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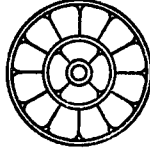
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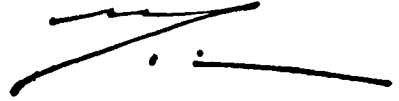


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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"Great is Truth and it shall prevail."

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WHY THIS WORLD OF PAINFUL EVOLUTION?

FROM A LETTER OF SRI AUROBINDO

... WHAT is the purpose and origin of the disharmony—why came this division and ego, this world of painful evolution? Why must evil and sorrow enter into the divine Good, Bliss and Peace? It is hard to answer to the human intelligence on its own level, for the consciousness to which the origin of this phenomenon belongs and to which it stands as it were automatically justified in a supra-intellectual knowledge, is a cosmic and not an individualised human intelligence; it sees in larger spaces, it has another vision and cognition, other terms of consciousness than human reason and feeling. To the human mind one might answer that while in itself the Infinite might be free from those perturbations, yet once manifestation began infinite possibility also began and among the infinite possibilities which it is the function of the universal manifestation to work out, the negation, the apparent effective negation—with all its consequences—of the Power, Light, Peace, Bliss was very evidently one. If it is asked why even if possible it should have been accepted, the answer nearest to the Cosmic Truth which the human intelligence can make is that in the relations or in the transition of the Divine in the Oneness to the Divine in the Many, this ominous possible became at a certain point an inevitable. For once it appears it acquires for the Soul descending into evolutionary manifestation an irresistible attraction which creates the inevitability—an attraction which in human terms on the terrestrial level might be interpreted as the call of the unknown, the joy of danger and difficulty and adventure, the will to attempt the impossible, to work out the incalculable, the will to create the new and the uncreated with one's own self and life as the material, the fascination of contradictories and their difficult harmonisation—these things translated into another supraphysical, superhuman consciousness, higher and wider than the mental, were the temptations that led to the fall. For to the original being of light on the verge of the descent the one thing unknown was the depths of the abyss, the possibilities of the Divine in the Ignorance and Inconscience. On the other side from the Divine Oneness a vast acquiescence, compassionate, consenting, helpful, a supreme knowledge that this thing must be, that having appeared it must be worked out, that its appearance is in a certain sense part of an incalculable infinite wisdom, that if the plunge into Night was inevitable the emergence into a new unprecedented Day was also a certitude, and that only so could a certain manifestation of the Supreme Truth be effected—by a working out with its phenomenal opposites as the starting-point of the evolution, as the condition laid down for a transforming emergence. In this acquiescence was embraced too the will of the great Sacrifice, the descent of the Divine itself into the Inconscience to take up the burden of the Ignorance and its consequences, to intervene as the Avatar and the Vibhuti walking between the double sign of the Cross and the Victory towards the fulfilment and deliverance. A too imaged rendering of the inexpressible Truth? But without images how to present

to the intellect a mystery far beyond it? It is only when one has crossed the barrier of the limited intelligence and shared in the cosmic experience and the knowledge which sees things from identity that the supreme realities which lie behind these images—images corresponding to the terrestrial fact—assume their divine forms and are felt as simple, natural, implied in the essence of things. It is by entering into that greater consciousness alone that one can grasp the inevitability of its self-creation and its purpose.

(The Birth Centenary Ed., Vol. 22, "Letters on Yoga", pp. 28-9.)

MISTAKES, KARMA AND DIVINE GRACE

WORDS OF THE MOTHER

So long as one repeats one's mistakes, nothing can be abolished, for one recreates it every minute. When someone makes a mistake, serious or not, this mistake has its consequences in his life, a "Karma" which must be exhausted, but the Divine Grace, if one calls It, has the power of cutting off the consequences; but for that it is necessary that the fault is not repeated. One shouldn't think one can continue to commit the same stupidities indefinitely and that indefinitely the Grace will cancel all the consequences, it does not happen like that! The past may be completely purified, cleansed, to the point of having no effect on the future, but on condition that one doesn't remake it into a perpetual present; it is necessary that you yourself stop the wrong vibration in yourself, that you do not reproduce indefinitely the same vibration.

(1961)

THE PSYCHIC BEING, THE EARTH AND THE REST OF THE CREATION

FROM SOME TALKS OF THE MOTHER

What is the difference between “spiritual” and “psychic”?

It is not the same thing. The psychic is the being organised by the divine Presence and it belongs to the earth—I am not speaking of the universe, only of the earth; it is only upon earth that you will find the psychic being. The rest of the universe is formed in quite a different way.

The universe contains all the domains higher than the physical: there is a global physical comprising the mental, the vital, etc., and all the domains above the mental are domains of a spiritual order, domains which are, for us, domains of the spirit, and it is this “spirit” which little by little, progressively, materialises itself to arrive at Matter as we conceive it. The beings of the Overmind, for instance, and all the beings of the higher regions have no psychic being—the “angels” have no psychic being. It is only upon earth that the psychic life begins, and it is just the process by which the Divine has awakened material life to the necessity of rejoining its divine origin. Without the psychic, Matter would never have awakened from its inconscience, it would never have aspired for the life of its origin, the spiritual life. Therefore, the psychic being in the human being is the manifestation of spiritual aspiration; but there is a spiritual life independent of the psychic.

Is there a correspondence between the psychic world and the earth?

But I have already told you that it is only upon earth that the psychic being gets its experiences to individualise itself. Hence there is an almost absolute interdependence between the psychic world and the earth.

What is the most effective means of awakening the psychic being?

But it is wide awake! And not only is it awake, but it acts, only you are not aware of it. It appears to you asleep because you don't perceive it!

Fundamentally, without this kind of inner will of the psychic being, I believe human beings would be quite dismal, dull, they would have an altogether animal life. Every gleam of aspiration is always the expression of a psychic influence. Without the presence of the psychic, without the psychic influence, there would never be any sense of progress or any will for progress.

Would there be a sense of beauty?

Yes. Perhaps not the highest sense of beauty, but in the vital one finds a complete sense of beauty and harmony. The beauty which is fundamental, profound, universal, constant belongs only to the psychic, but the sense of the beauty of form, of appearance, of colour, the educated, refined vital fully possesses.

And not love?

That depends on what you mean by "love"! There would not be divine love there, naturally, but all passions, attractions, desires exist in the vital. Only, the quality of these movements has been completely changed due to the descent and diffusion of the divine Consciousness in Matter. It has awakened the possibility of true love; otherwise, all those things which are taken for love, all passions and attractions and desires—the need of devouring—all that exists very well in the vital. The first form of love in Matter is the need of devouring: one wants to possess, assimilate; and the best way of doing it is to swallow and to digest! It can be said that the cat is full of love for its kittens when it eats them and the tiger full of love for the lamb it devours!

*

You say that the psychic being is the same thing as the divine spark...

No, I never said that,—it would be foolish! The psychic being is organised *around* the divine spark. The divine spark is one, universal, the same everywhere and in everything, one and infinite, of the same kind in all. You cannot say that it is a being—it is *the being*, if you like, but not *a being*. Naturally, if you go back to the origin, you may say that there is only one soul, for the origin of all souls is the same, as the origin of the whole universe is the same, as the origin of the entire creation is the same. But the psychic being is an individual, personal being with its own experience, its own development, its own growth, its own organisation; only, the organisation is the product of the action of a central divine spark.

But the day an external being, (physical, mental, vital) enters into direct and constant contact with the psychic being, one may say in the same way that the *physical* being of this person is organised by the central divine consciousness. The moment you put yourself in contact with it, submit yourself to it, you are organised by it, by the central divine consciousness; one may say that the body is organised by it, but it is a *body*, not a soul. The fact of being organised by the divine spark does not make it a soul.

Is there a psychic being in the atom?

No, it is not yet there. It can be said that there is a possibility of psychic consciousness in Matter—the diffusion of the divine Consciousness had only one object: to

make possible an organisation which would be under the direct influence of the Divine. That is why it passes over all the worlds of disorder.¹ It may hence be said that the Origin of the soul is also in the atom, in all the elements constituting the atom, but it is only the Origin... I must tell you that when it is fully formed, the psychic being has a distinct form which corresponds to our physical form. It is not altogether similar, but it has a definite form. Every psychic being is different from another—they are not all cut out, modelled to one pattern. They are different, each has an individuality, a personality.

*

The formation of the earth as we know it, this infinitesimal point in the immense universe, was made precisely in order to concentrate the effort of transformation upon one point; it is like a symbolic point created in the universe to make it possible, while working directly upon one point, to radiate it over the entire universe.

From the astronomical point of view the earth is nothing, it is a very small accident. From the spiritual point of view, it is a symbolic willed formation. And as I have already said, it is only upon earth that this Presence is found, this direct contact with the supreme Origin, this presence of the divine Consciousness hidden in all things.

The other worlds have been organised more or less hierarchically, if one may say so, but the earth has a special formation due to the direct intervention, without any intermediary, of the supreme Consciousness in the Inconscient.

Have the solar fragments the same matter as the earth?

I have taken care to tell you that this radiation was a symbolic creation, and all action on this special point had its radiation in the whole universe; remember this, instead of beginning to say that the formation of the earth comes from an element projected from the sun or that a nebula must have been scattered giving birth to the sun and all its satellites, etc.

But is it true that there is no difference between solar matter and terrestrial matter? Were the sun and the other worlds of the solar system formed at the same time as the earth?

Necessarily, everything was formed at the same time, the creation was simultaneous, with a special concentration of the Consciousness upon the earth.

¹ At the time of the publication of this talk, Mother added the following note for the sake of precision: "Some parts of the vital are worlds of disorder and the beings inhabiting the vital have no psychic being. The psychic being exists only upon earth, in the physical world. That is why I said in brief that the divine spark, which organises the psychic, passed over the worlds of disorder and manifested itself directly in the physical world to create there this possibility of organisation around the divine spark"

Have the beings of the other worlds and planets a psychic being?

No, it is a purely terrestrial phenomenon. Only, there is nothing against the idea that psychic beings may go to the other worlds if it so pleases them. There is no reason to think that one cannot, if one went to another planet, meet psychic beings; it is not impossible; but these would be psychic beings formed upon earth who have become free in their movement, going here and there at will for some reason or other. All knowledge in all traditions, from every part of the earth, says that the psychic formation is a terrestrial formation and that the growth of the psychic being is something that takes place upon earth. But once they are formed and free in their movement, they can go anywhere in the universe, they are not limited in their movement; but their formation and growth belong to the terrestrial life, for reasons of concentration.

(Questions and Answers, 1950-51, pp. 164-66, 141, 242-43.)

THRONE OF FLOWERS

To still the heart with a calm acceptance
 Into the being flows this deep ecstasy—
 The body embracing the Throne of flowers
 As if forever, with a magnetic eternity.

Wave upon wave of Strength and Grace
 Wraps me in tender folds of bliss.
 I sit in the world of a beauteous Presence—
 Upon my heart Your sweet inner Kiss.

The closeness to You is an endless space in time,
 My eyes locked fast in a wide-awake sleep,
 Every moment a glorious diamond of Peace—
 To live each day, yearning this tryst to keep.

16.3.1982

MINNIE N. CANTENWALLA

NIRODBARAN'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO

THE COMPLETE SET

(Continued from the issue of September 1982)

January 24, 1936 (continued)

I was grieved to see that after writing such a lot, you struck off all of it—it would have perhaps helped me. My difficulties run parallel to X's, I find; only there's a difference of degree.

Say rather that you have borrowed your difficulties from him or, say, run in his wake—a big steamer throwing a yacht into stormy waters.

But he has the great advantage of having a magnificent vital.

You have a sturdy but very sluggish one.

X has, on the one hand, your love, affection, letters etc., on the other his sufferings, paroxysms of despair, depression etc.

His paroxysms of despair were not caused originally by the Yoga, but by disappointments of the vital,—this one's behaviour, that one's refusal to be under his influence, ingratitude etc. These things had nothing to do with Yoga. But the devil once admitted turned itself upon his sadhana also.

He has passed seven years here, Sir, and still he groans and groans and perhaps I'll have to do the same.

And why please? Because he has never practised my Yoga, he has done his own. He has always put up some extremely traditional ideas about Yoga, jap, bhakti etc. etc. and challenged my own teachings with his reasoning mind which had no real conception of the things they meant. It is with great difficulty that I could sometimes get him to my direction by a secret pull and when I could do it he has always made some progress—which afterwards he refused to admit. And yet he made my incapacity as a Guru and the difficulty of my sadhana responsible for his failure when he had never even given it a trial. That is a thing others besides him have done, also.

Don't tell me that because he takes butter and tea, enjoys good company, the Grace is afraid of coming down, for that would not solve the problem.

There is no problem at all. It is simply because he has been pulling his own way with a savage tenacity instead of allowing his Guru to lead him. He now speaks of making his surrender. If he does it inwardly as well as outwardly, there may well be some considerable change.

Just one word about his poetry. I admit he had no vestige of poetry before he came here and that the Force has done it. But how shall I forget that he had to labour a lot at it?

It is ridiculous to talk of his labouring at it. He has an easy flow which ninety-one poets out of a hundred would envy him. The only thing he laboured over was his prosody and metrical experiments, but prosody is not poetry. The rhythm, the capacity for chhanda came to him at once when he started writing here—although till then he had been absolutely and hopelessly inefficient in that respect.

I admit the Force, but you have to admit the big personal contribution, the collaboration. If you aver that the contribution also was done by the Force you will throw me into shallow or deep waters.

I don't admit it. It is a legend he has foisted on you. If you mean his writing for many hours a day that is no labour when one has the capacity. That is use of the power given, it is not effort and straining to get the power.

Anyway, I suppose I am again talking rot, but these are fundamental wooden-headed difficulties.

Terrible rot.

Lastly I have embraced your "waiting on the Grace". I'll now dance and prance. A little khichuri, ālubhājā, a little harmless platonic love. Agreed?

I have no objection to alubhaja, but to the devil with your platonic love!

Last night I dreamt that you were most affectionately patting me for a long time; but before that, somebody asked me to promise that I would never indulge in any lower vital movements. And I promised. What's this?

Quite natural. If your vital makes that promise, the pat is normal.

But why this promise at all when I had no intention of that sort of vital movement?

You may not have intended, but something in your vital may have had dark intentions of its own.

I send you a poem by Nishikanta. He says: "What is the use of writing if Sri Aurobindo doesn't read?"

I read and correct—so he has no cause for complaint. The Bengali ones—can't read them unless I have a clear time—even only quarter of an hour. I have not had it the last few nights.

What about N's complaints? Shall we then turn a deaf ear to them?

What complaints? Micturition and phosphates? Tell him to economise his phosphates instead of squandering them and he will become strong and healthy as a tiger.

I understand that Dr. Banerjee examined I.K. and told you her case. Do you remember?

Good Lord, no. It is ancient history.

January 25, 1936

Mulshankar invokes the Mother's presence and help. The ward in which he is, is rather noisy, he hadn't a wink of sleep.

He should be removed to one of the paid rooms as soon as the Surgeon finds it can be safely done. It would be well if we could get frequent reports of his condition three or four times a day.

January 27, 1936

Benjamin has phimosi...

What kind of medical animal is this?

January 28, 1936

You forgot to have a look at Nishikanta's poetry yesterday? It has come back just as I sent it—want of time and absence of mind—I mean overmind?

How is that? But it is not surprising if I overlook something, considering the crash through which I have to go at a gallop.

My nights are again becoming heavy and I don't know how to deal with them.

So are mine with a too damnably heavy burden of letters to write.

I come out of bed with the morose thought that another night has passed away and I have done nothing.

You mean the morbid thought!

Thoughts of past pleasures and enjoyments are hopping in and out!

Man alive, send them hopping off for good. What a masochism in all that!

January 30, 1936

You compare your nights with mine! God above! Yours, Sir, are a labour of love—

Love under protest then or at least labour under protest!

And mine — labour of Yoga?

A labour of Bhoga?

[Now apropos of Mulshankar's accident]. He says that he fell half on the pavement and half on the road which seems to be right. At 5 p.m., three men came to him and wrote down his version of the accident, below which he was asked to give his signature. He realised later that he had made a mistake and asked me to write to you. I don't know how these people dared to come and trouble him without the surgeon's permission. Moreover, he is not even in a position to give an exact account of the accident, at present. But he can't remember how exactly he was knocked down... Babu says Mulshankar fell in the middle of the road, got up and walked to the pavement, which Mulshankar denies—he didn't walk at all. But Babu says also that when the car was on the point of knocking Mulshankar down, Babu closed his eyes from nervousness, and when he opened them he found Mulshankar on the pavement. And I hear he is asked to be a witness which he refuses to be. Purani has taken down his version. There is going to be an incongruity between the two statements.

It turns out that it was the 'juge d'instruction' who came to question Mulshankar, so there is nothing to say, though it is strange that they came in that way without informing or consulting the hospital authorities. It does not seem to me that Babu's version of M's walking can stand. If his eyes were shut *before* the clash and he opened them only after Mulshankar had reached (in whatever way) the pavement, he cannot have seen Mulshankar walking, not at least with his physical eyes. Moreover it is most improbable. The car caught the cycle in the middle of the street, granted, but

in such a way that the cycle went under the car and remained entangled there and Mulshankar must have been precipitated from the cycle, not merely tumbled from it. The car swerved in the collision in the direction of the same pavement and (according to Purani's sketch) was stopped farther or near this pavement, not in the middle of the road. The whole movement was therefore towards the pavement; Mulshankar must have been precipitated head foremost against it and so got his bad hurt on the head. If he had fallen down in the street where the collision took place, he would, it seems to me, have been run over or been otherwise hurt. In any case Purani should have pointed out to Bapu that his closed eyes and his seeing Mulshankar walk do not go together, he must have taken a mental impression for a fact, since Mulshankar denies the walking. It would be awkward, if the enquiries were pushed farther, that two different and incompatible statements about the accident should proceed from the Ashram. If Bapu does not give evidence, it is another matter. Who has asked him to give it? The juge d'instruction or someone else?

(To be continued)

AT THE FEET OF THE MOTHER AND SRI AUROBINDO

RECOLLECTIONS BY SAHANA

(Continued from the issue of September 1982)

MYSELF: I want to ask one question. Wherever I see anyone affected by doubt, disbelief or disturbance my aspiration and faith become more firm. These things never touch me; on the contrary my faith and aspiration surround and protect me like an armour, as it were. Very concretely I feel in me an unshakable faith at all times. Others' disbelief seems rather to increase my strength. Isn't it strange? Is there any meaning in it?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is the natural reaction of the psychic to mental doubt and the vital disturbance which caused it. The psychic knows that the Divine is and affirms its knowledge against all appearances. 31.8.33

MYSELF: Mother mine, Sri Aurobindo has written that I haven't informed you about the cause of my depression, but I couldn't myself make out at first what the reason was. On the first day, I felt a weakness since things began to be insipid and gradually the depression went on increasing. It seems to me this was an attack coming from outside and passing by me. There was nothing against you or anybody else. Often the past invades and causes a fall of consciousness, but there was nothing of that sort. I was myself surprised at what had happened. One day Dilip came in a very depressed condition and was saying many things. I was very much distressed to hear them. Could that be the reason then?

SRI AUROBINDO: There is a Force going about the Ashram trying to attack anybody who gives an opening. It fell upon Dilip and threw him into depression—in his case there were small outward reasons but all quite small and trivial, but the depression was of great violence and lasted long. Somehow or other it came through him to you but as it could not find any place to get through the mind or the vital, it fell upon the body (vital-physical or nervous) and created a weakness in which it was able to play. As soon as it could do that, helped by Dilip's remark, it began to whirl round the old machine of thoughts and repinings and despairs. This time it was purely mechanical and irrational, the subconscious bringing up the old habit and turning it like a wheel—which shows that it is nearing its last resources. This is what I saw, but I wanted to know the outward details from you and these entirely confirm what I saw.

MYSELF: Mother, since yesterday, I have been feeling worse. Painful old memories afflict me. Egoism again was coming back, I tried to reject it, but couldn't. Then followed a severe depression with thoughts of failure and other self-lowering

tendencies increasing and ending in a climax that with this body and this nature no sadhana can be done. Therefore let this body perish; where is the necessity to continue living? Now, the tendency to tell you everything got closed up and I took up the attitude that since I was going to die, I shouldn't disturb you further. All possible sorts of painful, depressing thoughts I indulged in, more in anger at myself. Deeply perplexed, I failed to find the cause. When, however, this phase passes, I laugh at myself and feel even ashamed. So dramatic, and yet disturbing!

SRI AUROBINDO: It is the suggestion of incapacity and departure (if not death) that the adverse Force is trying to suggest in each case. The whole thing is absurd and meaningless in your case, a mechanical repetition of old movements. But there was some spot somewhere in the physical in which the button could be pressed and the machinery began to turn round. You must therefore be on your guard especially against any beginning of depression and react immediately—you must not allow physical weakness to bring mental depression, for that is the gate by which it came in.

13.9.33

MYSELF: Mother, Sri Aurobindo's reply of today showed me how many kinds of forces are at play and how they make us suffer.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is really the same Force taking different forms using different means of approach or acting on different levels of the nature.

13.9.33

MYSELF: At times I feel so vexed to see that the things one should seek for in a pure or unmixed way in order to go forward in sadhana, are all lacking in me, —there is only the ego!

SRI AUROBINDO: It is so with everybody. Human nature is shot through in all its stuff with the thread of the ego, even when one turns to get away from it, it is in front or could be behind all thoughts and actions like a shadow. To see that is the first step—to discern the falsity and absurdity of the ego movement is the second, to discourage and refuse it at each step is the third,—but it goes entirely only when one sees and experiences (not only thinks) the One in everything and equally everywhere.

8.10.33

MYSELF: Dear Mother, I find that many people are upset over X's and Y's departure. Why should one be upset when a person leaves? I feel neither sympathy nor pain in such cases. I rather feel for you, thinking that you have taken so much trouble, spent so much of your time for them. But why are people so frequently leaving the Ashram? Is there any undue pressure of sadhana? In this year, just see how many departures! We didn't see so many going when we came. Is there any special reason or simply the action of the same hostile force? If so, why should that force succeed to such an extent now?

SRI AUROBINDO: I don't know why. It is perfectly irrational. People have been going as well as coming since the Ashram began. Perhaps it arises from the ignorant

idea that the people who go like X and Y are great bhaktas and sadhaks—while the fact is that X never made much progress even elementary and Y has been in a state of vital revolt sometimes against the Mother, sometimes against myself, latterly against both, for the last six or seven years. People go away because they are too proud and arrogant to accept the control of the Guru or of the Truth or of the Divine. Y had decided that the Truth was in Him alone and there was no Truth in myself or in the Mother. 10.10.33

MYSELF: From time to time my body has been giving me so much trouble that I can't say that I have really enjoyed what may be called good health.

SRI AUROBINDO: The human body has always been in the habit of answering to whatever forces chose to lay hands on it and illness is the toll it pays for its inertia and ignorance. It has to learn to answer to the one force alone, but that is not easy for it to learn. 16.10.33

MYSELF: Herewith a letter from a friend. She would like to come and settle here if you would accept her.

SRI AUROBINDO: The difficulty is that she seems to have vairagya for worldly life without any knowledge or special call for this yoga and this yoga and the life here are quite different things from ordinary yoga and ordinary Ashram. It is not a life of meditative retirement as elsewhere. Moreover it would be impossible for us to decide anything without seeing her and knowing at close hand what she is like. We are not just now taking more inmates into the Ashram except in a very few cases.

MYSELF: Sri Aurobindo, I have received a letter from another girl who had come for Darshan. You may remember that long ago she wrote once asking for shelter here. I have known her since her childhood. She wants now to come to do yoga. I have asked her to read your books, but she expects a reply. Will you let me know what to write?

SRI AUROBINDO: As for your friend, it is not possible to say that she can come here for that depends on many things which are not clearly present here. First, one must enter this Path or it must be seen that one is called to it; afterwards there is the question whether one is meant for the Ashram life here. The question about the family duties can be answered in this way—the family duties exist so long as one is in the ordinary consciousness of the Grahastha, if the call to spiritual life comes, whether one keeps to them or not depends partly upon the way of yoga one follows, partly on one's own spiritual necessity. There are many who pursue inwardly the spiritual life and keep the family duties, not as social duties but as a field for the practice of Karmayoga, others abandon everything to follow the spiritual call or line and they are justified if that is necessary for the yoga they practise or if that is the imperative demand of the soul within them.

MYSELF: Mother, my inborn idleness is still very cheerfully alive; but I am none the less desirous of offering myself through work. I was never devoted to work, especially household work—this big fault finds scope even when I remain in a good condition, while it is also true that I want to get rid of this idleness and turn a good worker. It seems I became one, and a habit also grew up but the frequent bouts of idleness unsettle that habit.

SRI AUROBINDO: Idleness must of course go—but sometimes I think you have pulled too much the other way. To be able to work with full energy is necessary—but to be able not to work is also necessary.

(To be continued)

(Sahana's Letters translated by Nirodbaran from the Bengali)


THE STORY OF A SOUL

BY HUTA

(Continued from the issue of September 1982)

The Mother's Message

This is the
interesting story of
how a being discovered
the Divine Life



THE new month began—1st July 1956.

The adverse forces always found chinks in my defence and frequently directed their attacks there. It was too hard to recognise the devil's crafty and treacherous acts. I thought that since I had dedicated my life to the Mother she should order me as to what I should do and what I should not—she must not be indifferent to

me—but I felt that she was so, and the old creeping sense of unwantedness, oppression and loneliness stole over my mind and chilled my heart. I wanted to run away, far away from the Ashram. The Mother wrote:

“One thing you must know in answer to your letter of yesterday.

“I give orders only to those who are *perfectly* and *totally* surrendered, as these orders cannot be discussed or disobeyed.

“To the others I show the Light and the Truth and give them advice when they ask for it, and these are always free to do what they think best for themselves.

“As for my Grace, love and blessings, they are always over all, but each one avails himself of them according to his capacity, receptivity and surrender.

“You know, my little child, that my love and blessings will never leave you—they will always be with you wherever you decide to go.”

I thought the Mother no longer wanted me. Then where was I to go? A horrible fear of never knowing any real security, of always being on my own with no one to belong to invaded me. But I knew only too well that the ordinary life was not meant for me—it would kill me. I was mystified by the dark and obnoxious suggestions which came swarming from the devil. At once I wrote to the Mother, and she replied:

“Well, my dear little child, now that you ask me what I see, I can tell you that there is in the world only one place where you can fulfil your aspiration and realise the Divine, *it is here*.

“It is well understood that there are difficulties, everybody has difficulties, but nowhere else, as much as here, you can find the help to surmount these difficulties.

“You say you have no will of your own but then you must not say ‘I will do this, and I will not do that; I cannot live here, and I want to go, etc., etc.’

“I asked you already *to side with me* and not with the bad forces that attack you; and instead of writing what *they want* you to write—simply to tell me ‘Mother, once more I am attacked, come to my help’—I shall always know what you mean and do the needful.

“So the only thing to do now, is to keep quiet and to know that the attack will go and you will make a new progress.

“With my love and blessings.”

In the afternoon the Mother went to the Prosperity Room to give blessings to people who were receiving their monthly requirements on this day. Every first of the month she did so. Thus people commenced their new month with courage and enthusiasm.

I do not remember exactly which flower she distributed—most probably the Marigold. She gave to this flower the meaning:

“Physical plasticity—one of the important conditions of the transformation.”

That evening I did not want to go to the Mother but I was strangely and strongly pulled by an unknown divine Force, and I ran to the Playground. There she received me in her room with open arms. I nestled in her warm embrace. I desperately needed some solace. After taking a deep breath I tried to still my nervous fluttering heart against her heart; after a moment or two, I felt an immense relief. Then I looked up at her great loving blue-grey eyes which showed an infinite mercy.

She took my hands into hers, patted them and said gently:

“My child, many things you do not know. But you must understand and know something and practise that. Whatever and whenever bad attacks come, you should at once take shelter in the Divine’s arms. You should imagine like this —‘Now I am in the Mother’s arms, so nothing can ever touch my true self.’

“People do not really know that my body is not as they see it: it is huge and wide with so many aspects. I am always taking everyone into my arms. This cannot be seen with the physical eyes, but surely people can feel it in their hearts, and it can even be seen with the subtle eyes when they are opened.

“There is always a tug of war in people’s beings—some of them want small pleasures and mortal things, while some want the Divine alone. If people listen to the lower elements and respond to them, then naturally they are caught in small matters, and by these they fall into a dark pit of inertia. They must pull themselves out of the abyss by constant effort and prayer.

“There is a dense veil between human beings and the Divine Consciousness, that is why they remain in misery and miss the true joy, peace and happiness. If people give a response to the lower elements, surely they remain in ignorance and darkness. Lower beings do not like to change themselves—they do not wish people to take the Divine’s Joy and they always harass them. So people can take neither the Divine’s Joy nor any other. But, of course, they can get rid of falsehood by constant prayer and sincere aspiration.

“Here there was a good French lady; her soul brought her here but after some time she got tired of this life and place and wanted to go back. She went. Afterwards she felt terribly miserable and remembered me and the Ashram. She still writes to me and wishes to come again but I have refused because, if she came back, the same thing would start once more.

“Indeed, it takes time to obliterate the lower nature.”

There were quite a number of people waiting to go to the Mother for their interviews.

Later in the evening, toffees made in the Cottage Industry of the Ashram were distributed.

There was a big queue of people to receive toffees from the Mother. When I stood before her she gave me a toffee with a slight pressure on my hands. Her smile was sweet and fleeting.

I ate my toffee which was really delicious. I wished I had more!

The Mother was always coming back late to her apartment in the Ashram. I loved to see her when she returned from the Playground. There was a little boy who always spoke in a lilting tone to the Mother thus:

“Bon nuit, Douce Mère
À demain, Douce Mère....”

The Mother was much amused and answered him back in a suitable similar vein.

The following morning I received the Mother's answer to my letter, which I had written the previous night:

“I read this morning your nice letter, and I am sending you some ‘endurance’ so that your aspiration can become steady and triumph in you over all that opposes it.

“The Grace's help is always there, and my love and blessings also.”

It was the Mother's French class that day. I did not wish to attend it, so I excused myself to the Mother and took my leave. While going home a sickening chill of fear and disappointment enveloped me, because I was aware of my defects. Also, I was uneasy at finding myself in the iron grip of so many lower dark elements which I could not name precisely or define accurately, and they were difficult to surmount because each of them had its own specific and peculiar vibration, sensation, and thousands of impulses surged up incessantly from the lower regions, mingling with one another.

I swung between dark fits of bitterness and emotional suspenses which came not only from my doubts about the glorious future but from the vivid remembrance of my past experiences of failure in life. Tears in my eyes were constant and the happy smile failed to appear on my face.

On Tuesday as usual Champaklal came with a card from the Mother along with a bouquet of white roses. I received the gifts and went to the Mother's Stores for my work.

I was still sweeping and scrubbing the floors, and arranging things properly in numerous cupboards.

After the strenuous work I got very exhausted. I took my lunch in a hurry at Golconde and went to sleep in my room.

In the evening I saw the Mother in her room at the Playground. She received

me with warm love. She held my hand and went into a trance. Then she gave me flowers. One of her gestures was unforgettable. She first smelt a scented flower, then she made me smell it. Again she smelt and, nodding her head with delight, gave the flower to me. Her great love for flowers is well-known.

At times the Mother and I spoke through flowers.

The Mother has explained in the book—*Flowers and their Messages*:

with “When I give flowers it is always along with the capacity they represent. Each one receives according to his receptivity. I can transmit a state of consciousness more easily to a flower than to a man: it is very receptive, though it does not know how to formulate its experience to itself because it lacks a mind. But the pure psychic consciousness is instinctive to it. When, therefore, you offer flowers to me, their condition is almost always an index to yours. There are persons who never succeed in bringing a fresh flower to me—even if the flower is fresh it becomes limp in their hands. Others, however, always bring fresh flowers and even revitalise drooping ones. If your aspiration is strong your flower-offering will be fresh. And if you are receptive you will be also very easily able to absorb the message I put in the flowers I give you. When I give them, I give you states of consciousness; the flowers are the mediums and it all depends on your receptivity whether they are effective or not.”

The day went on. In the evening there was the Mother’s French class in the courtyard of the Playground.

I sat there. I could not follow a single word except the laughter of people when some remarks were passed by the Mother or some funny questions were put to her by the children of the Ashram.

I felt that I was a total fool—the most illiterate person among the intellectuals—once again the wave of the inferiority complex engulfed me.

That evening it began to rain during the class. After the short meditation people dispersed.

My clothes were soaked with water. After bidding good night to the Mother in the Ashram, I went to Golconde. I slept intermittently. At every brief awakening, the thought of my worthlessness kept oppressing me. When I was fully awake, I suddenly became aware of frogs singing their chorus in tenor, baritone and bass, making point and elaborate counterpoint. This distracted my mind for a while from its own whirling and it was as if I had some companions in the hush of the night when everyone seemed fast asleep.

That night I tossed and turned the hours away as the unhappy thoughts of my inability to understand the Divine Teaching chased each other incessantly through my mind.

Towards the dawn I drifted off to sleep. So I missed the Balcony Darshan of the Mother which she gave at six o’clock.

About the daily Balcony Darshan the Mother once said:

“Every morning at the balcony, after establishing a conscious contact with each of those who are present, I identify myself with the Supreme Lord and merge myself completely in Him. Then my body, completely passive, is nothing but a channel through which the Lord passes freely His forces and pours on all His Light, His Consciousness and His Joy, according to each one’s receptivity.

“The best way of receiving what He gives is to come to the balcony with trust and aspiration and to keep oneself as calm and tranquil as one can in a silent and passive waiting. If one has something precise to ask, it is better to ask before, not at the moment when I am there; because all activity lessens the receptivity.”

Glimpses of the Mother’s Life, Vol. 2, p. 68.

The Mother sent me a card of flowers of various colours—*Garden Nasturtiums*—together with these words:

“Bonjour to my dear little child, to my sweet Huta, these ‘Promise of Realisation’ to give her good courage.

“With my love and blessings always.”

Thursday was the Mother’s French Translation class in one of the rooms at the Playground. A few newcomers were now attending it. Only by her special permission people could attend. Now the small room was indeed packed with all of us.

The flowers which I received from the Mother I kept in a crystal bowl in her room, and sat in the class. Everyone was absorbed in writing except me. I did not feel like writing, so I drew some peoples’ faces in my notebook!

After the class I picked up the flowers from the Mother’s room. Just as I was about to leave, she entered with a charming smile and gave me some more flowers with a kiss on my cheek.

As always there was march-past at 7.30 or so, with salute to the Mother who stood against the wall-map of undivided India. Then followed marching exercises. During them the Mother used to take rest in her room. After that, she came out and all meditated together for a few minutes. Then there was a distribution. Thus the day came to an end.

I slept better that night.

The next morning the Mother sent a nice card with these words:

“With my love and blessings—the Grace is there to help and protect you always, —let it do its work.

“I keep you close in my arms.”

In the evening I did not sit in the Mother’s class in the Playground courtyard,

because I had a lot of work to finish.

While I was engrossed in it, I heard the horn of the Mother's car returning from the Playground, and ran to the Ashram to see her. Late at night I remembered that I should now write a letter to my family about the new house they intended to buy.

“Respected Father and Brothers,

8.7.56

Loving greetings along with the Mother's blessings.

I was inspired to write this letter to you all. Now it is almost 11 o'clock at night.

In fact there is no ulterior motive or selfishness in writing this letter. I am stating what I have felt within me. So it is not out of place.

All of you have decided to buy a beautiful house. This house is called “Gospel House” and is very close to the Ashram. Nowadays it is pretty difficult to get a house so near the Ashram. You have got this one by the Grace of the Mother. Besides, you will have good facilities and the place will become permanent for you. All of you will stay peacefully and fearlessly under the Mother's protection.

The very thought that has come to your mind to purchase a house is itself due to the Divine's Grace and her inspiration. Otherwise it is impossible to conceive such an idea. There are billions of people, but very few who really understand and aspire for the Truth, so all of you are fortunate and blessed by our Divine Mother.

I am ignorant about wealth, property, money, etc. So I have no right to interfere in your personal affairs. But may I request you all to take the house in the Mother's name? So long as you would stay in the house, none would have any say in the matter and there would not be any kind of interference. The house would be looked after properly under the instructions of the Mother. This is my humble suggestion. Nevertheless, all of you have the full right to do what you think best.

Kindly write a letter to the Mother expressing what you wish to do about the new house. It would be wisest to approach the Mother directly. I tell you the truth when I say that the Mother has no interest to have for herself money, wealth, property, a house and so on. She wants only the pure love from your hearts. She has an affinity with truthful, honest and sincere people.

Here many rich people came and went. The Mother was quite indifferent to their cold interest and money. This is a fact.

The Ashram is the divine place in which peace dwells ceaselessly. Let us all realise it. There is no happiness without the divine peace. I am eager to see the progress and glory of you all in the divine atmosphere. The Divine alone is the Truth and Ananda.

From the Mother's talks with me I could gather that her perpetual Grace and blessings are with our family. She has done so much for us and still con-

tinues. Perhaps you will not realise her Grace at the moment but in future all of you will see and feel it concretely. This is what my heart says.

The Mother has liberated us. She wants us to emerge from the darkness into the Light. She is always wishing us well.

You all are working. True. But we have also to attain the supreme knowledge, the divine Love and the luminous Truth in order to unite with the Supreme Lord. This is our Goal.

I do not force you to take the house in the Mother's name. All are free to do what they feel is befitting.

Please remember me to all there and give my love to the children.

I do hope all of you are well.

Brothers, our mother has written to me. She wishes to go to Africa. Her health is not up to the mark. Kindly do the needful.

Please write to me often.

Kindly forgive me if I have written anything impertinent.

With the Mother's blessings and my warm regards,

Huta

A card came from the Mother showing the flower *Verbena hybrida* and bearing these words:

“Bonjour to my dear little child, to my sweet Huta,

Here is the beautiful ‘thoroughness’ she is putting in her work.

“The Grace is constantly with you—and my love and blessings too.”

The Mother's letters brought me only a momentary relief. I knew only too well that “Realisation” was a long way off in my then-predicament. It needed perfect surrender, sincerity and the elimination of the physical consciousness and ego. My prayers to the Supreme never ceased.

There was a film at the Playground. I did not see it.

*

Sunday and Monday—two days slipped by in the familiar pattern. I remained in the same situation of despondency and depression in spite of the Mother's sweetness and solace.

I wrote a letter to the Mother, praying her to do something to set me free from this state of ambiguity.

The morning after, the Mother sent me a pretty card presenting *Gladioli*, “Manifold receptivity”, accompanied by these lines:

“I am quite ready to do *everything* for you, and in fact I am doing it already,

but some part of your being, small but very obstinate, is always trying to escape and jumps out of my arms to run away. If you want all your miseries to stop, that also must stop. The Grace is working for it—so keep good hope.

“With my love and blessings always with you.”

Despite all the upsettings, outer as well as inner, I did not stop my work in which I found some relief. I decorated the idol of Shiva—actually it was not his image but the Shiva-Lingam in the shape of a top.

In the evening I went to the Mother. After our short meditation, I went to Golconde to finish my job. Then suddenly I looked at my watch. Ah! I would be just in time to receive nuts from the Mother if I went back to the Playground. For, it was the distribution day!

The Mother sent me on the succeeding morning a card depicting Pansies, and these words followed:

“Here are some nice ‘Thoughts of the Divine’. I had received a little bull yesterday, just what I wanted for Shiva. I shall give it to you on Friday. Like that he will have two bulls instead of one.”

Sri Aurobindo has given a significance to the bull—“Emblem of strength and force.”

*

In the evening the Mother saw me in her room at the Playground. Later I did not attend her class in the Playground courtyard. There was still some work left which was to be done. I went to Golconde and started the job. Meanwhile, I felt terribly uneasy, because I knew that this wonderful work of decorating the idols would soon be over; then what next? The burning questions of my life never ceased. I felt constantly that I had nothing in the world to do—nothing to fill my life and make it worth living. All my occupations seemed to me transient and very humdrum. I thought I should never have come into this dreadful world at all. Then I had a good, quiet cry in the seclusion of my room. I felt my heart lighten a bit and vagrant thoughts fell mute. I was perspiring profusely—after the attacks this always happened to me. Later a sudden and quick flash of light touched my consciousness and I wrote to the Mother:

“My dearest Mother,
Salutations.

You asked me on 2nd June: ‘If I teach you how to paint, will you learn from me?’ I answered: ‘Yes, Mother.’ Mother, are you really going to teach me painting?

Love,

Huta

The next morning she gave her reply on a lovely card:

“Bonjour to my dear little child, to my sweet Huta,
 “Indeed I shall show you how to paint and I shall be glad if you learn well.
 “One day I shall call you and do a painting in front of you.
 “With my love and blessings always.”

I was absolutely blank as to how I would learn painting from the Mother and what she would teach me.

That evening it was the Mother’s Translation Class. Before it, she and I met in her room. What I really wanted after those nerve-racking emotions was a haven of safety in which I could rest my weary mind and soul. I nestled in her arms for a few seconds. Then after receiving flowers from her and a kiss on my forehead, I made my way to Golconde to finish the pending work, because I had to show the Mother the decorated Shiva-Lingam just the next day.

It was a long time before I could sleep.

As usual in the morning I received a bouquet of white roses and a card from the Mother:

“Bonjour to my dear little child, to my sweet Huta,
 “A tout à l’heure—at 10.45 I shall see you.
 “With my love and blessings that are always with you.”

The Mother saw me in the Meditation Hall upstairs. On seeing the Shiva-Lingam, her face flushed with pleasure, and with a soft laugh she placed the second bull near the stand and, while touching the Lingam, she said:

“This symbolises Creation.”

Then after a few minutes’ meditation she gave me flowers. I left with her kiss and her very pleasant smile.

Sri Aurobindo has revealed about Shiva in the Cent. Ed., Vol. 17, p. 47:

“Shiva is the Eternal’s Personality of Force; through him all is created, through his passion, through his rhythm, through his concentration.”

I took the stand of the Shiva-Lingam to the stores and placed it with the other idols, and brought home the image of Vishnu.

In the evening the Mother asked me to dress Vishnu in a deep orange-coloured dress with gold lace, crown, ornaments and so on. While going home I thought that I should get a stand made for Vishnu in such a way that a golden King Cobra could stand erect above him with its five heads spreading their hoods over Vishnu’s head.

And behind Vishnu's head there should be a bright aureole.

The next morning I received a card showing a pretty butterfly resting on a sunflower, and these words followed:

“Bonjour to my dear little child, to my sweet Huta, who is doing such pretty things and loves beauty, here is an effort of Nature towards beauty.

“With my love and blessings always with you.”

That evening I did not see the Saturday-film.

I started adorning Vishnu. It was pretty difficult to stitch his dress. It took more of my time than I had expected. But I was glad—thus I could arrest the racing thoughts. I wanted to occupy myself more and more in one work or another. I was also stitching the Mother's dress.

The following morning a card came from her showing the flower *Coreopsis*, together with these lines:

“This is cheerfulness in work, Mahasaraswati's work, work of art, in all the useful and pretty things.”

It was Sunday. I did not go to the Mother's Stores. I did some odd jobs while remaining in my room.

In the afternoon I went to the Tennis-court to see the Mother playing tennis. She was active, but latterly she had not been keeping quite well.

I had observed that after the Supramental Manifestation on 29th February 1956, the physical troubles, setbacks, hardships, difficulties, struggles increased a hundred-fold for everybody. It was because so far the Mother's physical Presence had borne all the assaults that people did not feel with acuteness the dire and dreadful forces of the Subconscient and Inconscient. Now the Supramental Consciousness, Force and Light penetrated the dense layers of the Inconscient. All the falsehood, obscurities were surging out boundlessly from the immeasurable span of darkness.

Sri Aurobindo has explained in the Cent. Ed., Vol. 25, p. 317 the Mother's way of working:

“...The Mother by the very nature of her work had to identify herself with the Sadhaks, to support all their difficulties, to receive into herself all the poison in their nature, to take up besides all the difficulties of the universal earth-Nature, including the possibility of death and disease, in order to fight them out. If she had not done that, not a single Sadhak would have been able to practise this Yoga. The Divine has to put on humanity in order that the human being may rise to the Divine.”

The event of 29th February reminds me of one of the Mother's talks to me,

which I tape-recorded in 1968 and published in the first part of *About Savitri*, p. 19:

“That is the explanation of why the experience does not last. The atmosphere of the earth is too contrary to the magnificence of the Supreme Consciousness and veils It almost constantly. From time to time It can show and express Itself, but then again, this Inconscient atmosphere veils It.

“It was like that when in 1956 the Supramental Power came down upon earth. It was coming in torrents of Light, wonderful Light and Force and Power, and from the earth b-i-g w-a-v-e-s of deep blue Inconscience came and swallowed It up. All the Force that was coming down was swallowed up and it is again from inside the Inconscient that It has to work Itself through. That is why things take so much time here. It is too much unconsciousness in the response that veils what earth has absorbed. Otherwise, it is long since the Light has poured down and things ought to have changed.”

It is true that at the moment the whole world is undergoing drastic changes. The Mother has explained about Sri Aurobindo’s physical departure as well as about his teaching in the Cent. Ed., Vol. 13, p. 7:

“The lack of receptivity of the earth and men is mostly responsible for the decision Sri Aurobindo has taken regarding his body. But one thing is certain: what has happened on the physical plane affects in no way the truth of his teaching. All that he has said is perfectly true and remains so. Time and the course of events will prove it abundantly.”

I was fascinated by the Mother’s prayer to the Supreme Lord which she wrote on 10th August 1956:

“My Lord, through me Thou hast challenged the world and all the adverse forces have risen in protest.

“But Thy Grace is winning the Victory.”

Nothing of what the Mother has achieved and fulfilled will be banished from the earth-consciousness. Her work continues. For, the Divine’s challenges do not go in vain....

The Mother has declared about herself in her Cent. Ed., Vol. 13, p. 47:

“There is only one thing of which I am absolutely sure, and that is *who I am*. Sri Aurobindo also knew it and declared it. Even the doubts of the whole humanity would change nothing to this fact.

“But another fact is not so certain—it is the usefulness of being here in a body, doing the work I am doing. It is not out of any personal urge that I am

doing it. Sri Aurobindo told me to do it and that is why I do it as a sacred duty in obedience to the dictates of the Supreme.

“Time will reveal how far earth has benefited through it.”

During the sweets or nuts distribution at the Playground the Mother used to read peoples' notes and answer there and then. This took much of her time. Besides, it was very tiring for her to read notes at night without the proper light. To crown it all, some people talked to her nonstop.

Now the routine was changed. During the distribution the Mother heard the music of great composers like Bach, Beethoven, César Franck, Berlioz, Tchaikovsky, Brahms, Wagner and many other musical geniuses.

I enjoyed hearing the music especially in the Presence of the Mother. At that time I had no knowledge of European classical music! Then gradually I developed interest in it.

I was charmed by Beethoven's unique Symphony Number Nine. It was an invocation. He had as if painted the music in multiplex colours. It is as if the Spirit of Bliss came down from the Beyond in response. One gets totally carried away by this extraordinary music.

Sri Aurobindo has written about Beethoven's music in the Cent. Ed., Vol. 9, p. 561:

“There can be no doubt that Beethoven's music was often from another world; so it is quite possible for it to give the key to an inwardly sensitive hearer or to one who is seeking or ready for the connection to be made. But I think it is very few who get beyond being aesthetically moved by a sense of greater things; to lay the hand on the key and use it is rare.”

I have read in the book, *Men of Music* by Wallace Brockway & Herbert Weinstock, about Beethoven (pp. 162, 203-4, 207):

“The history of music offers no experience comparable to that sense of an expanding universe afforded by the masterpieces of Ludwig van Beethoven. With the advent of this titanic presence, there is an abrupt break with the past that has few parallels in the entire history of art...”

“Beethoven is the first, and in some respects the only, musician who stepped outside the frame of his art, to live wholly and heroically in the world. He could not be content merely to write music: unrest was in his soul, and doubt which in its savage intensity made the polite skepticism of the eighteenth century seem puny. Thought pursued him like a nemesis—he could not get away from it. His wrestling with destiny, not only his own but that of mankind, is one of the great epics of the modern world: he told it in a succession of mighty works which, in their boundless humanity and immediacy of appeal, have never been

equalled. By his struggles, Beethoven became one of the heroes of mankind; by his triumphs, he has become one of its prophets....

"To discuss the Ninth Symphony at all, in view of the welter of conflicting opinions—ranging from the truly worshipful ardor of a Paul Bekker through the palaverings of heavy snobs to the cold dislike of any number of sincere people who have their reasons—requires a vast girding-up of the loins. Briefly, the idolaters conceive of the Ninth as a constant and ineffable soaring into the musical empyrean until, at the height of the choral finale, to quote Bekker, 'A giddiness of spiritual intoxication seems to seize the mind, and this greatest of all instrumental songs of life closes with a dithyrambic outcry, to echo forever in the hearts of mankind.' Sir W.H. Madow, usually so restrained in his enthusiasms, goes Bekker one better: 'When the chorus enters it is as though all the forces of humanity were gathered together: number by number the thought grows and widens until the very means of its expression are shattered and we seem no more to be listening to music but to be standing face to face with the living world'....

"The Ninth Symphony rouses and fulfills our highest expectations for three movements and part of a fourth, and ends in a cataclysmic anticlimax....

"If today he is the most universally cherished of all musicians, it is because in the course of this heroic pilgrimage he created something enduring for every sort and condition of man. He failed often, but in the one overpowering ambition of his life he succeeded supremely: for the humanity he loved so much he left a testament of beauty with a legacy for every man.

"Bach's object is not to make the words sound more beautiful by his music, as it is with many composers, but to heighten their meaning. The thoroughness with which he worked out his musical language is an endless source of wonder....

"Bach always saw through a musician's eyes, and his great technical skill told him unerringly what ideas would sound well, not only as images but in a satisfying musical construction....

"Bach approaches the greatest mystery—that of the Trinity, God in One and God in Three—more nearly with music than any words are able....

"Strict artistic forms are a severe test; they take their toll of the lesser man but inspire the great artist to finest flights of the imagination. In clumsy hands the fugue crumbles into dusty contrivance, just as the sonnet can be a strong support to a fine poet and a stiff shackle to his weaker brethren. Bach was a great artist with a mathematical bent, and his fugues are, as those of no other composer, a true marriage of structure and expression. The technique of the thing fascinated him; but he was an artist, not a mechanic, and ingenuity is always subordinated to art...."

The Mother did not favour the music of Chopin, because he was such a depressed person—his anguished heart was reflected in his music, which was extremely sad.

The Mother has spoken much about Richard Wagner. She had a high regard for him.

I read in her Cent. Ed., Vol, 6. pp. 381-82 a beautiful description of how one should listen to music:

“...if one can be completely silent, you see, silent and attentive, simply as though one were an instrument which has to record it—one does not move, and is only something that is listening—if one can be absolutely silent, absolutely still and like that, then the thing enters. And it is only later, some time later, that you can become aware of the effect, either of what it meant or the impression it had on you.

“But the best way of listening is this. It is to be like a still mirror and very concentrated, very silent. In fact, we see people who truly love music... I have seen musicians listening to music, musicians, composers or players who truly love music, I have seen them listening to music... they sit completely still, you know, they are like that, they do not move at all. Everything, everything is like that. And if one can stop thinking, then it is very good, then one profits fully.... It is one of the methods of inner opening and one of the most powerful.”

I should like to quote Moore:

“Music, oh how faint, how weak,
 Language fades before thy spell!
 Why should Feeling ever speak,
 When thou canst breathe her soul so well?”

(To be continued)

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SRI AUROBINDO AND THE GITA

This note has been prepared by a member of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Archives. Its main purpose is to place on the public record references and materials that have until now remained unpublished.

THE Bhagavad-Gita, one of the greatest scriptures of the Sanatana Dharma, is among the few books that had an influence on Sri Aurobindo. As he wrote in a note of the 1940s:

My philosophy was formed first by the study of the Upanishads and the Gita; the Veda came later. They were the basis of my first practice of Yoga; I tried to realise what I read in my spiritual experience and succeeded; in fact I was never satisfied till experience came and it was on this experience that later on I founded my philosophy, not on ideas by themselves....¹

Sri Aurobindo seems to have first read the Gita in Baroda. Still kept in his room in Pondicherry is an old copy of the text published in Calcutta in 1301 Bengali era (1894-95). It is printed in Bengali script and includes a translation in Bengali verse by Nabin Chandra Sen. Sri Aurobindo underlined words all through this copy, and also jotted down in the margins translations of part of Adhyaya 3, verse 1, and Adhyaya 7, verses 1-3. These jottings are closely related to an incomplete translation of the Gita he did around the turn of the century. This rendering, published in Centenary Volume 8, pages 77-96, was written in Sri Aurobindo's characteristic Baroda handwriting in one of the many notebooks he used during the period. The fragmentary marginal translation of verse 3.1 is almost identical to the full translation in the notebook (see Cent. Vol. 8, p. 85). The marginal translations of verses 7.1-3 were not incorporated in the notebook translation, which ends with the last verse of Adhyaya 6. Sri Aurobindo's marginal translation of these three verses are published, for the first time, on page 664. Also published is his revision of the opening of the notebook translation; he wrote this on a loose sheet of paper that has only recently been discovered.

Sri Aurobindo's Baroda translation of the Gita has much in common with his translations, done around the same time, of such literary masterpieces as the *Mālavikāgnimitram* and *Vikramorvasīyam*. That is to say, at this point he treated the Gita more as a literary than as a spiritual classic. This is in sharp contrast to the translations of the Upanishads he did after taking up yoga in 1904 or 1905, in which the literary merits of the works are clearly brought out, but not at the expense of an exact spiritual interpretation.

Sri Aurobindo's final translations of three Upanishads, the Isha, the Kena and

¹ From a text published in *Mother India* in March 1971, pp.100-02.

the *Mundaka*, appeared in the review *Arya* between 1914 and 1920. All of them are masterly renderings, and two are accompanied by commentaries which cast light both on the ancient Vedanta and on Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of divine life. One might have expected him to publish in the *Arya* a translation of the most popular of Vedantic texts, the Bhagavad-Gita—but he never did. His interpretation of the Gita in the *Arya* is contained in two series of discursive essays which, published in book form, have become his most widely read prose work, *Essays on the Gita*.

The *Essays* began to appear in the *Arya* in August 1916—two years after the review's inception. But even a month before the *Arya* began—in July 1914—Sri Aurobindo wrote in a notebook that among the works he intended to take up was a commentary on the Gita. A similar note of August 1914 mentions the title *Essays on the Gita*.

It is interesting and perhaps significant that Sri Aurobindo chose for his treatment of the Gita the form of a series of essays rather than the traditional translation and verse-by-verse commentary. To be sure, most of the more important verses of the Gita are translated or paraphrased in the body of the *Essays*, and the main lines of the scripture's thought, as well as the majority of its key passages, are touched on in Sri Aurobindo's serial commentary. But the fact remains that Sri Aurobindo avoided a direct translation of the text.¹

It was to be expected that readers of the *Essays* familiar with the Gita would attempt to isolate the passages of translation and paraphrase of the former. One could further anticipate that scholars might try to assemble these passages into a translation "by Sri Aurobindo". One of the first to get this idea was a certain S. D. Deo of Poona, who on 1 August 1934 wrote to Sri Aurobindo asking if his handbook of the Gita, compiled from *Essays on the Gita*, could be published. Sri Aurobindo wrote to his secretary the following reply to be conveyed to Mr. Deo:

The permission cannot be given—the translations in the *Essays* are more explanatory than textually precise or cast in a literary style—I do not want that to go out as my translation of the Gita.

But even before Mr. Deo made his request, a disciple of Sri Aurobindo's, Anilbaran Roy, had taken up a similar work. His *The Message of the Gita: With Text, Translation and Notes: As Interpreted by Sri Aurobindo*, eventually published under the imprint of Allen & Unwin in 1938, had been begun in 1933, or earlier. A note exists dated 27 July 1933 in which Anilbaran asks Sri Aurobindo permission to send him the last three chapters of the compilation he was working on. Sri Aurobindo agreed; we may assume he had earlier seen the previous chapters. Two years later, on 4 December 1935, Anilbaran asked Sri Aurobindo to approve a proposed title

¹ The writer has been told by a person who received the information from Nolini Kanta Gupta that Sri Aurobindo intended at some point to do a complete verse translation of the Gita, but never found time for this work.

for the work: "Sri Aurobindo's Gita." Sri Aurobindo's reply throws some light on the nature of his collaboration with his disciple: "Sri Aurobindo's Gita would mean the commentary was by me"—an impression he evidently did not wish to create. Sri Aurobindo also declined to allow Anilbaran's book to be called an "abridged edition" of the *Essays*. He suggested the phrase "commentary summarising its substance" (*i.e.* the substance of the *Essays*), and this was incorporated into Anilbaran's preface to the 1938 edition of *The Message of the Gita*. This preface adds that the book had been prepared "with the permission of Sri Aurobindo"—a point which may be readily accepted, since in those days nothing could be published by any member of the Ashram without Sri Aurobindo's approval.

Although Sri Aurobindo declined to take responsibility for Anilbaran's compilation, it is significant that when a Bengali version of it was reviewed in 1942, Sri Aurobindo went to the trouble of writing in his own hand a refutation of certain remarks made by the reviewer against his interpretation as presented in the book. His note was not published during his life time, since he allowed his disciple Kapali Shastri to answer the reviewer; it appeared for the first time in the April 1978 issue of *Sri Aurobindo: Archives and Research*.

To compile *The Message of the Gita*, Anilbaran took translated and paraphrased verses of the Gita from the *Essays* and had them printed below the lines of the Sanskrit text. Verses not translated by Sri Aurobindo were provided by the compiler; for this he relied to a great extent on the translation of Bhagavan Das and Annie Besant. He had passages of commentary from the *Essays* printed either as chapter-introductions or as footnotes keyed to the appropriate verses.

Anilbaran's method had its virtues as well as its drawbacks. On the positive side, his work has been of immense help to students who wished to have Sri Aurobindo's interpretation before them while reading the text of the Gita. But students expecting a literal translation could easily be misled by the paraphrases printed below many of the Gita's slokas. The reservations first voiced by Sri Aurobindo in 1934 in regard to a work incorporating translations that "are more explanatory than textually precise" might well be applied to Anilbaran's useful work.

Still, the concept behind it was, and has remained, an attractive one. Two similar works have been published in recent years. Both have their merits which it is beyond the scope of this short note to consider. The one point that seems worth stressing is that there is no "Sri Aurobindo's Gita". What there is is *Essays on the Gita*—the form chosen by Sri Aurobindo to present his interpretation of this scripture.

TRANSLATIONS FROM THE GITA

OLD UNPUBLISHED FRAGMENTS FROM SRI AUROBINDO

Chapter 1, verses 1-6 (revised version)

Canto the First

DHRITARÂSHTRA

In the holy Field, the Field of the Kurus, assembled for the fight, what did my sons, O Sunjoy, what did the Pândavas?

SUNJOY

Then the King, even Duryodhan, when he beheld the Pândav army marshalled in battle array, approached the Master and said this word:

“Behold, O Master, this mighty host of the sons of Pandou marshalled by Drupad’s son, thy disciple deep of brain. There are heroes and great bowmen equal unto Bheme and Arjoona in war, Yuyudhân and Virâta and Drupad, the mighty car-warrior, Dhristakétou and Chékîtâna and Kâshi’s heroic king; and Purujit Coonty-bhoja and Shaivya, lion of men; and Yudhamanyu of mighty deeds, and hero Ut-tamoujas and Subhadra’s son and the sons of Droupady, great warriors all.

Chapter 7, verses 1-3 (marginal version)

When thou hast cloven to me with thy whole self, O Partha, taking refuge in me & practising Yog, hearken how then thou shalt know me without doubt and without imperfection. For I will declare to thee without reserve the whole result¹ of Philosophy & Science which when thou hast known there is nought else that is left to be known in this existence. Among many thousands of men hardly one striveth after perfection and of those even that strive & are spiritually whole, hardly one knoweth me without misprision.

¹ Uncertain reading.

SUPRAMENTAL AVATAR AND PHYSICAL TRANSFORMATION

A LETTER

YOU have put me a number of important questions arising from what I wrote to you on the *Agenda* and the Divine's Will.¹ I must not delay to answer them to the best of my ability.

(1) "How far limited in their workings are the Avatars who have brought down the Supramental World into this lower triple universe?"

I suppose you mean Avatars who came with the mission of establishing the Supermind in mind, life and matter on the earth. For, surely the Supramental World has not yet been brought down. Some Light, Force and Consciousness of it manifested in the subtle-physical on February 29, 1956 and the Supermind was at work in both Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, but there was no substantial establishment of it in the stuff of their bodies. The process of transforming the cellular consciousness was going on in the Mother but there seemed to have been no definitive supramentalisation of the physical stuff. The difficulty lay in the fact that these Avatars had assumed human nature with all its fundamental difficulties, the human constitution as evolved in the course of millennia, for then alone whatever change they would achieve in themselves would be meaningful for us, be a hope and a promise for our transformation. The limits accepted were immense. The Supermind's power too was great and its extraordinary action went on constantly, but except at certain times it was not exercised in an apparently miraculous manner. I say "was not" rather than "could not be"—and this brings me to your second question.

(2) "Are the 'luminous interventions', which you have mentioned in your last letter, law-bound or do they have their own laws not to be understood by intelligence or in mental terms? Nolini Kanta Gupta, just after the Mother's passing away, said in his message that 'further was not possible'. Not possible even if Grace intervenes?"

The Supramental Avatars come from the Transcendent—that is, from beyond the cosmic law. So they cannot be cosmically law-bound. They obey cosmic laws for their own reasons but they are free and omni-capable. When I showed to the Mother soon after December 5, 1950 a short write-up, for the readers of *Mother India*, on Sri Aurobindo's departure from his body, she picked out the phrase: "the mortal remains of Sri Aurobindo"—and said: "You cannot say this. There was nothing mortal about Sri Aurobindo. He did not die of physical causes. He had com-

¹ "Two Clarifications", *Mother India*, July 1982.

plete control over his body.” This was a staggering eye-opener. Although I had instinctively felt the same way, the direct explicitness of the Mother’s statement was like a lightning flash. It amounts to saying that neither Sri Aurobindo nor the Mother would be compelled to leave the body. If physical maladies came about and if they were responsible for the deaths of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, everything happened by their consent and for a purpose of their own. Nolini’s message I take to have been worded from what we may call the absolute point of view: since nothing further was done, it was the Divine’s Will that it should not be possible. Perhaps “possible” is an inadequate term and one could have said: “further was not chosen.” Here enters your third question.

(3) “Is there any concrete explanation why the new process of ‘mutation’ culminating in complete divinisation of the body was, as Nolini later declared and as you agreed, ‘postponed’ when originally the Mother as well as Sri Aurobindo had been sure of it? Of course, I know the answer is sometimes given along lines indicated by Sri Aurobindo once: what if the apparent failure suits the Divine’s plan better in the long run? But to me this is a mystifying answer, just consoling rather than concrete.”

I think we have to look at the situation from two angles. There is the Avatar’s transcendent self and there is his or her cosmically manifested or embodied self. The Avatar acts by being in touch with the Supreme Truth above and with the evolutionary conditions and needs below. In his embodied state he may not act with full knowledge of that Truth: whatever is required for his action is held by him in his consciousness. At any moment his own transcendent being, which is ever-free and whose ever-freedom is essentially present also in his cosmically incarnate form, may send a command running counter to what was decided to be necessary before. As you know, the Mother said in effect: “Somewhere it has been decided whether this body is going to be supramentalised or not, but this body is not yet given to know the decision.” I am convinced that when the Mother came to know the decision of her own highest self, she let the accepted physical troubles take their course and lead her to leave her body. Why the Transcendent reversed the trend we had been taught to affirm is hardly possible to gauge fully. All we can say is that somehow it was for a greater future benefit to the Divine Mother’s beloved children. Your fourth question seems to fumble towards an idea of this benefit, but, according to me, too hastily.

(4) “Why has the Mother to reappear on earth—as you envision—in order to supramentalise the human body? Is not the Divine free to complete her mission through any other body she may choose, a body which we are not aware of at the moment and which may not be known for a prescribed period?”

You do not appear to realise the tremendous pre-requisites. Sri Aurobindo¹ tells us: "The psychic and spiritual transformation must come first, only afterwards would it be practical or useful to discuss the supramentalisation of the whole being down to the body." Again, we learn from him:² "One has first of all to supramentalise the mental-vital and physical consciousness generally—afterwards one can think of supramentalisation of the body." Who is capable of the full preparation? I have not come across anyone who can sufficiently represent the Mother or Sri Aurobindo. But that is precisely what is wanted. Is there any sadhak with their oceanic knowledge, their light of intuition, their infinite peace, their occult force, their profound immediate understanding, their vast impartiality and compassion?

Moreover, has not Sri Aurobindo clearly outlined for his followers the necessity of the Guru's physical nearness to enable them to do the Integral Yoga, observing to the full all the conditions laid down for it? Here are a few words of his:

"In this discipline, the inspiration of the Master and in the difficult stages his control and his presence are indispensable—for it would be impossible otherwise to go through it without much stumbling and error which would prevent all chance of success."³

"The guidance of one who is himself by identity or represents the Divine is in this difficult endeavour imperative and indispensable."⁴

Q.—Is there any special effect of physical nearness to the Mother?

A.—It is indispensable for the fullness of the sadhana on the physical plane. Transformation of the physical and external being is not possible otherwise."⁵

The refrain in the three passages is the word "indispensable", referring to the physical presence of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother or of at least one of them as the sole condition for the disciple's doing the Integral Yoga with the hope of complete success in overcoming all obstacles: that is, of going right up to the body's total transformation, which will fulfil the Integral Yoga.

The central reason is that the Supramental Force which alone can effect the fulfilment cannot be brought into sufficient action without an Avatar of the Supermind being in our midst.

Certainly we can go a long way—even in bodily changes—by our self-dedication to the subtle presence of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and by drawing upon the power they have established on the earth in general and in the Ashram in particular, but I am afraid the logic of their revelations can conduct us only to one conclusion: the Mother has first to come back in whatever manner and stand before us physically transformed before we can reach the last stage of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga of Supramental Descent and Transformation.

29.5.1982

AMAL KIRAN

¹ *On Yoga II*, Tome One (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1958), p. 101.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Sri Aurobindo on Himself and on the Mother* (1953), p. 253.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 523.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 566.

I SEE WONDERS EVERYWHERE

WHETHER I reach Him, the Eternal Truth,
is not my only care.
An inner ever-begging ruth
tells me to share
in the human lot of growing towards Him,
to become aware
of the rotten and the dim.
I find life not difficult to bear
with its changing tests and moments of delight.
I see wonders everywhere
in the daylight and the darkness of the night.
Love has always been my nature's fare.
I am grateful for the flowers and the trees,
happy meeting people when they dare,
getting ready for the coming of the peace.
Breathing in the life-force of the air
makes my body strong and full of joy.
I appreciate the beautiful, the rare,
for instance singer Dilip Kumar Roy.
All I want is make a serving prayer
of my presence on the earthly plane
and to climb some steps on Heaven's stair.
Maybe then my life will not be all in vain.

8.3.1982

URSULA

SOME QUESTIONS ON “SAVITRI”

TWO LETTERS

I

YOUR question about the pronunciation of Sanskrit names in English, involving as they must a certain stressing in the new host-language, is one that has occurred to me several times while reading *Savitri*. I have often heard Westerners in particular say “Savitri” with an accent on the second syllable, but such a procedure would play havoc with Sri Aurobindo’s metre. A line like

Savitri, Savitri, O Savitri

would be a clumsy mixture with no true pattern if read:

Savít/ri, Savít/ri Ò/Savít/ri.

Where is the pentameter here? We can get it only if we attend to the Sanskrit pronunciation of the name. In Sanskrit, in place of the stress and slack which obtain in English, we have the quantitative length and shortness—the greater or lesser time taken by the voice over a vowel-supported syllable. There the feminine “Savitri” has both the *a* of its first syllable and the *i* of its last syllable long. They have to be stressed in English, making the line run thus:

Sávít/rí, Sá/vitrí/Ò Sáv/itrí.

“Aswapathy”, the name of Savitri’s father, in a line like the following would have the accentuation as I have shown it:

Thèn Ás/wapáth/y án/swered tò/ the séer.

As for “Satyavan”, we have to scan it as below:

This was/the dáy/when Sát/yaván/ múst díe.

Sri Aurobindo’s poem has other Sanskrit words too, requiring the right stressing, for example:

Wínd-háired/ Gundhúr/vas chán/ted tò/ the eár.

Or,

And in/ its héart/ stánds Vír/át, Kíng/ of kings.

Sri Aurobindo has himself shown the accentuation of this Sanskrit name by writing “Virât”. But the voice in the line does not move easily unless we put a secondary accent on the first syllable. Perhaps Sri Aurobindo intends this syllable to be stressed in English and has put that diacritical sign over the *a* just to indicate that it is to be sounded like the *a* in “dark”. Anyway, the other names—“Savitri, Aswapathy, Satyavan”—are clear in their stresses as judged by Sri Aurobindo’s metrical structure.

2

You have written:

“A point has arisen with regard to the interpretation of a couple of lines in Book One, Canto Three in *Savitri*.¹ Let me give the full passage, italicising the lines in question:

Only a while at first these heavenlier states,
 These large wide-poised upliftings could endure...
 An old pull of subconscious cords renews;
 It draws the unwilling spirit from the heights,
 Or a dull gravitation drags us down
 To the blind driven inertia of our base.
 This too the supreme Diplomat can use,
 He makes our fall a means for greater rise.
 For into the ignorant nature’s gusty field,
 Into the half-ordered chaos of mortal life
The formless Power, the Self of eternal light
Follow in the shadow of the spirit’s descent;
 The twin duality for ever one
 Chooses its home mid the tumults of the sense.
 He comes unseen into our darker parts
 And, curtained by the darkness, does his work,
 A subtle and all-knowing guest and guide,
 Till they too feel the need and will to change.

“I have been told that ‘the spirit’s descent’ refers to what the spirit did during the process of creation by the Divine. ‘The twin duality’ is taken to mean the dual status of Soul and Nature, Purusha and Prakriti, which are understood to be the two poises of the Divine that are necessary to work out and manifest in the creation the full figure of the Truth.

“I feel that the whole passage relates to the happenings in an individual mould and not to the universal mould or creation. In that case, just two lines in the middle cannot point to the latter. The ‘supreme Diplomat’ comes in the wake of our fall

¹ Edition 1970, pp. 34-35.

—the fall of the individual—to convert it into a means for greater rise. Will you please clarify the matter?"

Here is my answer:

The passage bears only on the individual's rise and relapse in the course of his spiritual experience. The "descent" spoken of is the opposite of the individual being's ascent to the "heights" of "heavenlier states". And "The twin duality for ever one" does not refer to Purusha and Prakriti in the usual sense but to

The formless Power, the Self of eternal light.

A reference to the original creation, the primal descent into the Inconscient, would be an anomaly, a sudden unprepared intrusion, in this context. Also, the mention of "the twin duality" choosing its home amid "the tumults of the sense" would be pointless because "the tumults of the sense" are surely part of Prakriti. We can't speak of Purusha and Prakriti descending into Prakriti itself! Again, the mention of "He" in the line,

He comes unseen into our darker parts

would be impossible to account for. In the ordinary Purusha-Prakriti universe of discourse it would signify Purusha alone. Where then would Prakriti be gone? Here "He" covers "the twin duality" and harks back to "the supreme Diplomat". It is the supreme Diplomat who is "the twin duality". We may equate this duality to Ishwara identical with his own Shakti.

K. D. SETHNA

MILLY PINTO

A REMINISCENCE

MILLY, who suddenly passed away in the Ashram on the night of July 3, was a personal friend of mine, so that the loss for me was more than for just a member of a collectivity.

We were both at college together. That was over 45 years ago. I still seem to remember her schoolgirl uniform: blue skirt and white blouse. She used to commute daily from a distance of twelve miles. Later it was a welcome surprise for me to see her here in the early forties. The second World War was still on. She brought the first jeep to the Ashram and it was she who started the transport service, lending a helping hand to visitors to the Ashram arriving at the railway station. At that time there were no bus services and the railway was the only means of convenient communication between French India and British. She was always ready at hand to load the baggage, to unload it—all with a benevolent smile.

During those years, Udar's Harpagon Workshop was still developing and Milly was perhaps the most energetic worker in the establishment. Often she would be found working solo at bucket-making. And more. Wherever there was a call for volunteers for harvesting, construction, concreting, etc., you could be sure of finding Milly there plunged in work. I have so often seen her returning at 11 p.m. or 12 in pouring rain to her room. She was service embodied. And the Mother had a special relation with her. However occupied She might be, the Mother had always time for Milly.

Milly was simple and unassuming to a fault. Few suspected that she had a living yogic side. It was years ago: I was addressing a seminar at the Park Guest House. Milly seemed to have peeped in and left. Later she told me that she did not find me in the hall. I was surprised and said that I was there, speaking to the audience. She smiled and told me: 'It was Kapali Sastry that was speaking there!'

I was taken aback. For although I was aware that at times my teacher Kapali Sastry was present when I was speaking or writing, to have this concrete corroboration was something totally unexpected.

She belongs to a family that has contributed substantially to the development of the Ashram. Even by herself, she had certain qualities that were singular. Next to her spirit of service was her utter dedication. When her famous aunt, Dr. Albuquerque, left a legacy—all for Milly—Milly offered the whole of it to the Mother. That the Mother arranged things differently is another matter.

Milly always remained the same—humble and simple. May her spirit of service inspire all of us always. May her dedication be an example to us always.

M. P. PANDIT

HOW I BECAME A HINDU

(Continued from the issue of September 1982)

4

My plight was pretty serious after I left college. I was now a married man and the father of a son. There was a family to support which included my parents in the village. But I had not a penny in my pocket. I gave up the only job I could get as a clerk in the Central Secretariat after exactly 65 days because I was ashamed to be a cog in the British imperialist machine. My supreme aspiration was to be a lecturer in some college. But every interview to which I was called ended with the employers pointing out that I had no previous experience of teaching.

It was in the midst of this misery that I met Ram Swarup. He was my senior by one year in the same college. But I had never seen or met him in my college days. I had heard that some of the best speeches made in the college Parliament by some student leaders had been written by Ram Swarup and that some of the good poems contributed to the college magazine by a class-mate of mine in his own name had in fact been composed by Ram Swarup. Thus I was familiar with the name but not with the face. I was also intrigued a little. Why did not this man himself deliver his own speeches? Why did he have to hide behind another person for publicising his poems?

Meanwhile, I was drifting away in my intellectual perceptions from my philosopher friend of college days who was also out of college and unemployed like myself in spite of his first class in the M.A. examination. He could see no meaningful message in Marx. He had also what I thought to be a bad habit of arguing for the opposite side in order to bring out the best from the supporter of a philosophical system. He was, however, full of praise for Ram Swarup whom he had known. He had one day described Ram Swarup as the most impersonal person he had met.

One day a common friend invited me to a meeting over which Ram Swarup was to preside. I went to the appointed place and met him for the first time, face to face. I found him full of Shavian humour. His looks had a kind of beaming love for which I fell immediately. We became friends on the very first day. After that we started meeting almost every day, sitting in a restaurant in Chandni Chowk or on the lawns under the walls of the Red Fort. The subject of discussion was a novel theory which Ram Swarup had evolved. At first I thought that he had got it out of his hat.

Ram Swarup admitted the validity of Marx regarding the role of class conflict in human history. But he raised a fundamental question which no-one to my knowledge had raised before I met him. How did classes come to be constituted in the first instance? This was his question. I did not know at that time that Marx had an answer to this question. Classes, according to Marx, had arisen in the primitive communist society when means of production got accumulated and some people appropriated them to the disadvantage of the others. The owners of these means became the

haves who then started lording it over the have-nots. But even if I had known this answer, it would not have satisfied Ram Swarup. His probe went deeper than that of Marx. How did the haves manage to appropriate the means of production?

So I waited for Ram Swarup to provide his own answer to his own question. He explained to me that classes were in fact the outcome of national conflicts in which one group of people conquered and imposed itself on another group and misappropriated the means of production. To his way of thinking, national conflicts had primacy over class conflicts. The secondary conflicts should not be allowed to obscure or obstruct the resolution of primary conflicts. *Ergo*, our national conflict with Britain had primacy over whatever class conflicts were present in Indian society. It was indeed a very dexterous use of a Marxian concept to outflank Marx. I could not meet the challenge or defeat the logic.

But I protested when Ram Swarup requested me to provide the historical facts to prove his point. He had not been a student of history like myself. To my way of thinking, facts came first and conclusions were logical deductions from whatever facts were available at any time. But here was a man who was out to reverse the process. I pointed out the illogic of it to Ram Swarup. He smiled and stated that to him the conclusions always came first and that facts could follow. I told him that his way of thinking smacked of fascism. He smiled some more and looked at me with an expression of "so what?" on his sharply intellectual face. The swear word which made many intellectuals quake in those days had no sting for him. In fact sometimes I suspected that he was a supporter of fascism.

This suspicion had some ground for me in his unabashed sympathy for the RSS which I had come to regard as a fascist organisation by then. Not that I knew anything about the RSS, I was only repeating what I had heard in my earlier intellectual circles. But Ram Swarup knew some RSS workers. One of them, he told me, was the manager of a famous milkshop in Connaught Place. He permitted a sweeper employed by the establishment to serve milk bottles to the clients who came to this shop in large numbers. One day a Muslim gentleman objected to a sweeper being allowed to touch the milk bottles served to the gentry. The manager replied that he was a Hindu and that his religion recognised no untouchables. I was touched by this story. I wished that all Hindus could make the same statement. But I did not change my opinion of the RSS.

I wonder how I would have shaped if I had continued to live in Delhi and to meet Ram Swarup regularly. He was not a Marxist, but was then definitely an atheist who believed that butter was more important than God. He had read some of Sri Aurobindo and had come to the conclusion that yoga was an instinct for suicide. Obviously, the human personality for him at that time was constituted by the human ego. He had been strongly influenced by Bernard Shaw and Aldous Huxley and valued very highly an individual's capacity to look at himself, remorselessly and with the help of reason. He introduced me to these great writers whom I had not read so far. On the whole, he had no use for any conventional morality or code of manners

and could see clearly how they were mostly used to put the other fellow in the wrong.

I am sure I would not have ended as a communist and a nationalist vis-à-vis Muslim communalism had I continued under his direct influence. His letters written to me during my stay outside Delhi did influence me at decisive points in my evolution. But the impact of his whole personality, face to face, would have been much more effective. For he continued to evolve and grow under his own impulsion which was not the case with me. I needed to be pushed ahead by my betters. Moreover, his growth was faster and of a deeper design than I could ever manage on my own.

I had to leave Delhi in December 1944. My first job was in Bombay where I was treated very shabbily by my boss. I broke down completely and wrote some very pathetic letters to my relative in Delhi. After two months I left Bombay for Calcutta where I expected my father to find some new opening for me. He did help me get a job. But he could not save me from the scornful jibes of my relatives and countrymen from Haryana. They often contrasted my high education with my small salary and bestowed on me the honorific of *padha likha bekar*, that is, an educated nincompoop. These same people were to hold me in high regard in later years when I succeeded in making more money. But in my early years in Calcutta they were a pain in the neck.

I have never been very much bothered about what other people say about me so long as I am true to my own lights and inspirations. Nevertheless, it was a great punishment to live in a crowd of people who cared for nothing except ready cash. I could understand them very well. I knew that they knew no better. I could even sympathise with them, prisoners as they were of a traditional culture which had suffered terrible corruption. But I could never understand their pre-occupation with me as a scandalous subject. Why could they not mind their own business and let me mind my own?

A letter from Ram Swarup which I received within days of my reaching Calcutta was nothing less than a command and a directive. He wrote: "I have read your letters which you have written to your relative. I can sympathise with you in your situation but I cannot support you in your mood of self-pity. Society has given you nothing, not even the right to protest. But that is no reason why you should whine and whimper. I would like you to develop your personal predicament into a more purposive protest against the social system as a whole." This message was like a powerful medicine. I started trying to be more impersonal.

My job was that of a travelling salesman and it took me from Calcutta to Peshawar. I visited almost all important cities and towns in Bihar, UP and the Punjab of pre-partition days. It was a great experience meeting people and seeing places. It broke down many of my orthodox habits. I was a vegetarian and have always remained a vegetarian. But I had never got used to different types of food and drink served by people belonging to different communities, including Muslims. One day I was shocked and felt very unclean when the Sikh proprietor of a hotel in Ambala told me that the water with which I had bathed that morning had been brought to

the common bathroom in a buffalo-skin.

On my way from Sitapur to Lucknow, I was absorbed in an interesting discussion with a middle-aged Muslim gentleman about the existence of God. He did not know any English but spoke a very chaste Urdu. I was amazed that this language had such an extensive vocabulary of technical terms in philosophy. He helped where I could not understand the Arabic terms. A co-traveller was listening to us intently. As soon as he discovered that I was an incurable atheist, he enquired about the examinations I had passed and the divisions I had secured. Then he concluded very contemptuously: "It is because you do not believe in God that you are wandering from place to place selling some miserable merchandise. Otherwise your degrees would have made an august officer out of you." I retorted that I was prepared to believe in God if he could provide a good job to me. The Muslim gentleman smiled benevolently on these crudities but kept quiet. These were hits below the philosophical belt. Obviously he felt helpless. It was not his cup of tea.

On my way to Peshawar from Rawalpindi, I became a witness to a very violent argument between two middle-aged Muslims about the desirability of Pakistan. One of them was a Punjabi, the other a Pathan. They were talking in a dialect of the Punjabi language some of which I could not understand quite clearly. The Pathan clinched the argument by saying that Jinnah "*Sala Soovar ka puttara he.*" that is, Jinnah was the son of a swine. The Punjabi rose up in his seat, red in the face, and challenged the Pathan to repeat the sentence. The Pathan kept his cool and remained seated. He stared at the Punjabi and said: "*Asi pher dasda han, Jinnah sala soovar ka puttara he.*" (I repeat that Jinnah is the son of a swine.) The Punjabi did not dare assault him, such was the self-possession in the Pathan's voice and face. Our journey to Peshawar was completed in benumbed silence.

On my way back from Peshawar I shared a lower berth with a middle-aged Englishman. He had just retired as a Major in the British army and was on his way home *via* Bombay. He was very gentle and had the British talent for understatement. He took a liking to me as we talked about the war which was now drawing to an end. He became a father figure for me after an hour or two and offered to share his lunch, which I could not because I was a vegetarian. I bought something for myself from the platform at the next station. As he prepared to have his afternoon nap, in his own corner, I took out a book to read. It was *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* by Lenin which I had bought earlier from the Communist Party office in Lahore. It had the emblem of the raised fist on its cover. Suddenly the Major had a look of horror on his face. As a pious Christian he crossed himself and moved farther in his corner. But he did not utter a word. I immediately put away the book in my suitcase and did not open it or any other Communist book again till we parted company at the old Delhi Station. He invited me to visit him if I ever went to England and gave me his card which I did not keep long because a journey to England was an unheard-of dream for me at the time.

But the most important event during my travels was a visit to the Communist

Party office on Mcleod Road in Lahore. My classmate whose father had humiliated me years ago had migrated to Lahore and become a party member *via* the All India Students Federation. It was he who took me to the Party office. This was my first contact with the Communist Party of India and its official publications. Quite a few of the young men and women working in the Party office were from Bengal.

They took to me immediately when I talked to them in my *bhanga*, broken Bengali. I bought a few books by Lenin and several party pamphlets mostly on the subject of the demand for Pakistan. I finished reading all of them by the time I returned to Calcutta.

But during my short sojourn in Lahore I had long discussions with my friend regarding the validity of the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan. He was convinced and tried to convince me that the demand was just and fully democratic. But I had the large number of Sikhs and Hindus in my mind. I had met many and talked to them on the subject during my travels in the Punjab and the N.W.F.P. They were all violently opposed to the idea of living in a State dominated by Muslim mullahs. But so far as my friend was concerned they were not the real people. He continued to talk of some progressive people who were united as brethren in language and culture irrespective of religious differences. I thought I was also a progressive. But I could see nothing progressive about Pakistan. The Muslim League was totally dominated by knights, nawabzadahs, Khan Bahadurs and fanatic mullahs.

On my return to Calcutta I told my employers that I was not prepared to travel any more, job or no job. They allowed me to settle down. I was a frequent visitor to the coffee house in College Street where I took to writing my first novel. I could not write in my small cell which I shared with four other people. So I acquired the habit of writing in coffee houses which lasted even after I had a comfortable home. It is during these sessions that I met a group of Bengali students who were members of the Congress Socialist Party. They took me to their leader whose name I cannot recall now. He commissioned me to translate from Hindi into English some writings of Acharya Narendra Deva and Sri Jayaprakash Narayan so that they could be translated into Bengali. It was difficult to find a Bengali in Calcutta who could translate directly from Hindi into Bengali. I suppose the situation is the same today.

I did the translations very fast. I agreed with every word of what these leaders of the CSP had written. These were their writings from the early thirties when the CSP had not broken with the Communists. I was not aware of the serious quarrel which had divided them from 1940 onwards. I do not know if my English translations were ever rendered into Bengali. But I earned the respect and regard of the Socialist leader. He was a lean, thin and dark man of medium stature. He had been a revolutionary and had spent long years in British jails, including a spell in the Andamans. His life inside a dilapidated dwelling place in a narrow, dark lane was very austere. His shirt always had several patches on it. He sat on a small mat without any other accoutrements around him. Sometimes he smoked a *biri*. But his

looks were stern. And he was a man of very few words. He inspired in me a great respect bordering on awe.

His confidence in me led him to suggest that I become the editor of a weekly in Hindi which the CSP had been publishing for some time for the benefit of the Hindi-speaking people of Calcutta. I was very diffident. This was a field in which I had no earlier experience. But he encouraged me. He told me that I could not do worse than the existing editor who, in his words, was a mere matriculate from U.P. I accepted the responsibility and wrote the first editorial a few days later. It was my last for that socialist weekly. The leader could not read Hindi. But he could understand it very well if something in Hindi was read out to him. He became very impatient as he listened to the earlier editor reading my piece to him. He sent for me immediately.

I was expecting a pat on my back for what I had written after a great deal of thought and polishing of language. But I was taken aback when I saw the hardlined face of the socialist leader. He asked me point-blank: "Are you a communist?" On my denying the charge forcefully, he protested: "But the line you have taken in this editorial is the communist line. How do you explain that? The communists had wormed their way into our party earlier also with disastrous consequences for our party. I cannot allow that to happen again. Not in the city of Calcutta. This is not a small town where some of our comrades may get hoodwinked by clever communist talk." His temper rose as he talked. It was for the first time that I had heard him utter so many words in such a small space of time.

I do not remember the subject of that editorial. It was perhaps about the Cabinet Mission proposals. I did not know the CSP line on that subject—or any other subject for that matter. Nor did I know the communist line except on the subject of Pakistan. I expected my friends from the coffee house to save me from the wrath of their leader. But their own looks had also become rather hostile. In my desperation I touched the leader's feet and swore by all that I held sacred that I was innocent of any deliberate distortion. The great man cooled down immediately. He blessed me by placing both his hands on my head and asked me to come again for a discussion on different party lines. Meanwhile I was to write no more editorials for his weekly.

I never met him again. The 16 August 1946 communal riots broke out in Calcutta after a few days. I would have been killed by a Muslim mob in the early hours of that day as I walked back towards my home from the coffee house which I had found closed. My fluent Urdu and my Western dress saved me. My wife and 2-year old son had joined me a few days earlier in a small room in a big house bordering on a large Muslim locality. On the evening of the 17th we had to vacate that house and scale a wall at the back to escape murderous Muslim mobs advancing with firearms. Had not the army moved in immediately after, I would not have lived to write what I am writing today.

(To be continued)

SITA RAM GOEL

THE LAW OF CONTRADICTION AND THE LOGIC OF THE INFINITE

A CRITICAL STUDY IN THE LIGHT OF THE NIRVISHESHA ADWAITA OF SHANKARA AND THE INTEGRAL ADWAITA OF SRI AUROBINDO

JUST as Indian Philosophy is associated with the Vedanta in the West, Adwaita is associated with the system of Shankara in India, although there are other systems which are Adwaitic. Again, Adwaita is generally taken to mean the oneness of the Supreme Reality or Brahman by denying the ultimate reality of the World, and these two positions are taken to be the pith and marrow of the philosophy of Shankara.

Brahman is existence-consciousness-bliss, Sachchidananda. Brahman is changeless, immortal and infinite, while the world is changing and subject to decay and destruction. Brahman is a self-existent and independent truth, while the world is only a phenomenal appearance. M. N. Sircar¹ writes: "Philosophy in Shankara is denial of immanent life and an assertion of transcendent consciousness. Though Shankara would accept a continuity of the immanent life, still he would not conceive and grant a history in the Absolute. And he has sacrificed the history to the fixity of an unchangeable and unchanged Absolute. His philosophy is essentially a transcendence in which the immanent life and consciousness have no meaning, no existence. Shankara has not reconciled the claims of relative experience and transcendent consciousness. Such reconciliation has been thought an impossibility and to the integral Absolute has been sacrificed the truth and revelations of relative consciousness. The plurality of relative consciousness is due to nescience. It has no *raison d'être* in the Absolute."

If we admit the reality of the world along with that of Brahman, then there will be two alternatives open to us. First, the world may be regarded as independent of Brahman and a separate reality altogether. Then we are led to a Sankhyan type of dualism. "The dualistic realism," says Dr. Radhakrishnan², "is the result of a false metaphysics." "If we assume the essential unrelatedness of subject and object, it would be impossible to pass from one to the other. A little reflection tells us that, if the two are independent, we require a *tertium quid* to connect the two. The moment we realise the utter unsatisfactoriness of the *tertium quid* hypothesis, we are left with the view that the two are aspects of one ultimate consciousness, which is the basis of all knowledge as well as existence."³

The second alternative is that the world is dependent on Brahman as an integral part of it, and then, according to the Shankarites, it cannot fail to affect Brahman's unity, for this world, subject to change and decay, affects the immutable and imperishable nature of Brahman. So a synthesis between the world and Brahman is im-

¹ *Comparative Studies in Vedantism*, pp. 133-34.

² *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, p. 320.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 328.

possible. The only way to escape from the self-contradiction, according to Shankara, is by a refusal of ultimate reality to the world and affirming it phenomenally. There would be no metaphysical dualism and at the same time the unity of Brahman: Its changelessness is maintained. Commenting on Brahma-sutra 2-1-14, Shankara says, *Na hi kūṣasthasya brahmaṇaḥ, sthiti gativat aneka dharmāśrayatvam sambhavati*—"The unchanging Brahman will have many qualities like stability and movement." So it is evident that he is applying the law of contradiction to Brahman. Stability and movement are patently contradictory and cannot be predicated of Brahman.

All this difficulty arises because of the adherence by Shankara and his followers to the law of contradiction—a law accepted by our great philosophers accepting the Nyaya-Vaisheshika system, or the Sankhya system, of Logic. This law takes on omnipotence and is sacrosanct and inviolable so much so that it is applied even to the Absolute by our great philosophers.

In a pointed but also picturesque way Sri Aurobindo puts Shankara's predicament of affirming the world phenomenally and denying it transcendently. Asking us not to deal thus with Brahman and the world, he writes: "Otherwise the two must appear as irreconcilable opponents bound in an unhappy wedlock and their divorce the one reasonable solution."¹

Let us consider the law of contradiction that has such a powerful hold even on one whom Sri Aurobindo designates "a man of metaphysical genius and rare logical force"—namely, Shankara.

"The principle of contradiction," says Bradley, "states a fact, it says no more than that the discrepant is discrepant, that the exclusive despite all attempts to persuade it remains incompatible."² It means that a thing cannot possess contradictory attributes at one and the same time. A cannot be X and Y at the same time. But the difficulty is: how are we to apply this law when we do not know what are contradictory or discrepant of each other so that they may not be predicated of a thing at the same time? The law of contradiction does not tell us what things are contradictory. So experience alone can tell us whether two qualities predicated of a thing are contradictory or not. One has also to know the nature of the thing of which the two qualities are predicated. This law seems to apply in the case of an individual but not in the case of a class. If a man is civilized, he cannot be uncivilized at the same time. But by man if you mean the race or nation, it cannot be affirmed like that. The entire Indian nation cannot be said to be civilized or uncivilized, for some may be the former at the same time that some are the latter. Bradley in his work, *Appearance and Reality* (pp. 505-506), thus observes, "And speaking in general, the more narrowly we take the subject and the less internal ground for diversity it contains, the more it threatens us with standing or insoluble contradictions. But, we may add, so much the more abstractedness and the less truth does such a subject possess." But here the trouble is that we do not know the nature of the Absolute. It can be neither a

¹ *The Life Divine* (Centenary Edition), Vol. I, p. 8.

² *Principles of Logic*, Vol. I, p. 145.

finite entity nor an individual,—say, a table or a man, for this involves us in plurality of absolutes, which is self-contradictory. But contradictions may lose their discrepancy while in the subject, and the two discrepant may become not strange but intimate bed-fellows locked in an inseparable and indistinguishable intimacy within the subject, and their oppositeness conjoined in it may be subdued within the character of the whole into something that cannot be called by the name applicable in separation. This may appear involved—a wheel within a wheel. An example of a kind of subdual may clarify one aspect. Oxygen and Hydrogen are two discrepant elements, but they join together to form water. Speaking in scientific language, H_2O is water—two atoms of Hydrogen and one atom of Oxygen. Water is something wholly different from both. In water the two constituents lose their contradictoriness and conjoin in a happy wedlock resulting in the blissful union of water. Hydrogen loses its tendency to explosiveness and Oxygen its tendency to inflammability. So in water the law of contradiction is ineffective in at least one aspect. The discrepant as such no longer exist in the whole.

The question naturally arises here how “an immense metaphysical genius” applied the law of contradiction to the Absolute. His greatness lies in the affirmation of the perfect transcendence of Brahman. Sri Aurobindo agrees with him in so far as he argues that the Absolute transcends all our categories. The greatest achievement of Shankara is to realise that the full and perfect nature of the Absolute cannot be revealed in and through relations. That does not mean that the Absolute who is all-pervading cannot at the same time transcend all relations and yet have them.

As J.S. Mill says in his work, *A System of Logic*, (p.137), “The end aimed at by formal logic and attained by the observance of its precepts is not truth but consistency.” So consistency is primary in formal logic. Shankara wanted to be consistent, and he achieved consistency by his Maya, which is the cause of the phenomenal world, and yet ultimately is non-existent because he uses the *chatuskoṭi*,—the dialectical quartet approved in Indian logic—as the master weapon. This quartet is this: (1) a thing is, (2) a thing is not, (3) it either is or is not, (4) it neither is nor is not. The fourth alternative is used, because even when phenomenally the world is, really in Shankara’s view it is not. It is only an appearance according to his *vivarta vāda*: the snake in the rope is only a delusion, for there is no snake really, even when a person is afraid of it. No school of Vedanta, until Sri Aurobindo, has successfully challenged this logic of Shankara of which *chatuskoṭi* is the main plank to preserve the unchangeableness of Brahman. The views of theistic schools of Vedanta have been shattered to pieces by the relentless attack of the Advaita dialectic. It is true that others have criticised Mayavada, Madhvacharya has written a brochure entitled *Māyāvāda Khaṇḍana* and has shown contradictions inherent in it. But none has been able to strike at the root of that logic and beard the lion in its own den. So Advaita has become a philosophy *par excellence*. Even to this day its hold is firm. Sri Aurobindo has presented a most formidable challenge to the *Nirviśeṣa Advaita* of Shankara, as it is philosophically known.

Sri Aurobindo acutely portrays Shankara's predicament or quandary between the spiritual experience of Nirguna Brahman on the one side and the world on the other: "Shankara, standing between the world and the eternal Reality, saw that the mystery of the world must be ultimately supra-rational, not conceivable or explainable by our reason, *anirvachaniya*, but he maintained that the world as seen by the reason and sense was valid and had therefore to posit an unreal reality, because he did not take one step still farther."¹ "Therefore he resolves the riddle of the world by obliging reason to recognise its limits, in which its unimpaired sovereignty is left to it within its own cosmic province and to acquiesce in the soul's intuition of the transcendent Reality and to support, by a dialectic, which ends by dissolving the whole cosmic phenomenal and rational-practical edifice of things, its escape from the limitations constructed and imposed on the mind by *Māyā*."² Here we have the *raison d'être* for Shankara's Maya and the application of the fourth alternative of the dialectic of *chatuskoṭi* which is one modality of the law of contradiction.

A doubt arises why Shankara had to resort to that mystic magic of Maya and the *chatuskoṭi* logic supporting it. Sri Aurobindo sees here "a conflict and opposition that this powerful intellect has stated with full force and masterfully arranged rather than solved with any finality,—the conflict of an intuition intensely aware of an absolute transcendent and inmost Reality and a strong intellectual reason regarding the world with a keen and vigorous rational intelligence."³ It is because of this keen regard for the world that Shankara travelled throughout India reaching remote places with his philosophy of world-negation, engaging himself in logical disputations wherever necessary. As he could not conceive of a synthesis, on account of his abstract or formal logic, between Brahman and the world, he did his best logically and philosophically. He could not throw away formal logic, for that is the plank of his disputation nor could he ignore his spiritual vision, for that is the basis of his disputation. The result is *Nirviśeṣa Advaita*.

(To be continued)

P. KRISHNA MURTY

¹ *Op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 206.

² *Ibid.*, p. 203.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 202.

POEMS BEFORE AND AFTER 1973

OFFERING: XV

I HAVE COME INTO A NEW COUNTRY—September 1980

*And I have come
Into a new country,
My true home.*

All that is past
No longer is,
In the vast

Experience of becoming.
I am like
A pigeon homing

To this...the soul's
Sweet dwelling place, elusive
Yet always known. The roles

Of creating and rending
I have played so many years,
Seeking the Drama's ending,

Closure for this volume of me,
The true containment
Of all that is written indelibly

Out of my soul's journeying,
So long incomplete,
The search... and yearning

To be fulfilled. And now, discrete
Experience, beyond beauty,
Beyond memory's meaning, is complete.

The vision clears.
What I know and see
No more appears.

As landscape to the outer eyes,
An earthly beauty.
Ethereal, intangible, it lies

Inward, concealed...
Beyond the land of language,
To the soul's eye revealed

As that which is beyond
What is and yet
More truly is...and is upon

My Octavos printed
By the Master Hand,
Lavish, unstinted,

Magnificently. *All that has been
And is and will be
I have known and seen.*

Having come into my true country
At last,
What can be taken from me?

No longer partial, a part now of a greater whole,
I have come to this,
The loved country of my soul.

ELIZABETH STILLER

Analog to "O My Country, I have known your sweet air"

THE DREAM OF A CHILD

SMILE blooms on children's faces
as flowers on trees and plants—
So also blooms the Mother's joy
on the bosom of distant sky....

Amidst such happiness I shall not keep closed
the doors of my heart...
I shall sing, dance and exult
with the children of time!

I shall bathe in liquid gold
and put on an argent robe...
My seat will be lotus petals
and bed the carpet of new-born grass....

When the night will be deep and my sleep sound
The Mother will descend in dream....
Touching me tenderly she will whisper
her secrets into my ears with a voice
divinely soft and sweet!

At dead of night she will call me aloud,
“How long will you sleep?
get up, for lo—the East is aglow
with the advent of day, and the wind
vibrates with the chirping of birds of light...

“Deer, the seeker of illumination,
rushes towards the blazing peak
and the young one follows her,
drawn by affection...

“The carefree bard passes
singing the awakening songs...
The votaries in the temple tremble
with devotion, with offering in hands.

“Awake, my child,
I shall kindle you with heavenly flame
and add to your dreamy eyes
the lustre of the boundless blue...

“The ocean will greet you
with the sound of snow-white conchs!
And the peacock dance the ‘Victory Dance’
while the clouds above will blow
the clarion of thunder....

“The Sun-God will appear then
on the crimson brow of Dawn!
And a bridge will be built
between the earth and the sky
by the shower of supernal Light.”

CHUNILAL CHOWDHURY

(Converted into English by the author from his original Bengali)

THE MISSING MASS MYSTERY

The author is a senior theoretician at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics and teaches at the University of California, Irvine.

MISSING: Most of the matter in the Universe. Could be hiding out in dwarf stars, in black holes on the edges of galaxies or in some hitherto unsuspected form. Anyone having a clue as to the whereabouts of this missing mass should contact the nearest observatory immediately. **REWARD** for information leading to the discovery of missing mass: possible fame; no fortune.

This notice has not appeared in any newspaper, in any of the technical journals that astronomers read or on bulletin boards in post offices, but perhaps it should. The problem of the missing mass has become an embarrassment to astronomers, an obstacle to understanding basic cosmic issues such as the structure of galaxies, the evolution of clusters of galaxies and the ultimate fate of the Universe.

How does one go about looking for the missing mass? In one sense, it is like looking for anything that is missing. If we knew exactly where it was, it wouldn't be missing. But we know where it *cannot* be. It can't be in the form of normal stars—they would show up on the optical telescopes. It can't be in clouds of cool gas—radio telescopes would see it. It can't be in clouds of hot gas—X-ray telescopes would detect it.

The mass we are discussing is not missing in the sense that the family dog or an old shoe might be missing. The situation is analogous to those difficult moments when your loved one tells you, "There's something missing in our relationship." You know right away that he or she is probably right.

In the same way, nature is telling astronomers that something is missing from the relationships that describe the large-scale motions of stars and galaxies. On a small scale, astronomers have no problem; we understand perfectly well the orbits of the earth and the other planets around the sun. But when we analyze the motions of stars and galaxies on a scale of tens of thousands to millions of light-years, we run into trouble. On the one hand, spiral galaxies give the appearance of being graceful pinwheel structures comprising billions of stars slowly rotating in stable orbits; on the other hand, examination of the motions of stars and gas clouds in the outer regions of spiral galaxies shows that they are moving much too rapidly to be in equilibrium with the gravitational force field that appears to be present. The stars should fly off on a tangent, zipping out of the galaxy. The outer regions of a spiral galaxy should have dispersed billions of years ago.

On a larger scale, the motions of galaxies in clusters of galaxies show the same peculiarities. The observed speeds of the galaxies are so large that the cluster should have flown apart billions of years ago, yet the galaxies appear to cluster together under the influence of their mutual gravitational force fields.

What is the matter? Matter, that's what. According to the motions of the stars

and galaxies, something must be producing an excess gravitational field to keep things in equilibrium, and that something can only be matter, or mass. Astronomers have searched long and hard for this matter, but they have found nothing. The mass is missing.

The shortfall of mass is not trivial. From all indications, as much as 80 or 90 per cent of the matter in the cosmos must be hidden from the view of our existing telescopes. Our Universe must be likened not to a dog that is missing a tail but to a tail that is missing a dog.

When you think about it, though, maybe I'm being too emotional. After all, is it so unusual that some things are hidden from view? Icebergs show only the tip. The root systems of trees form a vast, hidden network; the whole planet teems with invisible microbes. Why should the Universe be like a slick, superficial Hollywood movie, in which everything—emotions, plot, happy ending—hangs out for everyone to see? Shouldn't it be more like a great novel, a subtle, complex masterpiece in which the words and actions of the principal characters do not tell all but gradually reveal a much greater, though unspoken, depth and richness?

WALLACE TUCKER

With acknowledgement to *Science Digest* (New York), September 1981, p.18.

THE RUBAIYAT OF BABA TAHIR

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL PERSIAN DIALECT

(Continued from the issue of 15 August, 1982)

(24)

If com'st thou I will sacrifice to thee
My life; if not, I waste in agony;
Put on my heart thy pain so that I burn
And die or strike within an amity.

(25)

I want to quit this world, this world of woe;
To China, to Manchuria I will go
And yet beyond. To Pilgrims I will ask:
"So far enough, or even farther now?"

(26)

Happy are they who look at Thee all time,
Who sit with Thee, whose laughters with Thee chime,
If trysting Thee be not my privilege,
I'll go to them, who have Thy love sublime.

(27)

We but belong to Thee, though sunk in wine—
Though handless, footless, share Thy Love divine;
Muslims or Hebrews or Fire-Worshippers,
Whatever faith we have, we are but Thine.

(28)

An anguished heart alone knows grief and woe,
Gold's pureness but the crucible can show,
O hearts distressed, together get and weep:
A love-burnt heart, burnt heart alone can know.

(29)

Afflicted is my heart; it moans and cries;
 It heeds me not whatever I advise;
 I cast it to the winds, they bear it not,
 I put it on the fire, no smoke doth rise.

(30)

Anguish alone sprouts forth from my heart's slough,
 In my parterre, sole grief and mourning grow;
 From dismal desert of my worthless heart
 Not even a blade of Hopelessness springs now.

(31)

The breeze that comes from Thy dishevelled hair
 Is pleasanter than smell of hyacinth-air;
 Thy thought in close embrace I sleep at night,
 At morn my bed is a riot of roses rare.

(32)

Without Thee, Love, my lids are always wet,
 My tree of Hope is ever fruitless yet,
 All day and night in a sighing solitude
 I wait for the ebbing end of my life's fret.

(33)

My heart is a nuisance and a fount of sighs,
 Lives suffering, punished for the sin of eyes.
 If eyes see not Love's luring face of rose,
 How heart would ever know where sweetheart lies?

(34)

There is no winged moth in the world like me,
 No grief-torn lover roams more crazily;
 All worms and insects have a hole their own,
 I houseless, holeless, rove in agony.

(35)

If heart's sweetheart, whom shall I sweetheart claim?
 Who's sweetheart, if heart sweetheart are the same?
 My heart and sweetheart are so intermixed,
 I know not sweetheart whom, whom heart to name.

(to be continued)

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

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EUROPE 1974

A TRAVELOGUE—(42)

VATICAN City: the name conjures up unbounded interest, that verges on intense curiosity and singular inquisitiveness. The smallest independent State in the world: therein dwells a personage whose predecessors were centres of some of the greatest religious and political dramas of European History. Within its perimeter is the St. Peter's Basilica, the largest Church in all Christendom.

Peter, considered by the Christians not just one, but the first of the twelve disciples of Jesus Christ, came to Rome only to be persecuted and put to death under Nero's regime probably in 67 A.D. Peter is regarded as the first in the line of illustrious Popes that have headed the Roman Catholic world for two thousand years. St. Peter, venerated above all, holds the key to Heaven. When he died his mortal remains were taken by his disciples and buried on the Vatican Hill. Emperor Constantine built a church over his tomb. Not much is known of the first mausoleum.

In 1506 Pope Julius II started a new church on a grandiose scale and he commissioned Bramante, the greatest name in architecture in those days, to design and execute the new church. Bramante designed it in the fashion of a Greek Cross. However, he could not finish his work which was taken up by Bernini who was again the first designer in his days. Bernini made the church a replica of a Latin Cross and almost finished the enormous Basilica. About eighty per cent of the work we see both outside and inside are Bernini's handiwork. The two great colonnades circling the Piazza di San Pietro in front of the Basilica were also done by him, and he put 140 Saints over the amphitheatre of the colonnades. For all the charm and beauty of the Piazza di San Pietro with its fountains and obelisk, its unbroken symmetry, the credit goes to Bernini. Then came Michelangelo to crown the great Basilica. His dome was considered in those days as a wonder and was one of the few great domes of Europe. For Europe before Angelo's time did not know how to make a proper dome.

The Pieta, Michelangelo's masterpiece, could be seen inside St. Peter's, and they say this was his only work where he had signed his full name "Michelangelo Buonarroti, Florentine Maker". So far as his painting is concerned his greatest work of course is the painting on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. This Chapel is not inside the St. Peter's Basilica. It is just a big hall in the building nearby. A small Chapel that was, and still is, used for the private worship of the Pope or on some ceremonial occasion when desired by him. It has no special dome or spire or steeple. The story of creation that Michelangelo painted there can best be enjoyed in a good library and in a big picture in Art Books. There you can have your heart's fill, and survey and enjoy every inch of the famous painting. Inside the Chapel where lighting is insufficient and the nape of the neck starts aching, you can see very little of the Great Master's work. One feels suffocated with so many people in such a small room, bumping into one another. One hears every now and then 'Sorry' or 'Pardon'. The carpet,

the silk cloth for the walls, the gold cloth for the tables, the silver, the impressive Cross are all brought in when there is a ceremony. But for the tourist it is a dreary room with a wooden floor that squeaks and a damp dismal atmosphere. Perforce it has to be so, for where will all these lovely things be with thousands of tourists passing through the Chapel every day? The very interesting uniforms the Papal guards wear, I was told, were designed also by Michelangelo.

Michelangelo was a simple person but his faith and his vision were great. A perfectionist, he went on perfecting his work in each detail. It naturally meant delay. So much so that the Pope who commissioned the work, Sixtus IV (from his name came the name Sistine for the Chapel) appeared one day and threatened the artist that if he did not finish his work soon he would be thrown down from the scaffolding. It took Michelangelo four and a half years to finish the painting. He died at the ripe old age of eighty-nine.

Standing inside the St. Peter's Basilica, one cannot but remember that by an irony of fate this most wonderful church became the cause of the great schism of the Christian world. For it was to raise money for this edifice that Pope Julius II sent out Tetzl who sold the Indulgences that aroused Martin Luther.

(To be continued)

CHAUNDONA & SANAT K. BANERJI

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

1. Indian Literature in English, 1827-1979. A Guide to Information Sources. Edited by *Amritjit Singh, Rajiva Verma & Irene M. Joshi*. Published by Gale Research Co., Book Tower, Detroit, Michigan 48226. Pp: XXII+631. Hd. bd. Price: \$ 38.00.

2. International Yoga Bibliography, 1950 to 1980. By *Howard R. Jarrell*. Published by Scarecrow Press, Inc., 52 Liberty St., P.O. Box 656, Metuchen, New Jersey 08840. Pp: IX+231. Hd. bd. Price: \$ 13.50.

HEATED arguments about how many Indians pen their works in English can now be fuelled by the evidence provided by the first book under review. To cope with the mushroom growth of magazines and journals new writers spring up and show their mettle. The mere bulk of this book makes one doubt: "Are all educated Indians writers?" A peep at the index adds to our fear.

The Guide to information sources, the result of incessant combing of magazines and journals, and publishers' catalogues, lists Indo-English writers and their works from the beginnings (1827) to the present (1979). The editors can be sure that the next edition, possibly an updated one, will be as bulky as the Original Random House Dictionary.

Published as Volume 36 in the American Literature, English Literature, and World Literatures in English Information guide series, the coverage is comprehensive for primary works of poetry, drama and fiction. Included are works written originally in English, as well as works originally written in Indian languages that have been translated into English by the authors.

The bibliography is arranged in two major parts. Extensive listings of background material, reference works and other major sources of general information including criticism and Literary History on the subject of Indo-English literature are provided under Part I. Part II furnishes individual author bibliographies. The editors have provided dates for authors, pagination and full publication details wherever possible. For each author, primary and secondary sources are listed. Exceptions are those insignificant or influenceless authors who were not written about by scholars and critics. For ready reference, authors are grouped according to genre: Poetry, Drama, Fiction and Non-Fiction.

The Guide includes lists of relevant journals—*Commonwealth Quarterly* from Mysore and *The Advent* from Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry who do much to promote Indian Literature may feel understandably miffed at having been left out. There is also a list of publishers. Author and Title indexes are provided and in addition to that a Primary Author Index listed alphabetically by genre is included. It would be more complete if it were supplemented by a bibliography of Indian Literature in English translation. Perhaps the editors might care to do it in the next edition.

Since Indo-English Literature holds a continuing and increasing international interest in both the academic and public sectors, this source book should be useful to University and Public libraries as well as to scholars and teachers with a personal interest in this field of literature.

For many years a student of Hatha Yoga, the compiler of the second bibliography Howard R. Jarrell is a senior Reference Librarian at the Wright State University Library in Dayton, Ohio. A single man's venture, this bibliography on yoga intends to satisfy four important needs: 1. to give researchers leads to books and articles by providing them with thorough and precise bibliographic information by way of author, title, and subject access; 2. to help libraries obtain for their users verifiable titles for interlibrary loan of material not available in their own collections; 3. to permit browsing in one comprehensive source as a means of discovering unknown yoga literature; 4. to provide yoga teachers and students with a catalogue and index to yoga books, periodicals, and articles.

Listing over 1,700 references to yoga literature published during the last thirty-one years, this bibliography covers all forms of yoga and concentrates above all on Hatha yoga. Encompassing yoga literature published in English, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, and Dutch, it includes more than 1,300 books. Doctoral dissertations and theses in English—mostly American, over 300 journal and magazine articles in English and a list of 43 yoga periodicals are furnished. Author, Title and Subject indexes make the book a perfect reference book.

'All Life is Yoga,' said the Yogi's Yogi, Sri Aurobindo. Since people from many parts of the globe are getting to know what yoga is, this bibliography will be of signal value to all those interested in the subject.

P. RAJA

CROSSWORD

Clues Across

1. The human mind shut in the prison of its half-lit obscurity cannot follow the many-sided freedom of the steps of the Divine Shakti. The rapidity and complexity of her
. outrun its stumbling comprehension; the measures of her movement are not its measures. (6, 3, 6)
10. Nothing is . . . small or apparently trivial for her attention; nothing however impalpable or disguised or latent can escape her. (3)
11. Pron. (2)
12. Avoid also the error of the ignorant mind's demand on the Divine Power to act always according to our crude surface notions of omniscience and omnipotence. For our mind clamours to be at every turn by miraculous power and easy success and dazzling splendour; otherwise it cannot believe that here is the Divine. (9)
14. When she is allowed to intervene in her strength, then in . . . moment are broken like things without consistence the obstacles that immobilise or the enemies that assail the seeker. (3)
15. Ascetic bareness and harshness are not pleasing to her . . . the suppression of the heart's deeper emotions and the rigid repression of the soul's and the life's parts of beauty. For it is through love and beauty that she lays on men the yoke of the Divine. (3)
16. A mother to our wants, a friend in our difficulties, a persistent and tranquil counsellor and mentor, chasing away with her radiant smile the clouds of gloom and fretfulness and depression, reminding always of the ever-present help, pointing to the
., she is firm, quiet and persevering in the deep and continuous urge that drives us towards the integrality of the higher nature. (7, 8)
17. And when the grace and protection of the Divine Mother are with you, what is there that can touch you or whom need you fear? A little of it even will carry you through all difficulties, obstacles and dangers; surrounded by its full presence you can go securely on your way because it is , careless of all menace, unaffected by any hostility however powerful, whether from this world or from worlds invisible. (4)
18. Reject the false notion that the divine Power will do and is bound to do everything for you at your demand and even though you do not satisfy the conditions
down by the Supreme. (4)
20. Make your surrender true and complete, then only will all else . . done for you. (2)
21. The or keepers of wealth are more often possessed rather than its possessors; few escape entirely a certain distorting influence stamped on it by its long seizure and perversion by the Asura. (7)
22. Be entirely selfless, entirely scrupulous, exact, careful in detail, a good trustee; always consider that it is her possessions and . . . your own that you are handling. (3)

Clues Down

1. In all that is done in the universe, the Divine through his Shakti is behind all action but he is by his Yoga Maya and works through the ego of the Jiva in the lower nature. (6)
2. All is her play with the ; all is her manifestation of the mysteries of the Eternal, the miracles of the Infinite. (7)