodical. What seems certain is that the vital sadhana began after January 1921 and before the "Day of *Siddhi*" in 1926. This, of course, can never imply that the mind and the physical being were not concerned in the Yoga during this intervening period. Such an exclusion would be impossible in a Yoga called "Integral". But the main stress of the inner process, was on the Vital rather than on them. So we may aver that in the course of those nearly six years the real nature of the Overmind as no part of the Supramental Gnosis was gradually disclosed, the specific name for it approached and the final definition of "Supermind" as the Transcendent Truth-Consciousness developed.

(Concluded)

K. D. SETHNA

¹ The Centenary Ed., Vol. 26, p. 369.

² *Evening Talks*, Second Series, p. 296.

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 333

HIS JOY...

His joy ran infinite, boundless, deep,
Playing with Light as a child's new toy,
Visioning miracles he musicked with sound
And flew in the heavens of thought's solitude.

Endlessly frolicking in rapturous waves
On borders of worlds as yet hardly glimpsed
Rhythms of earth-life danced in his feet
Yet silence came not that hope cherished long.

A yearning vague, dispersed as in dream
His life he aspired for pure truth to found
For Peace a sanctuary on soil supreme,
Symphonic, intoned with the silence of God.

Then stillness appeared melodious-winged
And Self's organic harmonies burst forth
To swell the diapason of his soul
And orchestrate the symphony of earth.

In an inner communion he visibly heard
A speech falling softly mid waking and sleep,
A guide in the evening singing the morn
And a chant from the heights descended in streams.

"All sounds to thine ears my music shall be,
My voice as the surging of waves shalt thou hear,
Awaken to mornings of radiant suns
And walk in the myriad paths of the stars.
Time will not slay thee nor the ages deny,
Work shalt thou know my Truth to enact,
On earth shall the drama and dance be unfurled.
Thou shalt know peace mid the whirl of the days
And rest in my sunlight and sleep in my smile."

RICHARD EGGENBERGER

MY ANIMALS IN BOMBAY AND THE MOTHER'S GRACE

SOME RECOLLECTIONS BY LALITA

My love for animals and birds increased tenfold when I returned to Bombay after sixteen years' stay in the Ashram. What the Mother had instilled into me blossomed there, and I understood them deeply and they too came closer to me.

Fortunately my second husband Mehelli was a true animal-lover, so no sacrifice on our part was big enough for our pets. And there was nothing in our life that was kept secret from the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. I was in constant touch with Them. And even when They did not send me a written reply, Their help never failed to come to me. Many a time as soon as I posted the letter the illness or other trouble disappeared.

Cats were particularly hated and ill-treated in the neighbourhood where I was staying, so I wrote and prayed to the Mother to send somebody to help me rescue them. And within a month or two my prayer was granted. A Parsi family comprising two grown-up girls and their brother, as well as their father, uncle and aunt purchased a bungalow three houses away from us, and came to live there. They were all animal-lovers and not only kept dogs and cats but parrots, pigeons and other birds which needed help. With their co-operation we also made our road inaccessible to all animal-drawn vehicles because it was a hill-road, and the poor bullocks and horses were beaten like anything to make them draw heavily laden vehicles up the hill. These friends are still living there, though they have shifted to another house, and carrying on the good work.

As long as my mother-in-law was alive, we could not give the right kind of protection to the cats we tried to save. But after her death we had wire-netting fixed on all our doors and windows and kept our pets safely inside. They had the whole run of the house and were very happy. They also had a toilet for themselves, sprayed with sawdust and cleaned every day.

Oney

Our first cat was Oney, a female, so named because it was the only kitten left at our house by her mother which disappeared after leaving it. As the Mother had taught me how to keep only one kitten at each delivery of the cat and dispose of the others, I kept Oney's child Brownie, again a female, for it. But it was impossible to leave it at the fish-market when it grew up, as advised by the Mother, for I had seen how the fishermen ill-treated the cats there. So we adopted it and except for once it never went out of our house.

Poor Oney died of food-poisoning from some tinned fish given it by my mother-in-law in our absence. We could not even go to see it at the Animal Hospital (where it had been sent for treatment) owing to heavy rains. Thereafter any cat that we saved

and adopted we first sent to the hospital to be made sterile, otherwise life would become very difficult for us with their litters every three months. The males were castrated and the females were spayed.

Browny

Browny was very open to the Mother's Force and, strange to say, almost every time that I sat at my desk to write to the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, it would come running from wherever it was, jumping onto the desk, and play with my fountain-pen with its paw and I would write to the Mother, "Browny wants me to send its love to you."

It lived for sixteen years with us but it would always keep aloof from the other cats.

At one time it suffered from a stone in its bladder and could not pass its urine freely. We wanted to take it to the hospital but at night time, when it always slept with me, I kept praying to the Mother and caressing it. Suddenly it jumped up and, going to its tray which was always kept ready for it, it passed urine. I heard a tiny sound, so I switched on the light and found along with some small specks of blood a stone which had at last been ejected. Browny rapidly recovered after that, and I wrote and thanked my sweet Mother for Her kind intervention.

Nelson

A tom-cat of ours, which we named Nelson (because somebody had blinded one of its eyes and lamed one of its hind legs) we saved and adopted after it had been castrated. It was very fond of Mehelli, and as soon as he would return home from his work Nelson (Neloo for short) would come running to him, fall at his feet and rub its body against his shoes. Mehelli would pick it up and pat it and then let it go.

Every night Neloo would sleep on Mehelli's back and, if it were removed, it would protest and jump again to the same place. Regarding these cats our repeated experience was that, after they had been made sterile, within six months they became so quiet, gentle and loving that we wondered if the same changes could not be effected in human beings by the same procedure. They never fought among themselves, but lived a harmonious life together. We had sixteen or more, so we came to know about this very well.

People often asked me why I had not adopted some dogs also. It was only because our landlord had made a strict rule at that time that no tenant should keep a dog. Besides, dogs need to be taken out for a daily walk, bathed and made free from ticks, whereas our cats had no ticks, did not need either a walk or a bath. Practically half the day they spent in licking themselves clean, and licking their companions also. The doctor at the hospital had told us never to try and bathe them except

in some rare cases. They disliked water and even if a few drops fell on their bodies they would run away and lick themselves dry.

Willy

My favourite cat was a tom called Willy. He loved me very much. Every evening after our meal I would sit on a long sofa with my legs stretched in front of me, and read some of the Mother's or Sri Aurobindo's books before going to bed. As soon as I had settled comfortably, Willy would come running, jump on my lap, then slowly climb up to my chest and placing one paw on my right shoulder and the other on my left it would look deeply into my eyes. I wondered what it saw there, for the expression on its face showed amazement. I would say, "Willy, please sit down quietly and let me read, darling." It would settle on my lap and start purring.

Masky

Willy's twin sister was called Masky, because it seemed to have a perfect mask on its face. It was very sweet and loving, but very restless. One good thing in its nature was unselfishness. It would prefer to leave a little of its food for others rather than take their fish and milk, and was specially kind to our one-eyed Neloo.

What the Mother Says about the Animals' Love

On pages 240-43, Volume 5 of the Mother's *Questions and Answers*, somebody has asked Her, "What kind of love do animals have for men?"—and the Mother has answered, "It is almost the same as that of rather unintellectual men for the Divine. It is made up of admiration, trust and a sense of security. Admiration: it seems to you something very beautiful, and it is not reasoned out: and admiration from the heart, so to speak, spontaneous. For instance, dogs have this in a very high degree. And, then, trust—naturally this is mixed with other things: with the feeling of some need and dependence; for it is that person who will give me to eat when I am hungry, give me shelter when it is rough weather, who will look after me. This is not the most beautiful side. And then unfortunately, it gets mixed up (and I believe—I consider it entirely man's fault) with a kind of fear; a feeling of dependence and a kind of fear of something which is much stronger, much more conscious, much more... which can harm you, and you have no strength to defend yourself. It is a pity, but I believe it is altogether man's fault. But if men really deserved the love of animals it would be made a feeling of wonder and of the sense of security, something that's able to protect you, to give you all that you need, and near which you can always find shelter.

"Animals have an altogether rudimentary mind. They are not tormented by incessant thoughts like human beings. For example, they feel a spontaneous gratitude for an act of kindness towards them whilst men, ninety-eight times out of a hundred,

begin to reason and ask themselves what interest one could have in being good. This is one of the great miseries of mental activity. Animals are free from this and when you are kind to them they are grateful to you, and it turns into a very strong attachment, an irresistible need to be near you. There is something else. If the master is really a good one and the animal faithful, there is an exchange of psychic and vital forces, an exchange which becomes for the animal something wonderful, giving it an intense joy. When they like to be quite close to you in that way, when you hold them, it is that they vibrate internally. The force one gives them—the strength, of affection, of tenderness, protection, all that—they feel it, and it creates a deep attachment to them. Even fairly easily, in some of the higher animals like dogs, elephants, and even horses, it creates quite a remarkable need for devotion (which indeed is not thwarted by all the reasonings and arguments of the mind) which is spontaneous and very pure in its essence, something that's very beautiful....

"The working of the mind in man in its rudimentary form, its first manifestation, has spoilt many things which were much finer before.

"Naturally if man rises to a higher level and makes good use of his intelligence, then things can take on a greater value. But between the two, there is a passage where man makes the most vulgar and low use of his intelligence; he makes it an instrument for calculation, domination, deception, and there it becomes very ugly. I have known in my life animals I considered much higher than a large number of men, for that sordid calculation, that wish to cheat and profit was precisely not there in them. There are others that catch it—through contact with man—they catch it—but there are those who don't have it.

"The unselfish movement, uncalculating, is one of the most beautiful forms of psychic consciousness in the world....

"But this kind of wish to gain by what one has or does is truly one of the ugliest things in the world. And it is one of the most widespread, so that it is almost spontaneous in man. Nothing can turn its back on the divine love more totally than that, that wish to calculate and profit."

I had neither heard nor read anything of what the Mother says above. But my experience during the thirty years I spent in close contact with different animals was the same. That is why I love them more than human beings. We speak of the great love that human mothers have for their children. But what would you have said if you had seen Mamlujan, the cat which had brought Oney to us and left it in our care? This cat could never live without having a kitten with it, and as it could not have kittens of its own all the time, it would hunt till it found a cat somewhere which had delivered and then take away one of its kittens and bring it up with an astonishing love and care.

As it had no milk to give all the time, it would take the kitten to my friends or bring it to me to be fed with milk through a dropper. And how she loved to play with it, hugging and kissing it! We were so charmed to see this maternal instinct, and I wrote to the Mother about it.

One of the most stupid things I have read about is an old lady's beating her dog furiously because she believed there was no harm in doing it as the dog had no soul! Poor woman! If she only knew the truth she would never do such a thing; for not only animals but all living creatures have an evolving soul, what is called the psychic being, in them. But it will take a long time for humanity to become conscious of this fact.

My friends used to tease me saying, "It is a pity you are confined to this small place. You and your husband ought to have been placed in charge of a large animal sanctuary where even tigers and lions roam freely."

When people in Bombay asked us if we did not feel lonely and miserable without children, we said, "Not at all—we have the sweet and loving company of our cats."

"Cats!" they would exclaim in a horrified tone. "Oh my God, we pity you both. Those dirty, wretched and evil creatures!"

"If there was an iota of truth in what you say, surely the Divine Mother and Sri Aurobindo would never allow cats to be in Their Ashram," I would reply. "Besides, what is it to you?—it is entirely our business."

After that these people stopped saying anything. But one of my friends, who called sometimes to tell me something, once came in the morning when Mehelli was there.

She knocked, and he opened the door and asked her to come in and take a seat. "Sorry, but I will never step into this house as long as cats are there," she said.

"Then never come again, for we shall always have them," Mehelli told her angrily and shut the door.

(To be continued)

TOWARDS THE HIGHER LIFE

(Continued from the issue of October 1979)

CHAPTER II

Sparks of Surrender

(5)

“If you follow Him, you have nothing to fear, for the Grace will protect you and lead you to the ultimate goal. But... you have to be convinced down to the very cells of your body, in all the parts... that He is always there within me and around to guide me. It is with this confidence that one should abandon oneself.”¹

These lines if taken to heart can work wonders. But how to put them into operation, make the very cells throb with them? I toyed with the idea not for days but for months together.

In what words should I congratulate myself, praise my fate for being granted the rare boon, “I shall deliver you from all obscurities”? This soul-uplifting phrase was spoken by the Mother herself in a dream. But look at the audacity of the mischievous mind: it dismissed it outright, contending, “This divine promise was given to Arjuna, how could you dare take his place?”

A virtual promise from the Divine—and I did not care to treasure it! The philosophers’ stone I took for a pebble and threw it away! Covered by mud even a jewel loses its lustre.

When I read the passage quoted at the beginning of the article I came to realise what a blunder I had committed.

Spiritual laws are much more rigorous than the laws made by a mental government. One slip by us and there is a penalty. None can escape or evade the consequence of his deeds.

Here I may refer to some reactions related to the Mother’s fruit-distribution. This distinction may be said to have started from the early ’forties. Udar was among the rare few to enjoy the privilege. He stayed in the house just opposite to mine. Every morning Dyuman went to him with a plate of fruits from the Mother. It contained one piece for me as well. One day he said as if congratulating me, “Do you know Mother sends to you what she herself takes?” What a boon! It should have gladdened my heart, evoked unbounded gratitude for her graciousness but something else took hold of me. What? Denying herself she gives the fruit to me! Is it good to deprive the Mother to feed this wretched body? One day I gave vent to my feeling to Dyuman in a solemn tone. He pleaded, “Why should you think all that? The Mother gives it

¹ *Sweet Mother* by Mona Sarkar, Part II, p. 11.

to you and you take it.” Out of his goodness he persuaded me for one day, two days, even the third day, but it could not bring a change in my attitude. My mind failed to realise the value of the gift. My nature is full of such flaws and lapses.

The Mother knows how to regulate us and bring inner discipline. When she started fruit-distribution in cloth-bags with her own hand during the Pranam time, not even once did She grant me the favour, although I looked for it with hungry eyes and eager hands.

Some long twenty years later the Grace came to me in the shape of biscuits as Prasad and it continued till the Mother went into seclusion.

A brief mention may be made here of another stupidity of mine.

The Gita was so dear to my grandmother that she always kept it under her pillow. I could gather nothing from it, yet I wondered: “Even a man of the common run would feel shy to use ‘I’ so many times, then how could one who professes to be God do as Krishna does in the Gita?” What a silly, fantastic fancy!

Such was the impression on my child-mind about a scripture that is the pride of India and finds an honoured place among the world’s bibles. Swami Vivekananda has rightly said that a lion and not a mosquito can appreciate the strength of a lion.

“Abandon yourself to the Divine” has been dinned into our ears for decades but the riddle remains a riddle: where lies the mystery of the profound truth—the *mahāvākya*? How to put this principle, this precept into life-problems? Nothing in us that has usurped the throne of the heart wants to deprive itself of that pride of place. Even the cells are so organised that you cannot make a group, which is meant to respond to pain, answer to joy, and *vice versa*.

One day in August 1979 I made up my mind that whatever food came of itself from the Divine I would take and would not make any personal effort to have this or that. So long as things came in a greater quantity and quality than what was needed or desired, my faith grew by leaps and bounds but the day something pleasing to the palate was missing, “poor faith” could not ride the tide, it wavered and floundered. What a glorious example of “abandoning oneself to the Divine”! Why resort to hypocrisy? Further, why should the Divine take care of him who bothers so much about himself?

It is difficult to get out of the old rut. “The human in us clings to ignorance.” The bird is so eager to take a flight but its legs are tied, its wings are clipped. It is in meditation that I acquire some freedom, breathe a new air. That is why I rush to it whenever I get time. And now it has grown into a passion.

I recall a deeply moving remark of an eminent foreign scholar: “What a marvellous discovery is ‘meditation’ by the seers of India! The peace and tranquillity that they enjoy with nothing in their possession is a day-dream for us Westerners even when we surround ourselves with a world of things of comfort.”

Without entering into a detailed discussion, I may safely say that the hold of inertia on me is decreasing day by day. No more am I forced to drop like a dead weight during the day-time as was the case before 1977. Often it so happens that I do not get

time to take a nap at noon, yet I do not feel sleepy. At times my work begins at dawn and ends late at night—half-past eleven. A strange thing for a patient with troubled nerves! But if there arises the urge to meditate I forget the clock whether in the day or at night.

Right or wrong, my ambition is to scale the heights when not only for hours but for days together I might remain lost in conscious Samadhi. True, it might lead me to the beaten path of the old Yogas, but, never mind, let me obtain something tangible, then alone could I manipulate it at will.

This is not against Sri Aurobindo's ideology: "For the integral Yoga this method of Samadhi may seem to have the disadvantage that when it ceases, the thread is broken..." But "what is attained in the inner state, becomes easier to acquire by the waking consciousness..."¹

Defining Samadhi Sri Aurobindo says: "The greatest value of the dream-state Samadhi lies... in its power to open up easily higher ranges... delight of union with the Divine..."²

By chance three consecutive days happened to be holidays (15th August to 17th). To this was added a fourth (Sunday the 20th), and I passed these days in deep concentration with the intention to observe how far I could dispense with the needs of the body and the compulsions of life. Was there anywhere any sign of release from the "mass of habits"? The experience I had on New Year's Day repeated itself on the Darshan day followed by a descent of Yogic Force from dawn to dusk with a break for about 10 minutes at 10 a.m. The broken thread was picked up the next morning.

One thing must not be overlooked, for it forms a cardinal point in Sri Aurobindo's Yoga: "... The decisive ordeal"³ of his Integral Yoga is the consent of the lower vital to change and "it must not only be a mental profession or a passing emotional adhesion; it must translate itself into an abiding attitude and a persistent and constant action."⁴

It is so heartening to see that from the beginning of the month of September 1979 it is the lower vital that opens and invites the higher working first and then this working spreads to other parts, from the occiput to the heels, resulting in spontaneous Samadhi. Most of the hours of the 16th I spent in that state. At a certain privileged moment the pressure passed from the navel to the lower joint of the backbone and from the heart to the centre of the spinal cord forming a *chaturstrikon*. This is no more a rare phenomenon. Its frequency is increasing day by day.

The intensity and degree of Samadhi differs from day to day, perhaps due to the degree of readiness and opening of the *ādhār* at the time. Once, while seated in an armchair, I lost all sense of body-consciousness and the feeling was aroused that I had become one with the air. At another time the body appeared light like a *chaddar* (sheet) which got rolled up with nothing there. Is this called bodilessness?

¹ *The Synthesis of Yoga*, (1965), p 487. ² *Ibid.*

³ *On Yoga II*, Tome Two, p. 405.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 410.

QUESTION: The whole body is becoming like a white *chaddar* fully spread.

SRI AUROBINDO: Purification and straightening out of the consciousness.

Twice or thrice "the body seemed a stone"¹ and it appeared that Their Name was vibrating in a slow measured tone.

At another time the body resembled a slab, not made of stone but of light.

I should like to mention just one more experience (20.8.1979) which had some peculiarities.

Usually there remains no sense of body, breath or even "I" when one is in a state of Samadhi. At times some traces of the body are retained by a thread of witness-consciousness.

All in me "grew tranquil" since "the mind's factory had ceased to work."² During the Samadhi that I had on August 20,

Only sometimes small thoughts arose and fell
Like quiet waves upon a silent sea...
But found no response in the silenced brain.³

When completely withdrawn but awake within I seemed to be standing in knee-deep water near the seashore. I thought I was quite near the land, so would swim back safely but was nonplussed on finding nothing but water all round me.

Then I abandoned myself to the Divine.

"The greatest value of the dream-state of Samadhi lies... in its power to open up easily higher ranges... by which the soul grows in height, range and self-mastery ... it can prepare itself... for access to the Divine, the Supreme Self, the transcendent Truth... or it can by an absorbed inner joy... prepare itself for the delight of union with the Divine..."⁴

In order to reach a new height there must not be anything to obstruct the torrential flow of the Divine Shakti.

I have a recollection of one more vision of the vast expanse of the sea full of white light with myself reduced to the size of just a cricket-ball floating. Imagine the joy of a person having all these experiences while in bed with the mosquito curtain on. Are there not sufficient reasons why the heart runs to switch on the Samadhi again and again?

My experience of Samadhi is yet in its initial stage.

In order to bring purity to the very cells, things which are deeply rooted must be eradicated by digging. These days I go to the film-show from time to time to detect and discover what "powers stare from the Abyss".

The impulses that whisper to the heart
And passion's thunder-chase sweeping the nerves.⁵

¹ *Savitri*, B. VII, C. 6, p. 180.

² *Ibid*, B. VII, C. 6, p. 181.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

⁴ *The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 487.

⁵ *Savitri*, B. VII, C. 6, p. 176.

One day there rose a great desire to go to the movie. I asked myself, "Will the cravings of the vital ever come to an end?" But a contrary suggestion natural to a religious temperament like mine waved all hesitation aside: "Would you like to deny yourself the opportunity of seeing the life-story of 'Gopal Krishna', which is the theme of the show? Could there be a greater foolishness?" From this I drew the lesson that so long as even one delegate of Ego survives there cannot be full-flooded surrender.

Next week the film was interesting but not instructive. On returning home I could not keep the head empty of vain thoughts for more than an hour. This induced me to resort to Pranayama. Within minutes I reached the state of void. It needed no vigilance, no careful watch. When all was still within, these words came whispering to the ears: "Seated like Bholanath." "Only to the inner mind they speak direct:"¹ this line of *Savitri* about voices from within seems to be in tune with my experience.

I could not do the same the next day. Rippling thoughts kept on distracting the mind. Thus things by themselves are not good or bad: all depends upon one's attitude, as the Mother puts it.

It was a moonlit night. I was enjoying the dance of the silvery rays on the bosom of the waveless sea. Time was up to go to the film. Very reluctantly I did go but came away after ten minutes, impelled by the urge to devote the time to concentration. The eye, however, could not "travel upward" nor could I turn the gaze inward. Then I felt inclined to abandon myself into His hands. But it was a mere thought—a lip-service. Surrender does not bloom at once like a lotus from a quiet lake.

I am often haunted by the question: "How to abandon oneself? What to abandon?" When baffling problems defy solution and yet demand immediate decision, in what way are we expected to act? If we fail to rise to the occasion we may have to cut a sorry figure. I have to deal with twelve to fifteen heads in my department and it is no wonder there is a headache for me. How to know what is the right step—primarily in dealing with this all-too-human head of my own?

True, such questions cannot crop up in a "surrendered heart", but what is the "striving heart" supposed to do when put in a critical situation?

These questions will remain unanswered till Light conquers all as it has silenced the buzz of the physical mind.

In continuation of what I have said so far about rock-like persistence of the resistance, let me add one more point.

It was at midnight that I had retired, so I kept on sleeping till dawn turned into bright day. All the workers had gone on a day's leave, so I was at ease. At about 7 a.m. the Name seemed to be delving into deeper and deeper layers. Then there came an urgent call from the body's needs. To answer it would have been natural, but it would have hampered the free flow of the Grace; so in a prayerful mood I raised the consciousness to a higher level and remained lost. The descending force penetrated into the spinal cord and began its return journey upward but ultimately I had to get

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

up. There was a rock-like determined resistance of outer circumstance and the inner force could not break it.

Lest I should miss something important or fail to be accurate, I must put down all I have to say here and now, yet I cannot claim a hundred percent accuracy. All is not retained in its purity by the mind.

Suppression of nature's demands tells upon the nerves. For a month I had been feeling some pain in the lower part of the abdomen and at times a burning sensation while relieving myself. It was the first symptom of prostate-trouble. An article in *Bhawan's Journal* (March 24, 1979) says that the prostate becomes a problem in the case of 60 percent of all civilised men above 50, and that "often the only solution is to cut it out."

Spiritual action in this lower region had begun from the very beginning of my Ashram life, so I got a bit perplexed: how could I fall a victim to inflammation there?

Our *ādhār* may be likened to a pitcher with a hundred holes. All must be closed. If one hole is there, it will not hold water.

On July 28, 1979 after the day's work when I tried to go inward, the being refused to open and collaborate. I seemed to be grappling with "darkness within darkness". That night I had slept over the question of "abandoning oneself to the Divine". Next morning while it was twilight the idea broke upon me to leave myself in His hands.

This filled the heart with a new kind of joy. Soon after, I felt a mild action in the parts below the navel, by and by it reached the crown and I got merged in it. Meanwhile the trunk of the body grew stiff and solid as it usually happens when there is an intense working. With the increase in intensity there rose a sense of rock-like immobility.

What was most amazing was the vision of a hill, with nothing else around in the parts below the navel. Its colour was as that of iron ore. To assure myself I stared at it intently, again and again. Did it signify the stubbornness and rigidity of the lower nature? "...Nether nature screens the soul." The experience may sound incredible but there are many things in the world which still remain unanswered to the rational mind.

The extraordinary experience was likely to be marred by the rise of a desire to visit the toilet. A break meant losing the golden opportunity. To quote Sri Aurobindo though he wrote in another context: "...The pressure of the physical senses breaks the Samadhi and calls back the mind to live in their normal field."¹

So as before, I tried to raise the consciousness to a higher rung and the idea of relieving myself slipped from the mind, till there rose another tendency an hour after. In between a deep concentration seized me and all of a sudden there emerged in the same part of the lower vital the figure of a young calf, whose frontal portion was made of pure white light. A few days later, I perceived it again, standing still at the same place. This time the whole area was irradiated with a red light.

Another experience of note was the descent of Light directly into the

¹ *The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 485.

heart-centre, which acted like a saw making its way more and more to the interior. Slowly and steadily it reached the regions of the spinal cord, giving me the joy of conscious Samadhi.

And all experience a long march towards Light.¹
The seed grew into a delicate marvellous bud.²

The following two small events give a happy picture.

On 19-8-1979, instead of going to the film I went straight to the Ashram and spent one and a half hours there. During that period not even once did the thought of the cinema occur. My being aspired for this kind of self-conquest: not to shrink from but to face the devil in his own home and come out victorious.

In a dream I was approached by a young girl seeking my shelter and offering herself to my service. But "vain was the provocation of the events". As a serpent lies flat on the floor when its poison-tooth is broken, so I found my sex-parts lying vanquished and bathed in a white-light. Then there rose a sense of absolute emptiness. I remained utterly quiet tasting the bliss of purity. Thus was laid the foundation-stone for the edifice of transformation.

What I intend to emphasise here is that the Grace helped me to tide over the prostate-trouble before it could develop into a problem. An oppressive doubt lingered in my mind: "Was the cure radical? What if there is a relapse?" To find an easy access to the inner chambers of my "troubled rebel heart"³ I had wrestled with the question for the whole night (Saturday, 11-8-1979) but to no avail. Yet there was no sense of struggle or any sign of desperation. The will was constantly sustained by the flaming aspiration to resign myself to the Divine Will, unmindful of the result. But this again proved to be a mere thought, not something living.

Night had overpowered the might of the day and the shooting rays of Usha had pierced the heart of the night. With the rise of the sun I felt a mild action round the navel. Then these lines of the Mother came sailing before the eyes with overwhelming force to apply it there: "First of all, one must be able to distinguish the part that does not agree, then one must go deeply within to find the cause, then you will do this operation: pour the Peace and Force so that it may change."⁴

Very quietly I exerted my will and a moment later felt the pressure, the passing of the Yogic Force to the affected part—as water is pushed through a syringe—and the whole area got possessed by the Force. For a time it looked as if only light existed instead of the navel and its surrounding parts. This was followed by the feeling of a complete emptiness there.

One day it appeared there was nothing left that constituted the head. Its very stuff was reduced to a zero. Then this zero rose high up to an immeasurable distance

¹ *Savitri*, B. VII, C. 4, p. 155 ² *Ibid*, B. IV, C. 1, p. 8.

³ *Ibid*, B. VII, C. 6, p. 182.

⁴ *Sweet Mother*, Part II, by Mona Sarkar, p. 36.

and became one with *Mahāśūnya* (Great Void). All that remained was a huge vacuity, something beyond mental apprehension. The identification was so thorough that no trace of individuality even in the form of a dot lingered. The experience repeated itself a few days after. Just as in the morning hush the first ray of the sun turns all Nature into a golden ecstasy, so also these experiences of mine raise the hope of tasting the sweetness of a New Life.

(To be continued)

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LEVELS OF EXPERIENCE

(Continued from the issue of October 1979)

ALL concrete processes of psychological personality involve all the three consciousnesses, the difference between one and another is the way these consciousnesses combine and in the degree they do so. It is possible to conceive of all the activities as constituting a series with the most physical at the one end and the most mental at the other and the rest arranged between them in increasing degrees of consciousness. Evidently the processes with the physical factor predominant like reflex action, habit and routine thinking will fall together, the goal-seeking activities connected with the preservation and propagation of life come in another class, thought and imagination concerned with impersonal objective truth lie in still another. And these classes will be distinguishable by progressively greater degrees of consciousness present in them. And that suggests also the way of correctly handling them in the modification of behaviour. Where the consciousness is the least, it is mechanical repetition that changes behaviour. Habits cannot be changed by changing opinions. A changed opinion in the mind is a favourable circumstance and no more. Essentially one has to re-train the vital and the physical consciousnesses and for that one has to resort to methods appropriate to them. So far as the physical element is concerned repetition of the new act is the way and for the vital consciousness a breaking of the old identification and the formation of a new one has to be achieved and this is sometimes done suddenly too.

Thus we have here a plan of the levels of normal experience, the physical, the vital and the mental recalling the *anna*, the *prāṇa* and the *manas* of the Upanishads, which offer a new approach to the study of personality. We have already seen that it is strongly supported by the parallelism of the stages of general evolution and the facts of introspection confirm it. It also gives a practical advantage in handling personality. For failure to distinguish among them and their true natures, Psychoanalysis ascribes to mental ideas and their revival what really belongs to emotional and instinctive attitudes of the vital. A direct recognition of the true psychological factor will obviously be an advantage, besides constituting the appreciation of the truth in the matter.

Now we wish to undertake a comparison of this plan with some of those obtaining in psychology and see their relative merits and demerits. The distinction of the perceptual and the ideational levels broadly corresponds to the animal and human levels and this has an emotional basis. It does serve admirably in the classification of the different processes of personality. But there is a thinking which merely serves instinctive ends. It simply justifies what we vitally desire. And then there is the thinking which consists of sheer mechanical rounds. And there is also the true thinking which is purposive, directed to the solution of intellectual problems and the discovery of dispassionate truth. All these varieties of thinking on this plan will be

put together, since they consist of trains of ideas. But the essential energies in them are different even though the apparent form is the same. And in consideration of these energies it is more rational to regard them as predominantly physical, vital and mental processes and handle them accordingly. Similarly habit and instinct are put together at the perceptual level, since they have a sensory determination. Firstly, on this basis habits of thought and feeling have to be separated from habitual action and, secondly, the conscious accompaniment in instincts is very rich, whereas in habits it is so scanty.

The psycho-analytical treatment of the stages of development is all a matter of growth of the vital consciousness. It marks out the various steps it traverses to reach the normal ego-life of adjustment with reality for one of more or less pure wishfulness. Thought and the higher ideals are, indeed, in a measure used by the vital as means and they are there no more than canalisations of the vital energy. But reason as the perception of dispassionate objective truth too does exist and in his later series of Introductory Lectures, Freud does recognise it clearly. Says he: "our best hope for the future is that intellect—the scientific spirit, reason—should in time establish a dictatorship over the human mind."¹ And the aim of scientific thought, is "to arrive at correspondence with reality, that is to say with what exists outside us and independently of us, and, as experience has taught us, is decisive for the fulfilment or frustration of our desires."² The ego grows through a perception and recognition of reality. But its purpose is practical and its intention and method are to find the successful ways of the fulfilment of its desires. In this process it does modify its desires, but its essential nature and spirit is not that of letting the reality govern it, of surrendering its own desires to reality and seeking all its satisfaction in reality as it is independently of us. The ego is thus egoistic even when it adjusts to reality. But the true vision of science and our last hope for the future is different. That really requires and holds up a level of experience where the objective truth will entirely rule us. How the transition is to take place, how the growth is to proceed to that plane of experience Freud did not undertake to characterise. He confined his researches to the growth from the state of rank wishfulness of the id, the uncultivated vital, conscious and subconscious, into that of the relatively controlled and modified wishfulness of the ego, the relatively cultivated vital. But he truly recognised that the hope of the future lay in a complete transcendence of personal wishfulness and the achievement of the plane of impersonal objective experience.

It is exactly this part of the growth that has interested Sri Aurobindo and his method of Integral Yoga is an account of the theory and the practice of this growth. The other part, which occupied Freud almost exclusively and which he, in effect, made the whole of personality, comes in for a treatment at the hands of Sri Aurobindo as a lower rung of the ladder. This lower rung shows how man, the natural vital being, becomes a social vital being with thought as a servant of life. But the latter stage seeks to show the way of rising to the level of true objectivity, objectivity at the prac-

¹ Freud, *New Introductory Lectures*, p 219. ² *Ibid.*, p. 210.

tical plane as also that of truth as such. If the first he called growth from the natural to the normal, the second may be called growth from the normal to the real, since here reality and truth become true determinants of personality. In characterising this process Sri Aurobindo distinguishes many stages and steps between the normal mind and the supermind when the consciousness becomes truly constituted of Truth. However, those levels are not the subject of treatment here. Just now we are concerned with the levels of experience of the normal personality and in that connection we have attempted to show that there are, in fact, three distinct levels; the physical, the vital and the mental, progressively increasing in consciousness, possessing special characteristics and local references in the body. A failure to recognise them leads to confusion in psycho-analysis. We have just now seen that all the stages of development of the so-called mental life characterised by it are, in fact, all of the vital consciousness, the mind recognised by it was mostly that which is dominated by the vital and that the true mind, which reveals itself in a measure in scientific work in its perception of objective truth, it envisaged only as a future hope of humanity without attempting to explore the ways and means of attaining to it. In consequence, psycho-analysis has tended to make the vital the whole of man, which is an obvious mis-statement of human nature and personality.

The Jungian collective unconscious, the new level of experience, discovered by him, can also be more adequately accommodated in our threefold scheme. Sri Aurobindo adjoins to the three consciousnesses of the physical, the vital and the mental recognisably distinct subconscious and unconscious ranges, which tend to carry forward in the individual the racial and the universal history of the evolutionary process. This is perfectly consistent with his general evolutionary standpoint and approach. The collective unconscious of Jung would here be coincident with those ranges of the unconscious which embody the racial history. Here there would yet be further lower ranges embodying pre-racial universal history. But the more important thing is that it would primarily consist of the vital unconscious, since life was then lived at that level. To talk of the archetypes of the collective unconscious as 'idea' unknowingly introduces the mentalist and intellectualist prejudice falsifying the true facts, which must be of the nature of self-assertive urges of a general character.

We have probably shown sufficiently that the physical, vital and mental are the truly fundamental planes of experience and that the other schemes of development get into their right perspectives only when they are properly placed in them. We should also like to consider them in relation to the study of types of personality. The conception of mind in contemporary psychology is not at all clear and that is a source of many confusions. Freud showed that instinct rules our life not mind, thought or ideals. In that he saw the force and power of the vital consciousness and also rightly observed its true nature of self-assertion and self-affirmation in its wishfulness. Besides it, he also noticed the true 'reason' and its function. But yet he used the term mind as covering both, which tended to obliterate a real distinction. Had he clearly kept the distinction in view, he might have been spared most of the over-generalisa-

tions of the vital consciousness and thus given a truer picture of personality. The same applies to Western psychology as a whole. The animals have a consciousness, which is properly speaking a sub-mental consciousness. It is the consciousness accompanying, emerging from and growing with the biological phenomena of 'life'. It is rightly the vital consciousness. Mind is a new emergent in man and the mental consciousness is the true characteristic of the mind. Certainly most of the human consciousness is vital consciousness, the consciousness of 'life'-phenomena, which it shares in common with the animal. Contemporary psychology is supposed to have given up its intellectualist bias, but by using the term 'mind' too widely it is unconsciously perpetuating it.

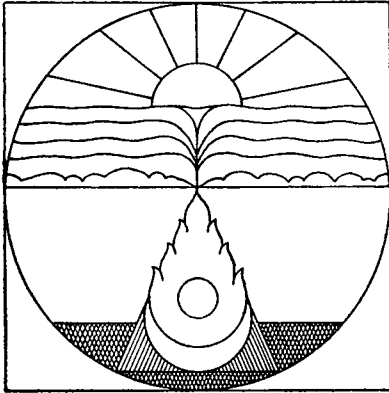
The modern treatment of types of personality suffers from the same bias. Introversion and extraversion are essentially dispositions or attitudes of the vital, the life-impulse thrown outside or thrown upon itself. In the abnormal cases it is more clearly recognisable as such. The gratification sought, in one case, is that of control, management and domination over other forces and in the other case that of one's own force. But the play is primarily of the vital force and consciousness. In normal life, however, where mental and intellectual activity exists as a strong trend, the true case of introversion, *i.e.* a real interestedness in ideas and higher emotions, is noticeable. In melancholy, *e.g.*, the individual is introvert but the interestedness in ideas and ideational activity is not for itself, it is rather as means for the self-gratification of the vital force, which has met with frustration at the hands of the external forces. To base personality types on the physique, as Kretschmer does, is to affirm that the body is the determinant of the vital and the mental consciousness. A more correct basis would perhaps be to recognise the physical, vital and mental consciousnesses as the primary modes and their relative domination in personality as the determinants of three primary types and their various combinations of the sub-types in between them. The idea of the physical, vital and mental consciousnesses is connected with the well-known Indian idea of the three gunas: *tamas*, *rajas* and *sattva*, the three primary qualities of the entire phenomenal existence. And on their basis we come across in the Gita and elsewhere a plan of types of personality, a tamasic, a rajasic and a sattwic personality and a tamasic-rajasic or tamasic-sattwic or rajasic-sattwic and so on. *Sattva*, light or consciousness, is, in fact, the quality of mind, *rajas*, activity, that of life and *tamas*, inertia, that of matter. Thus the sattwic personality may be called a mental personality, the rajasic the vital, and the tamasic the physical, and among these the various combined types will exist.

This treatment of types has a surer basis than any other and would possibly afford a scheme to accommodate the various typological schemes that exist today. It would firstly place them where they exactly belong in the personality's mental, vital and physical strata and then give them the right total perspective.

In the end we would venture to suggest that this plan of levels of experience and types of personality could give a new approach in psychiatry too and might even provide a wider base for the various psycho-pathological schools and therapies to discover

their mutual relatedness. The somatic therapy, the hypnotic method and the various forms of analytical and psycho-analytical treatments base themselves on partial data of personality, on which they lay an exclusive emphasis. Each one of them has to its credit a proved record of serviceability and success. A fuller view of personality may indeed provide a scheme for their harmonisation.

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THE THEOLOGICAL PROBLEM IN PARADISE LOST

(Continued from the issue of October 1979)

The Deity

MILTON's conception of the Deity has been disagreeable to most critics. The Deity in *Paradise Lost* is considered to be "a grotesque creation of a primitive culture; he is neither omniscient nor omnipresent, and his bungling inefficiency often amounts to cruelty to those who are affected by his conduct."¹

He is regarded as being harsh, tyrannical and egoistic. But to me He does not seem to be in any way abnormal. The orthodox Hindu conception of God consists of a trinity—Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. These three are said to rule the universe. But this is only a popular belief. In fact, what it means is that the Divinity functions in three ways: creating, preserving and destroying.

"These are not three independent centres of consciousness as popular theology represents, but three sides of one complex personality."² The Vedas also believe in one Supreme Being. But various names are given to Him due to His different qualities. In *Satyartha Prakash* Swami Dayananda Saraswati explains why God is called Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh. In the Vedas "He is called 'Brahma', for he makes all the world; 'Vishnu', for he pervades all; and 'Mahesh', for he destroys all..."³

So the very God who has created men will destroy them if they prove to be unregenerate sinners. Milton's God does the same thing. He not merely creates Adam, but punishes him when he forgets himself and yields to passion. But ultimately He saves him from perdition, because he repents.

The Christian doctrine of the Trinity does not very much appeal to Milton, because of his narrow rationalism. "To men like Servetus and Milton reason is the greatest object of faith; and they denied the Trinity because of its evident irrationality."⁴ In his attitude to the doctrine of the Trinity he is distinctly Arian. Like the Gita, the Vedas and Upanishads, he believes in one Supreme Being.

The Upanishad says, "All this universe is the Brahman. The variety of objects different from Him are nothing. They are all the forms of the Brahman." The Yajurveda clearly explains this belief in these words:

"O men, with all love and devotion adore the supreme and most happy Spirit; who existed before the creation, who is the Maker, Preserver and Upholder of all the suns and other luminous bodies; and who is the eternal Sole Lord of all that has been, is in existence, and will come into being. He has made and He sustains all the crea-

¹ *The Conclusion of Paradise Lost*: C.A. More, P.M.L.A., Volume 36, 1921.

² *The Hindu View of Life*. Radhakrishnan, p. 27.

³ Rigveda I, 16446.

⁴ *Milton and Servetus: A Study in the Source of Milton's Theology*: Martin A. Larson, P.M.L.A., Volume 41, 1926.

tures of the worlds from the earth to the sun."¹ But this Supreme Being is not a tyrant, a despotic sovereign. We can explain it in a simple way. God creates human beings with a purpose. They have to justify their existence in this world by behaving properly. Those who fail to realise this kindle His ire and come down to the level of beasts.

Milton's God is not merely kind but also stern. He is a loving God and at the same time a severe law-giver. The good are rewarded with His love, whereas the bad and vicious receive His unmitigated punishment. Milton's conception of the Deity is different from that of Browning who sings hopefully and confidently:

God's in His heaven
All's right with the world.²

Nor does he share with Browning the idea that

All service is the same with God
With God, whose puppets, best and worst,
Are we; there is no last nor first.³

Milton's conception of God is similar to that of the Hindus and to some extent to that of the ancient Greeks.

The speeches of the Deity in *Paradise Lost* are regarded as being pompous and He is considered, on that account, a school-divine, fond of sermonising. We shall have that impression if we consider Him a magnified man. But if we imagine Him as God, who is the author of this wonderful creation and of mankind, we can understand His superior way of speaking without feeling undue inferiority in His presence. Lord Krishna speaks in the same authoritative, confident tone to Arjuna on the battlefield, while explaining certain intricate problems relating to the right conduct and duties of Man:

"All this world is spread out by me, by my form unmanifest; in me dwell all beings, but not I in them dwell.

"As in the ether dwells the mighty wind and moves everywhere, so all beings dwell in me, know thou this."⁴

If we deprive the speeches of Milton's Deity of their spiritual significance, we hear only the stern Puritanic voice of Milton. But that is only one way of looking at the problem.

The ways of God in *Paradise Lost* may sound peculiar, if we shear them of their technological content. As we read the epic we ask ourselves the simple, logical ques-

¹ Yajurveda's Mantra XIII. 4 quoted by Swami Dayananda in *Satyartha Prakash*. Translated by Durga Prasad, p. 174.

² Browning, *Pippa Passes*.

³ *Ibid.*, *Pippa Passes*.

⁴ *The Bhagawadgita*: Dr. Shakuntala Rao Shastri, Chapter IX, Slokas 4 & 6.

tion—"Why did not God prevent Man from being corrupted?" Only Milton's firm belief in free-will and the dignity of man could answer the question. In the poem we see how God does everything to warn man of the impending disaster. But He leaves him free. This is exactly the same attitude as taken by Adam towards Eve. When Eve accuses Adam of not having forced her to stay with him, he replies,

"I warn'd thee, I admonish'd thee, fortold
The danger, and the lurking Enemy
That lay in wait; beyond this had bin force,
And force upon free will hath here no place."¹

The same may be the reply of God to Adam, for He had admonished him, indicated the danger, but never exerted force upon his free-will.

Moreover, Milton believes that God wants to test the fidelity of His subjects. Raphael tells Adam that at the time of creation God commanded the angels to guard the gates of Hell, lest a spy should interrupt His great task. He explains this mysterious action of God,

"Not that they durst without his leave attempt,
But us he sends upon his high behests
For state, as Sovran King and to enure
Our prompt obedience."²

So nothing happens without God's knowledge. But the temptation serves merely as a test of Man's obedience, for "a good temptation is that whereby God tempts even the righteous for the purpose of providing them not as though He were ignorant of the disposition of their hearts, but for the purpose of exercising or manifesting their faith or patience, as in the case of Abraham and Job; or of lessening their self-confidence, and reproving their weakness, that both they themselves may become wiser by experience, and others may profit by their example, as in the case of Hazakiah..."³ This testing, according to Milton, is desirable.

To understand Milton's Deity, we have to understand his conception of free-will and his insistence on right reason.

The Son of God

What is exactly the attitude of Milton towards the son of God? This is indeed a difficult problem. As we read *Paradise Lost* we form an impression that the Son of God is a manifestation of Love. Milton bestows upon the Son glory, splendour and

¹ Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Book IX, 1171-1174

² *Ibid.*, Book VIII, 237-240.

³ *De Doctrina Christiana*, Columbia Edition, B. I, Ch. VIII, pp. 87-89.

even divinity. So far he is in agreement with the orthodox conception. But whether he considers him equal to God is doubtful.

Here and there we find distinct traces of Arianism in the epic as when God tells Adam about Himself:

“...Who am alone
From all Eternitie, for none I know
Second to mee or like, equal much less.”¹

But Milton is more explicit on this matter in his *Christian Doctrine*. He undoubtedly acknowledges the Son of God as divine, but he is only on a higher plane than ordinary individuals. According to Milton, this position attained by the Son is a possibility within the reach of all human beings, provided they rightly utilise their gifts and strive to be divine. Milton's view is that Jesus Christ is a man and that he is adopted as the Son of God by virtue of his character. This adoptionist tendency is revealed to a certain extent in *Paradise Lost* also.

There are critics who hold the opinion that Milton is trinitarian in the first few books, but anti-trinitarian in his later books. “The most important question,” says Arthur Sewell, “is to decide whether or not Milton was anti-trinitarian, when he composed ‘Paradise Lost’. The view I shall put forward is that Milton was Trinitarian when the early books were composed, but his Trinitarianism is yielding to the pressure of other opinions in the later books.”² I do not think so, for even in the third book, he presents what appear to be two diametrically opposite views while speaking of the Son's offer to atone for the sin of man. Milton says that the Son is

Thron'd in highest bliss
Equal to God, and equally enjoying
Godlike fruition...³

But only a few lines later the poet says,

No sooner did thy dear and onely Son
Perceive thee purpos'd not to doom frail Man
So strictly, but much more to pitie enclin'd,
He to appease thy wrauth, and end the strife
Of Mercy and Justice in thy face discern'd,
Regardless of the Bliss wherein hee sat
Second to thee, offered himself to die
For mans offence.⁴

¹ Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Book VIII, 405-407.

² Arthur Sewell: *A Study in Milton's Christian Doctrine*, p. 85.

³ Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Book III, 305-307.

⁴ *Ibid.*, *Paradise Lost*, Book III, 403-410.

Possibly this is an example of hierarchic subordination in the Trinity, but it seems unlikely that Milton's theology is so precise. The best way of looking at the problem is as follows. Milton, when he is dealing with the Son by himself, treats him as equal to God. But when he considers him in relation to God, he assigns him a second place. Or it may be argued in another manner. When he chose a Biblical theme for his epic, he might have thought it safe to follow tradition. As long as he is conscious of it, he follows it. But when once he is led by his intellectualism, he sternly disapproves all that is traditional. This partly explains the inconsistency involved in the presentation of the Son of God.

Conclusion

Taking the above discussion into consideration we can safely conclude that Milton is a theist and has an idea of a personal God, with all the divine attributes of love, justice and kindness. But this does not prevent him from imagining that the same Supreme Spirit, which is immutable and infinite, pervades the whole universe. He feels that this spirit is everywhere, in earth, fire and water. He expresses this view when he says,

Thee Father first they sung Omnipotent,
Immutable, immortal, infinite,
Eternal King; thee Author of all being,
Fountain of Light...¹

A similar idea we find in the Gita:

“Unborn, eternal, permanent, ancient,
Not slain (he is) when (is) slain the body.”

“O Gudakesa [Arjuna]! I am the soul seated in the heart of all beings; I, the Beginning, Middle and likewise the End of beings.”

“I am Vishnu of the spirits of the sun, the radiant Sun of the lights...”

“O Arjuna, that which is the seed of every being, am I; nor without me there exists anything moving or not moving.”²

Here the idea is that God is the creator of the whole universe; all things proceed from one divine source, to which they return if they are not depraved. A few lines from Milton in explanation of this may not be out of place:

“O Adam, One Almighty is, from whom
All things proceed, and up to him return,
If not deprav'd from good, created all

¹ *Ibid.*, *Paradise Lost*, Book III, 372-375.

² *The Bhagavad Gita*: Dr. Shakuntala Rao Sastri, Ch. II, 20, IX, 20, 21, 39.

Such to perfection, one first matter all
 Indu'd with various forms, various degrees
 Of substance, and in things that live, of life."¹

The firm faith of the poet is that all animate and inanimate objects are motivated by one Supreme Force. We can imagine from all this that Milton has an abstract as well as a concrete picture of godhead. But he is primarily a poet and not a religious preacher. So he is not scrupulously careful about theological dogmas.

In fact the theological problem in *Paradise Lost* is nothing but the spiritual experience of Milton, his doubts and fears as regards the justice, or otherwise, of God's ways. Langland, poet of *Piers Plowman*, starts on his quest of Truth, but ultimately he closes his poem with a tragic disappointment. His quest is not fulfilled. But Milton is more hopeful.

Like Maharshi Dayananda who interprets the 'Mantra' of the Veda in *Satyartha Prakash* by saying, "God is called Nayaykari because it is His nature to do justice",² Milton seems to have acquiesced in God's justice and found that

Just are the ways of God,
 And Justifiable to Men,
 Unless there be who think not God at all.³

(Concluded)

ADARSH BALA

NOTE

All quotations have been extracted from *The Poetical Works of John Milton*, Edited after the original Texts by H. C. Beeching. Published by Oxford University Press, London, reprinted in 1956.

¹ Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Book V, 469-474.

² Swami Dayananda's *Satyartha Prakash*: translated by Sri Durga Prasad, p. 24.

³ *Samson Agonistes*: Milton, 293-295.

THE IDEAL CHILD

AN APPEAL

It was in 1977 during the Mother's Centenary Year that by Her Grace the thought occurred to distribute some 2000 copies of the booklet *Ideal Child* to the students in the Kutch District of Gujarat.

When someone sent the required money for 2000 copies, we thought there were a lot more students in Kutch. What about them? The answer was, 'Let us try.' If it is the Mother's Wish, the work will be done.

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INDIAN LIFE IN ENGLISH WRITINGS

(Continued from the issue of October 1979)

PART II (contd.)

Of Land and People

BETWEEN the simple narrative of two young English girls and the sophisticated record of an erudite scholar, there was indeed a vast gap—almost the difference between two planets. That was how *Two under the Indian Sun* and *Jesting Pilate* stood divided. If the former was candid, sincere and devoid of any scholastic artificiality, the latter was an assessment by a man of letters, proud of his intellectual perception and critical erudition. The Godden children and Aldous Huxley belonged to two disparate worlds. While Huxley was out to find fault with India, scrutinise her with the keen microscope of his over-developed intellect, the Goddens looked at the country with eyes filled with wonder at all they saw. India penetrated their deeper beings. But to Huxley the deeper sentiments had no meaning. His hard and fossilized mind thwarted the touching and feeling of profounder emotions. He took the Englishman's pride in this singular inability.

Huxley entered Bombay and this was his observation, 'Architecturally Bombay is one of the most appalling cities in either hemisphere. It had the misfortune to develop during what was, perhaps, the darkest period of all architectural history.' (*Jesting Pilate*, London, Chatto and Windus, 1930, p. 8)

What was wrong with Bombay applied to London, New York and in fact any large city of the world. This city was not the product of one architect, it was the sum-total of a gradual growth of decades or even centuries of necessity or convenience. The slums of London were not less ugly than any slum in any city. Even Paris, supposed to be the most beautiful city on earth, had its ugly quarters. From what point of view did Huxley judge architecture? This is a debatable issue.

It would appear that he was bent on censuring all things Indian when he said, 'The Moghul gardens are disappointingly inferior to any of the more or less contemporary ones of Italy. Shahmar or Nishat Bagh cannot compare with Villa d'Este at Tivoli or Villa Lante near Viterbo...But in general it may be said that the design of all these Indian gardens is rigid, monotonous and lacking entirely in the Italian grandiosity, the felicity of invention.' (*Ibid.*, p. 24)

Each nation has its peculiar way and concept of design. Italy may have beautiful gardens, these are beautiful in the European vision, fulfilling the European aesthetic ideal. But India may rightly have her own independent standard and the fact that it did not fulfil the European norm did not necessarily mean that the object in question was ugly. A Japanese garden by any standard is the most exquisite in the world, with its simplicity, dignity and perfection, compared to which the European gardens

may seem monstrosities, over-ornamented, over-filled Baroque creations which satisfy only the sensual man, but fail to reach the deeper chords of beauty attained by the Japanese.

Huxley's masterpiece of criticism occurred when he spoke of the Taj Mahal. 'I am always a little uncomfortable when I find myself unable to admire something which all the rest of the world admires...The Taj Mahal is one of the seven wonders, my guides assure me, that is, perhaps the most beautiful building of the world...The Taj was a disappointment...Architecturally, the worst features are its minarets. These four thin tapering towers, standing at the four corners of the platform on which the Taj is built, are amongst the ugliest structures ever created by human hands.' (*Ibid.*, pp. 57-60)

It would appear Huxley was the supreme epitome in judgement. His assessment was final and nothing could be pronounced after it. He attempted to clarify his imbecility by stating further of the Taj, 'Its elegance is at the best of a very dry and negative kind. Its "classicism" is the product not of intellectual restraint imposed on exuberant fancy, but of an actual deficiency, a poverty of imagination. One is struck by the lack of variety in the architectural forms.' (*Ibid.*)

He expressed a purely abstract view. He neither proved it with examples nor did he point out what his ideal concept of architectural perfection was. But we were not surprised. He was to declare later in *After Many a Summer*, 'If you considered them dispassionately nothing could be more silly and squalid than the themes of *Phèdre* or *Othello* or *Wuthering Heights* or *Agamemnon*.'

This was on the whole the tone of Huxley's travelogue, about which it could be said that a cynic was trying to assess the ancient culture of India on the questionable premise of Italian perfection. He skimmed the surface, but never succeeded in diving and discovering the true values of education, art, music, religion and architecture. Perhaps nature had its revenge. At the end of his life, he leaned to Indian philosophy for solace.

Criticism could be negative with an eye to destroy values. Such was Huxley's evaluation of all things, including India. But sometimes criticism could unveil some harsh facts as Koestler did in his book on Mahatma Gandhi, *The Yogi and the Commissar*.

Huxley had nothing to fall back upon except his Anglo-Saxon bias. But Koestler fell back upon facts. He went to Gandhi's original writings as source-materials, brought out the innate discrepancies of the author and arrived at a conclusion which was so damning that it could shock the Gandhians to the marrow. This could very well dislodge the popular leader from his pedestal of eminence as a saint and disprove the claim of his followers that he was an incarnation parallel to the Buddha or the Christ.

'Gandhi,' commented Koestler, 'in his humble and heroic ways, was the greatest anachronism of the twentieth century; and one cannot help feeling, blasphemous though it may sound, that India would be better off today and healthier in mind,

without the Gandhian tradition.'

Koestler's criticism was that Gandhi had bungled issues, mingling religion with politics, juxtaposing morality with the freedom-struggle and, at the end, asserting himself in spite of himself as the dictator and, as Koestler puts it, 'a Commissar'.

Koestler pointed out under different heads what struck him as the inconsistencies between what Gandhi professed and his actions—so that, in view of the tangle of contradictions, one might be at the end at a loss to judge the man whom India and the world revered as a 'great soul'. The heads might be classed roughly as Poverty, Morality and Sex.

Whether one fully agrees with Koestler or not, his is a powerful critique and no admirer of the Mahatma can afford to neglect it.

As regards Gandhian politics we may quote a passage from Sri Aurobindo: 'I do not believe that the Mahatma's principle can be the true means of bringing about the genuine freedom and greatness of India, her *Swarajya* and *Samrajya*. On the other hand others would think that I was sticking to the school of Tilakite nationalists. That also is not a fact, as I hold that school out of date. My own policy, if I were in the field, would have been radically different in principle and programme from both.' (*Sri Aurobindo Birth Cent. Ed.*, Vol. 26, pp. 838-9)

From the book on Gandhi we pass now on to much less influential a writing, though not less so in some respects, because it presented some significant contemporary Indian figures. The book in question which formed the texture of an autobiography was by Nayantara Sehgal and called *From Fear Set Free*.

Nayantara was the eldest of the three daughters of Srimati Vijayalakshmi Pandit. She was born in 1928. In the course of her highly interesting narrative, Nayantara offered us simple but effective pen-portraits of her mother, her father Sitaram Pandit, her husband Gautam and, most important of all, her uncle Jawaharlal Nehru.

Nayantara was three years old when her grandfather, Motilal Nehru, died. That was in 1931. She was reared among great names and figures, politicians, writers and eminent men and women. She and her sisters Rekha and Rita had their schooling mostly at home, in Anand Bhavan, Allahabad, because her father was already dead (he died in jail) and her mother was swept up in the vortex of Indian politics: the 1942 "Quit India" movement one day, the Bengal famine in 1943 the next. Nayantara has painted her mother as a highly nervous personality, but who could, when the occasion arose, rise as a successful diplomat and ambassador.

She has also given us a glimpse of her parents, her father, a Sanskrit scholar and a bar-at-law and her mother yet to make a *début* in Indian politics. They were happy and spent some time in London before the children were born. Later, following Motilal, his late father-in-law, Nayantara's father left the bar, entered politics, got imprisoned and died in custody prematurely.

This, however, did not dampen Vijaylakshmi's spirit; she entered the political arena side by side with her brother.

Nayantara was sixteen in 1944 and her two sisters were fourteen and twelve, when

Vijaylakshmi suddenly decided to send her children to America. By now the tragedy of Pearl Harbour had occurred; the United States had entered the field of war with every visible sign of breaking down the Axis Powers.

Friends and relatives strongly advised Vijaylakshmi against her decision. But she was firm.

Nayantara spent three years in the States. Of her two sisters one went to a Lycée in Paris and the other, the youngest, to a school in Switzerland.

When she returned to India, in 1948, the topography of the country had changed—India had won her freedom, Pakistan had been born, millions of men, women and children had been annihilated in the process and her mother was posted to Moscow as the first Indian ambassador.

Nayantara, without a chaperone, was left to her own devices, living in her uncle's ministerial mansion. One thing was clear. She wanted to get married. Though she harboured great respect for Gandhi, she did not believe in celibacy and the sexual doctrine advocated by the leader. She was twenty-one.

She met Gautam in a club. They fell in love and decided to get married. Just when the pair was growing intimate Vijaylakshmi wrote to her children to come over to Moscow for a short visit. She had been surprised at Nayantara's decision to get married. But she did not refuse her permission. The letter to her daughter contained, among other things, a request to bring along two Indian servants, as the domestic aids sent by the Russian embassy were uncouth and slatternly.

The three sisters and two servants flew to Moscow. In Moscow she found that their lives were like that on a ship in mid ocean. They were debarred from moving forty kilometres out of Moscow. They had very few friends, except the American and English embassies who invited them occasionally to parties.

The English and the U.S. embassies each had a strength of two hundred, consisting of clerks, servants, technicians, etc., while the Indian embassy had twenty-seven persons.

With nothing better to do, Nayantara and her sisters, along with the wives and daughters of other diplomats, joined the ballet school. They were surprised to note that the director, whom they called *Madame* and who was seventy years old, was more graceful, swift and flexible than all the younger women.

Her mother's duties consisted chiefly of meeting and entertaining ambassadors of other states, also the diplomatic corps of different nations. The only saving features in this sojourn to Russia were their visits to the Art Galleries and the Bolshoi Theatre where they saw some fine operas.

Before returning home, the Pandits were joined by Gautam from India. This trip, which was a pre-arranged one, Gautam and Nayantara named 'Operation Moscow'. Vijaylakshmi met Gautam and the formal sanction for the wedding was granted.

Gautam accompanied the Pandits to Paris, then to Stockholm, then back to India. On retrospect Nayantara found the Russian journey to have been quite frustra-

ting. She could learn nothing of the way of the life there. Not only that, Vijaylakshmi's eminent position as ambassador was questioned at all important functions.

Sarup Rani (that is, Vijaylakshmi) narrated later to her Indian friends some of her Russian experiences. The Russian servants were notoriously incompetent; but in other matters the Russians were thorough. The women were not counted as mere assets, nor did they form a mere part of men's existence. They were entirely independent and on their own. Molotov's wife was the head of a factory. Vyshinsky's daughter was a legal expert. Even, some of the Russian women could be mistaken for men. Vijaylakshmi quoted a few amusing examples.

The preparation of Nayantara's wedding began by selecting clothes and jewelry, inviting friends and relatives, also redecorating Anand Bhavan. Vijaylakshmi, as the mother, could not perform these jobs, due to her heavy duties as a political figure. She and Nehru had to fly to Jaipur to attend the Congress sessions there. The old family retainer Vyasji performed all the duties related to marriage.

There would have been chagrin, if the mother had not returned on the marriage day itself or if she had remained absent on the day of the formal betrothal.

After the wedding, the pair moved to Kanpur, the city of commercial enterprises. This was in the early 'fifties. British merchants held equal sway and position with Indian businessmen. Nayantara confessed she was a bad housewife and the old family servant had to be sent to Kanpur to attend to the household duties.

During her stay of a year at Kanpur she made two trips to Delhi to attend the marriages of her two sisters Rekha and Rita. (Rekha's husband was posted in Switzerland and Rita's in France.)

After some time all the three sisters were invited to Washington where their mother was then the Indian ambassador.

By now both Nayan and Rekha were pregnant. Gautam, having a long leave to his credit, was induced, not without difficulty, to join his wife and sister-in-law.

They found Washington a quiet city unlike bustling New York. Here their mother was very busy attending the many social and official duties and functions expected of an ambassador. The difference between the straight-jacketed existence in Russia and the free life in Washington became all the more perceptible. The house allotted to Vijaylakshmi was large and set within a spacious garden. Vijaylakshmi's personal maid Valentine was much attached to her mistress, and she disliked the intrusion by Madam's children. Nevertheless, things went well. Both sisters entered a clinic for child-birth, where someone mistook them both to be the wives of Gautam!

The children were born. Nayantara's child was a girl, whom she named Nonika, after a heroine in *Rajatarangini*, Kalhana's Sanskrit historical poem on Kashmir's traditional history.

After some time the three sisters returned home: Nayantara to Delhi where Gautam was to join his new post, Rekha to Berne and Rita to Paris.

After they returned to Allahabad, Nehru dropped in, on his way to an election campaign. By that time another child, Ranjit, was born.

After her post at Washington, Vijaylakshmi was appointed High Commissioner to London along with Jamsaheb of Nawanagar who was a family friend.

Nayantara accompanied her mother to London, where Vijaylakshmi recollected her youth spent there along with her husband, the cafés they had visited, the theatres they had attended, the many English friends they had met. That was in 1928, when Nayantara was a one-year old baby. Vijaylakshmi also recollected Nan, the English governess. The couple had come to London for a short visit, leaving a bleak India, torn by strife, agitation and restless with the non-cooperation movement, launched by Gandhi. Sitaram had played tennis and golf to his heart's content, eating in his favourite restaurants with his young wife.

Coming down to the present, Nayantara's narrative drags in trivialities, discussions, and sundry familial details like the birth of another child, Gita, and the birth of Rekha's children Arjun and Manju.

The culmination turned into propaganda and drum-beating to the glory and achievement of Nehru, 'Punditji is India, India is Punditji.'

The whole narrative has the typical feminine touch of intimate insignificant details. But on the whole the book offers us a clear picture of the existence of an aristocratic family and its anglicised life. There is no ideal preached, no great perspective, no deeper insight revealed. It does not profess to go behind the broad lines of superficial events, except to give us a clear and candid story. The whole is a frank appraisal of men and events from 1944 to 1960, the most meaningful years of the author's life.

(To be continued)

ROMEN PALIT

SELECTIONS

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EUROPE 1974

A TRAVELOGUE

(Continued from the issue of October, 1979)

(30)

SOMEONE once remarked that by the end of the twentieth century there would be just five kings in the world; the king of Diamonds, the king of Spades, the king of Hearts, the king of Clubs and the king of England.

Even a short visit to England is enough to prove that the above statement may very well become true. Wherever you go you are invariably met with a photograph of the smiling Queen. At such historic places as the Tower of London and other places, it is generally a picture of the Queen in her coronation robe, with the orb in one hand and the sceptre in the other—the sceptre having at its head the famous Cullinan diamond, the largest diamond ever found. I do not know if the Queen can be called beautiful by our conception of beauty. Yet she could project a certain dignity, charm and self-composure that make up for her lack of conventional beauty. She knows how to smile and is extremely photogenic. She is very well educated, has perfect manners and just the right amount of intelligence to understand her role of a constitutional monarch. And it seems she has learnt the lesson well from her uncle King Edward the Eighth.

A few years ago the Queen was voted one of the ten best-dressed women in the world. Her dresses are always chic yet dignified, devoid of all flashy ostentation. To please the mod section of her subjects, she has her sister Princess Margaret and daughter Princess Anne. Her fabulous jewellery is the envy of the world and she is considered one of the richest women in the world. Yet the British Parliament found it worth while to double her Privy Purse just a few years ago to enable her to maintain her many royal palaces in tip-top condition. What more proof does one want to be convinced that the English people love their Queen and all the pomp and pageantry attached to monarchy?

What would have happened if instead of a charming Queen the English had got for their ruler a more assertive prince, it is difficult to say. As it is they are charmed with the Queen. If ever there is a mild protest against her by the anti-monarchists who call her residence "The Establishment", a short paragraph in the papers saying the Queen is very much distressed is enough to stop all agitation and commotion.

The great Astrologer Cheiro had predicted two disastrous marriages in the British Royal family. We had occasion to see both: King Edward the Eighth renounced his throne for the woman he loved, and Princess Margaret was about to contract a marriage that would have been utterly disastrous for her. She was, however, prevented from taking this rash step by the intervention of Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother

and the Archbishop of Canterbury. Cheiro had also said that King George the fifth was an extremely lucky monarch and that under him the Empire would remain intact. What would happen after him Cheiro did not make it clear. Perhaps he understood that a dissolution of the Empire was in the offing in the near future. But he had not said anything about a woman occupying the throne of England. Or it may very well be that he had it in his memorabilia inconspicuously, but the statement did not receive much publicity.

*

When Lady Elizabeth Bowes Lyon, daughter of the Earl and Countess of Strathmore, got married to the Duke of York the second son of King George the Fifth, the people of England were happy because it was after about thirty years that a royal duke was getting married. There was no cause for extraordinary jubilation, it was not called for. The Prince of Wales, Heir Apparent to the throne, was still uncaught, prowling over England as the Prince Charming. And when he was sent out globe-trotting, he captured every heart, but he was still unmarried. His marriage would be an event of national importance.

So after a year when a little princess was born to the Duke and Duchess, there was very little fuss over her. No one could foresee that this tiny Princess would be one day the Queen of England. King George the Fifth gave to the Duke and the Duchess of York a beautiful house in Mayfair, it was number 145 Piccadilly. The Princess was not born here, she was born in the house belonging to the Earl and Countess of Strathmore, that is number 17 Bruton Street, a house in Mayfair which is the National City Bank now. A plaque has been put inside the Bank to remind the people that the Queen of England was born there. They say people going towards Hyde Park always rode a double-decker bus so that they could catch a glimpse of the Princess playing in the garden of 145 Piccadilly with her sister and the governess and the Corgi dogs. The two Princesses were very well loved by the King and the Queen and also by their eldest uncle who came down in the afternoons to play with them or take them out for a ride. It is reported that the two Princesses were so well looked after that they always looked as if they had just come out from a book of fairy tales.

Things moved fast and when one morning Princess Elizabeth saw an envelope on the front Hall table on which was written Her Majesty the Queen she is reported to have cried out ecstatically, "Oh it's Mummy now!" Soon the war came, the people saw very little of the two little Princesses. The children of England were packed off to either Australia or Canada. Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret were sent away to far-away Scotland. Her grand *début* was when she announced her marriage to Prince Philip of Greece. The parents of Prince Philip were King and Queen of Greece for a few months. Like almost all the Princes of Europe he was a great-great-grandson of Queen Victoria. When during the Revolution the King and the Queen lost their throne, King George the Fifth who had great fascination for the youthful prince intervened personally and sent out a cruiser to bring the prince to England. Perhaps in

doing so he had Princess Elizabeth in mind. But he did not live long enough to see her getting married to the prince he had rescued so long ago. Her marriage was a royal pageant that no one will ever forget. For she was now the Heir Presumptive to the throne. With the abdication of King Edward the Eighth her father was now the King as King George the Sixth.

*

Princess Elizabeth was touring the Dominions with Prince Philip when King George the Sixth died in his sleep in the early hours of the morning. She had to cancel her tour and come back to England immediately. All the important people had assembled at the airport to meet her. They were simply charmed to see a youthful figure descending the wooden stairs with a serious face and in black. They kissed her hand, for she had a few days ago gone out of England as Princess Elizabeth and she was now Queen Elizabeth II.

Other sceptres and other crowns might tumble down, but not the sceptre and crown of the King of England.

(To be continued)

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by

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BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Health and Healing in Yoga. Selections from the Writings and Talks of the Mother (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry 1979), Rs. 15/-.

'LIFE is a long disease.' It was Alexander Pope who remarked so. No one in his right senses would disagree with him. But as usual if there is a problem, there is a solution and there should be one. There are many ways of healing and restoring natural harmony to the body. Allopathy, Homeopathy, Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha, Shiastu Massage of Japan, Acupuncture of China and certain good books with a soothing effect are a few of the many healing devices. And here is a book that teaches the art of healing through yoga, as preached by the Yogi's Yogi, THE MOTHER.

The book taken as a whole is a selection from the writings and talks of the Mother, well edited. Some of the chapters here are in the form of questions and answers. No doubt, they are questions from the inquisitive minds, answered by the enlightened Mother. Causes of Illness, Cures of Illness, Foundations of Health and The Cycle of Life are the four parts along which the book evolves.

All illnesses are the outcome of a break in equilibrium. We are surely in perfect health if all the members and parts of our body are in harmony with one another. But if there is the slightest imbalance anywhere, immediately we get either just 'a little ill or quite ill, even very badly ill or else an accident occurs'. If we want to do all kinds of things with impunity, we must have a triple equilibrium—mental, vital and physical. But there are also two kinds of disequilibrium: functional and organic, the twins that quite often topple the three. And the causes for disease are the functional and organic imbalances. The three different kinds of *bad will* in the world (the small type that comes from ignorance and stupidity, the big type coming from wickedness, and the formidable one, the result of anti-divine forces) are also causes for disease. Finally, 'Fear'—a terribly contagious collective thing—that grips man from the cradle to the grave is also a cause. But one and the same illness may be due to a variety of reasons. It may spring from different sources of disharmony. And each person is expected to find out for himself why he is ill, because, to quote Jules Romain, "A healthy man is a sick fellow who is unaware."

If the doctor says, "It is I who healed," the Divine Mother would retort, "No! It is the Divine Grace," for without the Divine Grace how is it possible to heal? Dynamic Faith and Absolute Truth are the basic things for a man in order to get healed. If you ask the Mother, "What is the best way to get rid of fever?" She would unhesitatingly reply, "Remain peaceful and confident and it will soon be over." If we drive away the fear of Death, with the help of the all-powerful Trishul—Reason, Inner Seeking, and Trust in God—constituting the elements of Yoga, we are completely all right, for it is faith that cures more than the treatment. Accidents can be prevented during a precious fraction of a second. If one is not killed in an accident and comes out of it unscathed, we call it a miracle. But 'miracle' in the dictionary of the Mother means "awakened consciousness". And one must be awake every minute of one's life, if he wants to maintain his body in equilibrium. He has to attend to what the

Mother calls 'the nervous envelope' through which outside influences penetrate to the body.

"Happiness and good health are not normal conditions in this world. We must protect them very carefully against the intrusion of their opposites." This is the main point stressed throughout the third section of the book. The significance of Physical Education and Child Care are given much importance. To have a sound mind a sound body is a 'must'. The body must do exercises, have an active and regular life, eat well, do physical work and sleep well. Physical education, in the eyes of the Mother, must be based upon at least a minimum knowledge of the human body, of its structure and its functioning, if it is to be rational, enlightened and effective. The answers given to the ten questions on Physical Education during a girl's periods are indeed ten golden rules that every girl should remember during her menses and pregnancy times. Instead of instilling false hopes and fears into the children that corrupt their minds, they should be taught hygienic habits and outdoor games. 'Quality is much more important than quantity,' they should learn in the matter of both food and sleep. The story of the Swedish woman who had a skylabish dream after eating chicken, the rise and fall of the appendix in the stomach, the origin and rational explanation of the religious practice of consecrating one's food to God before taking it, are all a few of the many enjoyable anecdotes we encounter. 'Rest in Action' may sound a conundrum. But the Mother has taken pains to explicate things and this part shows her versatile knowledge.

The last part is the most interesting of all the four. 'The Cycle of Life'—from the conception to death and then transformation—as schemed by the Mother is highly readable. Maternity, in her view, is not just to bring children into the world as cats do their kittens—instinctively, ignorantly, machine-like: it is "a conscious creation of a being, with the willed shaping of a soul coming to develop and utilise a new body." The education of a human being should begin at birth and continue throughout his life and the parents are the first teachers. When children are wicked, they reflect their parents and so when they behave nastily, instead of scolding them, the parents should scold themselves. In this part we meet the old people of twenty and the young people of seventy. "What makes you grow old? How to be eternally young? How death occurs? How to prevent it?" Who is not puzzled by these questions and who ever is not eager to know the answers? Well! One should just glance through the sub-division titled 'Youth, Old Age and Death' that answers all these questions.

The very word 'health' comes from the same root as 'whole' and 'holy'. The 'whole' that is God—or whatever we like to call it—is the healer. A diseased person is none but one who has developed blocks between himself and the Whole. That shows something is disconnected. The aim of this book is to help release the three—emotional, mental and physical—blocks. In fact, the book is a pocket physician ready to perform miracles on all those who wish to maintain equilibrium in their nervous envelopes.

P. RAJA

Sri Aurobindo Circle—Thirty-fifth Number (Sri Aurobindo Society Annual—1979). Pages: 103. Price: Rs 10/-

The Mother's radiant face that adorns the three full pages of this annual gives everyone a message and her powerful eyes shower blessings to all those who look into their heavenly depths. The photograph of the Samadhi is symbolic of peace and serenity. The text of the opening page after the Mother's message stresses the need of surrender for the supramental change in the physical. The five gems given under the title "Thoughts from Sri Aurobindo" culled from his various works talk of aspiration, rejection and surrender, the human responsibility and Free Will. "A Letter of Sri Aurobindo" is a grandiose speech rather than a letter. Though written to a despairing Ashramite in reference to his personal problem, the letter has a wider bearing and can be treated as applicable to all the Ashramites, bidding them develop the power and the habit of taking refuge in the Mother and himself. Sri Aurobindo, the Heaven-sent messenger on earth, invites them to lead a divine life through him and get rid of their 'gratuitous tendency to despair'. In fact this letter has a universal appeal, for who in this world ever escapes from the tenacious tentacles of despair? The letter is indeed a panacea for bereaved souls.

It may not sound strange to readers of Sri Aurobindo if I say that he is at his best in explicating literature. He takes the initial sentence of the first Adhyaya of the Chhandogya Upanishad, "OM is the syllable (The Imperishable One); one should follow after it as the upward Song (movement); for with OM one sings (goes) upwards..." and gives an analytical explanation in his "Notes on the Chhandogya Upanishad". The glory of the Sanskrit speech, the change of meaning in the language, the marriage of different meanings in a single form of words, as expressed by Sri Aurobindo, will remain forever green in our memory. "What is Hinduism? What does it teach? What does it practise? What are its common factors?" Sri Aurobindo answers all these posers in his highly informative essay titled "Three Fundamentals of Indian Religion". The third instalment of "Conversations with Sri Aurobindo" by A. B. enlightens us on many topics. The purpose of an Avatar, evil and good omens, the celebrations of conventional religious festivals, the sixth sense possessed by plants, the desire for Moksha are a few of the many topics discussed. The fundamental distinctions between Purusha and Prakriti, English ghosts and Bengali *bhūta* are made. What happens when a person is placed in a position for which he is unfit? Can women be more successful in politics? Why women are more active (practical) than men? How external forces communicate through special parts in the body (for example, fear attacks us in the bowels)?—these are some of the many interesting questions answered.

Sri Aurobindo's writings in this annual express, possess and hold.

The main purpose of studying Sri Aurobindo's *The Human Cycle* is to understand his psychological theory. Kishor Gandhi makes it more fruitful by comparing the psychological theory of Sri Aurobindo with Karl Marx's economic theory.

After stressing the importance of studying Marxism, he gives a new voice to the Dialectical Materialism as propounded by Karl Marx. The simplicity with which Dialectical Materialism is treated deserves appreciation. In short, it is a five-page digest of the voluminous Marx.

K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar's nutshell commentary on Sri Aurobindo's great epic poem *Savitri* tells the history of its conception, composition, correction and publication. It will prove to be significant to students and lovers of Sri Aurobindo's poetry as it attempts a textual analysis of the work and helps the reader to gain a perspective on Aurobindonian literature. Prema Nandakumar's article "Sri Aurobindo's Interpretation of Indian Culture", reads like a long review article rather than an interpretative one. But her erudition here deserves mention. Sri Aurobindo's early years, his occidental approach, the book *The Life Divine* that grew out of his monthly journal *Arya* are all brought home to us vividly.

The four poems of Romen Palit make us remember some of the English religious poets. While reading the second one, "Thy Living Touch", we hear a number of echoes from Hopkins's "The Wreck of the Deutschland". Metaphors, though abundant, never jar on our ears and the rhythmic beauty (sprung rhythm?) is *par excellence*.

Ruud Lohmann's article speaks of the glory of 'Matrimandir' in the International City—Auroville. He takes the readers around the Matrimandir, shows the inner beauty of the place and like a licensed guide explains the symbolic meaning that lurks in every nook and corner of 'the ladder to the New World'. *Très bien*, Monsieur Ruud Lohmann, for your verbal painting! Sisir Kumar Ghose's short note "Consciousness and Culture: The Aurobindean Approach" and Arabinda Basu's "The Cosmic Consciousness" enlighten us considerably. These two and Prema Nandakumar's "Sri Aurobindo's Interpretation of Indian Culture" form a triangle, each part throwing light on the others.

This Annual is highly informative, entertaining and above all illuminating. It becomes a collector's item for the valid reason that some of the essays and translations of the great sage, Sri Aurobindo, are published here for the first time.

P. RAJA