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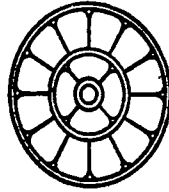
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I. THE SCHOOL Aurobindo Ashram Trust



Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

४

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.

AN APPEAL TO OUR WELL-WISHERS

Mother India has again to call for financial help. Our last appeal brought a very good response and we are deeply thankful. Costs have been steadily rising in everything. Our immediate need was to stock paper. We have paid a further Rs. 4,000. This has made a new gap in our resources. So we badly require donations of any amount that can be spared by our well-wishers.

The scheme of Life-Membership is still in force. If attended to, it can also help.

Advertisements too can be a good contribution. Tariff cards can be had on application.

Increase in the number of subscribers is always welcome.

We shall be grateful for help in any form, and particularly in the form of donations.

The donations will be taxfree 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-^{er} our profit is small on the whole.

... K. N. .

MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XXXI

No. 3

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail."

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A declaration

Some people looking at things superficially, might ask how is it that the Ashram exists in this town for so many years and is not liked by the population?

The first and immediate answer is that all those in this population who are of a higher standard in culture, intelligence, good will and education not only have welcomed the Ashram but have expressed their sympathy, admiration or joy and good-feeling. Sri Aurobindo Ashram has interested in Pondichery many sincere and faithful followers and friends.

This said, Our position is clear.

We do not fight against any creed,
any religion.

We do not fight against any form
of government.

We do not fight against any social class.

We do not fight against any nation
or civilisation.

We are fighting division, unconsciousness,
ignorance, inertia and falsehood.

We are endeavouring to establish upon
earth union, knowledge, consciousness, Truth,
and we fight whatever opposes the advent
of this new creation of light, Peace, Truth and love

CHAMPAKLAL'S VISIONS AT MATRIMANDIR

I

It happened unexpectedly that on 7 December 1978 I went to Matrimandir (Auroville).

I wanted to go down into the lower part of Matrimandir and have a look at it. The person who had taken us to Auroville told us that we were not to go down there as it was prohibited. I therefore stood along with the others on the raised border.

My eyes remained fixed on the upper part of Matrimandir. It was time for us to return, but I could not move from there. Little by little my eyes began to close. I saw that I was sitting with the others in the meditation room situated in the upper part of Matrimandir. The room was full and everything there was peaceful. In the atmosphere the fragrance of various flowers was felt by turns, and it made one full of joy. Suddenly I saw that someone was cutting down the heads of those who were seated in meditation, and the strange thing about this was that no blood was flowing after the severance of the heads. In its place a shining white liquid was flowing and it was spreading over all Auroville. I saw that each head cut down did not remain a head, but turned into a glorious golden light. It appeared that there were no heads but many suns that were going up and up one after another. Seeing this, I too chose to go up in the same manner, and I too went up. But I heard some sound and my eyes opened.

I was awakened. I saw that a man was working on Matrimandir where an iron framework was being made. Something like a stone was thrown down by him. Three or four such things were thrown down. I think it was some solidified portion of cement concrete there which that man was throwing down. There was something like mud below and the falling of the lump made a sound. I felt that it was for this reason that people were prohibited to go down there, lest they should get hurt by the falling of the cement lumps.

2

Unexpectedly, again on 4 January 1979 I had an occasion to go to Matrimandir.

As we reached there, brother Gerard came forward affectionately with a smiling face and welcomed us with the words "Hallo, Champaklal!" He told me, "There is a friend and he will show you everything. It is already arranged."

This time we walked about in the lower part of the construction and could have seen all, but as there was not much time at our disposal we saw only as much as was possible.

The atmosphere is such that one would not like to move from there. It holds us fast like a magnet. It is a splendid elevating atmosphere, calm and grandly beautiful, such as one would not like to leave. But as we had to go to our brother Narad's garden, there was not enough time to be detained there, and so we left after remaining as much as it was possible to do.

The Matrimandir that I saw this time was superb, wonderful beyond imagination. I saw above Matrimandir, standing in space, a huge figure reaching the heavens and enveloping the whole of Auroville. It could be described only as extremely majestic and grand, immeasurably vast, stupendous, exceedingly resplendent, scintillating, golden, radiant and with an absolutely fascinating form. One by one innumerable hands arose from each part of the body of that figure. Little by little, the figure began to rise up and up and, as it did so, hands appeared on its lower part also. After a while the figure gradually began to descend. At this time all its palms were open and spread out in space. A crystalline liquid was spreading forth everywhere from those palms. It was a very bright glistening liquid and it covered up all Matrimandir and then, from Matrimandir itself, streams of that crystalline liquid began to emerge and the whole of Auroville was turned into a large lake filled with that liquid.

Far off countless men, boys and girls were visible on all the four sides and they were watching with joy the crystalline lake. At last they began to enter into the lake one by one. Some of them were floating above while some were merged inside; but the liquid was so transparent that all the persons were visible.

Then that multi-handed figure came out of the lake, but this time, instead of hands, all its body was full of eyes. Afterwards the figure in the form of a golden light began to ascend, and mid-way it became stationary. Then, like rays from the sun, golden light spread out from the figure and began to spread all around.

Then lo! there was no lake. In its place, there was a big beautiful garden. At different places, the buildings were bright with that golden light. The atmosphere was full of fragrance of many kinds spreading out from many flowers. Along with this was heard the ringing of many bells accompanied by sweet music.

The vision ended, but it is not adequately rendered into words.

(Translated by Pujalal from the original Gujarati)

SOME NOTES ON THE MOTHER'S

PRIÈRES ET MÉDITATIONS

(Continued from the issue of February 21, 1979)

(7)

January 2, 1915

“ANY idea repeated too often, expressed too constantly, becomes dull, insipid, valueless.” There are in the world great ideas, great thoughts. If an idea is repeated too often with the same images, all real light in the thought goes away. You should never try to give expression to anything except what you have lived, *sauf celles que l'on vit*. No two experiences are and can be the same in every respect. If one wants to speak about them, one has necessarily to use a new mode of expression every time in order to bring out their real import.

“Transcendent speculations”: these are the ideas, the metaphysics, all the theories which seek to express the inexpressible.

What then is the use of philosophy? It has a value in that it serves as a mental gymnastics. It makes the muscles of the mind strong and active; it is a kind of mental discipline that enables you to fly from one swinging bar to another as in a circus. It also serves as an amusement for many people, just as you amuse yourself by playing basket-ball. Men take it seriously because they think they have no other means of knowing the Truth. One can of course make good use of it if one knows how; for it is a good thing for creating an instrument.

You must remember that there is no other object or purpose for anything in the world, except that of becoming conscious of the Divine and manifest Him; otherwise it is nothing, *prendre conscience du Divin et de le manifester, autrement ce n'est rien*.

“Thou wilt remain always the Ineffable”, because there is always something not yet manifested, always something that one has not lived. One does not really know anything, because even if one comes to know all that has happened in the past and everything that is happening at the present moment on this little earth of ours, there would still be the eternal future, and the whole of the infinite universe. There is always a beyond.

“Each new fact will be a new problem.” The idea here is that the universe is a perpetual unfolding of something which has not yet manifested, *un perpétuel déroulement de quelque chose qui n'est pas manifesté*. In this unfolding, no two things are alike, *ne sont pas semblables*. At each moment one must learn something that is new. Everything is new. The universe creates itself anew at every moment, *se recrée à chaque minute*. Nothing is fixed for ever. Everything can change. What is important is to choose the direction, it is the direction chosen that is important. Our march is like climbing a hill; we are on a road that climbs from below upwards. All depends on which side you turn your back. One must never say, “I cannot climb.”

January 11, 1915

“It is as if Thou hadst willed to cut me off from all religious joy...” Someone asked, “Why did the Lord ordain so?” The Mother’s reply was, “You must ask the Lord. The reason has been given in the Prayer itself. If I had been concentrated entirely in an extra-terrestrial union, I could not have worked in matter, like a human being; I would have been elsewhere. *Je ne pouvais pas travailler comme un homme dans la matière; je serais ailleurs.*”

January 17, 1915

“A passive and contemplative...servant”, that is, one who is always in meditation or contemplation, one who seeks the inner union, one who thinks that this union will change the world and things by force of the vibrations that the union may engender. The active way of serving the Divine is to act so as to change the circumstances.

“Joyful combat”, that is, fighting within oneself, around oneself, doing the Divine’s Work, *lutter au-dedans de soi, autour de soi, faire le travail du Divin*. The other way, namely, that of “joyful acceptance”, is the attitude of the ecstatic who looks upon everything that happens or exists at present as an expression of the Divine Will, like the Bahaist martyr who actually felt a wonderful ecstasy when he was being crucified for his faith.

“Acting by contagion, example and slow infusion”, in the hope that the things divine will spread in the atmosphere, *se répandront dans l’atmosphère*, without the need to act, through similar vibrations, *par des vibrations similaires*.

“The whole earth will rise against Thee...” Someone asked, “But why?” The Mother said, “There is no ‘why’ about it. It is like that, *c’est comme ça.*” The Divine’s Presence will mean that things *must* change, whereas things do not *want* to change. It is not merely that men of ill-will do not want to change; the malady is everywhere.

January 18, 1915

“The fixed ideas of the mind”: these are the preconceived notions. For example, one has an opinion about something or someone, without bothering to find out the real truth about the thing or the person.

The Mother gave in this connection the story of the way paintings are sometimes judged in an art exhibition. (She must have had ample opportunities of noticing this while she was in Paris in her early days, moving closely in the circle of artists.) The judges form an opinion about some artist, without even looking at his work. They say, “This is bad”, because the particular person may not happen to be liked by them.

To be able to judge a picture, or anything for that matter, one must be fully acquainted with the *métier*, must have a correct taste, must have an impartial knowledge. Our judgments are always vitiated by *parti pris*, consciously or unconsciously. We cannot judge truly so long as we are limited by our ego-reactions, and are unable to see things exactly as they are.

“Thou hast need of the mediation of my mind, to organise and form the means of action.” It is the business of the mind to organise. Through it one creates the plan or framework, *cadres*, of the work to be done. That is the function of the mind.

“Transform Thy enemies...” Whether they will be destroyed or transformed would depend on their own choice. Generally speaking, human beings are transformed, because they have the psychic being in them. There are on the other hand in the vital worlds Asuric emanations, who would much rather be destroyed than change.

January 24, 1915

“I saw all the ways...radiant with a calm and pure light”, the Light of the Supreme Consciousness.

February 15, 1915

“Covered all over with dust.” Everything on earth is full of dust, something that is inert and inconscient. The “dust” remains so long as it is not transformed into its divine equivalent.

March 3, 1915

“Solitude, a harsh intense solitude.” What was the reason for this solitude? “Because I was away from Sri Aurobindo, *éloignée de Sri Aurobindo*.”

“The destinies of the nations.” The first World War was on, and the destinies of the nations hung in the balance. “I knew what the destinies of the nations were, *moi je le savais*. But I didn’t want to prophesy. It will be there for everybody to see when the time comes.” As for herself, as an individual, its destiny was purposely kept hidden, *volontairement cachée*.

March 4, 1915

“Each turn of the helix upon the deep ocean” took her farther and farther away from Pondicherry, where her “true destiny” lay.

“The personal limits” are in the earth-consciousness. When one goes above the ordinary mind, one has a larger consciousness, in which the personality becomes just a point of concentration—very secondary, *très secondaire*. One is in a world which is much more vast.

“If Thou withdrawest”, the individual disappears, is dissolved in the Divine. If the active Will of the Divine, the Divine Presence manifesting It clearly, goes away, *si la Volonté divine, la Présence divine qui la manifeste clairement s’en va*, there is nothing that the being can do. The point has been explained in the talk on the Prayer that follows.

March 7, 1915

Unless one has had this experience, it is absolutely impossible to understand. It is not possible, the Mother insisted. It was a necessity, this experience. There was

a withdrawal, *retrait*, of the individual consciousness and the feeling that there was no longer any individuality.

For five years, she was in a state in which the Divine Will was clearly perceptible at every moment, and it was this that guided all her acts.

When one is entirely open and in contact with the psychic being and free from all attachments and desires, one perceives the Divine Will very clearly; It decides at each moment what is going to be.

Then there arose the necessity of coming down to the ordinary consciousness and do and decide things by the sole power of the mind, like an ordinary human being. And the perception of the Divine Will retired behind the veil. She strained and tried to know what the Divine Will might be, and nothing came. This had to be because it was the way the outer being could be prepared and made perfect for the expression of the Divine Will.

But it is, she repeated, very difficult to explain the reason for this step.

“I had done a most injudicious thing,” she continued, with a smile on her face. “When I left Pondicherry, I left my psychic being in Pondicherry, with Sri Aurobindo. All the time my consciousness was drawn towards here. The physical consciousness, left without the support of the psychic being, managed somehow for about a month and a half. And then, all on a sudden, when I reached Lunel, it snapped. I had a terrible illness. The whole body was torn asunder by a pain, from head to foot, a pain intense and sharp like that of neuralgia. It was as if somebody were tearing my body apart into bits. It was unbearable. After three days, the doctor gave up all hope. Then with an immense effort, I wrote out a letter addressed to Sri Aurobindo, as my last communication to him from this body. I had the letter sealed and sent it to be posted, and exhausted by the effort I fell fast asleep. The next morning, when I awoke, the pain was gone, and I could leave Lunel. It was another six months before the body got completely fit. Later on, when I asked Sri Aurobindo about my illness, and the cure, he said, he had felt that I was very ill... One thing, however, I should tell you about this illness. In spite of the terrible suffering of the body, my head remained perfectly clear throughout the experience. During convalescence, I had the experience of going out of my body in the waking state. I could see the body, my own body, seated in a chair, and yet I could not feel as if it were my body. My consciousness made the bodies nearby or even those at a distance act, *faisait agir les corps voisins ou même lointains*. This experience was so concrete that if somebody had asked where my body was, I would have pointed to someone else’s body. My consciousness was completely free of the body. I could even move a physical object at some distance, by simply directing my consciousness to it with all my vital force, without the aid of my body or any other physical means.” Here she gave the story of how she opened a drawer that had got stuck.

(To be continued)

SANAT K. BANERJI

PAGES FROM A SADHAK'S DIARY

(Continued from the issue of February 21, 1979)

(3)

The Mother said that during sleep we generally go out of the body. There is hardly one in a thousand who is an exception to this rule. The mind goes out to seek its own satisfaction, and the vital to fulfil its desires.

If one is very tired when going to bed, one usually sinks into the inconscience, one loses touch with the higher consciousness, and awakes in the morning tired and depressed.

It is very seldom that one goes into a higher consciousness during sleep.

*

One should know how to take rest and sleep.

If one cannot sleep at night, one should not make an effort to do so.

It is better to relax the body and make the mind and vital quiet at bed-time. Before falling asleep, it is always good to meditate or concentrate on the Mother. One can pray to the Mother that the consciousness may remain with her during sleep.

*

To keep the vital quiet, one should be absolutely free from all excitement, and use one's will to keep it quiet.

The will can be developed little by little, as one develops the muscles of the body by systematic exercise.

The vital is very fond of repeating things. So we must exercise our will-power again and again to keep it quiet.

*

Why is the Mother much more sweet in our dreams than in our waking state? Because, the Mother says, in dreams we approach her through our vital or psychi^c and not through the physical body.

Besides the people of the Ashram, many others come to the Mother in their sleep; some of them are not even known to her.

To meet the Mother in dreams is very beneficial. If we learn how to sleep correctly, we are sure to meet her now and then.

*

All these people who live in the Ashram dwell in the Mother's consciousness. So, she can know each movement of everyone of them, if she wants.

Sometimes she is affected by our wrong movements. And although she is herself absolutely immune from any attacks of illness, and has no illness of her own, yet we can throw these things on her and it takes her some effort to get rid of them.

It is true that the Mother has the power to reject these things. But she accepts or rejects them according to the necessities of the situation. Sometimes she accepts them for our benefit. Sometimes these things take the Mother unawares.

For example, one day while playing tennis, someone received an injury to his right eye. It hurt him much. But suddenly he found himself free from all pain. When the game was over, he found that the Mother had taken his pain on herself and there was a mark on her right eye.

*

Many things will remain unknown about the way the Mother has helped people.

In the days of Hitler's sweeping victories, the Mother came to know of the danger threatening India. The Japanese were secretly planning to invade India and it was revealed to the Mother that they were quietly advancing like an octopus to take India in their grip. She at once brought the matter to Sri Aurobindo's notice, and he saved Mother India by his Power.

(To be continued)

Q: If you understand the poem, please give a little footnote, just enough to catch the tail.

A: I don't see anything difficult or unintelligible in the last 3 stanzas. It is only the first that might seem to call for explanation, but it is inexplicable. You can symbolise, if you like, burning candles of vision, result vision climbing towards silence and the supreme music beyond the magic bars that separate lower and supreme consciousness. Result sky of mind full of transparent peace and occult knowledge; further result superconscient and subconscient spirit meet in trance (sleep) joined by the ecstasy of unspoken prayer in the regions of the inner being (subtle planes)—final result; Nature becomes a nature of eternity and immortality.

22-11-1938

Q: About yesterday's poem, I dreamt that it was exceedingly fine—only a dream!

A: But who said it wasn't?

Q: I am sorry, I don't understand where you get 'lower and supreme consciousness' in the poem, nor how you make 'magic bars' separate them...

A: I don't get these things anywhere "in" the poem—naturally, because the poem is not a treatise on metaphysics or spiritual philosophy, but only a series of mystic images, but I get it "from" the poem. You asked what was the meaning and I gave you what I gathered from it or, if you like, what it would have meant if I had written it. But anyone can put another intellectual version to it, if he likes.

Bars usually divide something and as they can't very well be dividing the Spirit or Supreme Being itself, they must be dividing the Supreme from the lower, especially as you have shadow-spaces of sky immediately afterwards filling with transparent peace which can only come from the removal of the "lid" well-known to shut mind from what is beyond mind. Especially as there is an infinity of "thought", the sky must be the sky of mind and mind is part of the lower (non-supreme) consciousness. If that is not the meaning, I'm damned if I know what the meaning can be—at any rate, if there is any other, it surpasses my capacity and range of spiritual or occult knowledge. As for the superconscient, the Supreme is the superconscient, so that there can be no doubt of that—the tranquil spirit's deep and the beatitude of sleep are not part of the ordinary consciousness but can only come in the superconscient or by the meeting of the superconscient and subconscient. You speak of Nature—being a song of eternity which it can't be (its roots being in the subconscient) unless there is the meeting of the superconscient and subconscient—the latter being a part of the fathomless deep of the spirit. That meeting is effected through the subtle or inner planes and the inarticulate prayer can only be the aspiration that rises from inconscient and half-conscious Nature calling for the union. That's all.

A DREAM-VISION: 3 JANUARY 1962

A LETTER TO THE MOTHER

EARLY this morning—a little before 3.30 a.m.—I had a dream. I saw you standing in a room high up in a very tall building. You are at an open door which looks out upon space. You are at the edge of the door: one more step, and you would fall out of the building. You are standing with your back turned towards the door and you are talking with someone inside. I am standing far below in a garden and looking up at you and saying, “There is Mother standing!”

I suddenly see fire coming out of a door on the floor just below the level at which you are. And I realise that the flame is most rapidly mounting up. I see that in a few minutes it will touch your dress. But how am I to warn you? I am so far down that if I climb up it will take too long. So I want to shout. But somebody from behind is holding me tight and I feel as if my mouth too were shut up by somebody’s hand. I struggle to move away that hand and to shout. But the one who is behind me and shutting my mouth says, “Wait. Just look!”

Then, with the fear that the fire will touch you, I close my eyes and say to myself, in an appeal to Sri Aurobindo, “How can this happen? Mother is divine and she must know that the fire is below her!” Then I open my eyes and see that you are now facing the door and looking at the fire. The fire is touching you and nothing is happening: it is as if it were playing with you and as if you were talking with it.

The whole scene changes. Now I see you standing in the Ashram where you daily give flowers to people. You are near the chest of drawers and holding a plate in which there is a heap of roses meaning “Surrender”. You are telling everybody, “Now I will give only this flower, because all of you need it.” You are pushing all the other flowers away. But to Vasudha you are laughing and saying, “I won’t give you this.” Then you pick out some other flower and give it to her. I don’t know what it is.

Then you look at me where I always stand. You tell me, “Choose your own flower, because I won’t give you the Surrender rose.” You distribute the roses and I am searching for my flower from a tray near me. Many kinds of flowers are there. After distributing the roses, you come to me, saying, “Which flower have you chosen?” I say, “Mother, the one I want is not there.” So you say, “All right. Then I will give you the one you want.” Already you have something in one hand which you are keeping closed. From the tray you also pick up a flower with the other hand. You come over to where you always give flowers to me.

Then you open the palm which you were keeping closed, and you ask me, “Is this the flower you want?” I search for the flower in your palm, but I don’t see it. Yet I feel and know inside me that there is a flower. So I look at you and say, “Mother, I know the flower is there. How is it I can’t see it?” And you reply, “My child, that is the very flower you have chosen—the flower meaning ‘The Divine’s Invisible Truth’.

Q: I've been searching for this truth. Already I have made you see something of it. Why when you saw me at the edge of the door high up, with the fire mounting towards me. Looking with your human eyes you feared, but at the end you saw the truth that I am the Divine, and so the fear you had was gone."

Then you pull me near to you and I am putting out my hands to hold you as I usually do. Suddenly I see that there are many people behind you and I draw back. Then you say, "Let them see. They must know everything now." And you take me in your arms and give me the flower which you were holding in your other hand. The flower is: "The Joy of Faithfulness." And inside this flower there is just one petal of "The Divine's Love". You say, "At present take this. It will do. By and by you will find the whole of the flower meaning "The Divine's Invisible Truth."

SEHRA

A SECRET

HAUNTS there are where Nature walks unseen
 With such noise as no human ears perceive—
 A quiet soft rustle of sunlight green
 Enveloped in perpetual solitude.

All unperturbed, harmonious in their course
 The branch and the squirrel on it swing in the breeze,
 While wisdom waits in still reflective mood—
 All life and thought, sunk in that water, cease.

A shuddering ripple breaks the tranquillity
 When man arrives with countless thronging things,
 For these heed not the cleansing sweep of wind
 And, shadowlike, confuse all harmony.

Unstirring by the water's edge I feel
 Nature's deep calm grow upon broken ties,
 And sometimes I uplift with future gaze
 Profound pool-stillnesses of light-brimmed eyes.

ANON

OUR LIGHT AND DELIGHT

RECOLLECTIONS OF LIFE WITH THE MOTHER .

(Continued from the issue of February 21, 1979)

(16)

The Mother's and Sri Aurobindo's Way with Animals

THE Mother was known for her love of animals and her deep understanding of their nature. It was a delight to hear her speaking to a cat in a musical tone full of affection, a tenderly modulated baby-talk. She dealt with the Ashram cats as if they had been "persons" with rights. The man who was in charge of the Prosperity Room in the 'thirties was given strict orders not to interfere with the movements of the beautiful female cat Bite-Bite which had made this place its home. If a cupboard was left open by him and Bite-Bite got on to any shelf of it, he had to respect its right to be there: not only was he forbidden to shoo it off but he had also to let it commit nuisance there if it wanted. His job was to develop his own consciousness and remember always to shut the cupboards. Else he should bear with equanimity the catty consequences of his own oversight.

The Mother has recorded many reminiscences of her dealings with cats. When I first came to the Ashram, they were a part of the life in it, serving various occult ends. How powerful the Mother's influence could be was borne in on me when she acted on a semi-wild female cat which she had named "Pichune". It had got into the habit of spoiling the bed of the sadhika—Lalita—who had it for her companion along with two other she-cats named by the Mother "Pink Nose" and "Black Nose". The bed was an unprotected area and no amount of hurdles put in the way of Pichune could prevent its perversity. So at last the Mother was informed. From the very next day Pichune was a well-behaved civilised creature.

Pink Nose had the Mother's darshan just before it died. There is a tribe of people in Pondicherry which looks out for cat-meat. The strange persons carry a long pole with a hook at one end. On seeing a cat pass, they rip open its belly with that hook. Pink Nose got attacked by one of the savages. It ran away and hid itself in a place difficult of access. Somehow Lalita and I pulled it out. We took it in a basket to the Ashram dispensary which at that time was within the main block of buildings. While Lalita stayed with her pet, I waited at the back-entrance of the Ashram through which the Mother used to go for her evening drive and return home. As soon as she was back I told her of what had happened. At once she came with me to the dispensary. She said something and Pink Nose stood on its hind legs and putting its front paws on the edge of the basket looked up at the Mother. The Mother again spoke to it. Its little nostrils quivered. After the Mother had gone we

had to get it chloroformed for the operation by Dr. Rajangam: her intestines, which were hanging out, had to be put in and the skin stitched. Naturally Pink Nose tried with its paws to slash away at the chloroform wad and the doctors' fingers. So I had to catch its front legs and hold them forcibly wide apart while the chloroforming was being done. It gazed at me with a most pained surprise as if wondering why I who loved it so much was torturing it by stretching apart its legs. Then it went under the anaesthetic and was lifted out to the operation-table. The intestines were pushed in and the ripped skin joined with stitches but Pink Nose died. Probably the anaesthetic proved too strong for it.

Almost immediately afterwards there was the Mother's Soup Distribution. The memory of Pink Nose's last look at me of unbelieving bewilderment haunted me all through the meditation. It was quite a trial of my Yoga, keeping my mind and heart quiet before I went to the Mother to get my cupful.

Lalita was very grieved, for she had loved the cat dearly. The Mother gave an interesting explanation of the accident that had happened to Pink Nose. In that period there was a talk of Lalita's moving to a better flat. The Mother said that the desire for such a place had become very strong in her, a wrong movement. This movement drew adverse forces. The cat, being extremely open to its owner and thus easily affected by that desire, found itself exposed to the attack. With the cat-eaters around, it fell a victim and thus sidetracked what might have harmed the owner in some subtle occult way affecting her body.

(In those days the inner movements tended very much to have repercussions in the outer being—a hypersensitive connection used to be there. For example, I once had a horrid crop of boils near my eyes and ears. The Mother reminded me of a certain acute desire I had allowed in myself a little earlier.)

Another cat, which was connected with me and had the Mother's darshan in its last hours, was the tom Miel. It was a very handsome animal. Sehra and I were indeed proud that it stayed with us, but it was never quite domesticated. It had sometimes a savage manner, as if it did not quite like our possession of it. In its sixth month, it caught the infection of an enteric epidemic which had already laid low all the cats in the neighbourhood. I have noticed that cats are very hardy creatures and can survive almost unthinkably adverse conditions of life, but when attacked by diseases their proverbial "nine lives" slip away pretty easily. The malady which affected Miel usually kills its victims within a few hours. Miel amazingly held out for nearly three days and went on suffering, most probably because Sehra whose first feline pet it was, and therefore doubly beloved, was extremely attached to it. At our wits' end we took it to the Tennis Ground where the Mother was having her daily game in the afternoon. When her set was over and she was walking out towards her car, we showed Miel to her. She looked into its eyes and said: "You don't look very brilliant, my little one." We had the impression that she found the case hopeless and did something occult to put an end to the "little one"'s misery. Two hours later I noticed a dried-up wizened look on Miel's face. Sehra was

perturbed. I gave the cat some drops of Coramine. It crawled under my bed and after half an hour died. The Mother confirmed the next day that she had severed the connecting "cord" between the subtle body and the gross.

Sehra was very cut up by the loss of Miel. The Mother, however, soothed her with the words: "You were attached to Miel, but it was not attached to anybody. It had a free wild nature. The relationship was rather one-sided. It was not particularly upset to lose you. It has gone to a special part of the subtle planes, where there is a Cat-Kingdom with a kind of Cat-God ruling it."

The next cat which we had—Goldie—lived longer. It was very affectionate and spent more than half the night in Sehra's bed, sitting on her chest and purring away. The Mother was apprised of whatever unusual happened to it. Thus, when the wheel of a rickshaw once went over its abdomen, Sehra lost no time in informing her. The Mother said: "Cats have some of their inner organs in a flexible mobile position and when the wheel was felt on the abdomen the organs moved away automatically. If the cat is eating its food normally, you don't have to worry." Goldie was much upset by the accident, its "mind" was confused for nearly an hour by what had so heavily passed across its body and it was in a slightly bad temper with us for a while. But it recovered soon enough and took its normal meal after a few hours.

The high spot of each day for it was the afternoon outing in my hand-pulled single-person rickshaw. It sat quietly behind my head on the lowered hood while our fox-terrier Bingo sat at my feet and barked at all passers-by who came too near the vehicle. After a full happy life Goldie, like Miel, succumbed to an enteric infection. When the Mother thought the case hopeless we consulted her as to putting it to sleep and thereby sparing it suffering. She said: "It is better to let it live out its life—unless the suffering is too acute." Goldie died a couple of days later.

Both the dogs which, one after the other, Sehra and I had were also fortunate to be in contact with the Mother. Bingo was already famous with her because it had figured in all the letters we had written from Bombay prior to Sehra's first visit with me to the Holy Land. When on the day of our arrival we went to the Playground, the Mother was standing in the midst of some boys and girls. She put up her right hand in greeting to me and soon came towards us. After Sehra had been introduced and blessed, the Mother caught sight of Bingo which had been given in charge of a friend sitting nearby. Immediately she exclaimed: "I must meet Bingo. I can miss people but Bingo I must meet." She hurried over to the dog, asked an attendant to bring some groundnuts and offered them to it. Bingo returned the Divine's courtesy with a growl of (I hope) gratitude. Sehra cried out: "Mother, don't be afraid. He won't do anything." The Mother turned towards her and, smiling, asked: "I afraid?" She fed the groundnuts to Bingo. The English expression "Lucky Dog!" could not have been more literally true.

Bingo died in the Ashram while I was in Bombay to see my grandfather pass away. The Mother was kept in touch with its condition from day to day. Our next dog was Épave, meaning "Waif". It was a street pup, a bag of bones, with

severe diarrhoea and with a rump hurt by a cow's kick. Thoughtless street-urchins were harassing it. We took it into our garden to let it have a peaceful death. It survived the crisis and grew into a sturdy specimen of a cross between a bull-terrier and a fox-terrier. When, after years of happy and even "bossy" life, it fell ill and its condition seemed to go from bad to worse, Sehra informed the Mother. The Mother went into a short meditation and then said: "I don't feel it can recover." Soon after, Épave sank into a coma. Our sadhak-friend Barin Ganguly, a great lover of animals and an expert veterinary doctor, tried his best to bring it round but to no avail. Sehra watched over the inert body all through the night following the evening when she had spoken to the Mother. At one point she felt as if she had to touch the dog to make sure it was alive, but suddenly she saw a faint form approach with outstretched arms and make the motion of taking up Épave. That very moment Épave gave a gasp and died. The next morning Sehra reported the night's experience to the Mother. The Mother said: "Yes, I came to take your dog's soul."

Although within my actual knowledge the Mother had only to do with cats and dogs and the Ashram's bulls and once a small donkey bought by Udar, she was interested in many other animals. She has referred to horses as well as to birds, which, like some cats and dogs known to her, had an aspiration to become human beings. But perhaps the animal she most fancied is the puma. I remember her telling us in the "Prosperity" Room with a very appreciative smile that the puma had a natural affinity with human beings and could make close friends with them. Of course, the dog is best known for such an affinity, but the dog has been a domesticated animal for millennia, while the puma is still a denizen of the wild. *The New American Encyclopedia*¹ has the entry on page 1135: "Puma (or Cougar), a large species of the cat-family found in America, where it ranges from Canada to Patagonia. The puma, sometimes called the American lion, from its tawny color, is about the size of a leopard, which it resembles in habit, preying upon animals up to the size of deer, but rarely attacking man. It is now scarce in North America, but in South America is found both in the tropical forests of Brazil and up in the snow on the Andes." It is surprising that no book comparable to Judy Adamson's series on a lioness and on its young has come out on this carnivore about which the Mother spoke so enthusiastically.

In my presence she twice talked of snakes. Once in connection with the liquid known by its patent name Lexin she said: "You can safely use it for scorpion-stings. But if a snake bites you it is better to inform me immediately." Lexin is really an effective inhalant antidote for all injuries from insects: I have seen it relieve a scorpion-sting within a matter of twenty minutes. I have not seen a case of snake-bite in the Ashram and evidently the Mother was not willing to take any risk with so serious an injury. It is equally evident that she was confident of curing it by her spiritual force.

The second occasion on which she mentioned snakes was when she related an experience of hers during one of the outings she made daily in the late afternoon. She said: "I was walking rather absorbed. Suddenly I saw a snake sliding past just in

¹ Published by Books Inc, New York. 1945.

front of my feet. One step more and I would have trodden upon its body. It never struck me that I might be bitten. The only thought I had was: 'I would hurt the snake by stepping on it.'"

Sri Aurobindo too is known to have dealt with animals. During the years of his association with the Mother he came most into touch with cats. Once Purani found him busy arranging a plate of fish for some cat of the Mother's. It is said that if a cat came and sat on his chair he would not allow anyone to disturb it. A certain dog also used to go to his room and lick his toes. When the cat Big Boy was about to die, Sri Aurobindo came down from his room and kept caressing it with his right hand. Very few people, however, have heard of his doings with animals prior to his association with the Mother, though there is clear evidence of a most unexpected kind. In the course of reading the proofs of the Centenary Edition of his works I came across an early writing, entitled "Some Selected Notes", on an epic by Kalidasa. Sri Aurobindo quotes a commentator on Kalidasa's mention of peacocks. The commentator gives an interpretation which says that peacocks are not attached to their environment. Sri Aurobindo rules out this interpretation and remarks: "I have reared peacocks myself and I can assure the reader that they have as much attachment as any other creature." Sri Aurobindo rearing peacocks is indeed a revelation!

But perhaps from the occult viewpoint this is in the fitness of things. The peacock is the national bird of India just as her national flower is the lotus and Sri Aurobindo laid the true foundation of Indian Nationalism, and his date of birth—August 15—coincides with the date of India's Independence. Again, in Sri Aurobindo's own symbology, the peacock stands for Victory. November 24, 1926, is a momentous landmark in the Aurobindonian Yoga, called the Day of Siddhi or Victory: on this occasion the Overmind descended into the physical beings of the Master and the Mother, laying the foundation for the future descent of the Supermind. The Victory Day is also the birthday of the Ashram's real and regular start under the Mother, to whom Sri Aurobindo then handed over the charge of his disciples and of the houses in which he and she and they were residing.

(To be continued)

AMAL KIRAN

AT THE SPORTSGROUND

2 DECEMBER 1978

ALTHOUGH one of my friends had repeatedly requested me not to miss this year's Physical Demonstration at the Sportsground, I was not very enthusiastic about going. Firstly because I needed someone to accompany me and secondly because I was afraid that it might rain at any time, and so make me all wet as it had done last year. But I left it to the Mother to decide and arrange everything. Evidently it was *Her* wish that I should go. So I found a suitable companion who took me there at the right time.

No sooner were we seated on our seats than I commenced to feel happy. I watched with keen interest each and every item and, as I was doing so, I felt the Mother's Presence more and more concretely, which, I am sure, others too felt.

Something in me widened, and my whole being was filled with an intense love for all the participants. I felt as if my two arms were encircling all of them and holding them close to my heart. I forgot the existence of my body. I was only a soul filled with love and admiration for all these children.

When the sports were over and I heard the Mother's voice, a sob escaped from my heart and tears threatened to well up in my eyes. But I controlled myself and looked at the sky.

Immediately something in me widened and prayed to the Mother to raise me above all outer circumstances, and keep ever before my soul and inner eye the high aim for which we are all here.

Then came dinner time and as I was standing with the others and talking, I felt a sudden and intense whirling of a Force overhead. It was dotted with gold-and-white Light, which I could see with my eyes open although really by an inner vision.

I felt as if I would faint and lose all awareness of my body. With great difficulty I controlled myself and behaved in the normal way. If I had allowed the Force to pull me inward (as it seemed to want to do) I would have fallen down and put my friend in trouble.

I asked myself whether something was going wrong with me owing to the tablets I was taking at times, which had been prescribed by the doctor. Then I remembered that I had not taken even half a tablet during the two previous days. It was only the Mother's Force at work everywhere, of which I had suddenly become conscious.

LALITA

MEDITATION AROUND THE SAMADHI

5 DECEMBER 1978

FIFTH December, 1978, the twenty-eighth anniversary of the day of our Lord's passing. It began with heavy rain. Now the time was just before 10 o'clock. I was busy with my work at the Ashram Press. I looked at my time-piece—only ten minutes more to ten. All the Ashramites must have already started to go to the Meditation around the Samadhi. What should I do? Very anxiously I started a run to cover about a kilometre to reach the Ashram main-gate within ten minutes.

But on the way I realised that I would not succeed. So it was better to go back. All my hopes seemed in vain. Tears flowed down my cheeks because I had been here for more than two years and never missed any meditation programme at the Samadhi.

Anyway I went back to the Press and engaged myself in my unfinished job, praying to the Divine Master and the Divine Mother to forgive me for my unpunctuality. Five minutes passed. Suddenly I felt a darkness around. Then I could not see anything more and lost all my outward movements. My consciousness entered into the deepest core of my heart. And there I found myself sitting in meditation in front of the Samadhi. It was not exactly the Samadhi, but like a sacred altar. I saw my Sweet Lord and Sweet Mother sitting on this *mandapa* in two chairs side by side and giving Darshan to the people with their ever-smiling faces. Their figures were exactly as in the photograph of the Darshan chamber inside Sri Aurobindo's room which I had visited in the early morning that day. The Mother had put on a yellow saree and Sri Aurobindo a white dhoti and *chaddar*. Two bright circles were just behind their heads, the Mother's was golden and Sri Aurobindo's blue. They appeared to be so beautiful... so charming... quite inexpressible. I had never before enjoyed such a Divine Ananda.

Then people started going one by one to offer their pranams. The Mother and Sri Aurobindo were giving their blessings with their magnificent touch. When I went and bowed my head at their lotus feet—suddenly I woke up and discovered myself in the press. There I saw my body was as active as before without any disturbance! What a miraculous thing it was! My gratitude to the Divine knew no bounds.

HRUSHIKESH

VISION ON 8 DECEMBER 1978

It was the night of 8 December. I woke up in the middle of it. It was 2.10 when I looked at the clock and I lay down again. I was lying with my eyes closed. Then I had a vision.

Vision

I spoke to Kamalaben that I was going out for a walk. "You too come and join me; it is a very beautiful place where we are to go."

But Kamalaben said, "No, no; you alone can go." I said, "Come and see for yourself, you will find it very interesting."

At last both of us started.

There was a forest and it was all full of flowers having a large variety of colours. The whole forest was filled with their fragrance. There were birds and animals too of many kinds and their voices created as it were a sweet music for our ears.

Advancing further, we saw that two children were moving towards us. "Champaklal," they cried from afar, and I wondered how they could recognise me from such a distance.

The boy and the girl approached me and were very happy on seeing me. They said, "Come to our house." Kamalaben told me, "You go alone; as for me I shall sit down here." But the children told her, "No, no, you too will have to come." Kamalaben told them, "I shall come at some other time, just now you take Champaklalbhai with you."

But seeing their loving insistence, I said to Kamalaben, "You also come, you too will like the place."

At last all four of us advanced, the two children leading. As we advanced we began to feel that we were entering quite a new wonderful world. On going further, when we looked in front of us we found that the road was blocked by a dense thicket. But on nearing the place the children did something, we do not know what, and there opened before us a path just big enough for us to go. Kamalaben said, "I am tired, I would like to sit down here. This place is beautiful enough for sitting down. Now I wish to rest for a while comfortably. Really I am very tired."

On hearing this the children began to laugh and then said, "Come, please come. There is nothing like fatigue in our place. You will surely know it when you will see the place for yourself. You do not need to walk there at all. The earth will walk for you." Saying this the children began to laugh. Kamalaben told the children, "But the earth too will get tired." The children said again with a laugh, "No, no, it is not like that. You will see there what you have not yet seen; come along." So saying they caught a finger of Kamalaben and made her rise, and she rose smiling.

We then entered a new world. One child went on explaining all. "Here we have children from various countries and we all live together. Now come and stand here, please."

So saying they made us stand at a place, but we saw that without walking we were moving further on and on. The boy and the girl were with us. Only now we could understand what the children had said about the earth moving for us. We saw it with our own eyes.

The children, pronouncing each different name, showed us the places where lived the children of various lands.

We saw the children from those lands, but what they had put on was uniformly beautiful and each had an individual and novel stamp. They also spoke in the same kind of language in spite of their knowing various languages.

Here our two children remarked, "There still are regions more beautiful than this; for so our parents have been saying. We were also told that when we would be ready, we too would be taken there. They say that everything there is more charming than what is here."

The two children added,

"Although we are very happy here, we feel how beautiful would be those regions about which our father speaks. It is pleasant here, no doubt; but we shall take you to our parents. Seeing them you will be very delighted. At present we are not to go up, but our parents themselves will take you both further there. All are not taken up, many are seen off here itself, but, as for you, we are sure that they will take you up.

"We are very very glad to have met you; but if you go up there, it is quite possible that you may not even return, you may stay on there. This has happened in the case of some, but very few have come back, farther up still less have remained. We have also heard that some have turned back after going some way. When we hear this, we are really astonished. For our father says that it is more beautiful there: why should some be coming back? We questioned our father about this and he replied, 'You will yourself understand this when you will go up'. How nice! our father is very very nice. He loves us very much and teaches us ever new things.

"Now let us go. See, you have not to walk. You can move everywhere without walking. All this arrangement too is the working of our father. It is he who has brought us here from our (physical) parents; but now we have no mind at all to go back to our own parents. Here are our true parents. You also will understand this thing as soon as you go there, and that too without being told about it.

"Yes, but remember one thing. You will be surprised when you meet them, wondering whether they are two or one. We ourselves in the beginning felt like that. Quite in the beginning, some children even felt afraid, and some were full of wonder. But now our parents have explained to them that only their bodies were different, but in fact they were one. We felt it to be strange; but our parents gave an explanation and said, 'Never mind if you do not understand this. After growing, when you come up, you will understand all.' Some of the children among us say that they have understood it, but all have not done so."

The children then said, "Look, what do you see in front of you?"

I said, "Light. Is it the East? It appears as though the Sun is going to rise, and now it appears that it is rising."

The children answered, "Yes, it is the East, but up there it is like this everywhere. Our parents were saying so. Our parents too will be there."

The children asked Kamalaben, "Did you get tired?" Kamalaben replied, "No, not at all."

The children exclaimed, "Say, did we not tell you that here there was nothing like fatigue. Till now we too do not know what fatigue is; but we have heard about fatigue. One person who had come here was asked about it and he explained to us what fatigue was. This matter we narrated to our father who said, 'My dear children! that world and our world here are two quite different things and people coming from that world might speak of many such things, but what they say is not all quite true.'

"Hearing this, we asked the father, 'Then why do those people speak of such things?'

"The father replied, 'It has become their nature.' And we asked the father, 'What is it that you call nature?'

"He said, 'This too you will understand later on. Look, I am not going to explain all that just now; for some words of those people have a different meaning in our world. Some of their things are even non-existent in our world. But all this you will surely understand one day and that too by yourself.'

"The father asked all of us, 'Is it not true?' and we replied in the affirmative. We know that all happens exactly as our father says.

"Now we shall proceed, but as for us we shall remain here in our own world. You will be seeing them. Look, look, they themselves appear to be coming towards us. Once we asked them, 'How did you come? How did you know that we had need of you?' Our mother replied, 'My dear children! one day you too will be able to know like this.'"

Two persons were seen in front coming towards us. Sometimes it seemed as if it was only one person coming, and sometimes it was two. We began to feel a pull towards them even from a distance. They came close, looked at us with great love and tenderness. Their sight was sufficient to create in us a desire to lose ourselves in them. We began to feel that we were intimately familiar to one another.

Then with a sweet and charming smile they said, "We were only waiting for your arrival." We observed that the children had clasped them and both of them were affectionately moving their hands over the children's heads; they moved their hands along their backs also. It was a wonderful sight to see—they were bending over the boy and the girl who were bending before them. I was so engrossed in the scene that I did not even notice the boy and the girl going away back from there.

The parents spoke to us, "Well, well, you have come at last." I was surprised a bit as to why they were saying this, but remained quiet.

The children had suggested to us, "You simply hear what the parents say; even

if you do not understand it then, you will yourself understand it later on.”

The father with a smile full of love began to speak to us as if we were very intimately familiar to them, “Look, we have spent many lives for accomplishing what you have already seen and the wonderful creations that you will see here now. You are now able to see the ultimate result. What you have already seen is nothing compared to what is still further. All of it you will be seeing as we rise higher and higher. But seeing is not enough, it has to be experienced and realised; and that too you will do. At present we have gone to different countries and brought from there children we found worthy of higher things. Later on these children will be taken higher up and gradually they will be led to higher and higher regions. At present it is not possible to have them settled here, but a time will come when all aspiring souls will find a place here. It is only a question of time.”

I saw that it was quite a new world. As we went higher, we saw elderly people who were busy doing their work cheerfully. In this way we saw many a world and the atmosphere of each succeeding world was of a superior character.

Little by little, we rose higher and yet higher and saw many wonderful worlds, worlds where physical necessities like food and drink and bath, etc. were absent.

At last we saw a dazzling golden light, up and down and everywhere. The mother and the father told me with the intimacy of love that we could not go further than this. I wondered what could be still further there.

The parents cast a loving yet piercing glance at us, and on looking at them I found that there was only one person, calm and shining. I remained very calm and quiet. From the atmosphere around there came a loud sound piercing the ear-drums, a sound the like of which we had never heard before, and both of us entered into them.

*

My eyes opened and I felt that I was in quite a new world. I saw Sri Aurobindo's cot by my side, I felt it with my hand and when I looked around I found that I was in the same place as before. I looked at the clock and it was 3-10 A.M. In only one hour I was as if back after many years. In my childhood, my father had told me a very interesting story of a sage who had gone for a bath in a river and in one plunge had passed many years of experience. The story as far as I remember was, in brief, like this:

The sage asked God to show him His Lila, and God gave him that experience. With a plunge in the river, the sage entered some mysterious world. There he married and had children. After passing many such years thus, when he rose up from the river, he found everything as it had been before the plunge.

(Translated by Pujalal from the original Gujarati)

CHAMPAKLAL

NATURAMA

THE vibrant air
Fused
With the raucous call
of the lone tenant
of the heaving henna.
While the sun
On thermal toes
Stealing space on rarefied rungs,
Mounted
To his meridian mood.
A floral welter
Flashed green below.
The neem,
A freshening leafy lustre,
Was
A tossing shimmer of smiles,
The palm,
In easy sweep of pace,
A priest in prayer,
Swung
A ritual of fanning fervours;
And
The rose-mallow, sporting
A single gloom of red,
Beamed
Heaving its hosanna to heaven.

G. VISWANATHAN

SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF EDUCATION

I

THE SCHOOL IN THE MAKING

I

WHAT is being done in the Ashram's Centre of Education is still in the experimental stage. Even those who do not subscribe to the gospel of spirituality can learn how life can be organised on a basis of spiritual principles.

The ideal set before us is a change of consciousness, a change of nature leading to the transformation of life to the Life Divine. For such a great change the foundation must be education. Consequently our educational goal is not to make the child great in the eyes of the world but to make the Great manifest in his life. The crux of the problem is how to bring about such a change in the child. Man's life is a very complicated process. Can education help the child to lead a beautiful and blissful life?

All over the world there is an anxious search for a new way of life, a new mode of action, a new pattern of education; a search for something that when it does come may well change the very fabric of human nature. Can the system of education followed in the Ashram provide it? In other words, what is Sri Aurobindo's contribution in the field of education?

This is a big subject. My purpose is not to expound his theory but to give some glimpses of how the School was started, how it evolved and is progressing. A fuller history will be written when a clear picture of the experiment comes into view.

Speaking to the students the Mother once said, "If you want to understand the true reason *why you are here*, you must remember that our aim is to become as perfect an instrument as possible expressing the Divine Will in the world. And if the instrument is to be perfect, you have to cultivate, educate, train it. You must not leave it as fallow land or a piece of stone without form. The diamond shows all its beauty only when it is cut artistically. It is the same for you. When you want your physical being to be a perfect instrument for manifesting the supramental consciousness, you must then cultivate it, shape it, refine it... That is why you come to the class, my children, whether you are big or small, for one can learn at all ages."

Every student should assimilate what Nolini said when the Ashram school students wished to know something about the Mother and Sri Aurobindo:

"You want to know something about Sri Aurobindo and the Mother from me. But there are three lines of approach: you want to know about them, know of them or know them. Of course the last is the best. Indeed if you know something you must become it. Becoming gives the knowledge. Becoming Sri Aurobindo and the Mother

means what? Becoming a portion of them, a part and parcel of their consciousness—that is what we are here for.”

Elaborating the point further, “What are the children here for? And what is she (the Mother) giving in the School, in the playground, in all the activities?” Nolini said:

“It is not simple efficiency in the outer activities that is given here, or meant to be given here. For such things one can get outside in a more successful way—external efficiency of your intellect, of your mind, of your vital capacity and your physical strength—the Russian or the German type. Our records don’t reach theirs, do they? But we don’t aspire for those records. For as the Mother has said: ‘I am giving here something which you won’t get anywhere in the world—nowhere except here....’

“I think I told you that once somebody asked me: ‘You speak of the soul but where is it?’

“I said, ‘It is very near you; still you don’t believe. If you see into yourself quietly, you will find that there are very many good things in you, not only bad things—bits perhaps, shades or shadows perhaps, but you know there is a good thought in you, a noble impulse, a sweet feeling. Each one has all these things, you have only to recognise them. All this is the expression of the soul in you. The beautiful, the luminous.... That appears to you from time to time, all come from your soul.’”

At the end he answered a few questions:

“Did Sri Aurobindo read out poetry to you?”

“Yes.”

“Loudly?”

“Yes.” (*Laughter*)

“Is there an echo in your ears?” (*Laughter*)

“I remember it very well, when he was reading *Eric*—when he had just written it. The Veda, of course, I heard very often.”

“The students would like to know very much what Sri Aurobindo’s voice was like.”

“I have to describe it? (*Laughter*) That I can’t. Can’t describe. He refused to be caught in the tape. We proposed it to him, he simply refused.”

2

Though the lever of the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education is spirituality, it stands for an integrated life with all its faculties alive. The teaching imparted affects the body for the better, awakens and enlightens the mind, and dynamises the spiritual propensities. What better inspiration can be given to the children than to initiate them when they are in their formative years into the great Mantra of the Mother, “Be master of yourself”? Along with books of the world, they must learn to read the book of their own beings and natures.

What is meant by becoming master of oneself? The Mother explains:

“One must know why one does this, why one does that; one must know one’s thoughts, know one’s feelings...etc. And to know oneself is not sufficient, this knowing must lead to conscious control....

“Try to do this little exercise: at the beginning of the day, say, ‘I will not speak without thinking of what I say.’ You believe, do you not, that you think all that you say! It is not at all the case, you will see that so many times the word you do not want to say is ready to come out, but you are obliged to make a conscious effort to stop it from coming out.

“I know people who were very scrupulous in not telling a lie, but when directly they are in a group instead of saying the truth they tell a lie spontaneously. They did not intend to do so, but it came ‘like that’. Why? Because they were in the company of liars: there was an atmosphere of falsehood and they simply caught the malady!

“It is in this way that little by little, slowly, with perseverance, first of all with great care and attention, one becomes conscious, learns to know oneself and afterwards to become master of oneself.”¹

To check the little children of the Ashram from their playful habit of telling lies the Mother asked each member of the Green Group to keep a count of the lies they told during the course of the day.

I know a person who made a resolution not to tell a lie. Although the idea was firm in his mind, he failed miserably in action. Past habits were so strong that at times words he didn’t like to utter came from his mouth unchecked. To bring even initial control he had to struggle for years.

A devotee of the Mother gathered some young ones and started a school in a room given by a zamindar. He used to pour into the ears of the children some noble thoughts: Do not tell a lie—do not quarrel—do not steal, etc.

One day, the boys plucked a pomegranate from the orchard of a zamindar and placed it in front of the Mother’s photo before the class started. As soon as the teacher arrived they came straight out with the truth; they had plucked the fruit to offer it as *prasad*.

“Did you ask the zamindar?” inquired the teacher.

“No.”

“You should have asked him; otherwise it amounts to stealing. I must inform the zamindar.”

The moment the news was broken to the zamindar he felt greatly annoyed that something had been done without his permission. He threatened to drive the children out.

The teacher took his seat with his pupils on the verandah. Soon one of the boys expressed his desire to say something. Not only he, but the others also wanted to speak. The teacher wished them to put everything down on paper. It was found that all of them had written the same thing in substance—“The Mother will

¹ *Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education*, February 1964, pp. 45-51.

give you another place.” And it came true. Of his own volition, someone offered them a place the same day.

To lead a beautiful and successful life “the education of a human being should begin right from his very birth and continue throughout the whole length of his life”. The Mother wrote this as far back as the year 1951.

The Mother continues: “...the child about to be born will depend very much upon the mother who forms it, upon her aspiration and will as much as upon the material surroundings in which she lives. The part of education which the mother has to go through is to see that her thoughts are always beautiful and pure, her feelings are always noble and fine....And if in addition she has a conscious and definite will to form the child according to the highest ideal she can conceive, then the best conditions are provided for the child to come into the world with the maximum of possibilities....

“To say good words, give wise advice to a child has very little effect, if one does not show by one’s living example the truth of what one teaches. Sincerity, honesty, straightforwardness, courage, disinterestedness, unselfishness, patience, endurance, perseverance, peace, calm, self-control are all things that are taught infinitely better by one’s example than by beautiful speeches.”

Finding a young child of seven or eight expressing himself in English and Bengali just after a few months of his stay in the Ashram, Rishabchand passed the remark, “He seems to have come learning everything from his mother’s womb.”

Joy was seen bubbling from the child’s heart when permission was granted him to stay for good. He would go about, expressing his joy to people, “You see, I too am palmanent (permanent).”

What impresses one most about him even now is his childlike simplicity and unassuming nature. He is loved by all teachers, professors, students—and he himself is now both a professor and a captain of the most hardy group. Being the only son of his father he inherited a good property but no worldly temptations could distract him from the path.

(To be continued)

NARAYAN PRASAD

TOWARDS THE HIGHER LIFE

(Continued from the issue of February 21, 1979)

Chapter V

Descent into the Inconscient

(6)

In our body's cells there sits a hidden Power
That sees the unseen and plans eternity.¹

All the cells of the body must be athirst for the Light.²

THIS is a section that has a lot of surprises to offer. Not that what I propose to say has anything sensational to feed the fancy; yet the startling developments—the subtle and silent changes that have come to my observation in the very texture and structure of my physical frame—augur far-reaching consequences. Here crop up a number of questions which cannot be evaded. In trying to give convincing answers I run the great danger of not only deluding myself but also of getting grossly misunderstood by others. Hence the hesitancy. It is hard to speak accurately about the matters concerned. Let the discriminating readers form their own opinion, approve or disapprove.

I repeat that all I have put on record is open to critical judgment. My experiences invite fire-brand students of Yoga, those in “soul's passionate search”, ready to burn like a moth in the fire of aspiration, to carry out their own experiments and scale “unreached heights”; make a voyage in the vast for spiritual exploration. The need of the hour is for hero-souls who can turn thorns into roses.

Without an overhauling and reshaping of the whole organic machine, the transformation of the very cells of the body, the glory of God cannot be realised in “Nature's mud”, “the Godhead shut within the cells” cannot be revealed; the body cannot become the fit abode of the One whom we adore.

In order to “make body's joy as vivid as the soul's”³ one must “feel the presence of the Divine in every centre of his consciousness, in every vibration of his life-force, in every cell of his body.”⁴

The same idea, the same thought as in the *Life Divine* of Sri Aurobindo we find echoed in his little book *The Mother*, which is dear to us as the Bible of bibles:

¹ *Savitri*: Part I, B. II, C. V, p. 155.

² Adapted from *Questions and Answers* (1957-58), p. 166.

³ *Savitri*, Part I, B. II, C. VI, p. 178.

⁴ Sri Aurobindo Cent. Vol. 19, p. 972.

“If you desire this transformation... you must be conscious in your mind and soul and heart and life and the very cells of your body and aware of the Mother and her Powers and their working”.¹

But where are we? How hopeless is our present condition!—

“These passions are the stuff of which we are made.”²

The riddle can be solved and immediate results obtained if we put into practice these two lines of the Mother:

“The body is made of a substance which is still very heavy, it is the substance itself which has to be changed.”³

For that not only must “the physical cells become conscious but receptive to the true Consciousness-Force. That is the work of transformation”.⁴

Nolini Kanta Gupta expounds in soul-stirring simple words how the principle of transformation differs from Nirvana.

“Our cells are packets of desire. To empty them of desires is Nirvana. To fill them with light is transformation.”⁵

The curious mind might question what immediate gain is expected from transformation?

Without going into the details as elucidated in the pages of *The Life Divine* I shall confine myself to two lines from one of Sri Aurobindo’s letters:

“...Even the illnesses can go entirely with the growth of peace and power in the nerves and physical cells...”⁶

I have often wondered what an awful life might have been mine as a helpless victim of two bone-breaking diseases—rheumatism and diabetes—had the Mother’s force not come to my rescue. Oh, the relief, the release that I feel today! Was it due to the action in the physical cells? How to ascertain the truth? To be better understood let me dilate on the point a little.

To the question—“How does one awaken the consciousness of the physical being?”—what the Mother said in reply reveals why so great an importance is given to physical training in our way of sadhana:

“It is physical education that teaches the cells to be conscious.”⁷

Let me illustrate the point as it has come within the orbit of my experience.

Digging into my memory I go back to the year 1957 or 1958. Though I was blessed with an experience unique of its kind in my life, for years I was unable to understand what hidden purpose could be served by such a high-grade spiritual action in the

¹ 6th edition, p. 74.

² *Savitri*, Part I, p. 127.

³ *Bulletin*, August 1978, p. 49.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

⁵ Adapted from his writing as I remember it

⁶ *On Yoga II*, Tome Two, p. 553.

⁷ *Bulletin*, August 1978, pp. 99-100

very cells. I did not even think it worthwhile to keep a note at the time, hence I cannot say precisely when it happened. I had an inkling of what took place at that period when the experience repeated itself several times two decades later. I was seated on the small verandah, facing Sri Aurobindo's Samadhi. From the very beginning I had a great attraction and an intense adoration towards his Samadhi, for which I have been amply rewarded. I had just closed my eyes. The meditation was neither deep nor intense. Suddenly, my consciousness was awakened to something unbelievable—beyond my conception. A cluster of "ignorant cells", looking white, shot forth from the right side of my shoulders and stood in front of the right arm. They did not glitter like stars but were much smaller—I may say dots of light within a luminous space. It was not a passing momentary experience. Surprised yet mute, I looked and looked at them.

The next experience happened on our long-cherished Darshan Day of the Mother's Centenary Year: February 21, 1978. I was so immersed in myself that I lost all sense of the body and of those seated around me in their hundreds. Suddenly my eyes met something for which I was absolutely unprepared. There came to view a formless void, an entirely blank space with an aura of its own in front of me in the midst of that crowd. Within the aura, appeared the exceedingly beautiful feet of the Mother in a bright pink-white colour. The most astounding part of the vision was that, in place of my own body, below the knees there stood only the Mother's. The vision was clear, there was no ambiguity—it was beyond the apprehension of the normal human mind. This experience I considered too sacred to be divulged; hence I did not breathe a word to anyone but am compelled now to disclose it, for it provides a link with others and has a bearing on the future evolution of my sadhana life.

The third experience I had while engaged in bodily movements and the fourth just on return from the Playground. The latter calls for some detail.

The Mother does not like the cutting down of food but she insists that one should regulate food habits according to one's nature and the need of the body. Ordinary life goes on "hunting for pleasure in the heart of pain",¹ obsessed by desire for food, sex, etc. On this score she admonishes: "So long as one keeps all the ties which bind one to life, which make you a slave to the ordinary life, how can you belong only to the Divine? That's childishness, it is not possible!"²

There is a school of thought which claims that "the shift of attitude towards food reflects a shift from the outer to the inner—a shift from *sthula* [gross] to *sukhsma* [subtle]".

Sri Aurobindo maintains: "...the food we take can be reduced to a minimum without the mental or vital vigour being in any way reduced."³ He has further said that there comes a time when the body does not need food.

People are very fond of coconuts in the South. It is a rare treat in the North. I

¹ *Savitri*, Part I, p. 177. II. 6

² *Bulletin*, Feb. 1978, p. 73.

³ *The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 318.

got addicted to them because of their nutritive value. They greatly helped me to reduce the quantity of solid food and for about two years I lived on four or five tea-spoons of rice at lunch and one slice of bread at night. At times I took only one slice in a week without feeling any debility. Occasions were there when I felt no need of food. But I could not continue the experiment for fear of losing strength and vitality.

“Fear leaped upon the heart at every turn.”¹

For a major change freedom from sexuality is not enough. The cells’ desire for delicacies, for luxury-dishes, must also undergo a change or else how can they be replaced by something new?

Anyway the experiment greatly relieved me from utter reliance on cereals and the body’s craving for food. Another benefit that accrued from it is that I got a chance to shake off an age-old habit and to form new habits.

It is at this point that my story actually begins.

My bowels were not moving well, so from October 6, 1978 I started living on a light diet (milk and greens) not in a spirit of Tapasya but to keep the body light and fit.²

I have got myself accustomed to such a diet and resort to it from time to time. On 18th October there rose a hesitation to go to the gymnasium: I felt the body should not be taxed—if I forced it, I might do it harm. Quite a laudable proposition. But impelled from within I went to the Playground. A few minutes of bodily exercise, instead of damping my spirit, urged me to greater efforts and I continued for full one hour without feeling the least sense of exertion. This is what I had read about in *The Synthesis of Yoga* (p. 318 quoted earlier). Light diet not only toned up my digestive apparatus but rejuvenated the nerves and tissues.

It is time to come to the kernel of the story. Back home, while I was relaxing on a mat, waves after waves of gratitude surged up from the core of the being. Surely it was due to the Grace of the Mother that at this ripe age the body was still capable of doing one hour’s exercise without the limbs feeling tired.³

The body seemed to fully share the feeling and reciprocated the sense of gratitude with a repeated throb of thrills. Then something unusual, unimaginable, happened. Almost simultaneously the lower parts of the legs below the knees came to full vision in a white light. One salient feature not to be missed here is that it looked as if, instead

¹ *Savitri*, Part I, II. 7, p. 189.

² “A premature and excessive physical austerity, Tapasya, may endanger the process of the sadhana by establishing a disturbance and abnormality of the forces in the different parts of the system. A great energy may pour into the mental and vital parts, but the nerves and the body may be overstrained and lose the strength to support the play of these higher energies. This is the reason why an extreme physical austerity is not included here as a substantive part of the sadhana.” (*On Yoga*, II Tome Two, p. 567)

³ “15 minutes of well-coordinated exercises...give your body all the training necessary. But you don’t play for more than an hour each day at the most.” *Questions and Answers* (1958), p. 72.

of flesh and blood, there existed only cells—luminous, “exultant cells” resembling white dots, white points. Light in the same part I had seen a few days before but at that time there was not a single dot. This helped me to clearly mark the difference.

Here some significant words of the Mother flash to the mind:

“The cells which are able to vibrate to the contact of divine joy, to receive and preserve it, are regenerated cells on the way to becoming immortal.”¹

To think it could be applicable to my case would mean living in a fool’s paradise. But it could be safely presumed that here was the beginning of a great end.

There are other types of experience which are not less important:

Just after the daily exercises on July 7, 1977 I was lying on a mat for relaxation. Slowly, very slowly I found the body-consciousness withdrawing more and more inward. In no time it seemed that the body had become one with the earth. When identification with the earth was complete and there remained no trace of the bodily consciousness, what remained looked like light—vapour-white light. A little awareness that was there deep within saw light within light in proportion to the size of the body.

About six months later there was another experience of the same type. It is necessary to point out here that the first experience of this kind I had in 1958 as stated earlier. And the above in 1977—nineteen years after. But the gap between the second and the third was only six months. This time the body took the shape of a slab. The peculiarity was that its appearance was as that of a stone slab but it consisted of only dim white light.

These experiences were the result of a long preparation and much spadework in the bottomless pit of the Inconscient. To cite a few out of hundreds:

To enjoy the leisurely hours I was seated in an easy chair: the moment the mind grew composed there came to view below the soles of the feet a vacant space full of a luminous vapour.

At another time when entirely absorbed in contemplation I happened to see a very wide open space which was absolutely free from dirt and darkness, neat and clean and well organised. It looked like the depth of an empty mine from which all that was there had been dug out. It was pervaded by a pale dim light as is seen filtering through a thinly clouded sky.

Sometime in the month of October 1978, in the morning I was blessed with the vision of a white swan a little above the crown of the head and slightly later a beautiful milk-white dove between the eye-brows filling “the abyss of the heart with bliss”.² At night while in a dreamy state there appeared below the earth a huge open space spotted with white-washed newly built houses, symbolising the new creation.

When a “wandering ray” of the Most High touches the being, a heavenly air blows in the system. Two days afterwards I felt and observed that something shot forth, piercing the skull and filling the upper part of the head with light. Someone

¹ *Bulletin*, February 1978, p. 65.

² A friend of mine says that the soul resides in the heart of the swan.

who is in the know of these things tells me: "It is a very good omen: you are marked for Divine Realisation."

This was followed by another happy experience. First I felt the action of the Mother's Force in the lower region of the feet, which slowly spread upward to the whole body and reached the crown. Soon I felt like one in a deep trance which gave me a taste of the "divine liquor". The only thing of which I was conscious was a bright white light instead of the flesh. Since then whenever "the inner lamps are lit" I pass on to that blissful state without the least labour on my part.

Do all these experiences not provide ample ground for the supposition that the whole body has become the field of sadhana, one of the pre-requisites to enter the heart of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga? There are other types of experience which suggest the battle has come down to the very cells of the body.

"All that denies must be torn out and slain."¹

Let us now turn to the reverse of the coin. I had extracted myself from my hopeless situation but had not yet fully recovered. Gradually my power of endurance increased and moments of fear dwindled though distressing elements were still there. When my former strength and vigour were returning I discovered that "On life was laid the haunting figure of death".²

Life seemed carried off by the current like a log of dead wood. Off and on my vitality ebbed, resistance weakened and I faced the sense of death.

The one malady which I dreaded the most those days was the sinking of consciousness. A little effort exhausted me and I felt a sinking sensation. I could not devote myself to anything with an undivided mind. One or two hours' work told so much on my nerves that I was useless for the whole day. Again and over again I was overtaken by the desire to retire, to drop dead on bed even during the day-time. No food could recoup or restore me to my normal health.

Occasions were there when my brain was deprived of every ounce of its energy. Nerves and tissues seemed to have grown hollow and empty, as if nothing were left to sustain life. Just on rising from bed, the first idea that obsessed me was: "How am I going to fare through the day? What is in my lot?" I could not avoid feeling that I was fast aging. Was it due to the purgation and purification of the nerves and tissues?

I had heard that one has to die several times in the process of Yoga, before death actually claims his body. Three or four times I felt life was withdrawing little by little from the lower part of the body and I was nearing the door of death. Once it was followed by a sort of inner tremor which gave me a near-death experience. My body was reduced to the state of a corpse. The experience lasted for a considerable time. It is said that the feeling of death indicates the death of some part of one's old nature.

¹ *Savitri*, Part I p. 185.

² *Ibid.*, p. 93.

Question: "Can one experience death without dying?"

Mother: "Certainly. One can experience death yogically; one can even experience it materially..."¹

Question: "What is death, from the physical point of view?"

Mother: "Death is the phenomenon of decentralisation and dispersion of the cells which make up the physical body."²

Mine is not a doubting nature. I do not fall an easy prey to doubts but one cannot escape their assault. The forces are "ever ready to throw a rope" around one and hurl dust into the eyes. Despite unforgettable instances and vivid experiences doubts often intervened and kept me vacillating, questioning how far I was right in giving so much importance to the mysterious changes in the cells of the body. One glaring reason that weighed in favour of scepticism was the absence of corresponding strength within. A little weakness anywhere at once brought the feeling of old age. And there is reason for it. For more than a month, I felt so weak after the meal at night that climbing a few steps to reach my bedroom on the first floor caused hard breathing. The first thing I felt on leaving the bed was back-pain. Straightening the nerve fibres for half an hour made me capable of attending to my day's duty. Thus I was compelled to resort to Asana from August 1975.

Since November 1, 1978, there has been reason to believe that I have not only recovered my lost strength but scaled a new height. The more lofty the experience the more the hunger of the soul to conquer a still higher range. I have spoken about my exposure to rain. Here I tell another story giving a faint picture of the future.

Last November the weather was chilly and almost daily for more than a month it rained—often heavily. And daily I began my routine in darkness before dawn taking delight in having my bath by standing below the running pipe attached to the roof and not experiencing the least shivering. One day while doing Asana after bath I discovered in myself a new kind of strength. I do not find words to convey the exact feeling. All I can say is that the heat generated from within is far greater than any obtained from warm clothes. Though the experience could continue only about half an hour it served to give me an idea how great Yogis face chilly weather without the least stir in their inner immobility. At such mysterious moments the inner refuses to be affected by the outer hammerings.

(To be continued)

¹ *Bulletin*, August 1978, p. 101.

² *Ibid.*, p. 93.

LANGUAGE AND RHYTHM

A Free Translation by Robi Das of Rabindranath Tagore's

Bhāshā O Chhanda

JUNE's horde of clouds descends in torrential rain
Upon the Himalayan peaks: the mighty river Brahamaputra
Swells suddenly up and, with an irresistible momentum,
Hurtles with his roaring turbulent waves
Uprooting the trees in wild impetuosity and, bank overflown,
Rolls on swept with a fury like the veritable raving Dhurjati.
So, all alone in the tapovan beside the river Tamasā,
Limpid, lean and nimble, the great sage poet Valmiki,
Distressed by a concern, unfelt before—heart swayed
By a high suffusion of blood—paced up and down
Uttering the new powerful rhythm, that descended unto him,
In deep intent repetition in a solemn baritone voice.
But the sage failed to unravel the import of its message
That generated the pain of an intolerable pressure—
A message bearing the imprint of an indwelling fulness.
Like Garuda, young and robust, its great hunger
Seized his heart in its fold and tortured it—but why?
What did it signify?—What was its awful prayer?—
Where, in which world, would the immortal fledgeling build
Its nest, high and capacious—to materialise
A rhythmic vessel of a time-conquering epic?
He whom God graces with the celestial ecstasy ineffable
Bears the cross of an immeasurable pain in his bosom;
He is wide off the sleeping verge, ever-awake.
The divine boon *à la* Agni keeps his life all aflame
Ever on upwards as an altar light to the Sempiternal.

The sun went down. Devarshi Narad came down
To the hermitage at evening,—birds asleep were startled
At the reflection of his aura, tired bees fluttered
At the sudden fragrance of Heaven's Nandan flower.
The poet welcomed him with namaskār, gave him āsana
And queried, "Deva, may I know what great mission
Of Heaven lies behind your condescension to our earth?"
Narad smiled and said, "O sage, the rhythm
That was transmitted through a compassionate heart
Ascended to the Brahamaloka in columns of sonorous vibration

And disturbed Brahma with the touch of its magnetic charm.
 He called me and bade me go to the bank of the Tamasā
 And ask the poet Valmiki, pierced to his very soul by a rhythm,
 An arrow-like lightning-flash out of the immortal Vāk:
 'O blessed one, to whom will you dedicate in psychic love
 This mighty celestial gift of the Muse? O Poet,
 Which radiant godhead will you immortalise on earth
 In all his grandeur—laurel and renown—
 Enshrined in the colossal fire-sweet rhythmic Muse?' ”

The great sage, excited with emotion, shook his head
 And exclaimed, “The universe entire sings the paeans of God
 In rapt adoration: Fire rises in flames of mobile prayer;
 Heaven knows to what the wavy crests of the ocean aspire;
 The forest murmurs chants through its million boughs;
 Storm sweeps in a formidable fury over the earth.
 Nebula to butterfly—rolling waves of the Muse Eternal
 Carry them all, all attuned to the harmony supernal,
 To the other shore of Vaicounth's ocean of Peace inviolable.
 Human language, cramped by its own rigid connotation,
 Revolves interminably round the axis of man's daily needs—
 Its life-force ebbs away by its constant use,
 And mechanical it becomes in its dull pragmatic sense.
 Thought, once in language-attire, falls far short of the idea
 Which ever excels and exceeds it, ever it fails
 To sever totally the terrestrial bond in a leaping urge
 And soar up in a free voyage through the boundless sky
 Like a song unfettered wafting lightly on the air
 On the wings of seven tunes beyond the horizon.
 The message of the virgin-white light of the Morn
 Enters silently into the world's core and flings open
 The myriad-chambered mansion of the Muse
 Of the triple planes. Night's message of peace descends
 And envelops all around in a moment—
 Its interdict, solemn and silent, hushes like a Mantra
 The din and bustle of the enthralling world of Karma,
 And at once all laments, all efforts cease: a panorama—
 Replica of kinship to Death's eternal peace.
 The spark inextinguishable, flaming message of the star,
 Kindles a new star ever on in the index of the luminaries
 In the infinity of space and the eternity of time.
 The zephyr breathes into groves an enlivening vernal tune,

Blows deep into the sylvan core, almost impenetrable,
 And carries far-off the odes of the triumphant Youth.
 Alas! Where in the whole range of human expression
 Are such direct glorious rhythmic liberties of the Vast?—
 Beckoning glimpse of the Boundless?—the colossal flight of the Muse—
 Flight that transcends all barriers and reveals intimacy
 Of Heaven's delight? Where is in it the sigh, deep and sublime,
 That cleaves the soul, imprisoned in the stifling coil of illusion?
 My rhythm, like Pegasus, a kinetic marvel of beauty on wings,
 Aspires to galvanise man's language of the finite—
 Worn-out, drab, colourless—with a new tune, a new message
 To raise it to the world of idea from fetters
 Of its fixed and rigid groove's pale rotation—
 An aspiration that sustains me with an inner confidence.
 The Agni-yān sails with the helio-orb at a terrific speed
 In its diurnal motion through the ocean of the blue vast.
 So this rhythm I will dedicate to the Agni-like Vāk for the sail—
 It will at ease glide over the planetary bounds
 And lift the dense material earth up to the celestial sphere—
 The word elevated to the realm of the Idea,
 And man led to a pilgrimage to the halidom of God.
 As the ocean encircles the globe with his waves
 Dancing, liting eternally, so too my rhythm
 Will encircle and enthuse and enrapture human language,
 Sing in all age and clime the anthems of Man the Eternal,
 And dignify with a focus of sublime values
 The throbbing chord of Man the temporal.
 O Devarshi, Angel of Heaven, be you conveyor of my prayer
 To the Grand Father of Human Race, that the boon of Heaven
 May not be withdrawn back to its source.
 Hymns to the Divine humanise the Divine—
 My rhythm and muse will divinise man.
 O great sage, the triple world lies in the unerring light
 Of the direct vision of you all, denizens of Paradise.
 Answer my truth's call. Tell me, whose name
 Rings out vibrant to the tune of the Veenā ethereal,
 Whose prowess yields to forgiveness in a happy abandon,
 Whose character upholds dharmic laws sacred, inviolable,
 And shines ornate with the ruby's beauteous gleams,
 Who keeps humble unruffled by fortune's laughing floods,
 Never bends down to the pressure of penury's threatening drought,
 Who keeps ever wary of abundance of riches,

Who, like a blazing valour, stands unmoved in great danger,
 Who receives most but tilts the scale more in favour
 Of his bounties, yet bears the noblest sorrow of life
 Like a royal diadem in submission and glory?
 Tell me his holy name, O you all-seeing-Devarshi!"

Narad spoke out slowly, "Raghupati Rama of Ayodhya."
 "Yes, I know his name. Stories of his far-famed greatness
 Presuppose indeed a life rhythmic with an epic grandeur.
 But his complete chronicles are beyond my ken. I fear,
 Errors may creep in and tarnish the white radiance of the truth
 To call upon myself a blemish indelible.
 My divine assignment must await the blessed hour."
 Narad with a smile serene consoled him,
 "True will be what you will compose. What occurs
 Is not all true. O Poet, the true birth-place of Rama,
 I assure you, is your inner world, truer than Ayodhya."

So saying Narad soared up towards the Great Bear
 And vanished like an unearthly dream.
 Valmiki sat down in meditation.
 The Tamasā flowed on soundlessly.
 And the tapovan sank into silence unfathomable.

September 14, 1978

ROBI DAS

TO A TRUE FRIEND

THE Master's mighty bosom holds
 The wails and sobs of my small worlds
 And suffers with me, though not keenly....

One morsel of fate's cake, unpulped,
 Half choking and with tears I gulped:
 He listens to my burp serenely.

ANON

INDIAN LIFE IN ENGLISH WRITINGS

Introduction

INDIA'S link with the European countries can be traced back to the sixteenth century, much earlier than with America. Hence it would not be surprising that a good deal of literature, the significant portrait of this contact, interchange and communion, should grow up in the span of years, till we had a whole mass of relevant writings both Indian and European.

Of course, the major contribution to this literature can be traced back to hardly four decades ago, but the foundation-stone was laid by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee in the middle of the last century, with *Rammohun's Wife*. Maitreyi Mukherjee, in her excellent treatise, *The Twice-born Fiction*, has delineated the course of growth of Indo-Anglian fiction and shown that the roots of this literature had a century-old origin.

There were others who wrote in the first part of the present century, but they were Victorian in form. It was only in the late twenties that a fresh start was made, when Venkatramani made a significant contribution with his novels, *Murugan the Tiller* and *Kandan the Patriot*, and his book of prose-poems, *Paper Boats*, which was well-received in England.

In regular poetry too, Indians did not lag behind. Toru Dutt and Kashiprosad Ghose revealed that English, as a language, had become so much a part of the Indian consciousness that this consciousness could articulate itself in verse. After them came a host of poets: Sri Aurobindo, Manmohan Ghose, Sarojini Naidu and Harindranath Chattopadhyaya, to name only a few. Among others were Seshadri, Billimoria, Kanai Samanta, Chordia, Bhusan, the three Sethnas, and Manjari Isvaran.

In the field of drama Indians have not been so prolific in English as in their mother-tongues like Bengali, Hindi, Marathi and Tamil.

Indians writing essays, criticism and related subjective genres in English are quite numerous. But as these have not portrayed Indian life as such, they fall outside our scope of study.

We have deliberately confined ourselves chiefly to fiction where life is amply mirrored. We have included a few significant poems which have a bearing on the topic. Also, we shall review some travelogues which throw light on the subject. These are by English writers, and their reactions to Indian customs, life-ways, manners, festivals are extremely interesting.

For the convenience of our study and so that the chapters may not become voluminous, we have divided our essays into seven major heads. These are: (a) *Reliving the Days Gone By*, which are studies of historical novels, (b) *The Land and People*, which are first-hand accounts of persons and places, (c) *India Looks at Herself*. In this section are studies of some Indo-Anglian novels. (d) *The West Looks at India*. Here novels by Western writers on India are surveyed. (e) *The Clash Of Cultures*. India and the West have come significantly close due to international marriages,

friendships, etc. which have given rise to several problems. (f) *The Poet Looks at India*. Here we deal with a few poems by Indian poets on the theme. And (g) *Sri Aurobindo's Vision of India*. This last section does not examine philosophical or sociological treatises, but only those writings of Sri Aurobindo which are in direct link with our subject.

In conclusion let us add that our study does not pretend to be all-inclusive or encyclopaedic. We have chosen only representative examples which might serve as guides to the evaluation of Indian life with its many facets, many grades, many types of humanity and their ways.

Some eminent writers have, for one reason or another, fallen outside our scheme, such as Naipaul, Ved Mehta, Shasti Brata and Zulfikar Ghose.

Part I

Reliving the Days Gone By

History could be extremely absorbing or exceedingly dull depending upon the manner in which it was presented, the approach adopted and the creative factor which made history articulate with tangible life. To retell Indian history, specially ancient Indian history, was an hazardous task, for, save for inscriptions and folklore, we had no bases of authenticity. Much of Indian history was too shrouded in the fog of uncertain or even false data to yield substantial material to the creative writer.

But the poet had his licence and privileges, if he had sufficient inspiration behind him. One such gifted poet was Edwin Arnold, author of *The Light of Asia*, (London, Kegan Paul, 1891). This book is a century-old and must have come, at the time of publication in 1879, as a great literary event. It was written with sympathy and understanding. Edwin Arnold went to the Pali texts for reference and guidance. He did not, happily, attempt to impose his ideas on his subject in order to interpret the Buddha's life or teachings. The defects that were there were due more to his Victorian background than to anything else.

Some obvious errors had crept in, mostly anachronisms. But these could be overlooked, because they were minor in nature. The artificiality of style could be easily traced to his not being a major poet and to his Victorian milieu. But for lovers of India, it had a place of esteem, for, written by an Englishman, at a time when the English looked down upon India as a land of savages and upon her culture as next to aboriginality, the achievement was very creditable indeed.

Arnold began the poem thus:

*The Scripture of the Saviour of the World,
Lord Buddha—Prince Siddhartha styled on earth—
In Earth and Heavens and Hell Incomparable,*

*All-honoured, Wisest, Best, most Pitiful;
The Teacher of Nirvana and the Law.*

Then came he to be born again for men.

Arnold made the most obvious error at the start. Nirvana was a path of ego-extinction which could be revealed but not taught. He also spoke of the Scripture of the Saviour, which at once nailed Buddhism down to religious and moral philosophy, making the poetry flat and commonplace. In the sixth line he referred to the many incarnations of the Buddha.

There were several episodes mentioned in the *Jataka Manjari* and Ashwa Ghose's *Buddhacharita*. One of them was the episode of Devadatta, Buddha's cousin, and the wounded swan, wounded by Devadatta's arrow. Buddha's nature of compassion was revealed when he refused to hand back the wounded bird to the hunter:

'If life be aught, the saviour of a life
Owns more the living thing than he can own
Who sought to slay—the slayer spoils and wastes,
The cherisher sustains...'

(pp. 35-8)

Earlier Arnold, during the dispute between Devadatta and Siddhartha, made the latter voice what was to develop much later in his life. Perhaps the poet wanted to emphasise the trait of Siddhartha's compassion, but he overdid it when he made Siddhartha announce:

'For now I know, by what within me stirs,
That I shall teach compassion unto men
And be a speechless world's interpreter,
Abating this accursed flood of woe—'

(p. 35)

A brahmin soothsayer cast Siddhartha's horoscope and pronounced that the prince would either be a great king among men or be an ascetic. The soothsayer also bade the King make arrangements to find him a suitable wife, so that Siddhartha's mind might be diverted from other-worldly pursuits. For now Siddhartha had grown into a handsome young man, well-versed in the learning of the day, full of strength and valour worthy of a prince.

Princess Yasodhara, of a neighbouring kingdom, was to be wed. But there were conditions imposed—breaking a wild horse. Siddhartha succeeded in this with magnificent ease, where other princes including Devadatta had failed. The horse in question behaved docilely. (Does not this remind one of Alexander the Great's feat of a similar nature?) Siddhartha

Laid his right palm across the stallion's eyes,
 And drew it gently down the angry face,
 And all along the neck and panting flanks,
 Till men astonished saw the night-black horse
 Sink his fierce crest and stand subdued and meek,
 As though he knew our Lord and worshipped him.

(p. 54)

Then Yasodhara,

...the lovely Indian girl
 Rose from her place above the throng and took
 A crown of mogra-flowers and lightly drew
 The veil of black and gold across her brow,
 Proud pacing past the youths, until she came
 To where Siddhartha stood in grace divine,
 New lighted from the night-dark steed, which bent
 Its strong neck meekly underneath his arm.
 Before the Prince lowly she bowed, and bared
 Her face celestial beaming with glad love;
 Then on his neck she hung the fragrant wreath,
 And on his breast she laid her perfect head,
 And stooped to touch his feet with proud glad eyes,
 Saying, 'Dear Prince, behold me, who am thine!'

(p. 55)

This was the typical Indian *svyamvara* scene, except perhaps for the twelfth line. The Indian woman is shy; she will not, before a whole throng of men and at the first meeting at that, express her love in this manner. Also, the last but one line is not clear. It is as if Yasodhara touched his feet with her eyes instead of with her hands! Lastly, perhaps the four final words should come just after "stooped". Again, does one bow down with 'proud glad eyes'? Pride and humility are opposite terms. An error in material detail is Arnold's speaking of a 'black and gold' veil. Black was never an auspicious colour employed in Indian marriage ceremonies.

Anyway, the marriage was consummated amid the usual Vedic rites. After the wedding, King Suddhodana allotted a separate palace to the bridal pair, and laid before Siddhartha all elements of pleasure: lovely girls, beautiful raiments and sumptuous feasts. This was an island away from the sordid earth full of misery, disease and death.

But the inevitable occurred. In one of his sojourns, Siddhartha, in the company of his charioteer Channa, saw corpses taken to the cremation ground, bedecked with flowers. Also he saw

An old, old man whose shrivelled skin, sun-tanned,
 Clung like a beast's hide to his fleshless bones.

Bent was his back with load of many days... (p. 76)

This is very expressive. Channa went on to describe illness, disease and finally death which was

...the end that comes
To all. (p. 89)

Siddhartha was profoundly stirred down to his deepest being. He cried out:

'Oh! suffering world,
Oh! known and unknown of my common flesh,
Caught in this common net of death and woe,
And life which binds to both! I see, I feel
The vastness of the agony of earth,
The vainness of its joys, the mockery
Of all its best, the anguish of its worst;
Since pleasures end in pain, and youth in age,
And love in loss, and life in hateful death... (p. 91)

Then a scene of revelry intervened as if to wipe out the stark stamp of anguish. Buddha Ghosa describes the finale of this revelry, wine cups upturned, torn flowers and garlands all over the place, girls in their semi-nudity or total nakedness lying on the carpet in ugly postures. This awoke the final and crucial disgust in Siddhartha. This scene was not painted by Arnold. Anyway, Siddhartha realised that the zero hour had struck and

'I will depart,' he spoke; 'the hour is come!' (p. 105)

Channa attempted to dissuade the prince from such a folly. But Siddhartha's resolve was irrevocable when he declared:

'Since there is hope for man only in man,
And none hath sought for this as I will seek,
Who cast away my world to save my world.' (p. 118)

Near Rajagriha in a sylvan wood in the Ratnagiri hill (this was not in Maharashtra, but in Bihar) the Prince sat down for the arduous task.

By day and night here dwelt the World-honoured,
Subduing that fair body born for bliss
With fast and frequent watch and search intense
Of silent meditation... (p. 122)

Here, to Arnold, the meditation was merely closing one's eyes and sitting still, but of the inner quest, the search into unknown realms of the spirit, he spoke nothing. Perhaps this was beyond his sphere, the sphere of a typical Victorian poet, who saw things at their face values, but did not delve deeper. Not only the Victorian background was at fault, it was the very Western outlook which was scared of subjective realities.

Siddhartha went in for begging as well. Some revered him as a seer as he passed by, others jeered at him. Still others, recognising him as a man of noble birth, persuaded him to return home. He also had long conversations with a sage on spiritual issues—this fact was not corroborated either by the *Jatakas* or the *Buddha Charita*.

At this point Arnold has committed a great error in sequence. He has inserted the tale of the dying child's mother who came to him to revive the child. Siddhartha asked the mother to fetch a seed from any house where death or disease had not trod or struck. Such a seed alone would save the child.

This episode belonged to one of the many anecdotes uttered by the Buddha after he had attained Buddhahood.

Similarly the Buddha advised King Bimbisara about the futility of animal sacrifice. Here too Arnold has put the cart before the horse.

From Rajagriha, Siddhartha went to Gaya. Again Arnold has inserted some pictures of him

musing the woes of men,
The ways of fate, the doctrines of the books,
The lessons of the creatures of the brake,
The secrets of the silence whence all come,
The secrets of the gloom whereto all go,
The life which lies between... (p. 150)

He began a series of penances which emaciated him. Sujata, the wife of a pious householder, Senani, seeing the Lord in this state, came to him and offered curds and milk, which revived the Lord. Then she conversed with him and Arnold stated that it was from Sujata that Siddhartha imbibed the qualities of humility and non-expectancy which were later to form the nucleus of the Middle Path.

A few days later, before his final realisation, Siddhartha had an attack from the darker powers, akin to the temptation of Christ in the wilderness. Arnold described this thus:

Wherefore there trooped from every deepest pit
The fiends who war with Wisdom and the Light,
Arati, Trishna, Raga, and their crew
Of passions, horrors, ignorances, lusts,
The brood of gloom and dread.... (p. 164)

The demon of lust arrayed as a lovely maiden danced around him with inviting

gestures. Finding no response he vanished. So too others like Hate who had to finally fall away, defeated.

After that he realised *Samma Sambuddha* and the mystic vision of his past incarnations passed before his gaze. Then he had *Abhidjnana*, the cosmic experience.

To Arnold the vision of the past seemed to be the height of spiritual experience. But in reality this was never the highest experience. Sri Aurobindo said, 'His (Buddha's) concept of Nirvana was something transcendent of the universe...' (Sri Aurobindo Birth Cent. Vol. 22, p. 60) Again, 'They [those who have the experience of Nirvana] do not feel as if they had any existence at all. In Buddhistic Nirvana they feel as if there were no such thing at all, only an infinite zero without form.' (*Ibid.*, p. 65)

Thus Nirvana being the acme of Buddhistic realisation, both these statements of the visions of the past incarnations and the cosmic regard were erroneous—because Nirvana transcended all these human and cosmic manifestations.

In the meantime, King Siddhodhana had no peace of mind. Also, his grandchild Rahul was coming of age. Neither was Yashodhara happy. Then the news reached Kapilavasthu through some wandering merchants who said:

'We have seen
That sacred Master, Princess! we have bowed
Before his feet; for who has lost a Prince
Is found a greater than the King of kings.' (p. 187)

Buddha meanwhile had sent sixty of his chosen disciples to spread the word of Truth. He went to Banaras and King Bimbisara was converted to Buddhism. The King donated much land to the Buddha.

Siddhodhana sent his messenger to the Master who replied,

'Surely I shall go.
It is my duty as it was my will.' (p. 198)

Yashodhara met the Buddha and fell at his feet. Both she and her son adopted the mendicant's garb and vocation. Siddhodhana was angry at first at this news. Then his anger turned into regret. He could not reconcile himself to the fact that his son had attained spiritual greatness and was not his son or a king in the line of kings.

The Eighth Book contains a translation of some of Buddha's sayings, including his own spiritual line of incarnations, the four stages of man's becoming, the four noble truths and the eightfold path.

After this, the Buddha lived forty years before he attained *Mahaparinirvana*.

(*To be continued*)

ROMEN PALIT

EUROPE 1974

A TRAVELOGUE

(Continued from the issue of February 21, 1979)

“TELL us more about the houses in Mayfair, where something extraordinary has happened,” we demanded of our friend, as we wandered about the fairyland. And here I shall narrate some of the stories we heard from him, together with our impressions of what we actually saw.

Nathan Rothschild, head of the London branch of the Rothschild banks, also Consul General for Austria, spread the news that fateful morning of Wednesday, June 15, 1815, that the Allied Powers had won on the battle-field of Waterloo. His courier arrived early that morning from Brussels with first-hand news, but no one believed him. Nothing could disperse the gloom, the grey cloud of pessimism that loomed over London, and men's hearts felt that doomsday was very near. There was no “revelry by night”, lamps did not “shine bright over fair women and brave men”, no music was there, no “soft eyes looked love to eyes that spake”, as Byron describes the eve of Waterloo in his poem. Everyone's eyes were full of apprehension and fear, as if they had seen a ghost. It was a spooky morning. Suddenly, at about ten in the evening, the Duke of Wellington's A.D.C., the Hon'ble Henry Percy, dashed in panting with the news of victory. Suspense at last was over no matter what the price of victory and though gone was

Battle's magnificently stern array!

The thunder-clouds close o'er it, which when rent

The earth is covered thick with other day

Which her own day shall cover, heaped and pent

Rider and horse,—friend, foe,—in one red burial blent.

The revelry in front of the house was something unforgettable for those who saw it. And they described it to their children who on their part passed the story on to their grandchildren. This house was number 44 Grosvenor Square in front of which we were standing on a beautiful July morning, one hundred and fifty-nine years later.

In the same house, number 44 Grosvenor Square, another play was enacted some years later, of a very different nature. England experienced many a revolutionary movement and upheaval during the 19th century. It was in the throes of the birth of “Modern England”. It was customary in those days for the cabinet ministers to assemble every evening in one or another of their colleagues' houses. The ring-leader of one of those movements knew of it, and he planned a wholesale attack on the ministers one night, when all of them could be caught unawares. The host that morning, out for a ride, happened to meet someone who, it seemed, knew of the murderous plan and warned him. Naturally, he cancelled the party at once. Someone nearby was

also having a party that evening. As dusk fell on Grosvenor Square, the conspirators arrived in the neighbourhood of number 44, and were delighted when one by one the carriages came along. Not knowing about the other party, they thought all were for number 44. But when the time came for the attack, to their utter consternation they found the house, which was their target, in complete darkness and not a soul visible anywhere. Foiled of their design, they were finally hunted out of Mayfair by the police.

Now it was time to tell the French cook that there would be no party that evening. On hearing this he growled like a bear, then screamed, then jumped up to hit the basement ceiling and came down tearing his hair and beating his breast. What infinite care he had taken to give the party an excellent French dinner, how exquisitely beautiful the dinner looked all laid out on the kitchen table ready to be served in the banquet hall! There was nothing that the lady of the house could do to soothe him.

*

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Then a place was shown to us where once stood the mansion of Sir Ernest Cassel, grandfather of Lady Edwin Mountbatten. Sir Ernest Cassel was a multimillionaire and a close friend of the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII). To build his mansion he had imported eight hundred tons of Italian marble to adorn his halls. Even to demolish the mansion was an expensive business. Now at that very place a huge block has been built for luxury flats. And, as far as I can gather, Lord and Lady Mountbatten lived in one of these flats. Sir Ernest Cassel gave his granddaughter and heir the name Edwina in honour of his friend the Prince.

On the north side of Grosvenor Square once lived General Eisenhower, the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces. Number 2 belonged to Lord and Lady Hamilton who lived there for many years with Nelson as their guest. Clive of India too lived in Mayfair and the house is still there. Number 4 Grosvenor Square is the Italian Embassy, designed and decorated by Count Grandi in the likeness of an ancient Roman Palace. Number 21 Grosvenor Square belonged to Lady Thelma Furness, sister of Consuele Vanderbilt, wife of the ninth Duke of Marlborough and daughter of the American multimillionaire Vanderbilt whose name is equated with Rothschild and Rockefeller. It was in a party given by Lady Furness that Edward VIII, then Prince of Wales, met his future wife. In Berkeley Square there is the house of Lord Oxford, descendant of Horace Walpole. Lord Oxford was very fond of playing cards at very high stakes. One night he invited his friend, Henry Baring who, it is alleged, entered the house as a guest and left it as its owner.

Lord Beaconsfield (Disraeli) lived where Grosvenor Street meets Park Lane. It was the only house where the lanterns were kept burning till late in the night by his wife, for it was impossible to say when her Prime Minister husband would return from the House of Commons. They say he wrote his novels *Sybil*, *Coningsby*, *Tancred* and *Lothair* when he was living in this house. When he was very ill and about to die,

his doctor asked him to take rest, for he was still working, correcting his last speech. "Take rest?" he shouted. "You want me to go down to history speaking bad grammar?"

(To be continued)

CHAUNDONA & SANAT K. BANERJI

MEDITATION

LIGHT moves in the mind
of my creator
filling the rooms of silence and sorrow
where sockets slept in thirst

dawn comes from the eye
of my life giver
burning the house of sticks and stones
where i hid rehearsing blindness

sun gathers in the heart
of my beholder
making the naked free from shame
and the hunger is transcended

all of the night falls open
like warm seed
and i am awake
the one who is being dreamed

and i return to my own remembering
only a man seeing for himself

JAMES J. McVEIGH

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

How The Mother's Grace Came To Us: (True Stories About The Mother), Part Three by *Har Krishan Singh*, Published by *Har Krishan Singh*, 16, Rue Saint Louis, Pondicherry-605001. Price Rs. 6.80.

THE long-awaited Part Three of *How The Mother's Grace Came To Us* is greatly welcome. The book is one of a series being published by the author on the Birth Centenary of The Mother.

It is well known that at times the Path of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother is full of dry deserts and rough weathers, and anything that comes to the seeker as a ready help and an inner support at the right moment is like rain to the parched land.

The stories in question are vivid examples of The Mother's Grace that bring solace to the aspirant and strengthen his faith.

In spite of the fact that occasionally the Grace seems missing and one is at a loss to find one's way on the difficult and perilous journey that is Yoga, the stories are a living proof of the assurance that the Grace is there, is always there for all who are honest and steadfast and that it will stand by the true aspirants. Only what is needed is that one should stick to one's aspiration with sincerity, and trust the action of the Grace. Even though there be clouds covering the light of the sun, yet the sunshine will come sooner or later.

The stories are very useful not only for the seeker, but also for the layman: they provide a source of easy inspiration for the spiritual life, for all do not have access of understanding to the intricate philosophical thought and the difficult steps of the sadhana. These stories are manna for the soul of everybody.

There are a number of The Mother's messages in Her own handwriting and two paintings by the author, the one on the cover page being "The Mother's Consciousness Solidly Rooted in the Earth".

TAPAS KUMAR ROY

Students' Section

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

SPECIAL FORTY-FIRST SEMINAR

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

(Continued from the issue of February 21, 1979)

WHAT I HAVE LEARNT FROM THE MOTHER

Speech by Subhrangshu Mohanty

As I had not the privilege of any external personal contact with the Mother, there is nothing that I have learnt directly from her. But inwardly I have tried to imbibe her teachings and follow the ideal that she has put before us. In doing this, the most important thing I have learnt is to remain always deeply and fully conscious of who the Mother is in her spiritual reality and especially the supreme value of maintaining a firm faith in the victory of her mission on earth. For this purpose, I have found two passages from Sri Aurobindo's book *The Synthesis of Yoga* of inestimable value. So, instead of making a speech of my own, I shall read out these passages to you.

(I)

"The Ishwari Shakti, divine Conscious-Force and World-Mother, becomes a mediatrix between the eternal One and the manifested Many. On one side, by the play of the energies which she brings from the One, she manifests the multiple Divine in the universe, involving and evolving its endless appearances out of her revealing substance; on the other, by the reascending current of the same energies she leads back all towards That from which they have issued so that the soul in its evolutionary manifestation may more and more return towards the Divinity there or here put on its divine character. There is not in her, although she devises a cosmic mechanism, the character of an inconscient mechanical Executrix which we find in the first physiognomy of Prakriti, the Nature-Force; neither is there that sense of an Unreality, creatrix of illusions or semi-illusions, which is attached to our first view of Maya. It is at once clear to the experiencing soul that here is a conscious Power of one substance and nature with the Supreme from whom she came. If she seems to have plunged us into the Ignorance and Inconscience in pursuance of a plan we cannot yet interpret, if her forces present themselves as all these ambiguous forces of the universe, yet it

becomes visible before long that she is working for the development of the Divine Consciousness in us and that she stands above drawing us to her own higher entity, revealing to us more and more the very essence of the Divine Knowledge, Will and Ananda. Even in the movements of the Ignorance the soul of the seeker becomes aware of her conscious guidance supporting his steps and leading them slowly or swiftly, straight or by many detours out of the darkness into the light of a greater consciousness, out of mortality into immortality, out of evil and suffering towards a highest good and felicity of which as yet his human mind can form only a faint image. Thus her power is at once liberative and dynamic, creative, effective,—creative not only of things as they are, but of things that are to be; for, eliminating the twisted and tangled movements of his lower consciousness made of the stuff of the Ignorance, it rebuilds and new-makes his soul and nature into the substance and forces of a higher divine Nature.”¹

(2)

“The faith in the divine Shakti must be always at the back of our strength and when she becomes manifest, it must be or grow implicit and complete. There is nothing that is impossible to her who is the conscious Power and universal Goddess all-creative from eternity and armed with the Spirit’s omnipotence. All knowledge, all strengths, all triumph and victory, all skill and works are in her hands and they are full of the treasures of the Spirit and of all perfections and Siddhis. She is Maheshwari, goddess of the supreme knowledge, and brings to us her vision for all kinds and widenesses of truth, her rectitude of the spiritual will, the calm and passion of her supramental largeness, her felicity of illumination: she is Mahakali, goddess of the supreme strength, and with her are all mights and spiritual force and severest austerity of Tapas and swiftness to the battle and the victory and the laughter, the *attahāsyā*, that makes light of defeat and death and the powers of the ignorance: she is Mahalakshmi, the goddess of the supreme love and delight, and her gifts are the spirit’s grace and the charm and beauty of the Ananda and protection and every divine and human blessing: she is Mahasaraswati, the goddess of divine skill and of the works of the Spirit, and hers is the Yoga that is skill in works, *yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam*, and the utilities of divine knowledge and the self-application of the spirit to life and the happiness of its harmonies. And in all her powers and forms she carries with her the supreme sense of the masteries of the eternal Ishwari, a rapid and divine capacity for all kinds of action that may be demanded from the instrument, oneness, a participating sympathy, a free identity, with all energies in all beings and therefore a spontaneous and fruitful harmony with all the divine will in the universe. The intimate feeling of her presence and her powers and the satisfied assent of all our being to her workings in and around it is the last perfection of faith in the Shakti.

¹ *The Synthesis of Yoga* (Centenary Edition, Vol. 20.), pp. 116-17.

“And behind her is the Ishwara and faith in him is the most central thing in the *śraddhā* of the integral Yoga. This faith we must have and develop to perfection that all things are the workings under the universal conditions of a supreme self-knowledge and wisdom, that nothing done in us or around us is in vain or without its appointed place and just significance, that all things are possible when the Ishwara as our supreme Self and Spirit takes up the action and that all that has been done before and all that he will do hereafter was and will be part of his infallible and foreseeing guidance and intended towards the fruition of our Yoga and our perfection and our life work. This faith will be more and more justified as the higher knowledge opens, we shall begin to see the great and small significances that escaped our limited mentality and faith will pass into knowledge. Then we shall see beyond the possibility of doubt that all happens within the working of the one Will and that that will was also wisdom because it develops always the true workings in life of the self and nature. The highest state of the assent, the *śraddhā* of the being will be when we feel the presence of the Ishwara and feel all our existence and consciousness and thought and will and action in his hand and consent in all things and with every part of our self and nature to the direct and immanent and occupying will of the Spirit. And that highest perfection of the *śraddhā* will also be the opportunity and perfect foundation of a divine strength: it will base, when complete, the development and manifestation and the works of the luminous supramental Shakti.”¹

SRI AUROBINDO

(Compiled by KISHOR GANDHI)

¹ *The Synthesis of Yoga*, (Cent. ed. Vol. 21), pp. 752-53.

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