

MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

JUNE 1980

Price : Rs. 2.00

TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS

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

Among the other factors mentioned above, there is our decision of reverting to the use of envelopes instead of wrappers for posting in India. Complaints have come in that the edges of the copies got crumpled and that sometimes the wrappers got torn so that the copies were not delivered. But the cost of envelopes has shot up from the rate of Rs. 55/- in 1976 to the present rate of Rs. 200/- per thousand (a 300% increment)

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

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

We count as ever on the goodwill of our subscribers.

The slightly revised rates from January 1980 are as follows.

INLAND

Annual. Rs. 20.00

Life Membership. Rs. 280.00

OVERSEAS

Sea Mail:

Annual: \$7.00 or £3.50

Life Membership: \$98.00 or £50.00

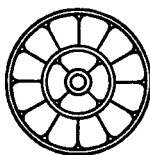
Air Mail:

Annual. \$22.00 for American & Pacific countries

£9.00 for all other countries

Life Membership \$308.00 for American & Pacific countries

£126.00 for all other countries

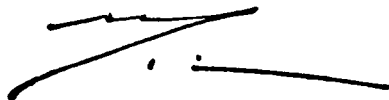


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



All Rights Reserved. No matter appearing in this journal or part thereof may be reproduced or translated without written permission from the publishers except for short extracts as quotations.

All correspondence to be addressed to:

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

Editor's Phone: 782

Publishers: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust

Editor: K. D. SETHNA

Managing Editor: K. R. PODDAR

Published by: P. COUNOUMA

SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM TRUST, PONDICHERRY-605002

Printed by: AMIYO RANJAN GANGULI

at Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, Pondicherry-605002

PRINTED IN INDIA

Registered with the Registrar of Newspapers under No. R. N. 8667/63

MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XXXII

No. 6

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail."

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
OUR COMPLEX BEING: WORDS OF THE MOTHER	... 335
THE STOPPING OF PAIN: A TALK OF THE MOTHER	... 336
TO AUROVILIANS: SOME TALKS OF THE MOTHER	... 338
A TALK BY THE MOTHER TO AN AUROVILIAN: SOME EXTRACTS	... 340
YOU AND ME (Poem) <i>Patti</i>	... 341
A LESSON IN FRENCH FROM THE MOTHER: A CORRESPONDENCE WITH AMAL KIRAN APROPOS OF A TRANSLATION	... 342
A NEW WORLD IS HERE (Poem) <i>Venkataranga</i>	... 343
THE REVISED EDITION OF <i>The Future Poetry</i> : CHAPTER VI: THE NATIONAL EVOLUTION OF POETRY <i>Sri Aurobindo</i>	... 344
COSMIC FLIGHT (Poem) <i>Alexander Brodt</i>	... 348
NIRODBARAN'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO: THE COMPLETE SET	... 349
A DREAM ON THE MORNING OF 29TH FEBRUARY 1980: RELATED BY CHAMPAKLAL	... 355
MYSTERIOUS NUMBERS	... 357
A VISION BY GANGADHARAN	... 358
SRI AUROBINDO'S SUPERMIND AND THE ANCIENT INDIAN SCRIPTURES: A LETTER <i>K. D. Sethna</i>	... 360

C O N T E N T S

“SWEET MOTHER” (Poem)	<i>Munne N. Canteenzwala</i>	... 362
MYSTIC MOUNTAINS (Poem)	<i>Amal Kiran</i>	... 363
THE SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM ARCHIVES AND RESEARCH LIBRARY	<i>Archives and Research Staff</i>	... 364
THE CLOUD MESSENGER: A NEW TRANSLATION OF KALIDASA’S <i>Meghaduta</i>	<i>Richard Hartz</i>	... 371
SRI AUROBINDO AND PROFESSOR ALEXANDER: THEIR THEORIES OF EVOLUTION	<i>Ranjit Kumar Acharjee</i>	... 376
INGESTION (Poem)	<i>Peter Heehs</i>	... 383
POEMS BEFORE AND AFTER 1973: OFFERING V: <i>Yes... But.</i> . SEPTEMBER 1979	<i>Elizabeth Stuller</i>	... 384
THE STUPID GURU AND THE FOOLISH DISCIPLES: A FREE TRANSLATION OF VEERAMA MUNIVAR’S TAMIL <i>Story of Guru Paramartha:</i> 5. TRAVEL WITH THE GIFT HORSE	<i>P. Raja</i>	... 385
BROKEN TOYS: A SHORT STORY	<i>G. Krishnan</i>	... 388
THE COPY CATS: A SHORT STORY FOR CHILDREN	<i>Maggi</i>	... 391
BOOKS IN THE BALANCE: JNANESHWARI (BHAVARTHA-DIPIKA) BY SRI JNANADEVA: TRANSLATED BY RAMACHANDRA KESHAV BHAGWAT	<i>Review by P. Raja</i>	... 396

AN APPEAL TO OUR WELL-WISHERS

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

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

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

Increase in the number of subscribers is always welcome.

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

The donations will be tax-free if sent ear-marked for us through the Ashram Trust.

AN EXPLANATION TO OUR WELL-WISHERS

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

OUR COMPLEX BEING

WORDS OF THE MOTHER

Mother, there are many elements in our being of which we are not conscious. Isn't that so?

YES, many.

Can there be some parts which serve the Divine without our being aware of it?

Yes, yes. In fact there are some which not only always seek the Divine but have an intense aspiration, and one is not aware of them. The psychic being is like that, and it is always there. But one becomes aware of it only very rarely. It is so veiled, you see. I spoke a while ago of the outer crust. It is really like a crust. It is something hard, thick, without any transparency, which lets no vibrations pass, and one lives so constantly inside this that one is not even aware that there is something else. But there is, there is indeed right in the depths of the being—specially of those who are predestined, that's understood, but still—a being which not only presides over one's destiny, not only aspires for identification with the Divine, but has the power to govern the circumstances of life and, in fact, to organise them in spite of the outer will which very often revolts and does not want the circumstances as this inner consciousness—which is fully clear-sighted—has organised them. And it is only much later, when one becomes aware of it and looks back at his life, that one realises that all this was wonderfully organised with a complete clear-sightedness of what was necessary, in order to lead him there, just where he had to go.

Most often the things which you took for accidents or misfortunes or even tragedies or even for the blows of fate, for attacks of the adverse forces, all this, almost all without any exception, was a marvellously perspicacious and admirably executed plan to lead you just where you had to go by the shortest road.

Of course this is not always absolute, because it depends on the importance of the individual in relation to the importance of the surrounding circumstances. That is why I said at the beginning: every predestined being. What I mean by "predestined" is a being who has come down upon earth to accomplish a precise mission and who, naturally, will be helped in the accomplishment of this mission. It may be a very modest mission but it is a precise one that he has to accomplish upon earth. Well, all these beings...their life is organised in this way; but ninety-nine and a half per cent are not aware of it, and they revolt or lament or... And then, above all, they pity themselves greatly and lament their own difficulties, their own miseries, their own sufferings, and caress themselves gently: "Oh, my poor little one, how unhappy you are!" But it is their inner being which has done everything.

20 October 1954

THE STOPPING OF PAIN

A TALK OF THE MOTHER

Sweet Mother, how can one transform pain into forms of pleasure?

AH! but that's not something to be done, my children. I shall certainly not give you the method! It is a perversion.

The first thing and the most indispensable is to nullify the pain by cutting the connection. You see, one becomes conscious of the pain because it is there.

For example, you have cut your finger, there's a nerve that has been affected, and so the nerve quickly goes to tell the brain, up there, that something has happened which is wrong, here. That is what gives you the pain to awaken your attention, to tell you: "You know, there's something wrong." Then the thought immediately feels anxious: "What is wrong? Oh! how it hurts," etc., etc.,—then returns to the finger and it tries to arrange what is not yet destroyed. Usually one puts a small bandage. But in order not to have the pain, if it hurts very much, you must quite simply cut the connection by thought, saying to the nerve, "Now remain quiet, you have done your work, you have warned me, you don't need to say anything any longer; ploff! I am stopping you." And when you do it well, you suffer no longer, it is finished, you stop the pain completely. That is the best thing. It is infinitely preferable to telling yourself that it is painful.

I knew someone who had... I don't know if you have ever had an ingrowing nail— an ingrowing nail means a nail which enters the skin, it hurts very much when it is in the foot; it grows into the skin; so naturally, especially if one wears tight shoes, it hurts very much. Well, I knew a boy who started pressing his nail, like this (*gesture*), with the idea that pain is simply an incapacity to bear certain intensities of vibrations, you see; so he went beyond the measure, and in fact he pressed, it hurt abominably at first, he pressed until his hurt was changed into a kind of pleasure, and this succeeded very well.

If you have some pain, and you give yourself much more pain still, then finally there's a moment when you either faint away (people who are a little weak and not very enduring faint) or else it changes into pleasure; but this is not recommendable. I am just telling you that it can be done. I saw a boy—he was twelve—who was doing that, and he was doing it very deliberately, very consciously. He had never heard of yoga but he had found it out all by himself. But this is not recommendable because his toes became worse. This didn't make it better at all.

But my own method which consists in saying to the nerve, "Now, you have done your job, keep quiet, you don't need to tell me anything more," is much better. One cuts it and then it's over.

When one has a very bad toothache (I don't know if you have a toothache sometimes or not, toothache hurts terribly because the nerve is quite, quite close to the brain,

so it doesn't lose its intensity on the way, it is very direct and hurts very much), the best way—in fact there's no other—the best way is to cut it: "It is good, you have done your work, you told me that something was wrong there, that's enough, don't move now." And one cuts, cuts it like this (*gesture*), cuts the connection, it doesn't transmit again. Naturally, you must think of something else. If afterwards you start saying, "Do I still have the pain?..." (*Laughter*)

Mother, here Sri Aurobindo has said that pain is a degradation of an original Ananda...

Yes, but everything, everything is a degradation. He has said, pleasure also. Pleasure and pain are equally a degradation of Ananda. Besides, the capacity for balance of the human physical consciousness is very small. If you have a pleasure which you push a little too far, whatever it may be, it immediately becomes a pain—whatever it may be. And there is always a place where one no longer knows whether it is a pleasure or a pain, it can as well be this or that. But wait a bit, eat something that's too sweet and you will see the effect. At first you say that it's very good, then suddenly it becomes something which.. oh! it is almost unbearable. For everything it is like that, for everything. They are very close relations, you see.

That's all? You still have something to ask?

Mother, there are periods when there is a collective illness in the Ashram...

Yes, not only in the Ashram. Unfortunately, first it comes in the town and then someone very gently...people who spend their time frequenting the town, you see, bring it along here, and then here people are like Panurge's sheep, when there's one who has caught it, it is considered smart, it is an elegance, everybody catches it....

For some reason or other one of the sheep falls from the boat into the sea, and all the rest follow one after another (*Laughter*). Because one has gone over, all rush headlong into the water. So it had become famous. They are called Panurge's sheep.

11 May, 1955

TO AUROVILIANS

SOME TALKS OF THE MOTHER

ALL those who wish to live and work at Auroville must have an integral good will; a constant aspiration to know the Truth and to submit to it; enough plasticity to confront the exigencies of work and an endless will to progress so as to move forward towards the ultimate Truth.

And, finally, a word of advice: be more concerned with your own faults than with those of others. If each one worked seriously at his own self-perfection, the perfection of the whole would follow automatically.

6 January 1969

*

We have to bear in mind that we are starting from the present state of humanity. So you must face all the difficulties; you must find the solution....

Each man has his solution, and that is the great difficulty. To be in the Truth, each one has his solution. And yet we must find a way for all these solutions to work together.

So the framework must be vast, very flexible, and there must be a great goodwill from everyone: that is the first condition—the first individual condition—goodwill. To be flexible enough to do the best thing to be done at each moment....

To be practical, you must first have a very clear vision of your goal, of where you are going. From this point of view, take money for example. An ideal which may be several hundred years ahead of its time, we don't know: money should be a power which belongs to nobody and which should be controlled by the most universal wisdom present. Put on the earth someone who has a vision vast enough to be able to know the needs of the earth and precise enough to be able to tell where the money should go—you understand, we are very far from that, aren't we? For the moment, the gentleman still says, "This is mine", and when he is generous, he says, "I give it to you." That's not it.

But there is a long way to go between what we are and what must be. And for that we must be very flexible, never losing sight of the goal, but knowing that we cannot reach it at one bound and that we must find the way. Well, that is much more difficult, even more difficult than to make the inner discovery. Truly speaking, that should have been made before coming here.

For there is a starting-point: when you have found within yourself the light that never wavers, the presence which can guide you with certitude, then you become aware that constantly, in everything that happens, there is something to be learnt, and that in the present state of matter there is always a progress to be made. That is how one should come, eager to find out at every minute the progress to be

made. To have a life that wants to grow and perfect itself, that is what the collective ideal of Auroville should be: "A life that wants to grow and perfect itself", and above all, not in the same way for everyone—each one in his own way....

You are the pioneers, you have the most difficult task, but I feel it is the most interesting one. Because you must establish in a concrete, durable and growing way the attitude that is needed to truly be an Aurovilian. To learn every day the lesson that is needed to truly be an Aurovilian. To learn every day the lesson of the day.... Each sunrise is an opportunity to make a discovery. So, with that state of mind, you find out. Everyone does.

And the body needs activity: if you keep it inactive, it will begin to revolt by becoming sick and so on. It needs an activity, it really needs an activity like planting flowers, building a house, something really material. You must feel it. Some people do exercises, some ride bicycles, there are countless activities, but in your little group you must all come to an agreement so that each one can find the activity which suits his temperament, his nature and his need. But not with ideas. Ideas are not much good, ideas give you preconceptions, for example, "That is a good work, that work is not worthy for me," and all that sort of nonsense. There is no bad work—there are only bad workers. All work is good when you know how to do it in the right way. Everything. And it is a kind of communion. If you are fortunate enough to be conscious of an inner light, you will see that in your manual work, it is as if you called the Divine down into things; then the communion becomes very concrete, there is a whole world to be discovered, it is marvellous.

You are young, you have plenty of time before you. And to be young, to be really young, we must always, always keep on growing, developing, progressing. Growth is the sign of youthfulness and there is no limit to the growth of consciousness. I know old people of twenty and young people of fifty, sixty, seventy. And if one does manual work, one keeps in good health.

10 March 1970

A TALK BY THE MOTHER TO AN AUROVILIAN

SOME EXTRACTS

Q: There have been some reactions about the little booklet that you gave us on religions, about the sentence which says: "Our search will not be a search by mystic means."¹

A: THEY don't know what mystic means are?

Q: Maybe they don't know, but perhaps what we do not know either is this: why not by mystic means? I have been asked the question.

A: By mystic means I mean the way of those who withdraw from life, like the monks, the people who withdraw into convents, or like the sannyasins here, those who abandon life to find spiritual life, who make a division between the two and say, "It is either one or the other." We say, "That is not true." It is in life and by living life entirely that one can live the spiritual life, that one must live the spiritual life. The Supreme Consciousness has to be brought *here*. From the purely material and physical point of view, man is not the last race. As man came after the animal, so another being must come after man. And as there is only one Consciousness, it is the same Consciousness which having had the experience of man will have the experience of a superhuman being. And so if we go away, if we leave life, if we reject life, then we will never be ready to do that.

But if you had read Sri Aurobindo, you would have understood, you would not have asked this question. It is because there is a lack of preparation from the intellectual point of view. You want to know everything without having studied.

Now, what else do you have to say?

Q: That is all. Yes, there is something else, if you don't mind. It is a letter from T. A letter from T who is here and who asked me to read it to you.

A: All right.

Q: (Reading) "Concerning what you have written about religions, a prayer rises up towards you. We ask for the Divine's Truth, fulfilled in the Truth of our being; we ask that our actions may manifest His Truth, that our minds and hearts may be exclusively moved by His Truth. We implore the full Light of His Truth on all that is still unconscious. With His Truth we want to know, through His Truth we want to act, and in His Truth we want to be. This is the prayer of Auroville to the

¹ "Our research will not be a search effected by mystic means. It is in life itself that we wish to find the Divine. And it is through this discovery that life can really be transformed "

Supreme. Be the triumphant Mother of our consciousness."

A: It could be put up on the notice board. It is very good, very good....

We want to change life—we do not want to run away from it.... Until now all those who have tried to know what they called God, to enter into relation with God, they have abandoned life. They have said, "Life is an obstacle. We shall abandon life for that." So, in India you had the sannyasins who renounced everything; in Europe you had the monks and the ascetics. Well, they can escape, even though when they are reborn they will have to begin all over again. But life remains as it is.

26 May 1970

YOU AND ME

I AM born to mate with Heaven,
To cast my lot on a shoreless sweep
That knows no petty schemes.

The gilded or bronze round of man
Cannot hold me long in its infinitesimal swirl.
I long for the broad vistas that *You* have known.

Oh! rid me of the slavery to little things
And let me see in the daily work of earth
Your unbridled Hand firmly on the reins of release!

Unveil in me your victor-head,
That Your sublimest schemes may not rest undone—
Use me for the tasks that matter most,
O see Your Bright New World begun!

PATTI

A LESSON IN FRENCH FROM THE MOTHER

A CORRESPONDENCE WITH AMAL KIRAN APROPOS OF A TRANSLATION

A.K.: In your translation of Anatole France's sentence—a direct and suggestive translation—

“The best in life is the idea it gives us of a something that is not in it”—have you deliberately omitted the words “at all” either after “not” or after “it”, words which would render the French “n'est point” in the original sentence:

“Ce que la vie a de meilleur c'est l'idée qu'elle nous donne de je ne sais pas quoi qui n'est point en elle.”

Perhaps “at all” at the end may echo something of the music of France's sentence, music which in its subtle and poignant mellifluousness seems impossible to catch wholly in an English rendering. Or do you think it will unbalance the rhythm as well as make the expression lose its sensitive simplicity?

THE MOTHER: Yes, *deliberately*, because in France's sentence there is nothing like *at all*. “qui n'est point en elle” does not mean *not at all*, if he wanted to say *at all* he would have said “*du tout*”, and not only it would not have been nice, but it would have spoiled the meaning also.

6.4.1955

A.K.: I am glad I asked you about “ne...point”. I have learned something. I believe most of us think that “point” always brings in the nuance of “at all”. From what you write, I gather that it is only a variant of “pas” unless it is followed by “du tout”. But what would “n'a point d'argent” mean? Would the “de” there introduce the sense of “at all”? Perhaps where “de” occurs, this sense comes in?

THE MOTHER: The “de” changes nothing to the sense. “n'a point d'argent” and “n'a pas d'argent” is exactly same—“point” is used for “euphonics” and is considered as more poetic. “de” gives only the sense of indefinite like “de l'eau”, “de l'air” etc. Only if it is written: “il n'a pas le sou” I would translate: “He has no money at all.”

8.4.1955

A.K.: Your explanations have made several matters very clear to me. (1) I understand, as never before, the function of “de” as a denotation of indefiniteness. (2) I realise that as there is actually the phrase “point du tout” the words “ne point” cannot mean “not at all”, though unfortunately most books teaching French lead us to believe that generally it does. (3) “Point” as a poetic equivalent of “pas” had never clearly struck me. But one problem still remains. If you say that “point” is used for emphasis, how is the emphasis to be indicated in a translation? Perhaps “at all” is brought in as an indication—but I feel now that it is a mistaken device, merely a fa-

cile à peu près. Would you say that in the case of “il n’a point d’argent” the emphasis is best translated by using, instead of “he does not have money”, a phrase like “he does not have any money” or better still, “he has no money”?¹ As for Anatole France’s sentence, I suppose “point” was used only with a poetic intention and not for emphasis. Perhaps in English there is no poetic need in such a context to avoid the common “not”—but, if in addition to the poetic tone the emphatic tone is intended, how will the mere “not” serve the intention? Could I assume from your translation that no emphasis in particular was intended by France? Or is the emphasis so subtle here that any attempt to translate it would be crude and therefore a slight understatement is preferable?

THE MOTHER: I meant by “poetic” the *sound* not the meaning. To translate France the most *simple* and short sentence is always the best.

9.4.1955

¹ Underlining “he has no money”, the Mother wrote in the margin “this”—expressing her choice out of the three alternatives offered for “il n’a point d’argent”.

A NEW WORLD IS HERE

A NEW world is here, a new light of the Master’s glorious presence.
 A celestial freshness is in the air, a soul-elevating fragrance.
 A nameless peace penetrates the self at the touch of a marvellous Grace.
 O Life! O Joy! Bud of beatitude! Breath of the All-Blissful Face!

Aspire and ask and all good things towards you shall move,
 O Soul! under the vast Wish-fulfilling tree of the Mother’s love.
 Lest you forget and invite your own doom, beware
 Of fear and doubt and high-browed thought’s disastrous snare

In any guise, from any corner of the being. Keep the doors shut
 And the windows closed firm against the foes with utter faith,
 A simple childlike trust in the Mother Divine despite your ignorance
 Shall lead you on, step after rhythmic step, to the Deathless Dance.

VENKATARANGA

THE REVISED EDITION OF *THE FUTURE POETRY*

(Continued from the issue of May 1980)

(Each paragraph of this chapter received light to medium revision during the early period (1930s); during the later period (1950) a few words here and there were added.)

CHAPTER VI

The National Evolution of Poetry

THE work of the poet depends not only on himself and his age, but on the mentality of the nation to which he belongs and the spiritual, intellectual, aesthetic tradition and environment which it creates for him. It is not that he is or need be entirely limited or conditioned by his environment or that he must regard himself as only a voice of the national mind or bound by some past national tradition and debarred from striking out a novel and original road of his own. In nations which are returning under difficulties to a strong self-consciousness, like the Irish or the Indians at the present moment, this kind of conscious nationalism in literature may be for some time a living idea and a powerful motive. In others which have had a vivid collective life that has exercised a common and intimate influence on all its individuals or in those which have cherished an acute sense of a great national culture and tradition, the more stable elements of that tradition may exert a very conscious influence on the mind of the poets. At once sustaining and limiting the weaker spirits, they give to genius an exceptional power for sustained beauty of form and a satisfying perfection. But this is no essential condition for the birth of great poetry. The poet, we must always remember, creates out of himself and has the indefeasible right to follow freely the breath of the spirit within him, provided he satisfies in his work the law of poetic beauty. The external forms of his age and his nation only give him his starting-point and some of his materials and determine to some extent, by education, by a subconscious and automatic environmental pressure, the room he finds for the free play of his poetic spirit.

Nor is it necessary to subscribe to the theory of the man and his milieu or the dogma of the historical school of criticism which asks of us to study all the precedents, circumstances, influences, surroundings, all that "created" the man and his work,—as if there were not something in him apart from these which made all the difference, something that made him a man apart and not like others. It is supposed that out of this elaborate scientific study the right estimate of his poetry will arise. But even the right historical or psychological understanding of him need not inevitably arise out of this method; for we may very easily read into him and his work things which may perhaps have been there in front of him or around him, but never really got inside him. And the right estimate of his work we certainly shall not form if we bring in so much that is accidental and unessential to cloud our free and direct impression. Rather the

very opposite is the true method of appreciation; we have to go straight to the poet and his poem for all we need essentially to know about them,—we shall get there all that we really want for any true aesthetic or poetic purpose. Afterwards we can go elsewhere, if we like, for any minor elucidations or rummage about laboriously to satisfy our scientific and historical curiosity. In this more natural order things accidental are much more likely to fall into their right place and the freshness and authenticity of our poetic appreciation have some chance of remaining unobscured and still vibrant. But quite apart from its external and therefore unreal method, there is a truth in the historical theory of criticism which is of real help towards grasping something that is important and even essential, if not for our poetic appreciation, yet for our intellectual judgment of a poet and his work.

In poetry, as in everything else that aims at perfection, there are always two elements, the eternal true substance and the limitations and accidents brought in by the time element. The first alone really and always matters, and it is that which must determine our definitive appreciation, our absolute verdict, or rather our essential response to poetry. A soul expressing the eternal spirit of Truth and Beauty through some of the infinite variations of beauty, with the word for its instrument, that is, after all, what the poet is, and it is to a similar soul in us seeking the same spirit and responding to it that he makes his appeal. It is when we can get this response at its purest and in its most direct and heightened awakening that our faculty of poetic appreciation becomes at once surest and most intense. It is, we may say, the impersonal enjoyer of creative beauty in us responding to the impersonal creator and interpreter of beauty in the poet. For it is the impersonal spirit of Truth and Beauty that is seeking to express itself through his personality, and it is that and not his personal intelligence which finds its own word and seems itself to create through him in his highest moments of inspiration. And this Impersonal is concerned only with the creative idea and the motive of beauty which is seeking expression; its sole purpose is to find the perfect expression, the inevitable word and the rhythm that reveals. All else is subordinate, accidental, the crude material and the conditioning medium of this essential endeavour.

Still there is also the personality of the poet and the personality of the hearer; the one gives the pitch and the form of the success arrived at, the other determines the characteristic intellectual and aesthetic judgment to which its appeal arrives. The correspondence or the dissonance between the two decides the relation between the poet and his reader, and out of that arises whatever is personal in our appreciation and judgment of his poetry. In this personal or time element there is always much that is merely accidental and this rather limits and deflects our judgment than helps usefully to form it. How much it interferes, can be seen when we try to value contemporary poetry.¹ It is a matter of continual experience that even critics of consi-

¹ Or even the poetry that has just preceded us, e.g. the nineteenth century's contemptuous estimate of the eighteenth or the twentieth century's equally contemptuous dismissal of the fallen Victorian demigods

derable insight and sureness of taste are yet capable of the most extraordinarily wrong judgments, whether on the side of appreciation or of depreciation, when they have to pass a verdict on their contemporaries. And this is because a crowd of accidental influences belonging to the effect of the time and the mental environment upon our mentality exercise an exaggerated domination and distort or colour the view of our mental eye upon its object. But apart from this disabling intrusion there is always something essential to our present personality which is of more value and has a right to be heard. For we are all of us souls developing our unfinished nature in a constant endeavour to get into unity with the spirit in life through its many forms of manifestation and on many different lines. And as there is in Indian Yoga a principle of varying capacity, *adhukāra*, something in the immediate power of a man's nature that determines by its characteristics his right to this or that way of Yoga, of union with the Divine, which, whatever its merits or its limitations, is his right way because it is most helpful to him personally, so in all our activities of life and mind there is this principle of *adhukāra*. That which we can appreciate in poetry and still more the way in which we appreciate it, is that in it and us which is most helpful to us and therefore, for the time being at least, right for us in our attempt to get into union either with universal or transcendent Beauty through the revealing ideas and motives and suggestive forms of poetic creation.

This is the individual aspect of the personal or time element. But there is also a larger movement to which we belong, ourselves and the poet and his poetry; or rather it is the same movement of the general soul of mankind in the same endeavour as the individual's and towards the same objective. In poetry this shows itself in a sort of evolution from the objective to the inward and from the inward to the inmost, the spiritual,—an evolution which has many curves and turns and cycles, many returns upon past motives and imperfect anticipations of future motives, but is on the whole and up to a certain point a growth and progress, a constant labour of self-enlargement and self-finding. It is a clear idea of this evolution which may most helpfully inform the historical element in our judgment and appreciation of poetry; it is a judgment of it from the viewpoint of the evolution of the human spirit and the subtler consciousness and larger experience which that progress brings. We can see this general movement working itself out in different forms and on different lines through the souls of the nations and peoples, not so many after all, who have arrived at a strong self-expression through the things of the mind, through art and thought and poetry. These things of the mind do not indeed form or express the whole of the movement, even as they do not make up the whole of the life of the people; they represent its highest points,—or in the two or three peoples that have powerfully developed the spiritual force within,—the highest with the exception of the spiritual summit. In these few we can best see the inner character and aim of any one line of the movement,—whether it be the line of poetry, the line of art or the line of religious and spiritual endeavour.

This general evolution has its own natural periods or ages; but as with the

stone, bronze and other ages discovered by the archaeologists, their time periods do not always correspond, are not the same for all the peoples which have evolved them. Moreover, they do not always follow each other in quite the same rigorous order; there are occasional reversals, extraordinary anticipations, violent returns; for in things psychological the Spirit in the world varies its movements more freely than in physical things. There, besides, the spirit of the race can anticipate the motives of a higher stratum of psychological development while yet it lives outwardly the general life of a lower stratum. So too when it has got well on to a higher level of development, it may go strongly back to a past and inferior motive and see how that works out when altered and uplifted or enlarged or even only subtilised by the motives and powers of the superior medium. There is here, besides, a greater complexity of unseen or half-seen subconscious and superconscious tendencies and influences at work upon the comparatively small part of us which is conscious of what it is doing. And very often a nation in its labour of self-expression is both helped and limited by what has been left behind from the evolution of a past self which, being dead, yet lives.

Thus, the Indian spirit could seize powerfully the spiritual motive in an age in which the mass of the people lived a strenuous external life and was strongly outward-going and objective in its normal mentality. It succeeded in expressing the supreme spiritual experiences, so difficult to put at all into speech, in forms and images proper to the simplest physical life and the most external customary mentality converting them into physical symbols of the supraphysical and then, by a rapid liberation, in its own proper voice, so producing the sacred poetry of the Veda and Upanishads. An Italy with the Graeco-Roman past in its blood could seize intellectually on the motives of catholic Christianity and give them a precise and supremely poetic expression in Dante, while all Germanised Europe was still stammering its primitive thoughts in the faltering infantile accents of romance verse or shadowing them out in Gothic stone, successful only in the most material form of the spiritual. In another direction, when it seized upon the romantic life-motive, the meeting-place of the Teuton and the Celt, we see it losing entirely the mystically sentimental Celtic element, italianising it into the sensuousness of Tasso, and italianising the rest into an intellectualised, a half imaginative, half satiric play with the superficial motives of romance,—the inevitable turn of the italianised Roman spirit. On the other hand the English spirit, having got rid of the Latin culture and holding the Celtic mund for a long time at bay, exiled into the Welsh mountains or parked beyond the pale in Ireland, followed with remarkable fidelity the natural curve and stages of the psychological evolution of poetry, taking several centuries to arrive at the intellectual motive and more to get at something like a spiritual turn still too intellectualised to find any absolute intensity of the spirit, only the first shimmerings of an outbreak of vision.

Generally, every nation or people has or develops a spirit in its being, a special soul-form of the human all-soul and a law of its nature which determines the lines

and turns of its evolution. All that it takes from its environment it naturally attempts to assimilate to this spirit, transmute into stuff of this soul-form, make apt to and governable by this law of its nature. All its self-expression is in conformity with them. And its poetry, art and thought are the expression of this self and of the greater possibilities of its self to which it moves. The individual poet and his poetry are part of its movement. Not that they are limited by the present temperament and outward forms of the national mind; they may exceed them. The soul of the poet may be like a star and dwell apart; even, his work may seem not merely a variation from but a revolt against the limitations of the national mind. But still the roots of his personality are there in its spirit and even his variation and revolt are an attempt to bring out something that is latent and suppressed or at least something which is trying to surge up from the secret all-soul into the soul-form of the nation. Therefore to appreciate this national evolution of poetry and the relations of the poet and his work with it cannot but be fruitful, if we observe them from the point of view not so much of things external to poetry, but of its own spirit and characteristic forms and motives.

SRI AUROBINDO

COSMIC FLIGHT

CONSCIOUSNESS has spread out its sail,
 Inward spirals its flight
 Lifted high by a mystic gale
 Towards a sparkling light.

Only the sound of rushing wind
 That onward-pressing flows
 Until, intense and full, the glint
 To a single light-vast grows.

The heart is now a crystal calm,
 It beats a timeless tune,
 And breath has grown a limpid balm;
 Mind fell in a deep swoon.

An all-pervading lucency
 Reveals form as massed force—
 A vibrant whirl of ecstasy
 Motionless on its swift course.

ALEXANDER BRODT

NIRODBARAN'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO

THE COMPLETE SET

(Continued from the issue of May 1980)

April 26, 1935

Just now an outburst with Champaklal. I am sure he will tell you about it, Mother. I hate to trouble you with these trifles.

Champaklal does not usually tell Mother about these things—outbursts of that kind are too common with him. And when heat meets heat, it is almost midsummer now.

April 27, 1935

I don't know if Buddha would have anything to do with Durga's or your principle of compassion with regard to killing.

No, of course not. I only said that on my own account as to compassion!

I don't think that Buddha would ever give his assent to killing of animals or taking any life.

I don't know. People used to say he died of eating too much pork. Now they say this particular pig was a vegetable.

Since it is the Truth one is seeking and the Impersonal also is one aspect of the Divine why should the Divine keep himself aloof from the seeker? Is it simply because one is guilty of seeking his impersonal aspect?

You speak of the Impersonal as if it were a Person. The Impersonal is not He, it is It. How can an It guide or help? The Impersonal Brahman is inactive, aloof, indifferent, not concerned with what happens in the universe. Buddha's Permanent is the same. Whatever impersonal Truth or Light there is, you have to find it, use it, do what you can with it. It does not trouble itself to hunt after you. It is the Buddhist idea that you must do everything for yourself, that is the only way.

Is it true that Buddha's Ahimsa was the main cause of India's falling an easy prey to foreign invasions, for it made her absolutely devitalised, inert, passive?

Rather doubtful. Buddhist kings generally did not hesitate to fight or to take life.

Though I don't believe in Ahimsa, Buddha's or Gandhi's, I feel a shrinking when I go to kill anything or see others doing it. Ahimsa in blood?

Nerves.

Sarat's story is out. In addition to raw mangoes he had some rasagollas too. This food business is almost a possession with him.

So I heard. Why almost?

We have decided to remove his stove for good. Rather childish, but what else can be done?

Quite right. The doctor said that he was surprised by the relapses of Sarat's health until he found that when he was not there, Sarat used to get up and secretly cook food for himself on the stove! Palate satisfaction seems to be more precious to him than his life.

R says he has still headache although the "cause" is not there. Some investigations? I wonder whether he needs a regime. The difficulty is to keep him to anything. Fried eggs—excellent effect, he got tired and had to drop it. Next tried Nergine, next codliver oil—each thing had a good effect, then he dropped it.

I think there is something in the vital clinging to the illness, while the other parts grumble about it.

April 29, 1935

You have heard that Smuthy Manibhai has recurrence of his eye disease more virulent this time. He has to stop his work, but he will die, he says, without it.

Pavitra says he saw him all the time touching his eye with his dirty hands and expostulated with him, but to no result. What is to be done with all these supernatural men? He was doing the same thing with his eczema and that was why it lasted for months. Except tying his hands behind him I don't know what is to be done.

I am plunged in a sea of dryness and am terribly thirsty for something. Along with it, waves of old desires. Any handy remedy?

Eucharistic injection from above, purgative rejection below; liquid diet, psychic fruit juice, milk of the spirit.

April 30, 1935

Your prescription, Sir, is splendid, but the patient is too poor to pay. I feel I am the least fitted for the path. The God-seekers whose lives I have read reveal what a great thirst they had for the Divine!

And what deserts they had to pass through without getting the thirst satisfied? The lives left that out?

Whatever you may say, Sir, the path of Yoga is absolutely dry and especially that of Integral Yoga!

One has to pass through the desert sometime—doesn't follow that the whole path is like that.

For this Yoga, one must have the heart of a lion, the mind of a Sri Aurobindo and the vital of a Napoleon.

Good Lord! Then I am off the list of the candidates—for I have neither the heart of a lion nor the vital of Napoleon.

You may say that when the psychic comes to the front, the path becomes a great Trunk-Road of Roses. But it may take years and years!

Does not matter how long it takes—it crops up one day or another.

And who knows one may not simply pine away in the dry desert before that?

No necessity to carry out any such disagreeable programme.

Have I the necessary requirements for the sadhana? The only thing I seem to have is a deep respect for you, which almost all people have today.

It is good that for accuracy's sake you put in the 'almost.'

I made the unhappy discovery that it is surely from a financial pressure outside that I jumped for the Unknown and the Unknowable.

It must have been a stupendous pressure to produce such a gigantic leap.

All this simply means that you have, metaphorically speaking, the hump. Trust in God and throw the hump off.

May 1, 1935

“Trust in God”? Personal or Impersonal? Tell me instead, “Trust in Me”, that would be comforting, tangible and practical.

All right. It comes to the same thing in the upshot.

May 3, 1935

I took J to hospital for her ear, but the E.N.T. doctor found instead vasomotor rhinitis, for which he prescribed parathyroid and calcium internally. But she is quite well at present. What shall we do?

If she is quite well, what is the use of parathyroiding and calciating her?

Champa complains of oppression of the chest, and sleeplessness began two days after there was no more medicine. She wants to starve herself at night; it appears Becharlal told her to do so! I have asked her to go to you. Is the famine method really a remedy for asthma?

May 4, 1935

I have again become the victim of people’s tongues. I came to know that someone was imputing most abject motives to some of my actions, without my giving any cause of offence. I am not even familiar with the person.

Do you think people need a “cause” for criticising others? It is done for the heavenly Ananda of the thing in itself. পরনিন্দা¹ is to the human vital sweeter than all the fruits of Paradise.

If 6 or 7 years’ stay in the Ashram, doing Yoga, can’t change these things in persons who are supposed to be good adharas, is there any chance for us?

These things are usually last to change, not the first. Until the inner man is completely changed, the outer refuses to budge. Of course that is not a universal rule, but it seems to be the general rule, at least here. Theoretically it ought to be otherwise and with one or two perhaps it is, but—

Can you explain why these poisonous shafts of criticism are thrown at me, without any reason at all?

Imagination and inference and joy of the perspicuous psychologist and joy of

¹ পরনিন্দা = slandering, criticising others.

fault-finding—and several other vital joys and joy of communicating to others which is usually called gossip. Quite enough to explain. No other reason wanted.

May 6, 1935

I am really amazed to hear that the Mother told a child, that only 5 or 6 here will realise the Divine.

“Blessed be they who believe all that they hear! for they have become like little children” (Pseudo-sayings of Christ).

What is this joke? You will tell me next that the Mother has confided to Dayakar that the supramental now reigns upon the earth or declared the secrets of the ineffable Brahman to K's baby. Are you by chance under the impression that X is 77 years old instead of her apparent age? Who has invented this supreme jest?

Then, Sir, what about the rest of us? Have we to be content only with a little joy and peace? Tell us something—give us a word of hope.

There are already more than 5 or 6 in the Ashram who have had some realisation at least of the Divine—so take comfort.

May 9, 1935

I would like to know if a vertical opening can be there without the opening of the inner centre.

It can—but that usually leads to *Moksha* and *Jnana* only, what Ramakrishna called *Shushka Jnana*.

I think that an intellectually developed man like X has an advantage over an emotional man like Y; he will have the vertical opening owing to his head concentration, and will most probably have also the experiences that Y had, when his inner centre opens.

Leaving out individual comparisons which are “odorous”, if the intellectual will always have a greater wideness and vastness, how can we be sure that he will have an equal fervour, depth and sweetness with the emotional men?

Will the emotional men have as much knowledge as the intellectual when their inner minds open up?

That is more logical—but the logical is not necessarily true. It may be that homo-intelectualis will remain wider and homo-psychicus will remain deeper in heart.

I am still not sure. Can we say that Ramakrishna's mind or Christ's mind was as powerful as that of Buddha? You may say that it is after all the realisation that is important and all three had that; nevertheless, I think that a powerful mind is an extra asset. In this intellectual age the mind is going to play a big part. Hasn't your great dashing intellect charmed many of the intellectuals of the age?

Buddha's mind as a mind was more powerful but had he as much or as many-sided a spiritual knowledge as Ramakrishna? I leave out Christ, because his spiritual knowledge was from the heart only and intense but limited.

Which intellectual age? The intellectual age is dead. Intellectuals are becoming less and less important. There is nothing dashing in my intellect. And what effect for the spiritual purpose has the charming of these ineffective intellectuals?

Please do not confuse the higher knowledge and mental knowledge. The intellectual man will be able to give a wider and more orderly expression to what higher knowledge he gets than the homo-psychicus; but it does not follow he will have more of it. He will have that only if he rises to an equal width and plasticity and comprehensiveness of the higher knowledge planes. In that case he will replace his mental by his above-mental capacity. But for many intellectuals, so-called, their intellectuality may be a stumbling-block as they bind themselves with mental conceptions or stifle the psychic fire under the heavy weight of rational thought. On the other hand I have seen comparatively uneducated people expressing higher knowledge with an astonishing fullness and depth and accuracy which the stumbling movements of their brain could never have allowed one to suppose possible. Therefore why fix beforehand by the mind what will or will not be possible when the Above-mind reigns? What the mind conceives as "must be" need not be the measure of the "will be." Such and such a homo-intelectualis may turn out to be a more fervent God-lover than the effervescent emotional man; such and such an emotionalist may receive and express a wider knowledge than his intellect or even the intellect of the intellectual man could have harboured or organised. Let us not bind the phenomena of the higher consciousness by the possibilities and probabilities of a lower plane.

Nirod,

What is the use and limitations of mercury powder? Is it not an unsafe thing which may do harm as well as good? In what illness can it be safely or effectively applied?

SRI AUROBINDO

(To be continued)

A DREAM ON THE MORNING OF 29th FEBRUARY 1980

RELATED BY CHAMPAKLAL

I SAW a huge magnificent multi-storeyed building. A lot of people had gathered there. But amongst them not a single person was known to me. They were moving about in such a way as if they were in a great hurry. I noticed that despite their hurried movements, they did not push each other. Everyone was going about very quietly without any noise. I enquired where all these people were going, and learnt that one who could go up right to the top floor and was able to come back had all his problems solved automatically. I was also told that this building consisted of 108 storeys. Its whole staircase was built like a labyrinth.

To each and every person who wished to go up, some instructions were given before starting. There were many instructions but the main instruction was this: when one loses his way and is unable to go further, he should go to the hall which was on every floor, adjoining the staircase. One must stand at the centre of this hall. Then a bell rings instantaneously, by itself, and its sound reaches the top floor from where one person comes and gives all the necessary instructions for going up. After that he becomes invisible. Despite this, some people prefer to turn back instead of going up. Very few choose to proceed further. Some persons do not even go to the hall to take instructions. Very very few persons are able to go right up to the topmost 108th floor without any instructions.

After this I do not remember what happened.

The scene changes. I walk on and on, passing through many beautiful places on the way. Some of these places are so beautiful and attractive that one gets tempted to remain there itself and does not wish to proceed further. At many places, the road went deep down and again rose high up. I walked and walked and arrived at a place which appeared like a desert. My legs were slipping into the sand. The temperature was very high. The heat was unbearable. The wind also was so hot that I did not know what to do. I then saw someone coming towards me. He said, "I was going back but now, after seeing you, I am also thinking of walking along with you. Let us go together slowly though the path is very very difficult." With great difficulty we somehow walked on and on and were suddenly delighted to catch sight of a group of children playing in the midst of this desert heat. On seeing us, all the children started jumping and dancing and chanting very loudly.

जय बोलो (Jaya bolo—say victory), जय बोलो, जय बोलो, जय बोलो, जय बोलो, जय बोलो भाई ।

The children then caught hold of our hands and said, "Let us go." But in this there was a sweet competition. Each child was eager to take us to his place. If one said, "Come to my place", the other one would insist, "No, no, you have to come to my place." This continued for some time. The children, who were so happy and jolly before, now became very serious. The youngest child amongst them came out of the

group and standing in front, in all humility, addressed all the children. He suggested, "Let us do this—first we can take them to our Dear Mother's temple. Then we shall do what our Babaji says." We asked, "Who is this Babaji?" He replied, "There is a long story about Babaji but for the present I would say just this—for all our difficulties, Babaji gets the solution directly from The Mother. Because of this, there are no quarrels at all amongst us. Our Mother's temple is so beautiful and alluring that you will not like to move in the least from there and will like to remain there itself. But it is very difficult to stay there. However, even seeing Babaji you will feel very happy. When you go there, you will know everything by yourself."

Now also, I do not remember what happened after this.

The scene changes again. I happened to go into quite a new building. There on the floor, I could see rows and rows of beds but not a single one was occupied. Later I learnt that Pranab was staying in that house and that the big hall inside was his. Just then I saw Pranab coming. He wore a coloured silk dhoti and was dressed like a prince. He just glanced at me and went to his room. The ceiling of this big hall was very high. On one side, on the ground, against the wall, there was a huge and very beautiful and enchanting picture of The Mother, touching the ceiling. It was a three-dimensional picture. If one kept on looking at it, one could feel as if The Mother Herself were sitting there, smiling sweetly and looking at us. One would go on looking at Her and never be satisfied.

Pranab went straight to The Mother's picture, and he did साष्टांग दंडवत प्रणाम (*i.e.* he stretched his body fully on the ground in obeisance). Both his hands were extended in front in a folded posture. He remained in this state for five minutes. It was a great surprise for me to witness this! After getting up, he kept on looking at The Mother unflinchingly. The feeling of complete surrender was vividly expressed on his face and its sight awakened in one a similar experience. He now started taking off his beautiful colourful clothes one after another. Then only I saw that what had looked like a dhoti was actually a चुन्दी (chundhadi) which is a very thin, special, colourful cloth used for dressing deities. He had put it on like a lungi. I remarked to him, "Your whole dress is beautiful! You look grand! This dress suits you very well." He replied, "Yes! Gangaram and others too said so!"

After that I do not remember anything.

The scene changes a third time. I saw a magnificent and extremely beautiful and attractive golden building. I use the word 'building' but it was neither a building nor a bungalow nor even a temple. I do not know what word to use. Its top was unseen and so were both its sides. The path leading to it was very dangerous and very frightful. Innumerable cobras and other snakes were moving about here and there. I could see various kinds of birds and even animals amongst them but they did not attack one another. I then saw a tall and majestic figure. All were rushing to him and he gave a loving touch to each and everyone. He held a small dish in his hand, from which he gave food to all. I could not make out what food it was which he fed to all. I could only notice that it was something shining-white and round in shape.

After partaking of this food, everyone appeared to be withdrawn. Finally he bestowed his compassionate look on all, took a few steps backwards and disappeared!

From amongst the animals there, a beautiful snow-white rabbit with golden and lustrous eyes approached me. It came close to me, looked at me intently and affectionately and tried to climb up on my body. I bent and caressed it lovingly. It then caught hold of the fringe of my dhoti in its mouth and started pulling me. I allowed myself to be led by it. The rabbit brought me right in front of the attractive door of that beautiful golden building I had seen from a distance. It appeared to be a door but I could not see any way of opening it—I could not even imagine how one could open it and get in. The rabbit left me there and returned soon with a very beautiful, lovely and grand bird with colourful feathers and a colourful body. It looked somewhat like a peacock. It stretched its beak towards the door and touched it all over. The door opened and I could see a tremendous fire burning inside! But, strange to say, the fire had no heat! I could not move from there and kept on looking at the beautiful mounting flames of the fire. It was a wonderful sight. The rabbit turned to me again, picked up my dhoti in its mouth, as before, and pulled me into the fire! But the fire did not burn me at all. On the contrary, I felt a delightful coolness all over my body—both inside and outside. From there, the rabbit pulled me out and led me to a hall on the second floor. This hall was full of shining and transparent white water. I could not comprehend how this liquid could remain in that hall without flowing out! It was surprising indeed. The rabbit pulled me as before, and took me inside the water. As soon as I entered the water, the outer skin of my body slipped off by itself just as in the case of a serpent sloughing its old skin! When I looked at my body, I noticed that it was a body of white light. The rabbit pulled me further but I could not move from there.

My eyes opened. For a while I could not make out where I was and what was the time. Slowly I realised that I had been in dreamland! A tremendous peace and joy was in my entire body. I have no words to say more than that. When I looked at my body, I found it the same as before! I could only laugh at this play of the Gracious Mother!

MYSTERIOUS NUMBERS

CHAMPAKLAL says that after he had finished his meditation on the seventeenth of April he automatically took up a piece of paper and without any thought wrote down the following figures and forgot them the next moment. He requests *Mother India* to publish them in the hope that some numerologist may be able to shed light on them:

$$0 \times 12 \times 60 \times 100 \times 4 \times 800 \times 9600 \times 720 \times 84 \times 32 \times 2 \times 0 \times 1 \times 0$$

A VISION BY GANGADHARAN

At 2 a.m. on Wednesday 17-10-1979 I was sitting and meditating in my room as usual. I had a vision in which I suddenly heard the continuous sound of our Divine Mother's car-horn. In a hurry I went down to the ground floor and reached the front door. The car was standing in front of my house.

Pavitra very respectfully opened the door of the car. The Mother got out and smiled. Closely following her was Chinmayi. From the front portion of the car (*i.e.*, from the driver's side) Amrita got out. I was standing in front of the Mother with folded hands and my heart was full of gratitude. The Mother addressed me in French, saying, "Is Urmila inside? I want to see her." I respectfully replied, "Mother, she is inside, but the staircase leading to her room is very narrow and the way to it very dirty. If the Mother approves I will go up to her room and bring her here in a minute."

Amrita told the Mother that my suggestion might be accepted. But the Mother said, "No, no, today is her birthday. I want to see her in her own room." So saying she entered the house and started climbing the staircase. We climbed after her in the following order: Chinmayi, Pavitra, Amrita and myself.

The Mother stood in front of my room and, looking at me, asked, "Are you staying in this room?"

I replied, "Yes, Mother," and at the same time I rushed into my room and came out with a few dried tulsi leaves that were there and devotedly offered them at the sacred feet of the Mother and made Pranam. The Mother blessed me by putting her hands on my head. A feeling of great joy spread through my body like an electric current.

I felt I had obtained the fruit, the total result of all my spiritual yearning through all my previous lives. I was truly fortunate.

My mind became calm like a sea without waves. Tears of joy poured from my eyes.

A face full of compassion, eyes shedding grace, as if all divine beauty had burst out as a divine smile on her lips, the Mother once again put her hands on my head and blessed me, and gave two huge lotuses, one red and the other white. In a graceful voice sweeter than nectar she addressed this unworthy being and enquired whether I was comfortably lodged in that small room. "Mother, all my wants are fulfilled by Thy Grace, I am very happy and contented here." On that, Amrita said, "He is one who is always overflowing with joy, Mother."

All present, including the Mother, laughed so loudly that it seemed as if the whole building shook to its foundations. I was astonished and delighted to see my few dry tulsi leaves offered at the sacred feet of the Mother change into fresh green leaves with golden hues and beautiful forms.

The clothes that the Mother, Chinmayi, Pavitra and Amrita were wearing, the car in which they had come, their footwear—all were golden. All the people were

young, full of health and beauty as I had seen them 25 years earlier. The supreme divine delight was playing in their visages. Their clothes were of golden silk. The Mother had golden anklets of exquisite craftsmanship.

The Mother said, "Let us go to the second floor", and went up the very narrow staircase to Urmila's room. We followed her.

(Urmila is a young sadhika from Orissa. She had stayed at Shantiniketan for many years and studied there. It is only three years since she came to the Ashram and has been working at Ganpatram's. One month ago she came to live in the same building as I.)

Urmila received the Mother with great love and joy and devotion and offered two very big roses at her feet and did Pranam. On touching the divine feet, the two roses, one white and the other red, were suddenly transformed into marvellous and extremely beautiful flowers of a golden hue.

The Mother blessed Urmila by putting her hands on her head and gave her two very big lotuses, one white and the other red. They were emitting golden light.

In Urmila's room there was now a new, fine, rare and extremely pleasant scent which had not been there at any time before.

Peace and silence pervaded the whole atmosphere. Like the singing of a bee in a garden the transcendent 'OM' sound was continuously ringing. There was the Mother's immortal nectar like the piano-music that she used to play at midnight on every New Year's Day for blessing the world.

The consciousness was raised to the infinite transcendental plane and was steeped in Ananda and Divine Consciousness. At that time a marvellous sound woke me up from meditation. It was 3 a.m.

After this vision I find and feel the Mother's concrete physical presence inside the Ashram building.

One day in the Ashram meditation hall, in front of the Mother's sacred bed (the bed on which her pure and holy physical sheath had been kept for some days after she had assumed the inner golden body), I was meditating. With open eyes and not in an inner vision, I saw the Mother sitting on the bed with a glowing divine golden body which looked most concretely physical beyond a shadow of doubt.

SRI AUROBINDO'S SUPERMIND AND THE ANCIENT INDIAN SCRIPTURES

A LETTER

SRI Aurobindo has said that the Vedic Rishis knew the Supermind as "satyam-ritam-brihat"—"the True, the Right, the Vast". In their earliest scripture, the Rigveda, the terms most frequently used in a joint form are "satyam" and "ritam". "Brihat" additionally comes in as applied to one or the other e.g., "ritam-brihat" (I.75.5). The full Aurobindonian phrase occurs as such only in the Atharvaveda's great hymn to Earth (XII.1.1).

According to Sri Aurobindo, the Supermind is also denoted in the Rigveda by the expression "turiyam svid" (X.67.1)—"a certain fourth"—whose discoverer is said to have been Rishi Ayasya. This "turiya", however, is not to be mixed up with the fourth state going by that name in the Mandukya Upanishad (7, 12). The Rigvedic "fourth" is not the Mandukyian *grand finale*, the indescribable Supracosmic who is neither the concentrated "Prajna", the creator and lord of all, nor the subtle "Tejasa", the brilliant dweller in the mid-world, nor the gross-physical "Vaiswanara", the universal godhead of Matter. The "turiya" of the Rigveda stands "fourth" from below as well as from above: it is above the lower triplicity of "prithivi" (earth), "antariksha" (vital mid-world) and "dyau" (mind-heaven) but below the higher triplicity, "tridhatu", constituted by "vasu" (substance), "urj" (abounding force of being) and "priyam" or "mayas" (delight or love), the Rigvedic equivalents of the Vedantic "sat-chit-ananda" (Existence-Consciousness-Bliss) and the Puranic "satya-tapas-jana" (truth-energy-creative joy).

Sri Aurobindo appears to be in no doubt that the Vedic seers and the early Upanishadic sages were aware of the Supramental plane. But, in his view, the later sages of the Upanishads concentrated on the infinite "Atman", the sheer Self of selves, which is one with the eternal "Brahman", the ever-silent One without a second, instead of taking it as a supreme basis in the ultimate Reality for that Reality's illimitable power of expression or manifestation. The reason, to Sri Aurobindo, for this concentration on the inactive all-transcending Brahman-Atman is threefold: (1) The Vedics found no way to make the Supermind effective for transformation or divinisation of embodied life. The Upanishadics even held that once one definitively entered "the gates of the sun", symbolising the Supermind, there could be no return to earth-concerns. (2) The Upanishadics came more and more to mistake what the Isha Upanishad calls the "golden lid, covering the face of Truth", as the ultimate dynamic side of the Divine. The "golden lid" Sri Aurobindo distinguishes from the Supermind as the Overmind, a similar-dissimilar delegate of the supreme Truth-Consciousness. Since the Overmind lacks the power to divinise the nature-part of man's existence, the sages began to be convinced that this part which looked undivinsable could not be a real feature of the Brahman who is all: in other words, it must

be a strange anomaly, an unreality wearing the appearance of the real. The world thus was regarded in a manner which in philosophical history was the forerunner of the later Shankarite idea of Maya, the indescribable illusionist world-magic. (3) The experience of the supracosmic Absolute, the "nirguna" or quality-less Infinite and Eternal, brought home to the post-Rigvedic Yogis the "proof" of their conviction of the world's non-divinity and unreality, because in this experience the world does actually figure as an insubstantial floating phantasm.

Sri Aurobindo further says that originally the old Indian terms "vijñana" and "mahas" answered also to his Supermind. "Vijñana" occurs in the Taittiriya Upanishad as the level which is beyond the being of "manas" (mind) and precedes the being of "Ananda" (Bliss). The same Upanishad mentions "mahas" and informs us that Risha Mahachamasya discovered this level. Both "vijñana" and "mahas" came, in course of time, to denote the Overmind. At a still more subsequent period, most probably later than the main Puranas, "vijñana" got identified with "buddhi", the highest stratum of the human intelligence, the pure reason as distinguished from the sense-mind which was labelled as "manas". Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan carried on this practice in our own day. Possibly "mahas" suffered the same degrading.

Now between the intellect and the Beyond there stood nothing, and the Beyond was identified with the silent Brahman or passive Atman. The concept of "ishwara" or God remained and was deemed useful for a devotion-oriented or dynamism-motivated *practical* sadhana preparatory to the realisation of the ultimate Supracosmic—but, *theoretically* and *in the final reckoning*, this concept was understood as the silent Brahman (alias passive Atman) experienced within Maya as Creator and Lord. The moment Maya was got rid of in the experience of the supracosmic One without a second, Ishwara would disappear, having been rendered superfluous. He was classed as the Highest Illusion,

The last infirmity of noble minds
(to adapt a Miltonic phrase to our purpose).

In the Gita we have a great attempt to go back to the ancient integrality of spiritual vision. The "purushottama"—the Supreme Being—who is higher than the "kshara (mutable) purusha" and the "akshara (immutable) purusha" and who subsumes them—does strike one as a Supramental reality, especially when accompanied by the concept of "para-prakriti", the creative Supernature. But this latter concept is rather shadowy and what in the last resort encompasses our minds as "purushottama" is the shining shadow of the Supermind in the top-layer, the synthesising crest, of the Overmind from where Sri Krishna who, in Sri Aurobindo's view, is the Being of Bliss ("ananda") come as an Avatar, using the Overmind-divinity as his instrument of manifestation. He wove together the three Yogas—"karma" (Work) "jnana" (Knowledge) and "bhakti" (Devotion)—and suggested the secret of secrets, the abandonment of all "dharma"s (rules, laws, creeds) to take refuge solely in the "purushottama" who would deliver the mortal from all grief and evil. But still the world in the Gita's vision does not quite escape being "anityam asukham" (transient and unhappy),

for all the field it offers of a mighty victory of Righteousness as in the Bharata War.

The way in which the Acharyas, the erudite commentators, have interpreted the Gita, each in favour of his own penchant, is not entirely unconnected with the Gita's own many-sided synthesising failure to express what the Overmind fundamentally moves towards yet is unable to point out unequivocally, much less to reveal convincingly. Taking advantage of whatever temporary stress the Gita puts on "karma", "jnana" or "bhakti", the Acharyas harp on their spiritual predilections and feel self-justified because the Gita in fact falls short of a fully satisfying unification. The fault with the Acharyas lay in their missing its *mus* towards that unification. Sri Aurobindo alone has brought it out unmistakably and disclosed the Overmind Godhead as a help towards the Supermind even though it may be a sublime danger if dwelt in too concentratedly. Hence his designation of the descent of it into his physical being on 24 November 1926 as "siddhi" (fulfilment) and yet his "No" to the Mother some nine months later when she was ready to precipitate the Overmind creation on earth.

K. D. SETHNA

"SWEET MOTHER"

THESE words are written upon my heart,
My very blood sings out your name.
The throb of the pulse in my body—
Its repeated cadence is the same.

Oh Mother, my very pores are hungry
To breathe in that sweetest sound—
It's the ever-present echo in my ears,
The sweetness that on my tongue is found

In each wakeful hour,
In each lull of sleep,
My heart, my mind, my body
In the temple of your name I keep.

MINNIE N. CANTEENWALA

MYSTIC MOUNTAINS

THE Alps soar to lone pinnacles of light,
Intensities of isolated trance,
An upward rush of separate sanctities
The mind can cherish in its narrow sight
And worship with its fitting wonderment.
But O the thought-bewildering wall of white
Outrunning the extremes of human gaze,
Vanishing to the right, fading to the left
And lifting a universe of dreaming ice,
A vast virginity with no gap in God
To let the world's familiar face yearn through—
All life plucked from its level loiterings
To one dense danger of divinity,
A sheer leap everywhere of soul made rock
Of rapture unperturbable by time—
The Himalay's immense epiphany!

No thin melodic themes drawn to high hush
Which yet weighs never the ineffable on earth's ear
Nor wipes out the earth's eye with infinite blank:
Here an all-instrumental harmony
Sweeps to a multitudinous peace beyond—
Both ear and eye numb with eternal snow,
Stunned by an adamant absolute of height,
Until new senses burst from the unknown—
A vision of the farthest truth above,
Around, below: a hearing of heaven's heart
Behind each pulse-throb of mortality!
Too often have we adored the Alpine mood,
Submitted to the cleavage between crests,
Followed the peak of love or peak of power
Or wisdom rising to a silver summit.
The uttermost of each hangs still ungrasped:
Life is a breakless cry: without the whole
Self towering up in massive mystic sleep
How shall it wear the crown of the endless sky?...
O wanderer soul, drunkard of distances,
Perfection's pilgrim, touch with votive brow
The foot of the one transcendent Himalay!

8 June 1948

AMAL KIRAN

THE SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM ARCHIVES AND RESEARCH LIBRARY

THE literary career of Sri Aurobindo spans more than sixty years. It may seem inappropriate to speak of the "literary career" of one who was essentially a yogin, but to Sri Aurobindo yoga was not a retreat from action, but a plunge into it. Even during periods when he saw no one, he worked; he was not absorbed in inactive contemplation. And for Sri Aurobindo to work meant preeminently to write. In sixty years he produced tens of thousands of pages of poetry, philosophy, exegesis, essays, criticism, translations, journalism, letters, and notes, written in English, Bengali, Sanskrit and other languages. During his lifetime most of these writings were printed in journals and later in books. By the middle of the century some one hundred titles had been published.

Late in the sixties, in connection with Sri Aurobindo's birth centenary (1972), the publication of his complete works was undertaken. An effort was made not only to collect all works, large or small, that had been published in any form, but to discover, transcribe and bring out any writings that had remained unpublished. The first volume of the Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library was issued in 1970. By 1972 twenty-eight volumes had been printed. A supplementary volume, containing material which had come to the editorial office too late to be included in its proper volume, was published the next year. With the issue in 1975 of a reference volume, which included an index, a glossary, and biographical and bibliographical information, the publication of the Centenary Library was brought to a close.

The Mother was active as a "literary" creator for even longer than Sri Aurobindo. And if her writings are not as extensive as his, the printed record of her conversations alone will fill more than twenty volumes. The Mother wrote and spoke both in French and in English. Her collected works are presently being published in these two languages.

To preserve a written document in the form of a printed reproduction assures life only to a copy of the final draft. The document itself, the artifact which shows the hand of its creator, is only faintly represented by this copy. And even the printed text itself, as it passes from edition to edition, is, to some degree, subject to loss and corruption. For this reason it is essential that the original documents themselves are preserved. They are like bullion assuring the worth of paper currency.

Of course there is no need to insist that the manuscripts of great writers should be preserved. The veneration in which mankind's creative geniuses are held is enough to ensure that their papers are treated with reverence. But this is not enough to guarantee their preservation. Paper documents, especially those of the last two centuries, contain within them the seeds of their own destruction. Modern paper, acidic in its very composition, is made more so by the process of its manufacture. This acidity soon turns the paper yellow, then brown, and finally into a heap of dust. Before this happens, the ink often has eaten into the yellowing paper, if instead it has not faded

out of existence altogether. Add to this the effects of the environment—the gradual harm wrought by heat and moisture, and the more rapid ruination brought about by atmospheric pollution—and take into consideration the destruction caused by insects and rodents, and one has some idea of the natural hazards which assail even the best-handled piece of modern paper. But far and away the greatest danger is man. Wilful destruction and loss aside, it is men by their careless handling who do most to destroy the written heritage of their past. Not the least part of the damage is caused by well-intentioned but misguided people who try to preserve their fragile documents in makeshift ways.

As early as 1952 an attempt was made to repair some of Sri Aurobindo's manuscripts, and also to preserve them by means of the microfilm camera. Neither effort, however, was systematic or complete, and both were abandoned before much progress had been made. Later, while the work of collecting material for the Centenary Library was under way, the need of preserving the original documents was again recognised. There was for the first time talk of establishing a permanent Archives at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. In January 1973 a proposal was submitted to the Mother and received her approval. A suitable work-space and storage area was needed and construction was soon begun. Two rooms were added to an old French colonial house near the main Ashram buildings in Pondicherry. This house had been the Mother's residence between June 1914 and February 1915. Here she had written:

"Oh Lord, I am before Thee as an offering ablaze with the burning fire of divine union...."

"And that which is thus before Thee, is all the stones of this house and all that it contains, all those who cross its threshold and all those who see it, all those who are connected with it in one way or another, and by close degrees, the whole earth."

The rooms occupied by the Mother in this historic house have been kept intact.

By October 1973 the two new rooms were completed. The next year, while the editorial staff of the Centenary Library was compiling its reference volume, two young Ashram technicians began to microfilm some of Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's manuscripts. They also underwent training in the science of document conservation at the National Archives of India. But after these beginnings had been made, the scope of the work increased enormously. Among the manuscripts given for microfilming, quantities of unpublished material were found. The continuing influx of unexpected papers made it impossible to go about the microfilming in a systematic way. As for publication, there were many journals in which new writings could appear, but it was soon realised that occasional and sporadic publication was no solution.

By mid 1975 the main tasks before the Archives had been made clear:

- 1) To collect, arrange, classify and conserve under optimal conditions the manuscripts of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.
- 2) To repair papers needing repair, and take all other necessary steps to ensure their preservation.

3) To microfilm the manuscripts systematically, and to collect and produce other photographic documents.

4) To publish hitherto unpublished material systematically.

As the Archives began to take shape, several other areas of work were recognised:

5) To verify the texts of all published works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

6) To assemble a collection of all editions of all published works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and to prepare an exhaustive bibliography of them.

7) To collect, arrange and make available authentic documentary information on the lives of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

8) To prepare and publish works of reference for students of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

9) To collect, arrange and store other significant research materials.

Points 5 to 8 are in a way extensions of work that had already been undertaken by the research staff of the Centenary Library. The reference volume of that series (Volume 30) contained, besides its principal reference tools (index and glossary), sections giving errata and biographical and bibliographical information. The research staff's files relating to these areas have become the basis of whole sections of the Archives' work.

The Archives' collection of publications by and about Sri Aurobindo and the Mother grew gradually into a small library. This growth necessitated an expansion into another building. In this place works of research will be undertaken. When, after the expansion, an official designation was needed for the Archives, the name chosen was *Sri Aurobindo Ashram Archives and Research Library*. As a department of the Ashram, the Archives is a part of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, a public charitable trust. Its staff consists of ten full-time and a half-dozen part-time workers, all of whom are devotees of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, and serve gratuitously.

The nine points listed above represent the nine principal sections of the Archives' work.

Manuscripts. The heart of the Archives collections are the papers of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Sri Aurobindo's manuscripts have been arranged according to a twofold division, by type and by subject. The physical types are Notebook, Loose Sheet and Printed Book; subject classifications are General, Vedic-Linguistic, Drama, etc. By category, the numbers of notebooks and loose sheets that have been arranged and microfilmed are as follows:

General notebooks	66
General loose sheets (major groupings)	8
Vedic notebooks	53
Vedic loose sheets (major groupings)	3
Dramatic notebooks and major loose sheet groupings	21
Other	32

The manuscripts of Sri Aurobindo's two epics, *Iliad* and *Savitri*, have yet to be finally arranged.

Notebooks and loose sheet groupings are numbered in series chronologically. NBG1, the first General notebook, was used by Sri Aurobindo at Cambridge around 1890. LSG1j, the last sub-group of General loose sheets (prose), consists of passages for the revised edition of *The Future Poetry*, written at Sri Aurobindo's dictation in 1950, the last year of his life. The chronological order is necessarily rough. Many manuscripts have no dates, and must be classified according to handwriting, notebook type, etc. Certain notebooks were used over a period of many years—sometimes during two or more distinct and widely separated periods. A few notebooks are devoted to a single subject, but in many one finds altogether unrelated writings next to one another or even mixed together in the most bewildering way. The first and most fundamental task of the Archives was to describe the contents of each notebook and loose sheet grouping page by page. It took more than two years to do this. Physical descriptions and chronological data were provided at the same time. Later other "finding aids", such as card-files were created. Similar arrangements have been begun for Sri Aurobindo's extensive correspondence. The Printed Books category of manuscripts includes all papers used by Sri Aurobindo directly in the preparation of books for the press, as well as proofs and corrected copies of the books themselves.

The manuscripts of the Mother have not been finally arranged. Mostly loose sheets, they have been placed in such categories as early writings, writings for the *Bulletin*, letters, notes, etc. After the completion of the publication of her Collected Works, a final arrangement will be made.

Probably more than ninety-five percent of the manuscripts of Sri Aurobindo are in the Archives' collection. Efforts are being made to obtain what remains. It is important that these precious documents are properly preserved.

Preservation. An article in the next issue will give an introduction to the science of preservation. Members of the Archives' staff have studied the various aspects of archival conservation at institutions in India, England and America. Some of the Archives' holdings are already kept in a cold-storage room in the main Ashram building. An air-conditioner keeps the temperature of this room around 25° C. Another air-conditioner and a dehumidifier will have to be installed in order to maintain the temperature and relative humidity closer to optimal levels. A fumigation chamber has recently been constructed, and many books and papers have already been treated in it. Some repairing of rare first editions has been done. Experiments have been made to determine the right materials—paper, paste, etc.—for use in Pondicherry's exceedingly hot, humid and salty climate.

Microfilming. All of Sri Aurobindo's notebooks and loose sheets, barring the manuscripts of *Savitri* and *Iliad* and a few others received only last year, have been microfilmed systematically. The manuscripts of his two epics, which were among the first papers to be microfilmed, will be taken up again after they have been arranged more perfectly. The same applies to most of the Mother's papers and certain corres-

pendences. The Printed Books manuscripts relating to *The Life Divine* have been arranged, described and microfilmed in seventeen rolls. Most first editions of Sri Aurobindo's books and the various journals in which his writings first appeared have also been photographically preserved. In connection with the biographical research discussed below, the Archives has acquired from places in India and England many microfilm rolls and photocopies of documents bearing on Sri Aurobindo's life.

The microfilming section has its own darkroom, where photocopies can be made from negative microfilm. It is hoped that some day positive photocopies of all Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's manuscripts and of other important documents will be produced. This will make it unnecessary to subject the originals to avoidable wear and tear. Also on the programme is the making of one or more positive microfilms from the original negatives. When this is done the latter can be treated specially and stored safely away, and only the former used on the Archives' microfilm reader. Most modern archives, as a precaution, store one set of positive microfilms in a place different from the one where the originals and the negative microfilms are kept. There are special problems connected with the storage of photographic prints and negatives (including microfilm) which are being studied.

Publication. Between 1951 and 1972 many writings by Sri Aurobindo that had never been published during his lifetime appeared in journals brought out by the Ashram or groups connected with it. Later most of these writings were reproduced in books and all of them were collected in the Centenary Library. But no complete inventory of unpublished material was ever made and no strategy worked out for its systematic publication. All this became possible only after the arrangement, classification and description of the manuscripts referred to above had been completed. Material which came to light after the last volume of the Centenary Library was issued in 1973 was at first published in various Ashram and Ashram-related journals, but it was soon realised that a more systematic approach was called for. Therefore *Sri Aurobindo: Archives and Research* was created. This biannual journal, whose first issue appeared on 4 April 1977, was designed to be a continuation of the Centenary Library. The journal's format—type-specifications, layout, paper, etc.—is identical with that of the thirty-volume series. The order of material follows the order of the Centenary volumes—first political writings, then other early writings, Bengali pieces, poetry, etc. In the seven issues of this journal that have so far been brought out some 600 pages of previously unpublished texts and another 150 pages of research material have appeared. Eventually all writings of Sri Aurobindo deemed fit for publication (including all material published in other Ashram journals after 1975) will appear in *Archives and Research*.

The publication of the *Collected Works of the Mother* was undertaken in connection with her Centenary (1978) and is still under way. The copy-texts for the fifteen volumes of this series have been provided by the Archives. Many of the Mother's writings had never appeared in book-form and had to be compiled. Other

pieces are appearing in the Collected Works for the first time.

The preparation of texts for publication is a complex and difficult matter. To say that Sri Aurobindo's or the Mother's writings are "edited" would be misleading, for that would imply that an editor had imposed his preferences on them, which is not the case. All texts of Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's writings represent the author's final intentions. But to arrive at a final text, the person responsible, whom it is convenient to call an editor, must make many decisions. A sometimes difficult-to-read manuscript must be transcribed. Certain words may require several attempts at decipherment, and some resist it altogether. More than one layer of revision may be present. If the text is being prepared from a draft that was never given final revision, the punctuation may be incomplete. Sometimes this can be reconstructed from a previous draft; at other times the editor must use his own discretion. His knowledge of the author's handwriting, habits of writing, and methods of correction are also drawn upon in other circumstances, such as when he is faced with what is clearly a slip. Sri Aurobindo admits to having made these: "Do you mean this is the first [slip] you have met?" he once wrote, in a humorous mood, to a disciple. "I used to make ten per page formerly in the haste of my writing. Evidently I am arriving towards a supramental accuracy." If any verbal emendations are made to a text printed in *Archives and Research*, the editors state the fact clearly in their notes. It normally takes three separate readings (or, with the first transcription, four) to produce a text free from errors. Then, after three careful readings of proofs, the text can be presented in the moral certainty that the editors have not interfered in any way with the transmission of thought between the author and his readers.

Verification. However much care may be taken, mistakes are still made. The editorial staff of the Archives not only must prepare the texts which appear in *Archives and Research*, but also must verify material already published in the Centenary Library. They produce, when necessary, new editions of old books, in which newly discovered material is added, and old texts are checked carefully sentence by sentence and word by word. Such a verification of the text of *Savitri* is in progress. It is hoped that in a few years a critical text of the poem will be brought out.

Bibliographical. A complete collection of each edition of each book written by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother is a necessity for simple purposes of record, for the making of bibliographies, and for "textual criticism", the establishment of printed texts. Few people know that virtually every printed work that gets beyond its first edition becomes gradually more or less corrupt. This is as true of the classics as it is of modern works. The textual critic must go back to the last edition seen by the author, to the first edition, and even to the manuscript to arrive at the text the author wanted to have printed. Happily, the reverence in which Sri Aurobindo is held and the care that has been taken while printing his books have kept them relatively free from errors. A bibliography of all titles by Sri Aurobindo published up to 1974 was included in the reference volume of the Centenary Library. A complete descriptive bibliography of all his books, articles and even manuscripts would be a great help to

scholars, and will be undertaken when possible.

Biographical research. Neither Sri Aurobindo nor the Mother liked anyone to give importance to their outer lives. But both permitted biographies of them to be written, and even provided their biographers with information. They did this in order to clear up certain misconceptions and falsehoods that had entered circulation. The Archives' staff began collecting material on Sri Aurobindo's life in order to prepare a factual chronology for the reference volume of the Centenary Library. Since then, many public and private archives, libraries, etc. in London, Cambridge, Baroda, Bombay, New Delhi, Calcutta and Madras have been searched, and large amounts of authentic biographical material have been uncovered, copied and filed. A.B. Purani's *Life of Sri Aurobindo*, an authentic work which was undertaken with Sri Aurobindo's approval, was revised by the Archives' staff in the light of their new material. A really complete documentary biography is a need of the future.

Works of reference. The first research work completed by the Archives' staff was the reference volume (Volume 30) of the Centenary Library. Since then a number of other works for scholars have come out, the most important of which is *Glossary of Terms in Sri Aurobindo's Writings*. As new editions of Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's works are published, the Archives provides indexes and glossaries for them. Other works of reference under preparation are a revision and enlargement of Sri Aurobindo's *Vedic Glossary* and a glossary (with index) of all proper names referred to by Sri Aurobindo in his writings. This latter work will come to many hundred pages when finally published. Mention has been made of the Archives' biographical and bibliographical projects above.

Other Collections. The term "archives" is most often applied to organised collections of personal and institutional papers possessing research value. Quantities of such material have come to the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Archives. It consists of letters and other papers, photographs, works of art, and other creations and objects, and relates to the history of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, the lives of the disciples who have lived and done yoga here, and other people who have somehow come into contact with Sri Aurobindo, the Mother or the Ashram. All this possesses research value, and, despite the shortage of storage space, it is being welcomed by the Archives and put away carefully until the time comes when it can be gone through. The Archives is also looking into the possibilities of oral history, the collection of recorded spoken documents, which is another important aspect of modern archivology.

ARCHIVES AND RESEARCH STAFF

THE CLOUD MESSENGER

A NEW TRANSLATION OF KALIDASA'S MEGHADUTA

(Continued from the issue of May 1980)

*Lines surviving from Sri Aurobindo's lost translation and included here are
in italics.*

THE Ganges now approach as she between
The hallowed hills Himalay's kingdom leaves:
A stairway to the Heavens, to wash all sin

From hopeless souls she came and Hell receives
Her saviour feet; above the world she plays
In Shiva's locks: as through their maze she weaves

Her wavy hands and on his crest-moon lays
Light fingers, at her rival's furrowed front—
The snow-fair Goddess—white her laughter sprays.

When thou like a God's elephant shalt slant
Down from the sky to sip her currents clear
As sparkling crystal, then will she enchant—

For angling into her wilt thou appear
Imaged—as if with her dark sister flood
The Jumna her far confluence were here.

Its cliffs with musk from nimble deer imbued,
The snow-peaked realm of her high birth at last
Rises ahead; on some bright altitude

Repose there till thy weariness has passed,
Matching in beauty the black sportive clay
By Shiva's bull on its hide's splendour cast.

The Mountain's soul should sudden fire dismay
From wind-stirred chafing cedar-branches sprung,
And blazing up spew sparks that sputtering prey

On the yaks' gorgeous tails, discharge among

Those hordes thy deluge: the distressed to aid
Are might and riches given to the strong.

At thy lion's roar will eight-legged Sharabhs mad
With vain hate leap at thee; as crushed they sprawl
Upon the rocks, to that self-injury add

Derisive pelting hail—for surely all
Deserve contempt that without hope of fruit
Squandering their breath by their own action fall.

The stone slab printed with the viewless foot
Of the moon-crested Lord, by saints with rite
Of constant worship served, circling salute:

For souls steadfast in faith it is a sight
Potent at death all evils to unbind
And with his Peace for ever to unite.

*Of Tripur slain in lovely dances joined
And linked troops the Oreads of the hill
Are singing and inspired with rushing wind*

*Sweet is the noise of bamboos fluting shrill;
Thou thundering in the mountain-glens with cry
Of drums shouldst the sublime orchestra fill.*

As snow-capped marvels round thee multiply,
Sweep to the Swan's Gate, Bhrigu's cloven road,
Then north in outstretched grandeur through it fly,

*Dark like the cloudy foot of highest God
When starting from the dwarf-shape world-immense
With Titan-quelling step through heaven he strode.*

Beyond in crystalline magnificence,
Mirror for nymphs their beauties to admire,
Its joints once cracked by Giant violence,

Mounts vast Kailas whose hly peaks aspire,
Like Shiva's boisterous laughter across Time
Upheaped, to occupy the vault entire.

Like women's new-crushed kohl thy lustre, climb
 A hospitable ridge resplendent-white
 As fresh-carved ivory: the scene sublime

Will from unblinking orbs rapt looks invite,
 Recalling the Plough-wielder when he spread
 The black silk on his shoulder's lucent might.

Baring his wrist, its horrid serpent shed,
 Should the Ascetic his bride's hand support
 While gracefully their pleasure-Hill they tread,

On the gem-studded slopes that walk escort
 Moulding thyself to steps, a staircase smooth
 To kiss the Goddess' feet in her fair sport.

Thee will the nymphs in their voluptuous youth
 To a shower-chamber merrily convert
 As in the summer heat soft limbs to soothe

They prick thee with sharp diamonds and make spurt
 Delicious jets—should they not let thee loose
 Spare not thy frightening thunders to assert.

Savouring Lake Manas' waters which produce
 The golden lotus, granting awhile, to please
 The Sky-God's elephant, thyself for use

As a choice head-cloth, with fine drops the breeze
 Dappling that stirs the magic Tree's rich yield
 Of raiment, on the Mountain take thy ease.

Sunk in his lap, her Ganges-garment spilled
 Beside her, charmed sight not to be effaced
 From the heart's vision once with it fulfilled,

Rests Alaka, whose marble brow is graced
 Yearly with clouds that draped in rain appear
 Like beauteous locks with netted pearls enlaced.

Her mansions wondrously with thee compare
 For many riches: women lightning-bright

In loveliness, great murals no less fair

Than Indra's bow, the thunderous drums at night
Rumbling in concert, courts that sapphire-paved
Like water shine and towers that touch thy height.

There all year long is Autumn's lotus waved
In dainty fingers while to tresses cling
Fresh Winter jasmines and cheeks pollen-laved

Wear Dew-time's gold; red amaranth of Spring
For braids and Summer's soft ear-blooms abound
With flowers the Rains for the hair's parting bring.

*For death and birth keep not their mystic round
In Alaka, there from the deathless trees
The blossom lapses never to the ground*

*But lives for ever garrulous with bees
All honey-drunk—nor yet its sweets resign.
For ever in their girdling companies*

The swans round lilies sail that never pine;
There peacocks never lose their glorious trains
And nights glow ever with a moon divine.

(To be continued)

RICHARD HARTZ

NOTES

Sharabhs · mythical beasts, reputed to be deadly enemies of the lion

Tripur: the lord of the three demon-cities which once subjected earth, the midworld and heaven to their oppressive dominion. The cities and their inhabitants were destroyed by Shiva in response to the Gods' supplications.

Swan's Gate: the pass through which swans reach and return from Manas Lake in their annual migrations. It is said to have been carved out with arrows by Rama of the Axe, the illustrious warrior-descendant of the primeval sage Bhrigu.

Dwarf: When the Titan Bali was afflicting earth and the Gods, Vishnu in answer to the sufferers' prayers appeared as Vamana, the dwarf. Obtaining from Bali the ironic boon of as much land as he could cover in three paces, Vamana towered suddenly to his cosmic stature. Measuring the earth with one step and the heavens with the second, with the third he thrust down Bali to reign thenceforth in the underworld.

Giant violence: the attempt by the mighty ten-headed, twenty-armed demon-king Ravana to

carry off Kailas to adorn his own kingdom of Lanka
 Plough-wielder: Balarama, elder brother of Krishna
 Ascetic: Shiva.
 Sky-God: Indra, rider of the archetypal elephant Airavata.
 Tree: the Wishing-tree, yielder of all desired objects
 Pollen-laved: rubbed with pollen from flowers of the Lodh-tree These bloom in Shishira, the
 second of the cool seasons of the Indian year
 Soft ear-blooms Shirisha flowers
 Flowers the Rains bring blossoms of the Kadamba tree.

On Sale

VOLUME II OF

Glimpses of The Mother's Life

Compiled by *Nilima*
 with the help of *Shraddhavan*
 Edited by *K. D. Sethna*

WITH MANY PICTURES—REVISED PRICE : Rs. 35/-

Here, as in Volume I, the Mother emerges as a spiritual figure of extraordinary sympathy, charm and creative insight.

Once again we come into contact with her varied activity, inward and outward, together with her divine reality in each passing moment as well as through the aeons of earthly evolution. Once again the great presence of Sri Aurobindo intensifies her own ambiance and envelops us both on its own and more intimately through her warm closeness to our affairs, which includes even the animal and plant world around us.

Available from

S A B D A

Sri Aurobindo Books Distribution Agency

Pondicherry-605 002

SRI AUROBINDO AND PROFESSOR ALEXANDER: THEIR THEORIES OF EVOLUTION

SRI AUROBINDO (1872-1950) and Prof. Alexander (1859-1938), two eminent contemporaries of the present century representing two distinct cultures one of the East and the other of the West, develop two theories of evolution, the former from a transcendental standpoint and the latter from an empirical and scientific background, which reveal some important resemblances as well as certain fundamental differences. Both therefore present very interesting studies in comparison.

Sri Aurobindo is by far the most original and creative thinker of modern India. The rare versatility of his genius, his profundity of thought, his rich exuberance of creativity and his capacity to probe into the depths of human experience and to achieve a synthetic comprehension have enabled him to raise a massive structure of metaphysics which is simply astounding. Nevertheless, Sri Aurobindo, as is well-known, was not an academic philosopher in the ordinary usage of the term and it was none of his intention to develop a speculative system of his own, as he himself admitted: "I had only to write down in terms of intellect all that I had observed and come to know in practising Yoga daily, and philosophy was there automatically. But that is not being a philosopher."¹ Evidently Sri Aurobindo was essentially a mystic and a *Yogi par excellence*, a daring explorer in the realm of the unseen and unknown. As we are aware, Sri Aurobindo, on his return to India, studied with devotion the various insights recorded in the Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Epics, Tantras and also the different systems of Indian philosophy, both orthodox and unorthodox. "He tried to grapple thus with all the basic problems of Indian culture, unravel the mysteries and symbolisms and explore an integral point of view which would harmonize the divergent trends of Indian thought, and synthesize them also with the valuable elements of Western thought. He builds, with rare confidence, on the convergent spiritual trends, the perennial stream of Western and Indian thought."² His thought-current, however, moved mainly in the arena of the Vedic and Upanishadic culture and ultimately he came to advocate some form of Vedanta which he designated the "real Monism, the true Advaita" as against the Advaita Vedanta of Shankara which he criticised as Illusionism. The expression 'Integral Advaita' also conveys his philosophical position. His *Life Divine* is acclaimed as his *magnum opus*, wherein his philosophy of evolution has been delineated in meticulous detail. *The Life Divine* is a magnificent synthesis of both mystic and metaphysical elements, as he was never sparing in outpouring the flashes of his intimate mystic realisation along with the presentation of metaphysical truths in conceptual terms and categories.

Of all the great Evolutionists of the West, Prof. Samuel Alexander has given the most brilliant exposition of a growing universe in his outstanding treatise *Space, Time and Deity*. His account of the evolutionary process resembles in many respects Sri Aurobindo's theory of evolution, though the dissimilarity between

both seems to be even more evident. An examination of the thought-current of Prof. Alexander will enable us to appreciate the basic truth of his view of evolution. Alexander, as is often noted, has developed his semi-naturalistic type of Emergent Evolution on the basis of neo-realistic and materialistic metaphysics and in this adventure he was strongly supported by Einstein's theory of relativity and by the findings of H. Minkowski. In fact, the conception of Space-Time would hardly have occurred to Alexander had he not been acquainted with the relativity theories of Einstein and with Bergson's doctrine of duration, real time. It also seems highly probable that Alexander's formulation of Space-Time as the primordial reality has been influenced by Kant's conception of Space and Time as *a priori* forms of perception. However, he re-interpreted these conceptions and gave them a new meaning and significance.

If the philosophical enterprise is not to be exhausted in the linguistic analysis or hair-splitting of abstract concepts, if philosophy stands for something comprehensive rather than mere logical quibbling or narrow academicism, then the problem of evolution must be an engaging preoccupation for any serious philosophical enquiry. The Idea of evolution is certainly more prominent in Western Philosophy than in Indian Philosophy and in fact, barring the solitary exception of the Sāṃkhya, where the problem received somewhat elaborate treatment, no other system of Indian Philosophy considered it worth-while to examine this problem in its proper perspective. The reason for not giving due and adequate attention to a problem of such paramount importance lies in the extremely individualistic outlook of Indian Philosophy which impelled it to investigate the problem of individual liberation. The Sāṃkhya system endeavoured to lend a cosmic character to the process of gradual transformation of the unconscious Prakṛti from its state of equilibrium of the gunas on account of the contact with the conscious Puruṣa. But this theory too is vitiated by the 'unconscious immanent teleology' which seems to be a contradiction in terms. Moreover, there are many unexplained gaps in the evolutionary process about which Dr. S. Radhakrishnan rightly remarks: "The principles of the sāmkhya system cannot be logically deduced from Prakṛti, and they seem to be set down as its products, thanks to historical accidents. There is no deductive development of the products from one Prakṛti."³

The notion of Evolution which was until recently the most engaging problem of both Science and Philosophy in the Western World was first brought into vogue by Huxley and Darwin in modern times, though the ancient Greek thinkers, particularly Plato and Aristotle, were quite familiar with the idea of evolution. Aristotle moved in the right direction when he described it as a process of gradual transformation of the potential into the actual. In the Neo-platonism of Plotinus, we have a glimpse of the spiritualistic interpretation of the evolutionary process in his theory of Emanations. In the history of modern European Philosophy, the concept of evolution exerted a tremendous influence with a certain magical charm on the imagination of many great scholars, scientists and philosophers and consequently we have a host of

evolutionary theories of a bewildering variety. By common agreement Emergent Evolution is said to be the most satisfactory theory of them all. Emergent Evolution is of three types, namely Naturalistic, Semi-Naturalistic and Idealistic advocated respectively by the three eminent Emergentists: R. W. Sellars, S. Alexander and Lloyd Morgan. For drawing a parallel between Alexander's Emergent Evolution and Sri Aurobindo's evolutionary scheme which is evidently emergent in character, we propose to give a short sketch of Alexander's theory first and follow it up with a brief survey of Sri Aurobindo's.

Alexander's scientific bias has compelled him to visualise the origin and development of the world absolutely from the materialistic standpoint. His story of evolution begins with a universe developed out of some physical harbinger of matter which is homogeneous and indefinite and this is Space-Time, the primordial reality, the original causal matrix, "the stuff or matrix (or matrices) out of which things or events are made, the medium in which they are precipitated and crystallised" and all finite beings are in "some sense complexes of space and time."⁴ From this primordial matrix, things, events and beings emerge in a slow and gradual process and at each and every level of evolutionary movement something new and different emerges from the antecedent state, while retaining whatever is already existent. The scientific theories and other factors responsible for Alexander's assumption of Space-Time as the ultimate stuff of things and beings, are now a matter of common knowledge and constitute a part of the history of Western Philosophy. But what seems to be most significant is that unlike the physical scientists and mathematicians, who assumed the existence of some substance, electricity or matter, as occupying Space-Time from the the very beginning, Alexander conceives Space-Time as empty of all such contents though possessing the potency of generating them all by its essential nature of motion. Space-Time, however, presents a very complex system which by itself is inconceivable though we can approach it by the idea of motion. Alexander has not explained how motion could be perceived without points. He made it abundantly clear that Space-Time, the primordial stuff of all things including mind and other emergents, is wholly physical in character. All existents are differentiations or groupings of Space-Time differing in degrees of complexity of constitution. The all-too-familiar diagrammatic representation known as 'pyramid of Emergent Evolution' drawn by Morgan⁵ shows some distinct levels of evolutionary movement but this by no means gives an exhaustive account of it. In Alexander's own language, "In the course of time, which is the principle of movement, the matrix of space-time breaks up into finites of ever increasing complexity. At certain points in the history of things finites assume new empirical Qualities which are distinctive of levels of experience, primary Qualities, matter, secondary Qualities, life and mind."⁶

As regards the future picture of Evolution, Alexander's view is that although the highest of these empirical qualities so far emerged is mind or consciousness by way of "constellations of motions" the process is still continuing, for there is no reason why it should stop. The next higher quality which will emerge from mind is Deity embody-

ing within itself all the highest intellectual and moral values. So Deity or Divinity, according to Alexander, is going to be the next higher empirical Quality of the evolutionary wave. But its definite shape and manner of embodiment is difficult to visualise. And, from Deity, the Deity of Deity and so on *ad infinitum*. As regards Alexander's belief in the emergence of Deity, he most unexpectedly falls back upon religious experience which indicates a striving towards the divine. Deity, however, is not to be identified with God; God who is infinite is not actual, but ideal. Deity too is a shifting and elusive ideal never to be realised. Deity is the next quality to be emerged in relation to man but once this is realised, it will cease to be Deity any more and it will receive a different designation—say, Angel.

Another important feature of his thought is his conception of Nisus—the creative evolutionary urge, which, he thinks, is responsible for the production of higher and higher qualities. Nisus until the emergence of mind was non-psychical, but as soon as sentience, or incipient level of mind, is reached, it becomes psychical and teleological. It seems therefore that Alexander's scheme of evolution was naturalistic, guided by a blind physical Nisus till the level of mind is attained, but with the introduction of intelligent Nisus his scheme assumed what may be called a semi-naturalistic colour and here we have an amalgam of determinism and teleology.

Sri Aurobindo's evolutionary theory constitutes the cornerstone of his philosophic creed. Lest we confuse his doctrine of Evolution with a theological account of creation, let it be prefaced by an outline of his position with regard to the true meaning of Philosophy and its method. Philosophy, for Sri Aurobindo, is not sheer intellectual abstraction. It must be close to life and hence reject exclusiveness of all kinds. It should move towards integration and unity of experience. An exclusive analytical way of thinking by reducing our thought and language into lifeless concepts and categories, however important it may appear to logic and epistemology and egoistically satisfying, can never be an effective instrument for deciphering the meaning of life and existence. In Philosophy what seems to be most essential, according to Sri Aurobindo, is a synthetic handling of experience, for extreme specialisation will lead to fragmentation or compartmentalisation of knowledge. Hence, according to him, the standpoint of Philosophy must be all-inclusive and comprehensive and its truth multi-dimensional instead of being linear. Sri Aurobindo therefore affirms the imperative necessity of collaboration between Philosophy and Yoga—a sort of self-discipline, so as to develop a higher intuitive process. Modern Philosophy, which is wedded to the analytical way of thinking and is accustomed to the use of the standards of natural science and its language, may find it difficult to re-orient its outlook, but this should not preclude us from appreciating Sri Aurobindo's evolutionary scheme based on his intimate intuitive realisation as the possible alternative version of the history of human progress.

Sri Aurobindo's theory of terrestrial evolution as the gradual self-manifestation of the Supreme Divine Being in material conditions has its root in the Upanishadic teachings of the essential identity of all existents, and hence he viewed the entire evo-

lutionary process from a spiritual perspective and calls it spiritual evolution because it is the evolution of the spirit hidden in the World-Order, an evolution also guided by the spirit.

As Sri Aurobindo says, "All evolution is in essence a heightening of the force of consciousness in the manifest being so that it may be raised into the greater intensity of what is still unmanifest, from matter into life, from life into mind, from mind into the spirit."⁷ In presenting a spiritual orientation, Sri Aurobindo keeps company with Hegel in so far as the general character of the evolutionary scheme is concerned, but he parts from Hegel in respect of the nature of Ultimate Reality. This difference is undoubtedly basic. The western scientific notion of Evolution affirms that life developed out of matter, and mind or consciousness out of life. Sri Aurobindo extrapolates the scientific explanation of the past events and projects this idea into the future evolutionary movement. The highest stage of evolution so far reached is consciousness which bears the promise and potency of something higher than itself. In other words, cosmic evolution cannot be said to have come to a stop with the emergence of consciousness. Man is not the crowning consummation of Evolution. As matter has developed into mind, "then there seems to be little objection to a farther step in the series and the admission that mental consciousness may itself be only a form and a veil of higher states which are beyond Mind."⁸ In addition to this speculative justification of further transformation beyond mental consciousness, Sri Aurobindo refers to the undeniable fact of man's highest aspiration, "the unconquerable impulse of man towards God, Light, Bliss, Freedom, Immortality", which indicates the gradual unveiling of the spirit upon earth.

Sri Aurobindo realises that the naturalistic account of evolution cannot adequately explain how mental consciousness could come into being from physical stuff unless we assume that conscious force or spirit was originally concealed in it from the beginning. In Sri Aurobindo's own language, "Evolution is a word which merely states the phenomenon without explaining it. For there seems to be no reason why Life should evolve out of material elements or Mind out of living form, unless we accept the Vedantic solution that Life is already involved in Matter and Mind in Life."⁹ Following Vedantic traditions, Sri Aurobindo calls the Supreme Divine Reality Sachchidananda, Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, and presupposes the twin principles of Involution and Evolution. Evolution is just the reverse process of Involution. Involution is the self-concealment and self-limitation by which the supreme Divine Reality veils itself into different stages until it assumes the appearance of matter, the 'Cosmic Inconscience.' Sri Aurobindo also calls this process 'descent.' It is because of the descent of the Spirit into Matter, Life and Mind that these can again ascend to the higher levels of the Spirit. Evolution thus is a process of gradual self-manifestation, progressive self-development in and through different kinds of higher and higher species till it reaches its original spiritual source. Evolution is thus the home-coming or the return-journey of the spirit. This makes it abundantly clear that the meaning and significance of evolution remains unintelligible unless considered along with

involution. In fact, involution is the counterpart of evolution and the twin processes constitute the two phases of the same wave. Sri Aurobindo himself has stated the different stages of involution and evolution in the following way: "The Divine descends from pure Existence through the play of Consciousness-Force and Bliss and the creative medium of Supermind into cosmic being; we ascend from Matter through a developing life, soul and mind and the illuminating medium of Supermind towards the divine being."¹⁰

By contemplating involution as the logical counterpart of evolution Sri Aurobindo seeks to advance a rational teleological justification of the evolutionary transformation and this clearly distinguishes his theory from other evolutionary theories of the West. Evidently the Western notion of creative urge or Nisus, said to be the driving force of evolutionary process, is an enigma of the evolutionary drama. Bergson's irrational 'Élan vital' is a blind, instinctive force which makes poetry of everything that should have been prose. Alexander's half-insentient and half-sentient Nisus offers no better explanation. Lloyd Morgan is, however, bold enough to transform this principle of urge into the 'Directive Activity' of God. Notwithstanding Sri Aurobindo's avowed disagreement with the Sāṃkhya evolutionary scheme, it seems that he has been greatly influenced by its doctrine of causality, Satkārya Vāda, *i.e.* the effect pre-exists in the cause prior to its production or origination. The principle presumably provided the basis of his formulation of involution through which he seeks a satisfactory solution of the most perplexing problem raised by the evolution of the higher from the lower. Unless we are willing to face the consequences of the dictum 'something comes out of nothing', Satkārya Vāda seems to be the only sufficient and satisfactory principle which rationally explains the emergence of the higher from the lower.

Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy of Evolution is mainly concerned with the future destiny of man upon earth. And the most characteristic feature of his concept of future evolution is that a divine life is to be realised on earth itself. Sri Aurobindo, as we have seen, does not believe that the evolutionary process has reached its apex with the birth of human personality. Such an assumption amounts to falsification of the fundamental trend of evolution. Alexander, like Sri Aurobindo, believes that man is not the last word of evolution. It is Sri Aurobindo's firm faith that the time has come when evolution will take a leap into the next higher stage, the stage of Supermind and the possibility of the future supramental stage is rooted in the mental existence or, in other words, 'mental-animal-humanity' contains the promise of the "spiritual and supramental being."

The Supermind (Vijnana) or creative wisdom of the Supreme Being descends and as a result mind, life and matter are radically transformed. No real and radical change is possible for man without a direct descent of the Divine Consciousness—the Divine Light. As a result of the descent of the Supermind, human beings will be transformed into Gnostic beings or Supermen. Matter, life and mind will not remain where they are. They will be divinised. Nature will turn into Supernature and

all present limitations and impediments will be removed forever. Sri Aurobindo's conception of Superman who is a perfectly spiritual being is certainly different from Nietzsche's. Dr. R.S. Misra compares the Gnostic being with the Superman of Nietzsche in the following way, "whereas the Gnostic being is a divine man, possessed of the higher qualities of goodness, beauty, love, bliss, divine strength, etc., the Nietzschean Superman is an embodiment of a Titan or Asura and is possessed of the qualities of physical strength, indomitable will, ruthlessness, egoism and so on."¹¹

This transformation known as the Triple Transformation which will radically change man into a Gnostic being will take place in three stages. These are: psychic, spiritual and supramental transformations. "The highest spiritual ideal of man is to attain integral self-perfection so that he can fully and effectively co-operate with the divine will immanently operative in Evolution. The spiritual destiny of man is to function as a co-partner of God in life's creative adventure—as an intelligent playmate of the world-spirit in the building of divine life."¹² This is in brief the highly optimistic scheme of Sri Aurobindo's evolutionism.

(To be continued)

RANJIT KUMAR ACHARJEE

REFERENCES

- 1 From a letter to Dilip Kumar Roy quoted by R. R. Dīwakar *Mahayogi Sri Aurobindo* Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. Bombay. 1962
2. Dr. D. M. Datta. *The Chief Currents, of Contemporary Philosophy*. Calcutta University P 153.
3. *Indian Philosophy*. George Allen & Unwin Ltd London. Vol. II. P 294
4. Samuel Alexander *Space, Time and Deity* Vol I P. 38.
5. Llyod Morgan *Emergent Evolution* 1923. P 11
- 6 S. Alexander. *Space Time and Deity* Vol. II P. 335.
7. Sri Aurobindo *The Life Divine* India Library Society. New York City. Third Edition, 1965. P. 647.
8. *Ibid.* P. 5.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.* P. 243.
11. Dr. R. S. Misra *The Integral Advaitism of Sri Aurobindo* P 336.
12. Dr. H. D. Choudhuri. *Sri Aurobindo The Prophet of Life Divine*, Sri Aurobindo Ashram. Pondicherry. 1973 (Reprinted) P 33

INGESTION

AMOEBAS put out pseudopods,
We men are more refined,
And use the techniques of the gods,
Although we use them blind:

We need no protoplasmic paws
To seize our tasty prey,
A subtle inward power draws
His vital force away.

We feed on but do not destroy
The lives of other men
And then like playful cats we toy
With what we taste again.

For though it's long since there emerged
From the primaeval slime,
Our protozoan forbears, urged
To evolution's climb,

Becoming ever fitter for
The struggle that is life,
Mutating into species more
Adapted to its strife,

We still remain the one-celled beast
We were when we began,
With grasping potencies increased
To meet the needs of man.

A specialised development
Of hand and mouth and gut
Took place, but still our lives were pent
In the same narrow rut,

Until apotheosis of
Ingestion was attained;
For by the power that men call love
An instrument has been gained

Unhampered by the body's gross
Materiality,
And when we use it we draw close
To life's divinity.

Amoebas put out their false feet,
The gods' ways are unseen,
And man when he sits down to eat
Is somewhere in between.

PETER HEEHS

POEMS BEFORE AND AFTER 1973

OFFERING V: *YES... BUT...* SEPTEMBER 1979

Yes, we are not pure and white
And our shells are mottled and patched;
But are we not all Supramental eggs
Nestling under the wings of Our Mother
Waiting to be hatched?

ELIZABETH STILLER

THE STUPID GURU AND THE FOOLISH DISCIPLES

A FREE TRANSLATION OF VEERAMA MUNIVAR'S TAMIL STORY OF GURU PARAMARTHA

(Continued from the issue of May 1980)

5. Travel With the Gift Horse

WHEN the disciples presented to their guru the villager's gift of an old, lame, one-eyed horse, the guru shouted with delight: "At last I have a horse to call my own!" He put a stress on the word 'my'.

"Our horse! Our horse," corrected Matti.

The villager gave them some much-handled worn-out ropes to be used as a halter and a bag stuffed with pieces of cotton and rags to serve as a saddle. The guru felt extremely happy, for any trash got free of cost made him jump with joy.

The disciples waited for an auspicious hour. The time came and Paramartha took his seat on the 'saddle'. Madaiyan went some ten feet ahead of the horse and acted as a herald. Peithai holding the halter pulled the horse forward. Others walked behind the horse, taking the utmost care of their guru. The 'great procession' consisting of six men and a horse started. Guru Paramartha puffed out his chest in pride and in his ecstasy forgot to bid goodbye to the donor.

On their way, the merry little gang sang, "*La lulla la, lulla lala la,*" and the passers-by eyed them with suspicion. Soon a tax-collector on horseback came rushing towards the guru. The very sight of him brought their happiness to a dead halt.

"Pay Rs. 20 for the horse. It is the road tax," demanded the tax-collector.

"Sir! This horse is not ours. Our guru is unable to walk because of old age. So a kind-hearted villager took pity on him and gave this horse. Free of cost, remember, free of cost! You seem to be yourself a kind-hearted gentleman. Your handsome face betrays it. Won't you allow us to go free of tax?" begged and cringed Matti.

But the tax-collector was firm in his demand. They had no other go but pay the tax.

They reached a nearby village chaultry and took rest. The guru lectured, "For the first time in my life I have travelled on a horse. But look, how much money I have lost! The money earned by illegal ways will not help much and for such people the doors of Heaven will be shut upon them."

"This is how people thrive," Madaiyan remarked. "Nowadays money and money alone is God. Money, they say, is capable of creating and destroying God. Don't you remember the proverbs—"The jingling sound of coins has the power to wake up a dead man' and 'The coin picked up from the gutter never stinks'?"

"Yes. There is an interesting story behind the second proverb. I will tell it to you now," started Mileichan. "Once an avaricious king went on taxing his people.

The citizens struggled under the burden of heavy taxes. A tax was levied on almost everything and finally the king imposed 'Pissing Tax' too. The prince, who was in charge of collecting taxes, one day complained to his father, the king, about his unwillingness to collect such a 'stinking' tax. The king sent his son away and deputed one of his ministers. A few weeks later the king summoned his son to the royal treasure-house and showed him the coins accumulated in one corner of the room. He then asked his son, 'Do these coins stink?' The prince, ignorant of the means by which the money had entered the treasure-house, replied in the negative. 'You see, my son, the money got by Pissing Tax never stinks,' said the king smiling."

As if they had realized a great truth, the disciples and the guru nodded their heads in approval.

At dawn they got ready for their journey. But they were shocked to find their 'lovely horse' missing. Sad at heart the disciples rushed into every house nearby in search of the horse. At last after an hour of thorough investigation they found their horse with its halter tied to a tree in the backyard of a house. They picked a quarrel with the landlord, accusing him of stealing their animal.

"Steal your horse? Steal this lousy invalid?" retorted the man. "I would not even have touched the nasty little creature had it not eaten the horse-gram grown in my field. You know, your horse has swallowed much of my horse-gram. Pay Rs.50 for my loss. Then you can have your horse back." The villagers gathered and spoke in favour of the landlord.

Sorrow-stricken, the guru paid Rs.50 and got back his horse. "We got the horse free of cost. But we have already lost Rs. 70 over it," murmured Mileichan.

"This horse has caused so many inconveniences and troubles," said the guru. "We have lost quite a good amount. Do I need the horse any more? I doubt it!"

A cheat in that village who had witnessed the quarrel wanted to play some tricks to extract money from the ignoramuses. He came near and had a closer look at the horse. He then spoke to the guru, "This horse which is the source of such havoc is possessed by an evil spirit. The spirit can be exorcised by reciting some holy mantras. If you pay me just Rs. 10, I will exorcise the spirit with my magic power. Then the horse will no more be a source of trouble."

The guru was reluctant but the disciples cheered up their master and said, "We have already lost Rs. 70. There is no harm in losing ten more. If the evil spirit is exorcised from the horse then we shall have a perfect, majestic horse." The guru agreed and paid Rs. 10.

The village cheat murmured some unlexical words, threw a few dead leaves at the horse, let his hand move from its tail to its head and finally he got hold of its left ear very tightly. He then cried, "I have dragged the evil spirit to the left ear. I can exorcise the spirit only if you pay Rs. 10 more."

The guru got angry and blurted out, "Keep your promise or else you go. We will find a better exorcist."

The village cheat gleefully bade goodbye to the fools and walked on his way with

his first-instalment gain of Rs. 10.

“Now I know how to drive away the bad spirit. It is dragged from the big belly to the little left ear. Let us remove the ear itself. It is so simple, you see.” So saying, Madaiyan took out his sickle and with a sharp cut sliced off the left ear of the horse.

“How ugly!” exclaimed Moodan.” A horse with one ear is very ugly to look at. Cut off the other one too.”

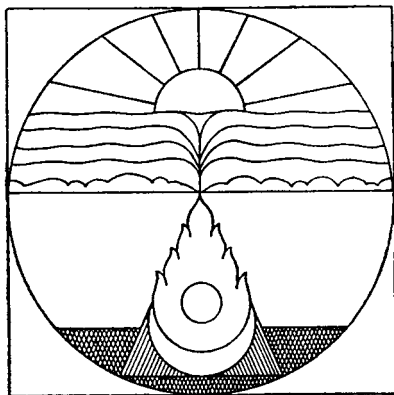
Madaiyan immediately carried out his friend’s suggestion.

“O fine! What a fine idea, earless horse!” the guru rapturously shouted. “Now it is so easy to spot our horse even if it gets lost in a herd!”

(End of Chapter Five)

(To be Continued)

P. RAJA



Poems by Peter Heehs

Night and Dawn

and

Image of Adoration

Rs. 12 EACH

Available from: SABDA

Sri Aurobindo Ashram

Pondicherry-605002

THE TALES OF INDIA

by

Daulat Panday

(Lalita)

Parts 1, 2 and 3

Price : Rs. 8.00 each

LIFT ME HIGH

Poems by Lalita

dedicated to the Divine Mother

Price: Rs. 5/-

From: **Publication Department**

Sri Aurobindo Ashram

and SABDA

Pondicherry- 605002

BROKEN TOYS

A SHORT STORY

It was many years ago I met her for the first and the last time on the sands of the Juhu Beach in Bombay. She was sitting all alone shabbily dressed. Her long hair showed here and there a streak of grey. Her health was poor and the abnormally delicate and mobile play of her features reflected a soul of extremely melancholy sensibility. She gave at the very first glance the impression that she had a genius for silent suffering.

Juhu Beach was beautiful, the happy holiday crowds were moving here and there, children were playing on the sands, men with baskets were selling tender coconuts and the waves were dancing brightly. But the strange woman sat in the least-crowded corner of the beach and looked like a being from another world than ours. I walked towards her, and at the very moment I came near her I saw the saddest face I had ever seen. In the large city of Bombay with lakhs and lakhs of people here was a woman who felt, perhaps, so lonely that she appeared like one who had consciously accepted her solitariness as her destiny. I certainly did not know, until my chance encounter with this woman, how lonely a person could be even in the midst of the hugest crowd and how peaceful in the midst of the loudest noise.

She was crooning a popular Hindi film-song of those days— “Where are the dear dreams of my youth?” (Kahan wo bachpan ke pyara swapna?) In front of her on a tattered piece of cloth lay a few toys, all broken—a headless wooden horse, an eyeless doll daubed with ink stains and a wingless aeroplane. When I came very near her she looked at me without any curiosity or fear. Then she started fondling the broken toys—sometimes holding them close to her face, kissing them and again putting them down. I watched her closely and felt that she carried in her consciousness the old scar, or the fresh wound, of some harrowing misfortune. I sat down by her side and after a few minutes asked her, “Does anything ail you, dear sister?”

She laughed. “Do you understand Malayalam?” she asked me.

“Quite well,” I answered.

Then in the most philosophic language she began: “Three souls, alas, do dwell within my breast.” I was puzzled.

Continuing she said, “The breast and the body are indeed one, but the souls that live in it are not two, nor five, but numerous. Like the onion we are made up of a hundred integuments, or a texture made up of many threads. Our ancients knew this.”

“You talk in riddles, sister,” I put in.

“I’m a simple woman. I know nothing of philosophy,” she remarked. Then she narrated the story of her life which was deeply moving.

Once Sushila was the happiest of women in Chalakudi, Kerala. She came from a wealthy family and was married to a young Army Officer. She was the mother of two beautiful children, a boy and a girl. She thought, poor woman, that her life was a long and alluring vista of unprecedented possibilities. Then came the First World War.

Sushila's husband was a Cavalry Officer and was posted to a distant land. Those were anxious days for Sushila. At that time she was living with her children in her parents' home. Soon the tragic news came that her brave husband had been killed in action. In the roll-call of honour his name would live for ever. But there was an aching void in the heart of Sushila.

At this stage of narration, Sushila paused for a moment and looking at the glorious evening sky spoke in a firm voice, "I see that my sorrows seem to distress you. But, my good friend, I still have intense faith in God and man. Life is not a brief candle, it's really a splendid torch which leads us on from a small island to a huge continent of joy and bliss." Now she fondled the headless toy horse. I was silent.

She continued the story of her life. Years passed by. The morning of the ninth of April, 1941 dawned beautifully. Sushila's son, Ramesh, was up with the streak of crimson in the eastern sky. He had breakfasted by a quarter after eight. The day continued to be beautiful. Ramesh was no longer a young boy. The darling of Sushila and the hope of the family was now the pride of the Indian Air Force. Every time Ramesh took the plane and went up, it was a thrill and a sort of self-fulfilment for him. If he came back successfully after that day's sortie, he would be promoted as the Squadron Leader. But that day he never returned. The ambitious youth could not match his valour against the might and fury of the German Luftwaffe. While England paid its tribute to Ramesh's courage, Sushila was shedding tears over the wingless aeroplane.

All her dreams had gone to pieces. I observed her minutely and saw in her tear-stained eyes unearthly peace. She was no ordinary woman. She had a tremendous inner reserve. Still I tried to console her in a poor manner and said, "There is Some Great Force that shapes our ends."

Quickly she completed my sentence with a sardonic smile, "Or more rightly ends our shapes."

Her smile almost crucified me. Though assailed by calamities, her patience and faith never seemed to forsake her. Sushila fondly thought that there was yet left one sole remaining joy. Her baby girl, Subhadra, had now grown into a beautiful maiden. Sushila had sent her to a second cousin of hers in Bombay. After the death of Ramesh, Sushila decided to leave her parents' home and live in seclusion in Bombay with her daughter. For three years there were no troubles. Then the most unexpected thing happened. On the eve of India's 14th Independence Day Subhadra had gone to her friend's house in Colaba for a dinner. It was getting late. Sushila's mind was full of ominous thoughts. Unconsciously, she had invited the hostile forces to take the upper hand. It was nearly midnight. Her expectations darkened into anxiety, anxiety into dread and dread into despair. While returning home after the party, Subhadra had died in a car-accident. Thus ended Sushila's worldly dreams.

"Now these are my only earthly companions," she concluded her story, "but to me, dear friend, they are more precious than the treasures of the deep sea." Then she smiled enigmatically, looking at the broken toys that lay before her.

I thought that by now she would have almost forgotten the taste of tears. She had already supped full on sorrows. I wondered whether any other person could have so much capacity for pain. It was in such a mood that I rose up and wanted to say farewell to her. Her glittering eyes held me captive. Then she spoke to me with robust optimism.

“Good friend, do you think that these sufferings have made my life sterile? No, no. These sad occurrences are really non-existent. They are, on the contrary, the Divine Mother’s Prasad—sweet, rich spiritual gifts. When you see the unity of things, there is no contradiction—cosmos includes chaos, tragedy and comedy are one, husband, wife, sisters, brothers and children are only a collection of conscious beings. So, you see that the broken toys, my husband, Ramesh, Subhadra and I were born in oneness, lived and grew up in oneness and would continue to live in oneness. Awake to this reality, there is no end to this universe. Take away the roof, Space loses its meaning; throw the clocks, watches and calendars into the sea, where is Time? There remains only one thing—a continuous beginning.”

In the silence that followed, I felt strong and joyous. The setting sun filled my heart with fresh hope. I saw the vision of the future ‘not veiled in the vague glamour of a dream, but lit with all the solemn glory of a revelation.’ I gave my thanks to Sushila and walked towards the bus-stop, ruminating over the strange incident of that day. I discovered that all human experience is potentially our experience. The malady of a congenitally sick soul can be cured by a Divine Physician, a foul soul can be cleansed in sacrificial blood, and the tears of a lonely soul can be wiped away by the Knower of All. Children may break their toys. They may gather pebbles on the sea-shore. The International Year of the Child may come and go. ‘But on the sea-shore of endless worlds children meet.’

G. KRISHNAN

SELECTIONS

from

SRI AUROBINDO’S SAVITRI

253 Pages Rs. 12.50

SRI AUROBINDO BOOKS
DISTRIBUTION AGENCY
PONDICHERRY - 605 002

THE COPY CATS

A SHORT STORY FOR CHILDREN

(Continued from the issue of May 1980)

LONG before the drums stopped rolling and certainly before Betse had cracked her whip, Copy I leapt off her pedestal. Seeing this, Copy II also jumped. Instead of flying past Copy II, Copy I flew for her throat and they crashed to the ground. It was much like that first day in the house. Fur flew. There was loud caterwauling, terrible noises. Only this time there was the audience, shouting "Wild cats! Help!"

"They're wild cats." The panic spread. People at the back of the audience began screaming.

"The big cats are loose."

"The elephants have escaped."

"The tiger's out of her cage," and their own stampeding made it sound as though an elephant were indeed on the rampage. Betse stood her ground and cracked her whip.

"Keep calm everybody," she pleaded. "Ladies and Gentlemen!" She called in a trembling voice. "Please keep your seats. It's only the Copy Cats. They are tame cats," and though she didn't know if this were true and was very afraid herself she was rather magnificent, for she stood her ground as the acrobats and the clowns began to take over. The dancing horses, part of the next number, who had been waiting for their turn, suddenly pranced into the ring and started doing their polka around her, the red feathers on their heads waving madly. Betse felt that she was in a nightmare and was very conscious that it was all her fault for having changed the cushions. Suddenly the clowns were all around her tumbling and pretending this was part of the show.

"Good girl," said Petit the smallest clown, "don't lose your head. The show must go on," and he snatched the whip out of her hand and whacked her on the behind in his clownish way and scampered off. It didn't hurt but Betse ran after him in anger. At this the audience or what was left of it laughed and she realised that the show must indeed go on. By now she had lost sight of the Copy cats but from the commotion on the east side of the audience she guessed that they were even now making their exit in that direction. When she caught up with Petit he turned around and butted her in the stomach and as she was sailing through the air the horse-master caught her and put her up on the leading horse. From here she saw the audience sail past her as Jolie, the white mare, cantered around the ring. She had never been on a horse before and it was one of the nicest moments of her life. Suddenly the horse-trainer Monsieur Lacoste who was sitting behind her whispered in her ear, "Do you think you could stand up with me? That would settle the audience." Betse was about to say no. But then she thought of her mistake. Jolie suddenly looked very big and the ground very

far away.

"Yes," she whispered.

"Smile," ordered Mr. Lacoste and he lifted her to her feet, holding onto her hands all the time of course, and there they were, Monsieur Lacoste and Betse smiling at the audience. Betse hardly had to bother about keeping her balance at all and the applause went so much to her head that she leant forward and stood on one leg with the other at right angles to it in a very good arabesque. She held her head high and waved at the audience.

"Bravo, bravo," cheered the people. "It's the little wild cat girl. My, she's brave."

"It's all right. Sit down". And those people who had still been hovering around the exits or standing in the aisles now sat down again.

"She wouldn't be so calm if it weren't part of the act," she heard a fat lady say as she cantered past. She was so pleased at this that she arched her back a little more, at which she lost her balance and her grip and Monsieur Lacoste just managed to swing her to the ground by bending right down at great peril to himself.

"Never mind. Well done," he said and just as Betse began smiling up at him gratefully Petit came and butted her in the rear.

"Tumble," said Petit, "and pretend to be cross," and she did. "You're a natural," she heard him say just before Monsieur Lacoste picked her up again.

And that's what everybody said amidst thunderous applause when it was all over at last: "She's a natural." But Betse hurried away from the circus people who wanted to clasp her hand and embrace her. She had saved the show, but now she must save her cats.

She quickly threw a coat over her satin tunic, grabbed her whip and ran out into the night wondering whether they had destroyed each other. The hand that held the whip trembled and she could not help remembering that everything that had happened was the result of the mistake with the cushions.

There were still small knots of people standing outside and in the parking lot near the cars, all discussing Betse and the cats and when they caught sight of Betse's shining tunic they said,

"There she goes,"

or

"That's the little girl,"

or

"That's Bouncing Betse,"

so that she hesitated to stop and ask people if they had seen her cats because she was sure they must all know about how she had changed the cushions. Then she thought, "But the Copys are more important than people knowing," so she stopped and asked a man with a cigar in his mouth if he'd seen which way the cats had gone.

"Little lady," he said, "may as well ask me about a shooting star. They whizzed right past me in there." And he shrugged his shoulders. "They were fizzing and spitting and flying all at the same time."

Betse very much wished that her Uncle Fetherall had been near but he wasn't. He was in another town and might as well have been on another planet so urgent was her need of help. This was the first time that she had had to solve anything without him in a crisis.

"What shall I do?" she wailed more to herself and the world at large than to the man with the cigar.

"Why don't you go to the newspaper? They'd be interested in your story and then anybody who sees the cats will phone them or go and tell them. Why, if anybody can ever get near those Copy Cats they may even be taken to the offices. That's the sort of thing that happens when you publish a story." Betse hated the idea of telling the whole world about what a fool she'd been.

"No," she said. "Never." The man shrugged and she suddenly saw the cats lost and afraid and said in a small pinched sort of voice, "All right."

Thus it was that at midnight she found herself at the night editor's desk with a reporter taking her story down and a photographer taking her picture and a lady bringing milk and chocolate biscuits to her. When she had finished speaking and the reporter asked her if she had any idea why one of the Copy Cats had attacked the other she realised that she hadn't mentioned that part at all and she went hot and cold all over and very red and white in the face. The crumbs of the chocolate biscuit went down her throat and got into a wrong aisle. And for a long time she couldn't speak. And when she could all she said was "No" in a very small voice. And then she put the unfinished half of the biscuit down. They had tasted so good at first and she had planned to eat several more but now she was very relieved when the lady reporter said,

"The poor child's quite white. Come home with me, Betse; I'll put you to bed. Even heroines have to sleep."

"What about the Copy Cats?" said Betse.

"By morning everybody'll be phoning the paper to say where they've been seen."

So Betse let herself be tucked in but she felt like a fraud and she didn't sleep well at all. And she'd been stupid to speak to the reporter because she knew that he thought Copy I was a dangerous cat when in fact it was all her fault. She had betrayed her trust.

And indeed the next morning the newspaper spoke of Betse the heroic little girl who had saved the show after having been almost attacked by a circus wild cat that had gone berserk.

"Oh no," she groaned. "This is beyond a joke. There's no truth in this. Look," she said pointing angrily at the article, "Copy I would never have attacked me. It wasn't her fault at all. It was all my fault." And the whole story came out.

"Well," said Maureen, the lady reporter, "cats don't worry about what's said about them in the newspaper. It's cushions and milk and other sensible things they worry about. So the thing is to get them back and give them lots of milk and separate rooms as far as I can see."

"I've always been told that reporters are hard-bitten," said Betse indignantly.

Maureen laughed and laughed. And in the end Betse had to laugh with her. But she still didn't feel comfortable about all the lies in the paper, specially the ones she'd told.

Maureen had been right about everybody's ringing up the newspaper, but though they spent all day tracking down cats that had been sighted none of them were the Copy Cats and that night Betse slept very badly again. She dreamt that Copy I was sitting near a swamp and in great danger of being sucked in. And what Copy I told Betse was: "How can I ever show my face in public again if everybody thinks I'm a dangerous wildcat? I'm not even a Copy Cat by nature. I'm just an ordinary home-loving cat."

Next morning when Maureen heard about Betse's dream she didn't laugh. She said quite soberly,

"If it'll make you feel better we can give the cushion-mistake story to the newspapers."

"I won't know if it'll make me feel better or worse until I've done it, will I?"

Betse was usually a rather sunny sort of person but there's nothing like a bad night plus a bad conscience to make one edgy and she quickly said much more humbly, "I suppose it'll make me both."

And thus it was that Betse found herself being interviewed a second time. And Uncle Fetherall was there beside her supporting her and saying it was all his fault in the first place because if it hadn't been for the fact that he couldn't spell the cats would never have gone into the circus. They would even now have been sitting quietly at home lapping milk from their separate saucers.

"Be that as it may," said Betse quite firmly, "they would never have done it quietly."

Just as Uncle Fetherall was going to reply the phone rang. Everybody in the room heard the woman's resounding voice.

"Is that the *Daily Tale*?"

"Yes, Madame, it is."

"I am Madame Boomeranga the Crystal Gazer and I have seen the Copy Cats sleeping in each other's arms on the edge of a swamp. They are waiting to be rescued."

There followed some rather complicated instructions which made no sense to anybody who didn't know the town.

"A swamp," said Betse and Maureen together exchanging significant glances. "But never in each other's arms."

"You never know," said Uncle Fetherall, "Necessity is the mother of other things besides invention"

And then the phone went again.

"This is Madame Sagrad. Madame Cascara Sagrad. I know my rival Madame Boomeranga has just phoned you. But she is of course give you incomplete information. The cats are sit in the fork of an old oak tree on the edge of the swamp. Don't forget there is crystal gazers and crystal gazers and what I say is go to Madame Sagrad."

There followed some even more complicated instructions and then the phone

went down again.

It was a complex search involving firemen, cameras and much heart-in-the-mouthness, but finally the cats were found and Betse was allowed to go up with one of the firemen. And it was difficult to believe what she saw. There were the two cats so intertwined that it was difficult to tell them apart. Even their tails were wrapped around each other. And the only way to bring them down was...together. Like this. All intertwined. Even when they were down on the ground they clung to each other. Uncle Fetherall immediately gave them the joint name of Copy III and when Betse was interviewed yet a third time she said,

"They have become inseparable and we are retiring from the circus to lead a quiet home life. That's what we all want."

"I hope," said Betse's mother when she came home, "that you don't expect me to get more cushions." Betse's mother always kept her eye on the main thing.

"No," said Betse confidently, "That won't be necessary at all."

And it wasn't. She got out the old green cushion and mended it here and embroidered it there and sewed on a felt flower where neither mending nor embroidery would serve. And the Copy Cats shared the cushion for ever after.

"Phew," said Uncle Fetherall. "That's better than any of the circus tricks you ever taught them."

"So it is," said Betse, "and I don't believe I could ever have taught it to them." And then they both fell into silence, for just then Copy I began cleaning Copy II's face with her tongue.

(Concluded)

MAGGI

The Mother : Past—Present—Future

by

K. D. Sethna

Price : Rs. 8/-

Published & printed by

Kamal Gambhir

at Kamal Printers, 365 Raja Park,

Jaipur-302004

Available from

SABDA Pondicherry-605002

and

Mother India office, 6 Lal Bahadur Sastry Street, Pondicherry-605 001

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Jnaneshwari (Bhavartha-Dipika) by Sri Jnanadeva. Translated by Ramachandra Keshav Bhagwat. Published by Samata Books, Madras-6. Pages XXXIII+689. Price Rs. 96/-

PRAJAPATI thundered "Da!". Gods, men, and asuras heard the monosyllable and deciphered its meaning in their own way. The Gods took the word for *Damayata* (be self-controlled), the men took it for *Datta* (be charitable) and the asuras for *Dayadhvam* (be compassionate). If a syllable like "Da!" could be interpreted in so many ways, why not the 700-verse Bhagavad Gita?

Battlefield—it is an arena for megalomaniacs to play the selfish game. It is a place where men of wrath and valour mutually exchange cuts and thrusts and mock at one another's groans. Such a place of horror and bloodshed, it is surprising to note, gave birth to the song of the exalted Lord, widely known as the Bhagavad Gita. If the Sermon on the Mount presents the essence of Christianity, then this sermon on the battlefield doubtless represents the essence of Hinduism.

The book under review is an illuminating commentary on the Bhagavad Gita by the Marathi mystic and saint-poet who lived in the 13th century A.D., Jnanadeva or Jnaneshwar. Although he entered his Samadhi at the very young age of 20, he saved himself from oblivion's curse by writing *Anubhavamruta*, *Changdeva-Pasasti* and his magnum opus *Jnaneshwari*, discourses on the Gita. Jnanadeva composed his *Jnaneshwari*, otherwise known as *Bhavartha Dipika* (the lamp illuminating the import of the Gita teachings) in the temple of Mhalsa (Mahalaya) on the southern bank of the river Pravara in the Ahmedabad district. He completed the work in the year 1290 A. D., when he was hardly fifteen springs old. His study of the mysteries of yoga under his elder brother and guru, Nivrattinath, gave him the dauntless hope to compose one of the greatest works in the whole of Marathi literature and especially spiritual literature.

It is well known that Adi Sankara, the first of the commentators, left a few of the many hundred verses without any commentary and the most modern and reliable commentator Sri Aurobindo confined his interpretations of the Gita to forty-four scholarly essays collected under the title *Essays on the Gita*. But the boy commentator Jnanadeva did not leave any one of the 700 slokas untouched. In fact he wrote 9000 *Ovi*-verses (an *Ovi* is a very flexible and rhythmic metrical form) by way of commentary. These verses expand the Bhagavad Gita and impart to all the eighteen chapters new vigour and richness.

Unlike many commentators, Jnanadeva in his verse-to-verse commentary brings to light the deeper meaning and hidden significance of the dialogue between the blessed Lord and Arjuna by explicating in a way that can be easily understood even by those who have little experience in religion. An example from the present book is enough to highlight this point. On the battlefield of Kurukshetra, dropping his bow and arrows, Arjuna sank down on the chariot-seat, his mind convulsed with grief. Seeing Arjuna

in such a plight, the exalted Lord spoke, "Whence, at this odd moment, has come over thee this turbid mood to which the Aryans are never prone, which leads not Heavenwards, and which, O Arjuna, brings on infamy?" (Samkhya Yoga—II, 2). Jnanadeva comments, "...O Partha, just consider how helpless you have become through compassion: Has darkness ever eclipsed the sun? Have the winds been terrorised by the clouds or is ambrosia ever liable to death? Or has firewood ever burnt the fire, or has the water ever been dissolved by salt, or has the world-destroying poison ever been destroyed by contact with any other substance? Or has the frog ever devoured the serpent? Has the jackal ever fought with the lion? Has any such paradoxical thing occurred anywhere?..."

The entire discourse abounds in lovely similes and metaphors and they make the commentary highly readable.

The most recondite parts yield their secret to the readers without any effort and the explanations by way of exquisite examples reveal the spiritual insight of the learned young Jnanadeva. His clearness of thought and aptness of comment make *Jnaneshwari* fascinating.

In short, this splendid commentary beacons the path that leads to the royal tower of the Bhagavad Gita.

A word about the translation: Fine.

A word about the printing and get-up of the book: Superb.

P. RAJA

**Guidance
from
Sri Aurobindo**

Letters to a Young Disciple

Nagin Doshi

Part Two

Price: Rs. 15.00

Available from

Sri Aurobindo Books Distribution Agency
and

Publication Department

Sri Aurobindo Ashram

Pondicherry-605 002

**EDUCATION
FOR
A NEW LIFE**

by

NARAYAN PRASAD

Price: Rs. 12.00

Publisher :

MOTHER INDIA

Sri Aurobindo Ashram
Pondicherry-2

Available from :

S A B D A