

MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

SPECIAL ISSUE

15 AUGUST 1983: THE ANNIVERSARY OF
SRI AUROBINDO'S BIRTHDAY

Price: Rs. 3.00

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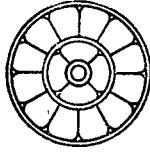
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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All correspondence to be addressed to:

MOTHER INDIA, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry - 605 002, India

Editor's Phone: 4782

Publishers: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust

Editor: K. D. SETHNA

The Late Managing Editor: K. R. PODDAR

Published by: P. COUNOUMA

SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM TRUST, PONDICHERRY - 605 002

Printed by: AMIYO RANJAN GANGULI

at Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, Pondicherry - 605 002

PRINTED IN INDIA

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

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MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XXXV

No. 8

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail."

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KARPĀSA IN PREHISTORIC INDIA

A Chronological and Cultural Clue

by K. D. SETHNA

WITH AN INTRODUCTION by DR. H. D. SANKALIA

Pp 200+ ×. Cloth: Rs 70

THIS book is a companion volume to the author's first venture in the historical field. *The Problem of Aryan Origins*, published last year. It converges on the same goal but by different routes and thus adds strength to the central thesis.

What is attempted is a general revision of ancient Indian history. Taking the aid of archaeological discovery, documentary material and linguistic study, the book seeks to bring about a radical change in (1) comparative chronology, (2) the sequence of cultures and (3) the cultural character of several phases of India's career in antiquity.

By a close investigation of the term *karpāsa* for cotton in Sanskrit literature and by an alignment of its first occurrence with the first ascertained cultivator of the cotton-plant in our country, the body of Indian writing called Sūtras is shown to be in its early stage contemporary with the Harappā Culture, the Indus Valley Civilization, of c. 2500-1500 B.C. The natural consequences are a new date for the Rigveda which is commonly held to have started in c. 1500 B.C. a thousand years before the Sūtras, and a new understanding of the Indus Valley Civilization as at once a derivative, a development and a deviation from the Rigveda a millennium after this scripture's beginning in c. 3500 B.C.

However, the argument from *karpāsa* does not stand alone. Its import is buttressed from several other directions. Pointers from India are rendered sharper by significant suggestions caught from the Mesopotamian region with which the Indus Valley had commercial and cultural contacts. In agreement with several scholars but with an eye to more particulars, a name for this Civilization is discerned in the Sumerian records: Meluhha (pronounced Melukhka). It is then matched—again with a closer scrutiny than given before by like-minded scholars—with a name applied from more inland India to people of the Indus Valley for the first time in the Śatapatha Brāhmana which just precedes the earliest Sūtras and would thus synchronize by the new chronology most appropriately with the initial development of the Harappā Culture. The name is Mlechchha which becomes Melakha or Milakha in Prakrit.

The riddle of the Indus script is also confronted and a fairly long debate is held on the claims of Proto-Tamil and Proto-Prakrit for the language embodied in it. The latter is adjudged more likely to be the base though other elements as part of the superstructure are not brushed aside.

At the end, as a key-insight, the vocable *karpāsa* itself is disclosed as functioning under a transparent veil in several lists of Sumero-Akkadian words which are connected with the trade between the Harappā Culture and Sumer.

The above résumé hints at only a few examples of the manifold research pursued along new lines with a sustained thoroughness. Here is a book opening up vista on novel vista for the Indologist without sacrificing any of the scientific rigour with which honest investigation of the past is to be carried on.

Dr. Sankalia of international repute in archaeology writes, among other matters "There is no doubt that Shri Sethna has made a very intelligent use of his deep knowledge of archaeology and Sanskrit literature." Apropos of the relationship between the Rigveda and the Harappā Culture, he ends his Introduction: "Shri Sethna's views deserve careful consideration, and should stimulate further research in this vexed problem."

Publishers:

BIBLIA IMPEX, 2/18 ANSARI ROAD, NEW DELHI 110 002

Representative at Pondicherry: **SABDA**

Sri Aurobindo Books Distribution Agency,
Sri Aurobindo Ashram Pondicherry - 605 002

SRI AUROBINDO AND HIS WORK

AN INTERVIEW WITH DR. J. N. CHUBB by R. BANERJI
IN CLEVELAND, OHIO, U.S.A. IN 1971

R.B. 15th August marks the birth of Indian Independence and it is also the birth-date of Sri Aurobindo, one of the greatest philosopher-sages that India has produced. Could you tell the listeners a few facts about his life and teachings?

J.N.C. Sri Aurobindo was born in 1872 and hence next year on 15th August his birth centenary will be celebrated in India and other parts of the world. I may take this opportunity to mention that to commemorate this event the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and International Centre of Education plan to publish his first Collected Works running into thirty volumes and covering Philosophy, Yoga, Social and Political Thought, Studies in the Ancient Indian Scriptures, Essays on Indian Culture, Poetry and Literature and other miscellaneous writings.

R.B. I believe he wrote mainly in English?

J.N.C. Yes, he was a master of English and of several European languages. His early years were spent in England. He was born to a thoroughly anglicised Bengali who had resolved that his sons would be brought up exclusively in the atmosphere of western culture and not be exposed to any Indian influence. With this object he sent them to England for their education. Aurobindo was then 7 years of age. He was first coached privately in English and Latin and at the age of 12 he was admitted first to St. Paul's school where he spent 5 years in mastering the Classics and reading voraciously outside the curriculum in French and English literature and history. In his final examination he secured an open scholarship to King's College in Cambridge and passed the Classical Tripos examination in the first division at the end of his second year. He then went on to pass the Indian Civil Service examination but contrived to get himself disqualified by not appearing for the riding test.

R.B. Why did he do that?

J.N.C. Sri Aurobindo explained later that he felt no call for the I.C.S. There was a greater call to which he responded—the call of his Motherland. Even as a student in England he was a fervent patriot and it is not surprising that some years after his return to India at the age of 21 he threw himself into the political struggle against the domination of the British. He and Lokmanya Tilak gave to the Indian Nation the ideal of complete independence—Swaraj—as its political goal and these two men became the acknowledged leaders of the independence movement. During his

political career Sri Aurobindo was arrested, prosecuted and for a year held as an undertrial prisoner but was acquitted of the charge brought against him.

R.B. Many people are puzzled by the fact that Sri Aurobindo withdrew from politics and left British India for Pondicherry in South India which was then a French possession. What made him abandon politics at a time when his country needed him most?

J.N.C. There was another and deeper call to which he was responding, a mission which though not inconsistent with the ideal of Indian independence was more comprehensive and of far greater significance for humanity as a whole. I may mention that on his return to India he spent thirteen years in the service of the Baroda State as Professor of English and later as Vice-Principal. During this period he learned Sanskrit and several modern Indian languages. He had returned as a brilliant scholar in Greek and Latin having absorbed deeply the culture of ancient, medieval and modern Europe. Now he supplemented this by thoroughly assimilating the spirit of Indian and Eastern culture. It is therefore not surprising that Romain Rolland, writing of Sri Aurobindo's contribution to world culture, remarked that Sri Aurobindo had achieved "the most complete synthesis between the genius of the West and the East."

R.B. And was this the greater mission for the sake of which Sri Aurobindo withdrew from the narrower field of political activity?

J.N.C. No, his mission was much more comprehensive. It was basically spiritual though working out a rich synthesis of the highest and best in eastern and western thought was an essential part of it. Sri Aurobindo's spiritual life, his practice of yoga, had begun even when he was in Baroda. In 1907 he met a great Maharashtrian yogi called Lele and at his suggestion he practiced the silencing of the mind. What was extraordinary was that within three days Sri Aurobindo achieved what is regarded as the acme of mystical contemplation. His mind, as he put it, "became silent as a windless air on a high mountain summit and effortlessly I walked into Nirvana or rather Nirvana walked into me." He was then 35.

R.B. About the same age at which the Buddha attained Nirvana!

J.N.C. Yes, but Nirvana was only the beginning and not the goal of Sri Aurobindo's spiritual Odyssey. As an undertrial political prisoner he had practiced the yoga of the Gita and this culminated in a vision of and union with the Universal Divine, the Supreme Person, the Purushottama, immanent in himself and in all beings. He had thus achieved a synthesis between the ineffable Emptiness (Shunyata) of the Buddhists and the God of Love preached in the Gita and in Christianity.

R.B. This reminds us of Sri Ramakrishna's oft-repeated statement that the Supreme is both with form and without form, that It is at one and the same time the Divine Mother of the universe and the indescribable Absolute.

J.N.C. True, but such a synthesis of two apparently contradictory realisations was achieved much earlier in India, notably in Sri Chaitanya in the middle ages. Sri Aurobindo, however, did not rest even with this grand synthesis of the two major spiritual realisations. He was deeply concerned with the antithesis that is usually set up between the passage into the eternal Spirit, Heaven or Nirvana and life here on earth in our embodied existence and it is precisely here that his yoga and spiritual vision differ from that of traditional Hinduism or Buddhism and indeed from the goal conceived by all the world religions. Sri Aurobindo's mission begins in the working out of the final reconciliation between the extreme terms of existence, Spirit and Matter, a quiescent status of being in the Eternal and life in the body as a growing, dynamic process rich with the potentialities of higher stages of consciousness, a synthesis between the Truth that is always ever the same because It is beyond time and the Truth that is progressively unfolding itself in the world of change and becoming. Sri Aurobindo's yoga was not merely the yoga of personal salvation and freedom but also the yoga of world-transformation. His mission was to bring down the Divine Light, the Power and the Bliss into this transient and sorrowful world with the object of transforming it into a true manifestation of divine harmony and plenitude.

R.B. But why do you say that this is distinctive of Sri Aurobindo's yoga and mission? We find in other religions as well that the ideal of personal salvation does not give us the full expression of the spiritual life. In Mahāyāna Buddhism, for example, we have the ideal of the Bodhisattva, one who is moved by compassion and who takes a vow not to withdraw into Nirvana till all human beings can be freed from this life of suffering.

J.N.C. Sri Aurobindo does not merely supplement the ideal of personal salvation with the ideal of universal salvation. According to him salvation or spiritual freedom (Moksha) is an exit from this world of embodied existence into a Heaven or Nirvana; it is, taken by itself, not a transformation of life here on earth but an escape into the Eternal. Universal salvation would only be a mass exodus of the whole of humanity from this world into the timeless realm of the pure spirit. In Sri Aurobindo's vision what is supplemented is not merely the ideal of personal salvation with that of universal salvation but the ideal of spiritual freedom with the ideal of bringing about a total transformation of the instruments of the spirit, the mind, the life and the body so that our existence here on earth can grow into a greater freedom and perfection.

R.B. Would you say that Sri Aurobindo's idea of bringing about a transformation of life here on earth was a rejection of the traditional religious goal of freedom or salvation which is usually described as other-worldliness?

J.N.C. Well, I would say that Sri Aurobindo rejects the drive present in traditional spiritual philosophies towards other-worldliness, the exclusive insistence on uniting with or merging into the timeless Beyond thus leading finally to an abandonment of this world of manifestation. But he does not reject the ideal of salvation or freedom, Moksha, Nirvana or union with God. As I said he supplements this ideal with the larger concept of the integral transformation of human nature. Spiritual freedom, according to him, is an indispensable condition for realising the ideal of the perfectibility of man as an embodied being and of human society. Salvation is not the termination of the spiritual quest. It is the beginning of a greater unfolding of the eternal spirit in the world of time.

R.B. How does Sri Aurobindo conceive this process of the transformation of human life? How does it differ from the process of freeing oneself from ignorance, craving and the egoistic consciousness?

J.N.C. In freedom or salvation the self or soul detaches itself from its psychophysical personality or its instrumental nature and remains absorbed in the eternal Spirit. This by itself, says Sri Aurobindo, is a flight from Nature and not a liberated and sovereign acceptance of material Nature. Sri Aurobindo's idea of transformation applies to the instruments of the spirit, the mind, life and body. These are not to be abandoned. They contain an as yet unrealised divine potentiality. Each has its own characteristic mode of self-fulfilment. If we cast aside humanity in order to put on divinity what would be the purpose of this world of creation or manifestation? An escape into Heaven or the eternal order would leave unsolved the riddle of human existence.

R.B. You are saying that for Sri Aurobindo life here on earth has a meaning and purpose as distinct from a spiritual fulfilment in the eternal.

J.N.C. Precisely. Sri Aurobindo believes that this world of manifestation, that is, this embodied and collective existence in time is not an illusion or *Maya*. It is not a gigantic accident or a cosmic misadventure; nor is it a mere play or *lila*, a purposeless indulgence of a divine caprice. There is a cosmic purpose, a secret divine intention which is being worked out in this field of manifestation and which is directly concerned with man's ultimate destiny and fulfilment.

R.B. This reminds me of two lines from Tennyson's *In Memoriam*:

"And one far-off divine event
To which the whole creation moves."

J.N.C. Yes, that would describe Sri Aurobindo's vision of the future in a very general way. As you know, most religions explain this world as a creation or manifestation of the Supreme Being, but they do not give any explanation of this whole dimension of existence. I believe Sri Aurobindo has revealed the secret of manifested existence. According to him this field of manifestation has two characteristics. First it is a veiled expression of the Divine Spirit. Divinity is not or not yet manifest in the world of nature. Connected with this we have the second characteristic which is that this world of embodied existence is an evolutionary manifestation of the Divine Spirit which is concealed within it. Higher and higher powers and principles of existence gradually emerge in the course of evolution, matter, life, the animal mind and the human or rational intellect. Sri Aurobindo sees a still greater potentiality concealed in this long and laborious process of evolutionary Nature. Since it is the veiled Divine Spirit which is progressively unfolding itself in time and in a graded series, the process will continue till the divine potentiality is realised. As Sri Aurobindo has put it: "It is inevitable that all the powers or degrees of power (of the Divine) should emerge one after another till the whole glory is embodied and visible." Thus the purpose of this vast cosmic process of evolution is to manifest the unveiled Divine.

R.B. You said that the purpose of manifestation was concerned with man's ultimate destiny. What is the place of man in this cosmic process?

J.N.C. The unveiled manifestation of divinity will bring about a new order on earth and a true creation in place of the present world of conflict, suffering and obscurity. But this can only come about through the conscious cooperation of man because he is part of this process. But man, says Sri Aurobindo, must surpass or exceed himself through a total transformation of his outer nature. Our present conditioned and limited humanity cannot be the instrument for the embodiment of the hidden divinity. Man as he is now is a transitional being and, therefore, not the last term of the evolutionary series. We can say that either he must be surpassed or must surpass himself. Through this transformation and self-exceeding there will emerge, as the next stage in the evolution, a race of what Sri Aurobindo calls Gnostic beings who will be as far above our present humanity as man is above the animals. A Divine Life in a Divine Body here on earth is Sri Aurobindo's vision of the future evolution of man. This will inevitably lead to the establishment of a new social order in which harmony and the creative spirit instead of the present state of conflict, suffering and obscurity will permeate every stratum of existence and every aspect of human relations, both among individuals and among nations.

I may mention that this was not merely an utopian dream or vision which Sri Aurobindo entertained. Both he and his collaborator, a French lady, who is known as The Mother, have struggled, suffered and endured and have worked ceaselessly to bring to birth this New Age of humanity.

OUR SPIRITUAL HERITAGE—5

EXTRACTS FROM SRI AUROBINDO'S WRITINGS

(Continued from the issue of July 1983)

Ancient Indian Spirituality

THE task of religion and spirituality is to mediate between God and man, between the Eternal and Infinite and this transient, yet persistent finite, between a luminous Truth-Consciousness not expressed or not yet expressed here and the Mind's ignorance....

Ancient Indian spirituality recognised that man lives in the Ignorance and has to be led through its imperfect indications to a highest inmost knowledge....

...[What] the West persistently mistakes for spirituality is a preference for living in the mind and emotions more than in the gross outward life or else an attempt to subject this rebellious life-stuff to the law of intellectual truth or ethical reason and will or aesthetic beauty or of all three together. But spiritual knowledge perceives that there is a greater thing in us; our inmost self, our real being is not the intellect, not the aesthetic, ethical or thinking mind, but the divinity within, the Spirit, and these other things are only the instruments of the Spirit. A mere intellectual, ethical and aesthetic culture does not go back to the inmost truth of the spirit; it is still an Ignorance, an incomplete, outward and superficial knowledge. To have made the discovery of our deepest being and hidden spiritual nature is the first necessity and to have erected the living of an inmost spiritual life into the aim of existence is the characteristic sign of a spiritual culture....

A wider spiritual culture must recognise that the Spirit is not only the highest and inmost thing, but all is manifestation and creation of the Spirit. It must have a wider outlook, a more embracing range of applicability and, even, a more aspiring and ambitious aim of its endeavour. Its aim must be not only to raise to inaccessible heights the few elect, but to draw all men and all life and the whole human being upward, to spiritualise life and in the end to divmise human nature....

The total movement of Indian spirituality is towards this aim; in spite of all the difficulties, imperfections and fluctuations of its evolution, it had this character. But like other cultures it was not at all times and in all its parts and movements consciously aware of its own total significance....

... the greatest powers of the Vedic teaching, that which made it the source of

all later Indian philosophies, religions, systems of Yoga, lay in its application to the inner life of man. Man lives in the physical cosmos subject to death and the "much falsehood" of the mortal existence. To rise beyond this death, to become one of the immortals, he has to turn from the falsehood to the Truth; he has to turn to the Light and to battle with and to conquer the powers of the Darkness. Thus he does by communion with the divine Powers and their aid; the way to call down this aid was the secret of the Vedic mystics. The symbols of the outer sacrifice are given for this purpose in the manner of the Mysteries all over the world an inner meaning; they represent a calling of the gods into the human being, a connecting sacrifice, an intimate interchange, a mutual aid, a communion....

Man arrives at immortality by breaking beyond the limitations not only of his physical self, but of his mental and his ordinary psychic nature into the highest plane and supreme ether of the Truth: for there is the foundation of immortality and the native seat of the triple infinite. On these ideas the Vedic sages built up a profound psychological and psychic discipline which led beyond itself to a highest spirituality and contained the nucleus of later Indian Yoga. Already we find in their seed, though not in their full expansion, the most characteristic ideas of Indian spirituality. There is the one Existence, *ekam sat*, supracosmic beyond the individual and the universe. There is the one God who presents to us the many forms, names, powers, personalities of his Godhead. There is the distinction between the Knowledge and the Ignorance, the greater truth of an immortal life opposed to the much falsehood or mixed truth and falsehood of mortal existence. There is the discipline of an inward growth of man from the physical through the psychic to the spiritual existence. There is the conquest of death, the secret of immortality, the perception of a realisable divinity of the human spirit. In an age to which in the insolence of our external knowledge we are accustomed to look back as the childhood of humanity or at best a period of vigorous barbarism, this was the inspired and intuitive psychic and spiritual teaching by which the ancient human fathers, *pūrve pitaraḥ manuṣyāḥ*, founded a great and profound civilisation in India....

The Upanishads have always been recognised in India as the crown and end of the Veda; that is indicated in their general name, Vedanta. And they are in fact a large crowning outcome of the Vedic discipline and experience. The time in which the Vedantic truth was wholly seen and the Upanishads took shape, was, as we can discern from such records as the Chhandogya and Brihadaranyaka, an epoch of immense and strenuous seeking, an intense and ardent seed-time of the Spirit. In the stress of that seeking the truths held by the initiates but kept back from ordinary men broke their barriers, swept through the higher mind of the nation and fertilised the soil of Indian culture for a constant and ever-increasing growth of spiritual consciousness and spiritual experience. This turn was not as yet universal; it was chiefly men of the higher classes, Kshatriyas and Brahmins trained in the Vedic sys-

tem of education, no longer content with an external truth and the works of the outer sacrifice, who began everywhere to seek for the highest word of revealing experience from the sages who possessed the knowledge of the One. But we find too among those who attained to the knowledge and became great teachers men of inferior or doubtful birth like Janashruti, the wealthy Shudra, or Satyakama Jabali, son of a servant-girl who knew not who was his father. The work that was done in this period became the firm bedrock of Indian spirituality in later ages and from it gush still the life-giving waters of a perennial never-failing inspiration. This period, this activity, this grand achievement created the whole difference between the evolution of Indian civilisation and the quite different curve of other cultures....

The ancient spiritual knowledge and the spiritual tendency it had created were saved in India from... collapse by the immense effort of the age of the Upanishads. The Vedantic seers renewed the Vedic truth by extricating it from its cryptic symbols and casting it into a highest and most direct and powerful language of intuition and inner experience. It was not the language of the intellect, but still it wore a form which the intellect could take hold of, translate into its own more abstract terms and convert into a starting-point for an ever-widening and deepening philosophic speculation and the reason's long search after a Truth original, supreme and ultimate....

There was in India as in the West a great upbuilding of a high, wide and complex intellectual, aesthetic, ethical and social culture. But left in Europe to its own resources, combated rather than helped by an obscure religious emotion and dogma, here it was guided, uplifted and more and more penetrated and suffused by a great saving power of spirituality and a vast stimulating and tolerant light of wisdom from a highest ether of knowledge....

The second or post-Vedic age of Indian civilisation was distinguished by the rise of the great philosophies, by a copious, vivid, many-thoughted, many-sided epic literature, by the beginnings of art and science, by the evolution of vigorous and complex society, by the formation of large kingdoms and empires, by manifold formative activities of all kinds and great systems of living and thinking. Here as elsewhere, in Greece, Rome, Persia, China, this was the age of a high outburst of the intelligence working upon life and the things of the mind to discover their reason and their right way and bring out a broad and noble fullness of human existence. But in India this effort never lost sight of the spiritual motive, never missed the touch of the religious sense. It was a birth time and youth of the seeking intellect and, as in Greece, philosophy was the main instrument by which it laboured to solve the problems of life and the world. Science too developed but it came second only as an auxiliary power. It was through profound and subtle philosophies that the intellect of India attempted to analyse by the reason and logical faculty what had formerly been approached with a much more living force through intuition and

the soul's experience. But the philosophic mind started from the data these mightier powers had discovered and was faithful to its parent Light; it went back always in one form or another to the profound truths of the Upanishads which kept their place as the highest authority in these matters. There was a constant admission that spiritual experience is a greater thing and its light a truer if more incalculable guide than the clarities of the reasoning intelligence....

The epic literature is full almost to excess of a strong and free intellectual and ethical thinking; there is an incessant criticism of life by the intelligence and the ethical reason, an arresting curiosity and desire to fix the norm of truth in all possible fields. But in the background and coming constantly to the front there is too a constant religious sense and an implicit or avowed assent to the spiritual truths which remained the unshakable basis of the culture. These truths suffused with their higher light secular thought and action or stood above to remind them that they were only steps towards a goal....

Art in India, contrary to a common idea, dwelt much upon life; but still its highest achievement was always in the field of the interpretation of the religio-philosophical mind and its whole tone was coloured by a suggestion of the spiritual and the infinite....

Indian society developed with an unsurpassed organising ability, stable effectiveness, practical insight its communal co-ordination of the mundane life of interest and desire, *kāma*, *artha*; it governed always its action by a reference at every point to the moral and religious law, the Dharma: but it never lost sight of spiritual liberation as our highest point and the ultimate aim of the effort of Life. In later times when there was a still stronger secular tendency of intellectual culture, there came in an immense development of the mundane intelligence, an opulent political and social evolution, an emphatic stressing of aesthetic, sensuous and hedonistic experience. But this effort too always strove to keep itself within the ancient frame and not to lose the special stamp of the Indian cultural idea. The enlarged secular turn was compensated by a deepening of the intensities of psycho-religious experience. New religions or mystic forms and disciplines attempted to seize not only the soul and the intellect, but the emotions, the senses, the vital and the aesthetic nature of man and turn them into stuff of the spiritual life. And every excess of emphasis on the splendour and richness and power and pleasures of life had its recoil and was balanced by a corresponding potent stress on spiritual asceticism as the higher way. The two trends, on one side an extreme of the richness of life experience, on the other an extreme and pure rigorous intensity of the spiritual life, accompanied each other; their interaction, whatever loss there might be of the earlier deep harmony and large synthesis, yet by their double pull preserved something still of the balance of Indian culture....

The idea of the Divinity in man was popularised to an extraordinary extent, not only the occasional manifestation of the Divine in humanity which founded the worship of the Avataras, but the Presence discoverable in the heart of every creature. The systems of Yoga developed themselves on the same common basis. All led or hoped to lead through many kinds of psycho-physical, inner vital, inner mental and psycho-spiritual methods to the common aim of all Indian spirituality, a greater consciousness and a more or less complete union with the One and Divine or else an immergence of the individual soul in the Absolute. The Purano-Tantric system was a wide, assured and many-sided endeavour, unparalleled in its power, insight, amplitude, to provide the race with a basis of generalised psycho-religious experience from which man could rise through knowledge, works or love or through any other fundamental power of his nature to some established supreme experience and highest absolute status....

[The] great effort and achievement which covered all the time between the Vedic age and the decline of Buddhism, was still not the last possibility of religious evolution open to Indian culture. The Vedic training of the physically-minded man made the development possible. But in its turn this raising of the basis of religion to the inner mind and life and psychic nature, this training and bringing out of the psychic man ought to make possible a still larger development and support a greater spiritual movement as the leading power of life. The first stage makes possible the preparation of the natural external man for spirituality; the second takes up this outward life into a deeper mental and psychical living and brings him more directly into contact with the spirit and divinity within him; the third should render him capable of taking up his whole mental, psychical, physical living into a first beginning at least of a generalised spiritual life. This endeavour has manifested itself in the evolution of Indian spirituality and is the significance of the latest philosophies, the great spiritual movements of the saints and Bhaktas and an increasing resort to various paths of Yoga. But unhappily it synchronised with a decline of Indian culture and an increasing collapse of its general power and knowledge, and in these surroundings it could not bear its natural fruit; but at the same time it has done much to prepare such a possibility in the future. If Indian culture is to survive and keep its spiritual basis and innate character, it is in this direction, and not in a mere revival or a prolongation of the Puranic system, that its evolution must turn, rising so towards the fulfilment of that which the Vedic seers saw as the aim of man and his life thousands of years ago and the Vedantic sages cast into the clear and immortal forms of their luminous revelation.

Even the psychic-emotional part of man's nature is not the inmost door to religious feeling nor is his inner mind the highest witness to spiritual experience. There is behind the first the inmost soul of man, in that deepest secret heart, *hrdaye guhā-yām*, in which the ancient seers saw the very tabernacle of the indwelling Godhead,

and there is above the second a luminous highest mind directly open to a truth of the Spirit to which man's normal nature has as yet only an occasional and momentary access. Religious evolution, spiritual experience can find their true native road only when they open to these hidden powers and make them their support for a lasting change, a divinisation of human life and nature. An effort of this kind was the very force behind the most luminous and vivid of the later movements of India's vast religious cycles. It is the secret of the most powerful forms of Vaishnavism and Tantra and Yoga. The labour of ascent from our half-animal human nature into the fresh purity of the spiritual consciousness needed to be followed and supplemented by a descent of the light and force of the spirit into man's members and the attempt to transform human into divine nature....

A widest and highest spiritualising of life on earth is the last vision of all that vast and unexampled seeking and experiment in a thousand ways of the soul's outermost and innermost experience which is the unique character of [India's] past; this in the end is the mission for which she was born and the meaning of her existence....

(*Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library, Vol. 14, pp. 139-155*)

(*To be continued*)

A PLEA FOR THY MEN

THE hostiles active as the overlords
 Perversely dog Thy men's true aspiration;
 Vicious, they fling their own false wills' false cords,
 Noose necks to throttle calls for Thy Compassion.

People self-willed following self-interest,
 Intoxicated in their devious power,
 Inflict their egoism on Thy best,
 Thinking they've reached their most triumphant hour.

Others, self-cheating, play a double role,
 Hide from Thy eyes their fake life, bide their time,
 Not only gag true breath of their own soul
 But actively are busy slinging grime.

Thou alone can counter these falsehood-powers' mad drive,
 Make for Thy men a little space to live.

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

TOWARDS SPIRITUAL REALISATION

THE MOTHER'S TALK ON AUGUST 1, 1956

Sweet Mother, does the worship offered to the goddess Durga and to Kahl have any spiritual value?

THAT depends on who offers the worship.

It is not that which is of importance for the spiritual value. For the integrality and the complete truth of the Yoga it is important not to limit one's aspiration to one form or another. But from the spiritual point of view, whatever the object of worship, if the movement is perfectly sincere, if the self-giving is integral and absolute, the spiritual result can be the same; for, whatever object you take, through it—sometimes in spite of it, despite it—you always reach the supreme Reality, in the measure and proportion of the sincerity of your consecration.

That is why it is always said that, no matter what aspect of the Divine you adore or even what guide you choose, if you are perfect in your self-giving and absolutely sincere, you are sure to attain the spiritual goal.

But the result is no longer the same when you want to realise the integral yoga. Then you must not limit yourself in any way, even in the path of your consecration... Only, these are two very different things.

Spiritual realisation—as it was formerly understood, as it is still commonly understood—is union with the Supreme in some way or other, either within you or through some form or other, it is the fusion of your being with the Supreme, with the Absolute, almost the disappearance of your individuality in this fusion.¹ And that depends absolutely on the sincerity and the integrality of your self-giving, rather than on the choice you make of that to which you want to give yourself. For... the very sincerity of your aspiration will make you cross all limitations and find the Supreme, for you carry Him within yourself.

Whether you seek Him outside, whether you seek Him within, whether you seek Him in a form or without form, if your aspiration is sincere enough and your resolution sincere enough, you are sure to reach the goal.

But if you want the complementary movement of which Sri Aurobindo speaks, that is to say, to return to the outer consciousness and world after having realised

¹ Later a disciple asked Mother “Why did you say ‘almost’? Isn't then the disappearance complete?” To which Mother answered “Somewhere, I believe it is ‘The Yoga of Self-Perfection’ [The Synthesis of Yoga], regarding those who wish to merge in the Supreme Sri Aurobindo says or rather hints that this cannot be done, for the Supreme wants it otherwise. But Sri Aurobindo says it without saying it, it is just an allusion in passing. The idea is that beyond Being and Non-Being, the total Summit necessarily includes a form—what might be called an essential form—of the individuality, which no longer contradicts or is even distinct from the One, but is included in the One without any separation. But the words at our disposal mean nothing! And one is reduced to giving a childish explanation. That is why I said ‘almost’”

this union in yourself, and transform this outer consciousness and world, then in this case you cannot limit yourself in any way, for otherwise you will not be able to accomplish your work.

Essentially, you must be able to find this oneness with the Divine in all forms, all aspects; in every way that has been used to reach Him. And you must go beyond that and find a new way.

So, the first point to clear up in your thought—and it is a point of capital importance: you must not confuse the integral yoga with other spiritual realisations, which may be very high but cover a very limited field, for theirs is a movement only in depth

You may pierce a hole, you see, with your aspiration and make a movement in depth through anything at all. All depends on the intensity and sincerity of your aspiration—on the sincerity, that is to say, on how far your self-giving is complete, integral, absolute. But it does not depend on the form you have chosen: necessarily, you will have to pass through in order to find what is behind.

But if you want to transform your nature and your being, and if you want to participate in the creation of a new world, then this aspiration, this sharp and linear point is no longer enough. One must include everything and contain everything in one's consciousness.

Naturally that is much more difficult.

Mother, what is this "divine element in human nature" which always demands symbols for the completeness of its spiritual satisfaction?

Oh! what I have just read to you today?¹

It is precisely that part of the being which is not satisfied with abstractions and with escaping from life and evading it and leaving it as it is. It is that part of the

¹ "In any cult the symbol, the significant rite or expressive figure is not only a moving and enriching aesthetic element, but a physical means by which the human being begins to make outwardly definite the emotion and aspiration of his heart, to confirm it and to dynamise it. For if without a spiritual aspiration worship is meaningless and vain, yet the aspiration also without the act and the form is a disembodied and, for life, an incompletely effective power. It is unhappily the fate of all forms in human life to become crystallised, purely formal and therefore effete, and although form and cult preserve always their power for the man who can still enter into their meaning, the majority come to use the ceremony as a mechanical rite and the symbol as a lifeless sign and because that kills the soul of religion, cult and form have in the end to be changed or thrown aside altogether. There are those even to whom all cult and form are for this reason suspect and offensive; but few can dispense with the support of outward symbols and even a certain divine element in human nature demands them always for the completeness of its spiritual satisfaction. Always the symbol is legitimate in so far as it is true, sincere, beautiful and delightful, and even one may say that a spiritual consciousness without any aesthetic or emotional content is not entirely or any rate not integrally spiritual. In the spiritual life the basis of the act is a spiritual consciousness perennial and renovating, moved to express itself always in new forms or able to renew the truth of a form always by the flow of the spirit, and to so express itself and make every action a living symbol of some truth of the soul is the very nature of its creative vision and impulse. It is so that the spiritual seeker must deal with life and transmute its form and glorify it in its essence." (*The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 153)

being which wants to be integral, wants to be integrally transformed or at any rate to participate integrally in the inner adoration.

In every normal being there is the necessity, the need—an absolute need to translate into a physical form what he feels and wants internally. I consider those who always want to evade life in order to have self-realisation as abnormal and incomplete. And in fact, these are usually weak natures. But those who have strength, force and a kind of healthy equilibrium in themselves, feel an absolute need to realise materially their spiritual realisation; they are not satisfied with going away into the clouds or into worlds where forms no longer exist. They must have their physical consciousness and even their body participate in their inner experience.

Now, it may be said that the need to adopt or follow or participate in a religion as it is found all ready-made, arises rather from the “herd instinct” in human beings. The true thing would be for each one to find that form of adoration or cult which is his own and expresses spontaneously and individually his own special relation with the Divine; that would be the ideal condition.

To adopt a religion because one is born in that religion or because the people one loves and trusts practise that religion or because when one goes to a particular place where others pray and worship, one feels helped in one’s own prayer and worship, is not the sign of a very strong nature; I should say it is rather the sign of a weakness or at any rate of a lack of originality.

But to want to translate into the forms of one’s physical life the inner aspiration and adoration is quite legitimate, and it is much more sincere than what is done by a man who splits himself into two, leads a physical life quite mechanically and ordinarily and, when he can do it, when he has the time or when it suits him, withdraws within himself, escapes from physical life and the physical consciousness and goes to far-off heights to find the spiritual joys.

Someone who tries to make his material life the expression of his highest aspiration is certainly more noble, more upright and sincere in character than a man who splits himself into two saying that the outer life is of no importance and will never change and must be accepted as it is, and that, in reality only the inner attitude counts.

(Silence)

My file of questions is increasing. And I must say they are not all equally interesting; but still, I could perhaps take one or two of them for the satisfaction of those who have asked them.

First, some of you have got into the habit of sending me questions without signing them, for fear that I may reveal the identity of the one who has asked the question. I shall never reveal it, you may rest assured; and even if I make an unpleasant remark, nobody will know who it is for. *(Laughter)*

There is another thing. Some of you don’t take the trouble of asking your questions in French. As I did not give you notice openly that I would reply only to ques-

tions in French, I have translated one or two of them for the moment; but in future, if you want me to consider your questions, they must be expressed in French. Even if there are many mistakes, it does not matter, I shall correct them.

Here is one which has been asked in English, to which the answer is very short. I am asked:

“What is the fundamental virtue to be cultivated in order to prepare for the spiritual life?”

A sincerity which must become total and absolute, for sincerity *alone* is your protection on the spiritual path. If you are not sincere, at the very next step you are sure to fall and break your head. All kinds of forces, wills, influences, entities are there, on the look-out for the least little rift in this sincerity and they immediately rush in through that rift and begin to throw you into confusion.

Therefore, before doing anything, beginning anything, trying anything, be sure *first of all* that you are not only as sincere as you can be, but have the intention of becoming still more so.

For that is your only protection.

Can this effort to cultivate this initial virtue be a collective one?

Certainly it can. And this is what used to be attempted long ago in the schools of initiation. Even now, in more or less secret societies or very small groups, the collectivity seeks to be sufficiently united and to make a collective effort sufficiently complete for the result to be a group result instead of an individual one.

But naturally, that complicates the problem terribly.... Each time they meet, they try to create a collective entity; but for a virtue to be collectively realised, a tremendous effort is required. However, it is not impossible.

(Silence)

I have been asked another question which is a little more subtle, but it seems to me it has quite a special interest... Somebody asks what is the true intensity for wanting the Divine, in the will to unite with the Divine. And then this person says that he has found within himself two different modes of aspiration, especially in the intensity of aspiration for the Divine; in one of these movements there is a sort of anguish, like a poignant pain, in the other there is an anxiety, but at the same time a great joy.

This observation is quite correct.

And the question is this:

“When do we feel this intensity mixed with anguish, and when the intensity containing joy?”

I don't know if several or many of you have a similar experience, but it is very real, this experience, very spontaneous. And the answer is very simple.

As soon as the presence of the psychic consciousness is united with the aspiration, the intensity takes on quite a different character, as if it were filled with the very essence of an inexpressible joy. This joy is something that seems contained in everything else. Whatever may be the outer form of the aspiration, whatever difficulties and obstacles it may meet, this joy is there as though it filled up everything, and it carries you in spite of everything.

That is the sure sign of the psychic presence. That is to say, you have established a contact with your psychic consciousness, a more or less complete, more or less constant contact, but at that moment it is the psychic being, the psychic consciousness which fills your aspiration, gives it its true contents. And that's what is translated into joy.

When that is not there, the aspiration may come from different parts of the being; it may come mainly from the mind or mainly from the vital or even from the physical, or it may come from all the three together—it may come from all kinds of combinations. But in general, for the intensity to be there, the vital must be present. It is the vital which gives the intensity; and as the vital is at the same time the seat of most of the difficulties, obstacles, contradictions, it is the friction between the intensity of the aspiration and the intensity of the difficulty which creates this anguish.

This is no reason to stop one's aspiration.

You must know, you must understand the reason for this anguish. And then, if you can introduce just one more element in your aspiration, that is, your trust in the divine Grace, trust in the divine Response, it counterbalances all possible anguish and you can aspire without any disturbances or fear.

This brings us to something else, which is not positively a question, but a request for an explanation, a comment or a development of the subject. It is about Grace.

I have said somewhere, or maybe written, that no matter how great your faith and trust in the divine Grace, no matter how great your capacity to see it at work in all circumstances, at every moment, at every point in life, you will never succeed in understanding the marvellous immensity of Its Action, and the precision, the exactitude with which this Action is accomplished; you will never be able to grasp to what extent the Grace does everything, is behind everything, organises everything, conducts everything, so that the march forward to the divine realisation may be as swift, as complete, as total and harmonious as possible, considering the circumstances of the world.

As soon as you are in contact with It, there is not a second in time, not a point in space, which does not show you *dazzlingly* this perpetual work of the Grace, this constant intervention of the Grace.

And once you have seen this, you feel you are never equal to it, for you should

never forget it, never have any fears, any anguish, any regrets, any recoils... or even suffering. If one were in union with this Grace, if one saw It everywhere, one would begin living a life of exultation, of all-power, of infinite happiness.

And that would be the best possible collaboration in the divine Work.

(*Questions and Answers, 1956, pp. 244-51*)

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AT THE FEET OF THE MOTHER AND SRI AUROBINDO

RECOLLECTIONS BY SAHANA

(Continued from the issue of July 1983)

Sri Aurobindo's Letters

THE rejection of desire is essentially its rejection from the consciousness itself as a foreign element not belonging to the true self and the inner nature. But refusal to indulge the suggestions of desire can also be part of the rejection and it must be part of the yogic discipline. It is only when it is done in the wrong way, by an ascetic principle as a hard moral rule, that it can be called suppression.

When one lives in the true consciousness one feels the desires outside oneself, entering from outside, from the universal lower Prakriti, into the mind and vital parts. In the ordinary human condition this is not felt; men become aware of the desire only when it is there, when it has come inside and so they think it as their own and a part of themselves. The first condition for getting rid of desire is, therefore, to become conscious with the true consciousness, for then it becomes much easier to dismiss, than when one has to struggle with it as if it were part of oneself to be thrown out from the being.

When the psychic being is in the front, then also to get rid of desire becomes easy; for the psychic being has in itself no desires, it has only aspiration and love for the Divine. The constant prominence of the psychic being tends of itself to bring out the true consciousness. This is what is happening in you so you need not be over-anxious about the desires, only careful that they do not get in and bring a vital mixture.

21.3.1931

The division of the being of which you speak is a necessary stage in the yogic development and experience. One feels that there is a twofold being, the inner psychic which is the true one and the other the outer human being which is instrumental for the outer life. To live in the inner psychic being in union with the Divine while the outer does the outward work, as you feel, is the first stage in "Karma Yoga". There is nothing wrong in these experiences; they are indispensable and normal at this stage.

If you feel no bridge between the two, it is probably because you are not yet conscious of what connects the two. There is an inner mental, an inner vital, an inner physical which connect the psychic and the external being. About this, however, you need not be anxious at present.

The important thing is to keep what you have and let it grow, to live always in the psychic being, your true being. The psychic will then in due time awake and

turn to the Divine all the rest of the nature, so that even the outer being will feel itself in touch with the Divine and moved by the Divine in all it is and feels and does.

7.4.1931

You write “যতদিন না আমি¹ psychic being জাগে² But your psychic being is already awakened, if it were not, you would not have these experiences. The inner being which you feel in union with the Mother is the psychic being. As you probably have not quite understood what I wrote to you, it might be better if you show Nolini my letter and ask him to explain to you the difference between the three layers (স্তর) of the being about which I have spoken in the letter—

- (1) The inmost psychic being which is now awakened in you.
- (2) The external being which you feel doing work while the inner (psychic) is in union with the Mother.
- (3) The inner mental, vital and physical consciousness which connects the two, but of which you are not as yet conscious.

9.4.1931

It is all to the good if you are not disturbed by the recurrence of the pain; not to be disturbed, to remain quiet and confident is all the right attitude, but it is necessary also to receive the help of the Mother and not to shrink back for any reason from her solicitude. One ought not to indulge ideas of incapacity, inability to respond, dwelling too much on defects and failures and allowing the mind to be in pain and shame on their account; for these ideas and feelings become in the end weakening things. If there are difficulties, stumblings or failures, one has to look at them quietly and call in tranquilly and persistently the divine help for their removal, but not to allow oneself to be upset or pained or discouraged. Yoga is not an easy path and the total change of the nature cannot be done in a day. It is necessary for us to know precisely the state of your health so as to give you precise and constant help, that is the reason why the Mother has to put you the question from time to time. 27.5.1931

There is no reason why you should not practise singing, if you feel that you can make it part of your yoga.

It is not possible for the Mother to give you the five minutes a day you ask for, her time is already too much taken. There are many others who have asked the same thing, the Mother has had to refuse them all. You are mistaken if you think that any such arrangement is necessary for your sadhana and daily meditation of the kind would help you if you kept always the right attitude; but if you keep the right attitude, you will not need any such routine of outward means, the help the Mother is always giving you would be more than sufficient.

I think it needful at this stage of your sadhana to repeat my previous warning about not allowing any vital mixture. It is the crudity of the unregenerated vital that prevents the psychic from remaining always in the front. You have now seen clearly

¹ until my

² awakes

the two different consciousnesses,—according to what you have written in one of your letters,—the psychic and the vital. To get rid of the old vital nature is now one of the most pressing needs of your sadhana. You are trying to get rid of the vital attachments and to turn entirely to the Mother. At this juncture you must be careful not to allow the movements of the old vital nature to enter into your relations with the Mother. Take this matter of your wish for more physical nearness to her or contact with her. Take care not to allow this to gain on you or become a desire; for if you do, the vital will begin to play, to create demands and desires, to awake in you jealousy and envy of others and other undesirable movements and that would push your psychic being into the background and spoil the whole truth of your sadhana. There are some who have suffered much trouble and difficulty in their yoga by making this mistake, and I think it therefore better to put you on your guard. 13.7.31

(To be continued)

THE STORY OF A SOUL

BY HÛTA

(Continued from the issue of July 1983)

Thr Mother's Message

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



Two days elapsed and once again a dark depression took possession of me—my whole being concentrated deep within me in one long nightmare of despair. I felt that I would not be successful in this work of painting as I had met with many failures in my life. Fate had played a one-too-many trick on me already.

I saw the Mother in the evening. With an infinite tenderness she ran a finger across my cheek and wiped the tears away. Then we had a long meditation together. My nerves were soothed, and I felt better. Her smile really brightened my spirit.

She sent me a card along with these lines:

“I am sending back your book corrected; except for some points, it is all right.

“I am sending you for painting an integral protection (the flowers of bougainvillea).”

The same morning I received from the Mother a white Horse-flower—“Joy of integral faithfulness. That link of love which makes all faithfulness so easy.” She wanted me to paint that flower instead of the bougainvillea. I finished the painting and she saw it in the evening and said:

“The leaves here have an effect of transparency. You should not paint transparent leaves. To give the proper impression, you should put a little creamish colour to bring out the true effect. Oh! if I could only have a brush and colours right now, I would soon alter the leaves.”

She made a gesture with her right hand as if she was altering the painting. Then she did a sketch of a Horse-flower in order to show me its original form. Afterwards she said while pointing to the flower:

“This flower has a soft and beautiful brightness like satin. In painting you can give the shine of diamonds and even more than that. You know, Watteau was a French artist who, when he did human portraits, painted the clothes in such a way—with such strokes—that it looked as if he had clothed his models in real satin.”

It was indeed very true that I had no sense of colour—I did not know how to mix one colour with another to bring out the right effect of vividness.

Early morning the next day a card came from the Mother. She had written:

Bonjour to my dear little child to my sweet Huta

I am sending integral protection for painting

À tout a l'heure at 10.45

My love and blessings and the Divine Grace never leave you, even for a moment.

In the morning before I went to the Mother I painted the white Bougainvillea (Integral Protection).

Later I took this painting—as well as another of a Horse-flower which I had altered according to her instruction—along with a palette full of colours and some brushes, in case the Mother would like to alter anything. But she did not use them. She admired the painting of the white Horse-flower.

As for the painting of the Bougainvillea she said:

“You see, in these flowers there are different kinds of shades—all the colours must be brought out in the painting. Even in the white background you must not forget to show various shades of colour. For, Nature is not simply white, she has numberless hues and there is always a play of shifting colours in her.”

Then she led me to one of the cupboards, which I had previously cleaned. She took out an image of a crystal Buddha. At once I recognised it. At the time of cleaning and arranging things, little did I know that one day the Mother would give me precious and charming objects as models to paint. With a smile, she said:

“Here is Buddha. Paint him on a white background.”

I was puzzled—how on earth was it possible to paint the crystal Buddha on a white background? I went to my room and arranged everything. Then after a quick lunch I set myself to work. I remembered what the Mother had told me about Nature and the different shades of colour even in a white expanse. Very well; I mixed blue with white and finished the job.

That evening I took the painting in a box to show it to the Mother in her room at the Playground. She observed it minutely. I simply marvelled at her serenity and seriousness, because the painting was such a sight that none could have checked his laughter. I was unmoved because I thought that what I had done was exactly according to her instructions. Then slowly she said while suppressing her laughter:

“The face of Buddha is all right but his head looks as if he has worn a blue cap!”

And a little laugh escaped her. Her glance rested upon the picture for a moment and then she looked at me as she resumed her talk:

“His shoulders also are not very shapely. Child, you must not rub brushes against a board while painting. You must only give touches—oil colours are not like water colours—water colours need a proper brushing but not oil colours. You must be careful. Paint the image once again on an orange background.”

I was feeling spent—as if I had no strength to do anything. I knew that I could not paint and the Mother insisted on my doing it. In vain she took all the trouble,

I thought. I found everything in an awful mess, including my life. The hostile forces were on the alert to upset and overthrow the whole thing so skilfully—they never missed a chance to create in me a strong feeling of incapacity and inferiority. Past griefs and present problems were blurred together in a dark menacing cloud which hung over me, giving me no rest. I lived on my nerves and took everything too hard.

The following morning the Mother sent me a pretty card showing *Azalea* with these lines:

“I am sending these flowers of ‘restfulness’ to bring you peace and rest in the mind and the nerves because that is the solution of your problems—quiet, quiet, quiet, do not get excited about any small thing and at once you will feel better.

“My love and blessings and the Divine Grace are always with you.”

I took rest for one day. The next morning the Mother sent me a lovely card depicting a brook and on both the sides there was snow, and these lines followed:

“We will call this pretty picture ‘the way through purity’, the way of an intense and ardent consecration, desireless and pure.

“Let me lead you on this way towards your Divine Goal.

“My love and blessings along with the Divine Grace never leave you.”

Then gradually I recovered my poise and once more I picked up brushes and colours. I put the image of Buddha on the seat of a chair and painted it giving strokes here and there—not attending to the light and shadow on the background made of an orange cloth which I had put over the back of the chair.

The Mother saw the painting in the evening—she looked at it for quite a long time. I thought: “What is there so special to look at?” Then suddenly she held my hands, shook them and said with sheer gladness and joy:

“O child, it is beautiful! exquisite! it is not simply a painting—it is a vision! I have seen the light in the painting—it is vivid—it is excellent! How did you do the background?”

My face was a study of curiously mingled expressions. My eye-lashes fluttered for a moment while I answered her: “Mother, I think I have done this painting at random.” She smiled brightly and soon plunged into a profound meditation while holding my hands. She remained indrawn for more than one hour. My hands and legs started aching. Many people were waiting outside the room for her blessings and for interviews with her.

When she awoke, she was extremely happy and pleased. She caressed my hands,

embraced me and kissed my forehead. I tried to get up but I could not move easily—my feet had become absolutely numb. Then she got up from her couch, and led me to the floor where there was no carpet, and asked me to stand for a few seconds on the cool floor. I did so and felt the blood circulating in my legs. She held my right arm and saw me off at the threshold of the room.

I went home, and looked at the painting—I knew fairly well that I did not wish to follow rules in painting—that is, to keep a background and to observe light and shadow—and so on. I felt that to be an impressionist was more my line than to be a realist. Now a little breath of happiness touched me, making my mood swing away from depression and despondency.

*

At night I lay awake for quite a long time, thinking of my future life and work. I told myself: “What has painting to do with my future—my goal? What is it after all?” The Mother seemed to sense my feeling. She wrote just the next morning on a card showing a vase full of lovely carnations of red and white colours:

Bonjour to my dear little child
To my sweet Huta

“Here is a nice vase of ‘collaboration’ for indeed we shall collaborate to do nice things and express in painting a higher world and consciousness.

“Truly the Divine Grace is over you to lead you to an exceptional realisation. Along with it my love and blessings never leave you.”

I really wondered about the “higher world and consciousness”. It was too much to believe this, because, unfortunately, I had an extraordinary ability to find new mistakes to make both in art and in spirituality. I lacked confidence in myself in spite of the Mother’s constant reassurance.

She says in *Words of the Mother*, p. 158:

“... Most of those who call themselves artists draw their inspiration from the vital world only; and it carries in it no high or great significance. But when a true artist, one who looks for his creative source to a higher world, turns to Yoga, he will find that his inspiration becomes more direct and powerful and his expression clearer and deeper....”

That morning I painted the vision which I had seen the previous night. Space was extended enormously—I was standing on a snow-white cloud watching a silvery river which flowed mysteriously near the fleecy clouds. The atmosphere was ethereal. I tried to capture the whole scene in my painting, and showed it to the Mother in the evening. After seeing it, she slowly raised her head, a hint of amusement in her shining eyes, and said:

“Ah! well, it is nice but you must give to the river a certain stroke in order to create an impression as if it is flowing vividly. To give the accurate effect of things, you must give different strokes according to what you observe. You see, each stroke expresses the particular texture and speciality of each thing. In painting, surely, there should be the right colours, accurate strokes, proper composition, and from the beginning to the end everything should be perfectly harmonised.”

Then she showed me, by drawing a sketch, how the river should flow.

All that I wanted to express, I could not do owing to my lack of knowledge—I was not at all bold enough to use colours freely—there was some rigidity in my being. Nonetheless, I was completely absorbed in this work—secretly I did like to toy with colours.

*

It was Christmas day. Everybody was in a gay mood. But unfortunately it started to drizzle.

For the past many days the grand preparation had been going on in Golconde. It was like a festival. Everyone liked to contribute their help in wrapping gifts for the Mother to distribute to people.

Whenever I could snatch some time, I too helped in one of the rooms in the basement where all the things had been kept.

During this time I was busy making a silken golden-yellow curtain for the Darshan Room where Sri Aurobindo and the Mother used to give darshan to their disciples. I stitched bright milk-white sequins on top of it, which glittered whenever the curtain fluttered gently in the breeze.

A lovely card displaying an enormous deep-pink rose arrived with the Mother's words:

“This is the Divine's sweet love which I am sending you today, with all my love and blessings and the constant Presence of the Divine Grace.”

I felt like painting the rose which was on the card. I did so that very morning.

In the evening the drizzling changed into heavy rain. So the Christmas Tree and the presents had all to be kept indoors under a cover and this ruined the enthusiasm, gaiety and joy of the occasion. The Mother seemed to be unruffled, handing to each one their gifts with her enchanting smile.

On the 26th I received a card illustrating exquisite yellow and orange roses arranged in a green vase. These lines were under the picture:

“Bonjour to my dear little child to my sweet Huta
Today I shall see your painting a little before 5.30.

My love and blessings and the Presence of the Divine Grace are constantly with you.”

I took the painting of the rose which I had done the previous day. She saw it and laughed softly. After remaining in silence for a second or two she said:

“My-child, I have never seen such a big rose! From where did you get the idea to paint it? Look at the colours—they are too gaudy....”

I answered, “Mother, I did it from the card you sent me yesterday...” Her eyes widened while she said:

“I see, but it is better not to try to copy from cards. Paint directly from Nature and copy the richness and vividness of her. Then you will surely be able to express her beauty and reality in your painting.”

Sri Aurobindo writes in the booklet *Art—Revelation of Beauty*, pp. 31-32:

“There is no incompatibility between the inspiration from within and the dependence on Nature. The essence of the inspiration always comes from within but the forms of expression are based on Nature though developed and modified by the selective or interpretative sight of the artist....

“If Art’s service is but to imitate Nature, then burn all the picture galleries and let us have instead photographic studios. It is because Art reveals what Nature hides that a small picture is worth more than all the jewels of the millionaires and the treasures of the princes....”

On the 27th December a card came from the Mother, showing a charming vase with different-coloured Poppies. She had written below:

“Bonjour to my dear little child to my sweet Huta

It is all right—you can come with the pictures this morning at 11 o’clock and we shall decide together what you will do next.

My love and blessings and the Presence of the Divine Grace are always with you.”

The Mother sent me the flowers *Beaumontia*—“Unselfishness. Deeply open so as not to refuse anything.”

She wished me to paint these flowers in order to teach me how depth could be shown by using certain colours and strokes to make the object look real.

I met the Mother at the appointed time in the Meditation Hall upstairs. I told her: “Mother, I am always hesitating while painting. I have found that it is great fun to play with colours, but I cannot possibly make myself understand why I am to do painting. Will it ever help me in my future life? But, of course, you did say something about the higher world and consciousness. I am sorry I haven’t reached

that state—I only make an absolute mess every now and then in painting. You know already that my mind is unsteady and my outer being is too feeble to express anything, and my inner being is often concealed by the clouds of the dark forces. What can I do?”

The Mother stared at me for the space of a moment or two and then said soothingly:

“You should only think of the present moment. If you make plans for the future and think of the future, it is of no use. You can think about the present with your knowledge but you know nothing about the future—even a man of genius cannot know anything about the future—no matter whatever plans he may make.

“Yes, indeed, there are so many difficult things, but human beings can do everything—even animals can do much but they have no thinking mind.

“Now you must try to realise all difficult things. Nothing can be done without persistent and constant effort. It is interesting to fight with difficulties but not with easy things. This earth is a field of effort. You must make a constant effort to reach your goal. The Divine’s Grace and help are always there for everybody to use in the right way. Human beings are helpless without the Divine’s Grace and help. It is the Divine’s Grace that is doing everything but surely you must never listen to the devil and his false suggestions.

“You see, you have your individual self and you must go further with the right attitude and with the true consciousness—think only of the present and proceed to your goal.

“Now in painting, in sports, in arranging flowers, cultivating gardens and doing other things, by what consciousness and attitude are these things being done? If you have the right attitude and the true consciousness, then nobody can prevent you from going further towards your destination. The right thing is this: whatever may happen to you outwardly, you must always keep the right attitude and the true consciousness. Even if one is a saint outwardly and yet does not live in the true consciousness and the right attitude, he is simply living the most ordinary life. So you must not think about any exterior thing—neighbours, house, material circumstances—because all these things are absolutely false. You must remain inward and live in the true consciousness and the right attitude.

“If you feel tired, uneasy and upset, it is because you listen to the adverse suggestions. You must never do that.”

Later, after she had seen my notebook in which I used to report her talks, she wrote:

“I am sending back your book in which I have written at the end the summary of what I told you—the central and essential teaching”:

“To lead the Divine Life does not depend on any exterior activity or circumstances. Whatever you do from the highest work to the most ordinary, you can lead the Divine Life if you are in the true consciousness and the right attitude.”

*

It was very interesting that the Mother sent me a card depicting flowers in a vase similar to *Beaumontia*. This shows how extraordinary were her conception, vision, sensibility and aesthetic sense.

She wrote:

“This morning I have not yet received the flowers of ‘Unselfishness’ so I cannot send you one just now. If I get them in time I shall send you one.”

I frequently practised painting this particular flower—the shape of which was like a cup.

That very night, when the Mother came from the Playground to go to her apartment in the Ashram, she brought with her a huge bunch of flowers—*Beaumontia*. I usually happened to be present when she returned. She asked me to paint the flowers. I told her apologetically: “But, Mother, I have already painted these flowers several times and it is a bit boring to paint the same thing again.” Her smile was warming—her eyes lit up with laughter when she said:

“Ah! If I were you, I would paint these pretty flowers over and over again.”

Alas! I had nothing left to do except paint the pretty flowers over and over again!

I love to quote Vivekananda:

“Art is the most unselfish form of happiness in the world.”

To paint—to occupy myself in exterior activities—was all right, but I was not at all satisfied with anything. Very often my heart cried out and craved for the Divine. Time and again I had a nostalgia to go back to my own sphere. In fact, I knew that it was not possible till my whole being was transformed and till I knew something about the Divine Life and lived it! I expressed my feeling to the Mother. She sent me a painted card of *Poinsettia* with the flower’s significance:

“The Divine’s love manifested in the vital.”

And these lines followed:

“Yes, my child, I will teach you not only *what is* Divine Life but also *how* to live it so that you will realise in yourself that true divine life.

“My love and blessings and the Presence of the Grace are constantly with you.”

Indeed, one of the Mother’s writings in *Words of the Mother*, p. 154, answers correctly all puzzling questions:

“...There is nothing to prevent a Yogi from being an artist or an artist from being a Yogi. But when you are in Yoga, there is a profound change in the values of things, of Art as of everything else. You begin to look at Art from a very different standpoint....”

That evening I saw the Mother in her room at the Playground. I said: “Mother, once you told me that to reach the Divine is a difficult task. Tell me how to meditate properly without any obstruction and to get into touch with the psychic being, how to live the Divine Life and unite with the Divine.”

She gazed at me sympathetically and said with a slight smile:

“O that! Then you must stop thinking actively and give your mind and emotions a little rest! Try to gather the energy of your consciousness as if you are taking air from outside by your will and aspiration; and then you should meditate in your heart and go as deep as possible within your true self. As a matter of fact, in work—in outer activity itself—you can meditate and become aware of your psychic being. It is good if you remember constantly the Divine during your work. Also, you must never lose courage and faith. You must be patient and aspire quietly for the Divine.”

Well! She had said everything I had asked for. It was pretty tough to practise and live the spiritual truths in order to find the soul and lead the Divine Life by remaining in the Higher Consciousness.

I went home, and quietly turned the pages of my spiritual diary and found a slight change in me. That very night I wrote to the Mother asking whether my feeling was right. The next morning she answered:

“Yes, my child, there is obviously a change and things are getting better, but still you may have to fight away the evil force that wants to separate you from the Divine. Stand firm in your resistance knowing that I am always with you to fight it out.

“With my love and blessings.”

I shuddered—a cold shiver went through my whole being. At the same time I felt how right were her words!

“...still you may have to fight away the evil force...”

Before I ever saw the Mother, I had written in one of my prayers to her in the book *Salutations*:

“...This too I know that in this life of mine I shall have to rebel a lot. Everybody will turn against me. They will slander me, they will scorn me, they will hate me. And I shall hardly escape what is called calamity and suffering. But it does not matter. I have confidence that I have Your protection, so much that no harm can come to me.

“Let mountains of misfortune fall upon me, let the deadly poison of the hostile world be my drink. Even so, shall I not gain at last the Divine Love? May You triumph!”

The following morning the Mother sent me a fine card along with these words:

“Bonjour to my dear little child to my sweet Huta

My love and blessings and the Divine Grace are always and will always be with you.”

In the evening as usual I went to the Mother in her room at the Playground. We had a short meditation. It was the day of her French class. From time to time our eyes met. They smiled at each other in love, and my heart fell mute in her warm Presence.

Later, since it was the last day of the year 1956 the Mother distributed a Message for the coming Year:

“A power greater than that of Evil can alone win the Victory. It is not a crucified but a glorified body that will save the world.”

(To be continued)

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CORRECTION

In the issue of July, p. 418, the first Talk quoted in “SOS of Ayurveda” should be dated 21.12.1938.

EASTERN MYSTICISM AND MODERN PHYSICS

(Continued from the issue of July 1983)

4

Now a few words on the general philosophical conclusions drawn by Capra in the realm of modern physics itself about our knowledge of whatever “reality” this science studies. His general stand¹—phrased still in relation to Eastern mysticism—runs:

“Modern physics has confirmed most dramatically one of the basic ideas of Eastern mysticism that all the concepts we use to describe nature are limited, that they are not features of reality as we tend to believe, but creations of the mind; parts of the map, not of the territory. Whenever we expand the realm of our experience, the limitations of our rational mind become apparent and we have to modify, or even abandon, some of our concepts.”

Everything here is acceptable save that, as in one of the passages just cited before this, all the terms used in modern physics are sought to be proved purely mental conveniences to correlate experience, terms giving no indication of the territory thus mapped out. True, in quantum physics we have no means of dividing “the thing-as-such” from the results we get on our measuring equipment. True also, the concepts of classical physics break down to a large degree before the paradoxes we meet in the submicroscopic world. But can we go so far as to declare that the paradoxes leave us quite in the dark about the nature of this world?

Here we may recall Capra’s formulation of the fix in which quantum physicists find themselves: “We know that classical concepts are inadequate at the atomic level, yet we have to use them to describe our experiments and to state the results. There is no way we can escape this paradox.”

Why does Capra not see that the correct position is to be reached by evaluating with the help of “this paradox” all the paradoxical answers nature gives to our questions to it in quantum physics? As we saw, no genuine subjectivism is entertainable in science *vis-à-vis* the apparatus with which we contact the atom or the subatomic particle or the atomic process observed. If these latter phenomena are ultimately the constituents of objects in the man-sized world such as the very apparatus we employ for observation, it is to be expected that the constituents should not only exist objectively, non-subjectively, like this apparatus but also share some of their properties.

The actual practice of physicists bears out the expectation. If we ask what Capra means when he says that we inevitably have to use classical concepts in stating the results of our experiments, we shall discover a condition of affairs well sketched by

¹ *The Tao of Physics* (Shambhala, Berkeley, 1975), p. 161

another remarkable writer on the same subject, Gary Zukav, who has given an account more or less on the same lines as Capra, even drawing parallels with Eastern mysticism. After delineating the diverse strangenesses revealed by experiments, he¹ tells us:

“All of the above notwithstanding, particle physicists of necessity analyze subatomic particles as if they *were* like little baseballs that fly through space and collide with each other. When a particle physicist studies a track on a bubble-chamber photograph of a particle interaction, he assumes that it *was* made by a little moving object, and that the other tracks on the photograph likewise were made by small moving objects. In fact, particle interactions are analyzed in much the same terms that can be applied to the collision of billiard balls. Some particles collide (and are annihilated in the process) and other newly created particles come flying out of the collision area. In short, particle interactions are analyzed essentially in terms of masses, velocities, and momenta. These are the concepts of Newtonian physics and they also apply to automobiles and streetcars.

“Physicists do this because they have to use these concepts if they are to communicate at all. What is available to them is usually a black photograph with white lines on it. They know that, (1) according to quantum theory, subatomic particles have no independent existence of their own, (2) subatomic particles have wave-like characteristics as well as particle-like characteristics, and (3) subatomic particles actually may be manifestations of interacting fields. Nonetheless, these white lines (more patterns) lend themselves to analysis in classical terms, and so that is how particle physicists analyze them.

“This dilemma, the dilemma of having to talk in classical terms about phenomena which cannot be described in classical concepts is the basic paradox of quantum mechanics. It pervades every part of it... We try to use familiar concepts as points of departure, but beyond that, the familiar concepts do not fit the phenomena. The alternative is to say nothing at all.

“‘Physicists who deal with the quantum theory,’ wrote Heisenberg, are also compelled to use a language taken from ordinary life. We act as if there really were such a thing as an electric current [or a particle] because, if we forbade all physicists to speak of electric current [or particles] they could no longer express their thoughts.’²

“Therefore, physicists talk about subatomic particles as if they were real little objects that leave tracks in bubble chambers and have an independent (‘objective’) existence. This convention has been extremely productive. Over the last forty years almost one hundred particles have been discovered.”

¹ *The Dancing Wu Li Masters: An Overview of the New Physics* (Bantam Books, New York, 1980), pp. 201-02.

² Werner Heisenberg *et al.*, *On Modern Physics* (New York, Clarkson Potter, 1961), p. 34.

Zukav has similar comments on another characteristic attributed to subatomic particles. He¹ writes:

“Subatomic particles spin about a theoretical kind of axis like a spinning top. One big difference between a spinning top and a spinning particle, however, is that a top can spin either faster or slower, but a subatomic particle *always* spins at exactly the same rate. Every electron, for example, always spins at exactly the same rate as every other electron.

“The rate of spin is such a fundamental characteristic of a subatomic particle that if it is altered, the particle itself is destroyed. That is, if the spin of a particle is altered, the particle in question is changed so fundamentally that it no longer can be considered an electron, or a proton, or whatever it was before we altered its spin. This makes us wonder whether all of the different ‘particles’ might be just different states of motion of some underlying structure or substance. This is the basic question of particle physics....

“Every subatomic particle has a fixed, definite, and known angular momentum [in terms of which the spin of subatomic particles is calculated and which depends upon the mass, size, and rate of rotation of a spinning object] but *nothing is spinning*: If you don’t understand, don’t worry. Physicists don’t understand these words either. They just use them....

“The angular momentum of a subatomic particle is fixed, definite, and known. ‘But,’ wrote Max Born,

one should not imagine that there is anything in the nature of matter actually rotating.²

Said another way, the ‘spin’ of a subatomic particle involves “The idea of a spin without the existence of something spinning...³” Even Born had to admit that this concept is ‘rather abstruse.’⁴ (Rather!?) Nonetheless, physicists use this concept because atomic particles do behave as if they have angular momentum and that angular momentum has been determined to be fixed and definite in each case. Because of this, in fact, ‘spin’ is one of the major characteristics of subatomic particles.”

What the state of affairs half ironically described by Zukav should philosophically involve is—for example—not that there is nothing spinning in spite of a spin being an appropriate account but that something does spin and yet the notion of spinning fails to cope with its full nature. Analogously, we must aver that something akin to a little moving object must be there to make those tracks in the bubble-chamber yet to think of it as nothing more falls short of doing justice to the rest of our knowledge of it. In the subatomic world classical concepts at the same time do and do not hold. An

¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 207-08.

² *The Restless Universe* (New York, Dover, 1951), p. 206.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

affinity to our familiar world has to be affirmed while we also affirm a non-affinity. Contradictory qualities are met with but because of this we are not entitled to declare that we are dealing simply with our conceptual map rather than with the actual territory or that we are totally in the presence of our measuring and categorizing mind's creations. We are as little entitled as we would be to dub baseballs and automobiles and tops mere mental creations. Doubtless, the necessary combination of contradictories—or, to employ Bohr's famous term, "complementaries"—yields an extremely queer nature for observed reality: still, what figure as opposites are not themselves utterly divorced from the non-queer reality which we know from day to day. Quantum physicists who make use of classical language for not only their experimental set-up but also for the results obtained are perfectly justified within a restricted area. Although, between the submicroscopic and the man-sized, no one-to-one comparison is possible, some reflections of the latter in the former have to be philosophically accepted, Capra notwithstanding.

In ordinary reality, opposites are to be found: objects appearing to be confined to a small area like a baseball and objects appearing to spread out like a water-wave. But they are separated and may be considered different manifestations of a basic substance called matter. Reality in quantum physics gives us not two divided opposite manifestations but seemingly coincident opposites as though of one and the same thing, a particle that can show itself as a wave and a wave that can act as a particle. The one reality behaves in the same locus as contradictories. In response to varying challenges (experimental arrangements), it alters itself in the same locus. The capacity of complementary manifestations which is a known part of nature is now exercised in a most odd manner which strikes our experience as impossible. The sole saving feature is that although the same thing in the identical locus is a particle and a wave, it is alternatively so and is never what we may term a wavicle. Already logic is exceedingly strained to the point even of magic, yet it is not made to renounce itself completely. Precariously it keeps its poise on a trembling verge. However, if it is honest it should recognise that not only has the border been crossed between what is familiar to our minds and what is basic to the phenomenon of familiarity: it is also set deeply enough in the basic to feel at work an Energy beyond the mentally seizable and through it to sense the ultimate which is beyond all logic yet not beyond experience and comprehension on a higher plane than the mental. Some inkling of this ultimate no less than of its energy is caught from the marvellous access of power that can come, from the exploration of the basic, to the level of the familiar through a tremendous development of nuclear technology.

While something of the familiar must be figured in the basic, the converse should also hold. Our dead-certainty about things being what they seem from day to day must vanish, giving place to a sense of mystery in the familiar. All that is known should come to be regarded as not coincident with the real—and, though the known partakes of objectivity and is not simply a mental construct, an element of mental superimposition upon the objective should be recognised, leaving us in a mood to

anticipate a brain-bewildering experience even in relation to our routine perception of the man-sized material world. What has been deemed impossible should be looked at with considerate eyes. Events which religious history has called "miracles" may be reckoned worth studying as acceptable possibilities. When we discover how paradoxical the ultimate constituents of our world are, we should be ready not only for the "paranormal" to mingle with normality but also for a "supernature" to find a foothold in the daily natural round. The room made for the incalculable, termed "chance" by quantum physics, in connection with individual micro-events in contrast to the statistically certain group-occurrences which fall within the probability-calculus, may be judiciously extended from their sphere to that of the "observer". Already relativity theory has broken through the vetoes of the old complacent Newtonian mechanics. Side by side with its breakthrough, an occasional subtler one from hidden domains of Life and Mind and Beyond-Mind should appear credible in the domain of common Matter on the strength of the near-miraculous encountered in the subatomic field.

This in general is how one would conceive Eastern mysticism's outlook on the stage reached by the discoveries and disclosures of modern physics. Its philosophy here would not quite see eye to eye with Capra and it would incline to find some fault with him for not adequately indicating the scientific stance of the genius with whom modern physics practically started: Einstein who, besides framing relativity theory, also launched quantum theory on its career with his treatment of Planck's energy-packets.

Capra does discourse on Einstein with great admiration and with admirable mastery of his concepts and stresses more than once the recurring need of quantum theory to relativize itself. Thus he¹ throws into relief a major incompleteness in that theory at its very centre of attention, the atomic nucleus:

"Soon after the formulation of quantum theory, it became clear that a complete theory of nuclear phenomena must not only be a quantum theory but must also incorporate relativity theory. This is because the particles confined to dimensions of the size of nuclei often move so fast that their speed comes close to the speed of light. This fact is crucial for the description of their behaviour, because every description of natural phenomena involving velocities close to the speed of light has to take relativity theory into account. It has to be, as we say, a 'relativistic' description. What we need, therefore, for a full understanding of the nuclear world is a theory which incorporates both quantum theory and relativity theory. Such a theory has not yet been found and therefore we have as yet been unable to formulate a complete theory of the nucleus... We do have several 'quantum-relativistic' models which describe some aspects of the world of particles very well, but the fusion of quantum and relativity theory of the particle is still the central problem and great challenge of modern fundamental physics."

¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 75-76.

What Capra refers to as relativity theory is the "special" and "general" ones which Einstein developed, but it is well known that Einstein looked upon his work as unfinished. Electromagnetism and gravitation remained to be deduced by him from a single set of primary axioms. All his life he sought for "the unified field theory". None of his efforts proved quite convincing. Till such a theory has been found, macrocosmic phenomena in their entirety cannot be said to have come within the domain of physics and their final interpretation would be lacking. But if such a theory were discovered it would, according to Einstein, take away the whole basis accepted at present of quantum physics; for, in spite of certain relativistic treatments of quantum problems, there is a radical rift between the outlook of Einstein and that of Bohr-Heisenberg. Capra has no seizable hint of this situation.

Lincoln Barnett,¹ whose exposition everywhere has been endorsed by Einstein himself, has well phrased it: "Relativity has shaped all our concepts of space, time, gravitation, and the realities that are too remote and too vast to be perceived. The Quantum Theory has shaped all our concepts of the atom, the basic units of matter and energy, and the realities that are too elusive and too small to be perceived. Yet these two great scientific systems rest on entirely different and unrelated theoretical foundations. They do not, as it were, speak the same language. The purpose of the Unified Field Theory is to construct a bridge between them." But the bridge, as we can gather from Philip Frank,² would carry to quantum physics the "theoretical foundations" of relativity physics. In building a theory of "unified field", Einstein "also thought that in this way he might be able to obtain a more satisfactory theory of light quanta (photons) than Bohr's, and derive laws about 'physical reality' instead of only laws about observational results".

A little more detailed illumination in this respect is supplied by Ilse Rosenthal-Schneider:³

"Einstein's ideas of a complete and unified theory have led to an exciting controversy on the significance of the physical world picture provided by quantum mechanics...

"His criterion for the reality of a physical quantity is 'the possibility of predicting it with certainty without disturbing the system'. In quantum mechanics, there is no possibility of such prediction of complementary quantities [like particle and wave, position and velocity, etc.]. Quite apart from this 'incompleteness' and from the statistical character of the laws, quite apart from the influence of the measuring process on the measured system, Einstein feels that quantum mechanics is *not* likely to furnish the basis of a complete theory for the whole of physics,—though it may be deducible

¹ *The Universe and Dr. Einstein*, with a Foreword by Albert Einstein (A Mentor Book, The New American Library, New York, 1953), p. 119

² *Einstein His Life and Times* (Jonathan Cape, London, 1948), p. 264.

³ "Presuppositions and Anticipations in Einstein's Physics", *Albert Einstein: Philosopher-Scientist*, edited by Paul Arthur Schilpp (The Library of Living Philosophers, Inc., Evanston, 1949), pp. 141-42.

from this basis—, because the *psi*-function [Schrodinger's wave-equation] does not describe the happenings in a single system, but relates to an ensemble of systems only....

“In contrast to Bohr, who claims that quantum theory—seen from the view-point of complementarity—appears as ‘a completely rational description of physical phenomena,’ and thinks that ‘a radical revision of our attitude as regards physical reality’ is needed, Einstein regards this description as incomplete, and anticipates that a comprehensive unified field theory may finally include a satisfactory explanation of quantum phenomena. His aim is a theory which represents ‘events themselves and not merely the probability of their occurrence,’ and he expressed the opinion that there may be a chance of solving the quantum puzzle without having to renounce the representation of ‘reality.’”

Capra does not dwell sufficiently on Einstein's demands. He¹ does allude to his aim: “Subsequent to the emergence of the field concept, physicists have attempted to unify the various fields into a single fundamental field which would incorporate all physical phenomena. Einstein, in particular, spent the last years of his life searching for such a unified field.” Capra² even quotes Einstein as saying: “We may therefore regard matter as being constituted by the regions of space in which the field is extremely intense... There is no place in this new kind of physics both for the field and matter, for the field is the only reality.” However, in Capra's book we look in vain for a mention of the grave consequences of the Einsteinian view to quantum theory.

All we are told³ is: “The Copenhagen interpretation of quantum theory is not universally accepted. There are several counterproposals and the philosophical problems involved are far from being settled...” We are not made to realize Einstein's attitude. Einstein does not stop at the quantum level. Beyond this level the fundamental reality would not deny what happens short of it and yet it would give rise to a vision of something “sitting out there” as in our common world and, though a much more amazing actuality, still not utterly discontinuous with it. Such a vision would also help us avoid the ambiguity that has now got attached to terms like “observer” or “participator”, which, for all the care exercised by Capra in places, are likely to play a sophistical part for ordinary readers.

5

How shall we sum up the credit and the debit sides of Capra? His very qualities—on the one hand his highly knowledgeable synthesis of the profound strangenesses inherent in relativity and quantum theories and, on the other, his inner touch with

¹ *Op. cit.*, p 211.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

Eastern mysticism's view of the world of Shakti as a unified dynamic system and his enthusiastic account of this view—may push to unwarranted inferences those who are over-eager to discover reasoned support in modern physics for their religious convictions or spiritual experiences. For, nothing basic by way of comparison between modern physics and Hinduism's Brahman-Atman, Buddhism's Nirvanic Permanent, Taoism's unmoving Way for all movements is anywhere rationally established; mind and matter are nowhere demonstrated to be similar in stuff; no cosmic Intelligence is made to glimmer out of what is termed a participatory universe on the strength of a new "slant" of physical theory on the nexus of observer and observed; no distinct idea is given of a possible and perhaps scientifically necessary foundation *à la* Einstein to modern physics, which would mean an unexpected transfiguration rather than a complete contradiction *à la* Bohr of classical physics. However, to the calm-eyed student, Capra can serve as an excellent signpost set up for physical science in the direction of some distant approximations to a certain aspect of "Tao".

If we put aside the book's attempts at philosophical argument and at drawing exact parallels with Eastern mysticism but let its superb survey of modern physics make its full impression on us, we shall be brought vividly into the vicinity of the vision unfolded as early as the 1940s by Sri Aurobindo¹ in his epic *Savitri* in connection with "Reason" suddenly impelled to a transcendence of "her" old scientific formulas—a vision spiritually atmosphered yet free from implications that there is nothing really "out there" and that we are directed by modern physics towards subjectivism in any meaningful way:

All was precise, rigid, indubitable.
 But when on Matter's rock of ages based
 A whole stood up firm and clear-cut and safe,
 All staggered back into a sea of doubt;
 This solid scheme melted in endless flux:
 She had met the formless Power inventor of forms;
 Suddenly she stumbled upon things unseen:
 A lightning from the undiscovered Truth
 Startled her eyes with its perplexing glare
 And dug a gulf between the Real and Known
 Till all her knowledge seemed an ignorance.
 Once more the world was made a wonder-web,
 A magic's process in a magical space,
 An unintelligible miracle's depths
 Whose source is lost in the Ineffable.
 Once more we face the blank Unknowable.

¹ *Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol*, with Letters on the Poem (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1972), pp. 254-55.

In a crash of values, in a huge doom-crack,
 In the sputter and scatter of her breaking work
 She lost her clear conserved constructed world.
 A quantum dance remained, a sprawl of chance
 In Energy's stupendous tripping whirl...
 Clutching for props, a soil on which to stand,
 She only saw a thin atomic Vast,
 The rare-point sparse substratum universe
 On which floats a solid world's phenomenal face.
 Alone a process of events was there
 And Nature's plastic and protean change
 And, strong by death to slay or to create,
 The riven invisible atom's omnipotent force...

(Concluded)

22. 5. 1982

K. D. SETHNA

SUPPLEMENT

It may be enlightening to cull from *Savitri* all the references to modern physics, especially when they link up with evocations of the outlook the ancient Rishi-physicists of India had on the world of matter.

At first was only an etheric Space:
 Its huge vibrations circled round and round
 Housing some unconceived initiative:
 Upheld by a supreme original Breath
 Expansion and contraction's mystic act
 Created touch and friction in the void,
 Into abstract emptiness brought clash and clasp:
 Parent of an expanding universe
 In a matrix of disintegrating force,
 By spending it conserved an endless sum.
 On the hearth of Space it kindled a viewless Fire
 That, scattering worlds as one might scatter seeds,
 Whirled out the luminous order of the stars.
 An ocean of electric Energy
 Formlessly formed its strange wave-particles
 Constructing by their dance this solid scheme,
 Its mightiness in the atom shut to rest;
 Masses were forged or feigned and visible shapes;
 Light flung the photon's swift revealing spark

And, showed in the minuteness of its flash
 Imaged, this cosmos of apparent things.
 Thus has been made this real impossible world,
 An obvious miracle or convincing show.
 Or so it seems to man's audacious mind
 Who seats his thought as the arbiter of truth,
 His personal vision as impersonal fact,
 As witnesses of an objective world
 His erring sense and his instruments' artifice...¹

A master Magician of measure and device
 Has made an eternity from recurring forms
 And to the wandering spectator thought
 Assigned a seat on the inconscient stage.
 On the earth by the will of this Arch-Intelligence
 A bodiless energy put on Matter's robe;
 Proton and photon served the imager Eye
 To change things subtle into a physical world
 And the invisible appeared as shape
 And the impalpable was felt as mass:
 Magic of percept joined with concept's art
 And lent to each object an interpreting name:
 Idea was disguised in a body's artistry,
 And by a strange atomic law's mystique
 A frame was made in which the sense would put
 Its symbol picture of the universe...²

Earth all perceives through doubtful images,
 All she conceives in hazardous jets of sight,
 Small lights kindled by touches of groping thought.
 Incapable of the soul's direct inlook
 She sees by spasms and solders knowledge-scrap,
 Makes Truth the slave-girl of her indigence,
 Expelling Nature's mystic unity
 Cuts into quantum and mass the moving All;
 She takes for measuring rod her ignorance...³

He bore the ripples of the etheric sea;
 A primal Air brought the first joy of touch;

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

² *Ibid.*, p. 241.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 244.

A secret Spirit drew its mighty breath,
 Contracting and expanding this huge world;
 The secret might of the creative fire
 Displayed its triple power to build and form,
 Its infinitesimal wave-sparks' weaving dance,
 Its nebulous units grounding shape and mass,
 Magic foundation and pattern of a world,
 Its radiance bursting into the light of stars...¹

Inevitable their thoughts like links of Fate
 Imposed on the leap and lightning race of mind
 And on the frail fortuitous flux of life
 And on the liberty of atomic things
 Immutable cause and adamant consequence...²

All is a speculation and a dream:
 In the end the world itself becomes a doubt:
 The infinitesimal's jest mocks mass and shape...³

The will of the Timeless working out in Time
 In the free absolute steps of cosmic Truth
 Appears a hard machine or meaningless Fate.
 A Magician's formulas have made Matter's laws
 And while they last all things by them are bound:
 But the Spirit's consent is needed for each act
 And freedom walks in the same pace with Law.
 All here can change if the Magician choose.
 If human will could be made one with God's,
 If human thoughts could echo the thoughts of God,
 Man might be all-knowing and omnipotent;
 But now he walks in Nature's doubtful ray.
 Yet can the mind of man receive God's light,
 The force of man can be driven by God's force,
 Then is he a miracle doing miracles.
 For only so can he be Nature's King.⁴

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 415.

² *Ibid.*, p. 267.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 519.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp 457-58.

MOTHER THE EVER-PRESENT BEAUTY AND BLISS

THE word spirituality means various things to various people. How to express that spirituality in our mundane life is another point on which no two minds seem to agree. If they do then we can say they are kindred souls.

In India we have lots of spiritual men and gurus, some of them may be very good. But Sanat and I ran a thousand miles away when we heard that there was a guru visiting our neighbourhood or that someone was lecturing on spirituality. Sanat's inner being perhaps had been preoccupied with the presence of Sri Aurobindo, I had my sweet visions and a worthy friend for a life partner. There was no place for any other kind of spirituality. In fact what we saw in the name of spirituality repulsed us. The Divine is Sat, Chit and Ananda and perforce Ananda includes the All-beautiful. So why all this bareness and ugliness?

When we saw the Mother for the first time we were simply delighted. Here was a person dedicated to yoga and spirituality yet She did not think it necessary to give up wearing beautiful and artistic clothes. Refined beauty-aids for face and hands were also taken up in Her grand sweep to raise humanity to a higher level. Nothing was left out. Her manners were polished and graceful like a high-born lady's, a highly sophisticated woman's. If this was spirituality or an effect of spirituality then it must be worth pursuing. The Mother was seventy-two when we first saw Her; no doubt Her body looked old but at close quarters She was a different person. Before Her glorious countenance and overflowing youthfulness and vivaciousness, I at twenty-five felt old and staid. And if I could play Tennis at twenty-five the Mother could do so even at eighty. After seeing Her, there was no question of disobeying Her or not heeding Her wishes.

Yet She made us so bold. I remember an incident that is still warm and alive in my mind. One evening She looked particularly beautiful with a glint of the Arabian Nights in Her ensemble. I touched Her and said impulsively, "Oh Douce Mère, how beautiful you look!" The very next moment I was struck at my temerity and was half expecting a slap. But lo! She gave out a peal of laughter that sounded like some distant and heavenly bell. She was sweet as a girl of sixteen receiving her first compliment. I was amazed. This was the Mother, this was Her way. Back home I read from the *Prières et Méditations*:

O, la divine splendeur de Ton Unité,
O, l'infinie douceur de Ta Béatitude,
O, la souveraine majesté de Ta Connaissance,
Tu es l'Inconcevable, le Merveilleux.

Another day I ran to the Mother, revolting and hot, perhaps my face too was red, after having suffered something I considered quite insufferable. "Douce Mère,"

I said, "I can't do this yoga." Her Imperial Majesty surveyed me from head to foot, then burst like a hydrogen bomb. She shouted at the top of Her voice, "What, can't do yoga? You will have to do yoga." There were a lot of people around in the next room and the passage and they were alerted. Yet I saw one or two of them were smiling. Obviously they knew the Mother better than I. Then there was nothing but cool and fragrant South-Sea breeze. She chose flowers all the time holding my hand. She even called for more flowers from inside, pressed my hand, patted my shoulders, gave me a kiss on my forehead and sent me packing off to my house. I walked the street like an somnambulist. At night I could not sleep. The room was full of the Mother's scent. The Divine Beloved invaded my whole heart. "Oh Mother, Mother," I cried till the East was all scarlet and gold.

In after-years when She was gone and difficulties were rampant, I used to think of Her beautiful face and asked again and again, "How shall I do this yoga, Douce Mère?" Once She actually turned my mind towards my grandparents. They were remarkable people. Grandfather, a Zamindar, when his brothers and cousins were having a hell of a good time, spent his days among books in his own library. He did his M.A. and Law, started practising at the Calcutta High Court. Perhaps he was the first person in the Mukerji family to do such a thing. The very first M.A. in the family. When he died still comparatively young, grandma did not retire to the back of the house weeping. Like Rani Rashmani she made the Government issue a decree authorising her to manage the Zamindari and sign all papers on behalf of her son (my father) who was still a minor. After eight years grandma handed over to my father a peaceful Zamindari, an efficient management, and a well-filled coffer. If grandma could do so much three-quarters of a century ago, I a modern girl ought to be able to do more. I ought to be able to face all the rigours of yoga with a smiling face. For I am not alone, the Mother is always with me. She once said to a worried girl whose father was about to go to Delhi for an operation, "I will be in the surgeon's knife." Whether as Maheshwari, Mahakali, Mahalakshmi or Mahasarasvati, She never leaves us.

CHAUNDONA BANERJI

APHORISMS

1. WHEN you lay bare your difficulties before the Mother, there is at once a liberation and a step forward nearer to her. 31.12.1932
2. Each depression overcome kindles a new aspiration in the heart, consolidates the mind's resolution, opens up a new, more intimate and elevated relation with the Mother. 11.3.1933
3. Quietude is the path which brings one to the entrance-gate of spiritual realisation. 3.9.1933
4. Silence opens the passage to direct communion with the Divine. 3.9.1933
5. By rejection grows the strength of rejection. 7.12.1933
6. To feel and become conscious of the Mother's guidance is the core of the sadhana.
7. A mental resolution does not carry one very far; each resolution must sprout spontaneously from the inner soil of the soul and blossom into a flower of realisation in the garden of the life divine.
8. Any mental plan as to how to do the sadhana does not help much; to go deeper within is the right way to know how to proceed.
9. Difficulty is nothing depressing. It is to be taken as a sign that the Light from above has touched the part of the being to be changed. It brings unhappiness and suffering only when the unwillingness to change comes in.
10. Why comes the question of sacrifice? There is no such thing as sacrifice in spiritual life. Whatever one gives is never lost or gone for good; every bit is purified and shaped into its highest fulfilment.
11. Once you take up the spiritual life, there is no place for the past in it. And a single seat, the golden throne of the Divine alone, shines through the heart of your future.
12. The more you love the Divine Mother, the more your love for others takes the right shape. The more you go near to Her the more you establish the right relation with others. And when She becomes the sole necessity, the sole reality in your life you travel on the sunlit path and the whole universe is radiant with the light of Her Grace.

13. O to feel devotion to the Mother! A stream of sweet unselfishness fills the heart with a love so pure! In deep gratitude the entire being prostrates itself at Her loving feet. And She with Her compassionate and gracious smile bends down and kisses the soul as the Infinite kisses the rising star. 24.9.1940
14. When you give a thing to the Mother its value is only so much as you give yourself with it. 29.10.1942

SAHANA

AN INDIAN GODDESS

SHE is a cow,
an Indian cow
that's tethered to the post next door
and as she stands and snuffles in the sun
and bends to munch her hay
the strands of it
stick out
and say:
we are the food for gods.
The gods of India are a lot, a teeming lot and colourful
they'll strike you dead as soon as not
for your own good
and string your head around their necks and drink your blood,
(or so they say)
or give you palaces and dancing girls and toenail polish
just as easily
for your own good.
There's nothing gods of India will not do for your own good
though you never know what.
But Lakshmi the Indian cow,
who is stable as a good kitchen table
will give you light for your own good
will give you a gentle look
which says:
All is well, there is peace.
Be tranquil and still, my daughter,
for I stand here near your house
munching my hay
for your own good.

-

This is her blessing today
that she stands by your house and is still.

MAGGI LIDCHI

“WHERE AM I GOING?”

WHEN walls rush inwards
And vision gets blurred
And doubt dilutes certitude
The question assails
“Where am I going?”

Then let me image and reach
Intense depths and unknown heights
Never attained yet in all my search
For bluer than blue skies.

Let me then see and hold Your feet
And bathe them in tears
Of utter helplessness.

But first, O Mother Divine,
Remove all grit and sand
Of my karmic burden from within
My head lest its sheer weight
Hurt Your long beautiful toes.

Those toes, symbols of ten planes,
At whose touch my mind and heart and soul
Would vibrate and widen and soar
Into the sky of Your infinite being
While my body will become a part
Of Your footprint on matter's breast.

Then I would be within that Light and Delight
That severs all shackles and bridges all chasms—
Each cell of my being will then throb with deep insight
Alive and aware that every moment is Your conscious presence.

May 83

DINKAR PALANDE

IGNORANCE : ITS ORIGIN, ITS LOGICAL-PHILOSOPHICAL NECESSITY AND ITS PURPOSE

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

THE problem of Ignorance and of the Cosmos and their relation to the Absolute is as old as philosophy. A thousand answers have been given to it and yet it persists because here is one of the fundamental problems of all philosophies and all religions, Western and Eastern.

Every philosophy admits that the world came out of the One eternal or that God created it. The Many or the world are a manifestation or creation of the One or God. But the process baffles the human intellect so that it has earned the sobriquet, "Ass's Bridge", for many systems have foundered in the attempt to solve the problem.

There are more than three fundamental issues of philosophy on which Sri Aurobindo has thrown not merely light but a flood of illumination. The problem of Ignorance is one such fundamental issue. The origin of Ignorance, its necessity for manifestation and even the purpose of Ignorance are laid bare by him. Before we enter into the Master's revelation, a swift survey of how the religions and philosophies of the world have seen it would be rewarding.

Christianity and Islam both say that Adam and Eve or Adam and Havva (as they say in Islam) lived idyllically and ideally, until Satan tempted Eve to eat the forbidden Fruit and Adam at the instigation of Eve ate also. Then the fall took place. But who is the progenitor of Satan and how did he come to tempt them is a question that cannot be asked: Satan has just to be accepted. It is from Judaism that Adam and Eve and Sin came into Christianity and Islam, for according to Judaism sin is inherent in man after what happened in the Garden of Eden.

The great Buddha revolted against faith based on beliefs and denied the authority of the Vedas. He had no revelation to start with, other than the experience by which every man is confronted. He asked everyone to investigate for himself. From this injunction the Buddhist doctrines are derived. Rhys Davids says, "Such originality as Gautama possessed lay in the way in which he adopted, enlarged, ennobled and systematised that which had already been well-said by others; in the way in which he carried out their logical conclusion: principles of equity and justice already acknowledged by some of the most prominent Hindu thinkers. The difference lay in his deep earnestness and in his broad public spirit of philanthropy."¹ The first sermon the Buddha gave to his ascetic friends is known by the name, "Dharma Chakra Pravertana." The doctrine is based on two axioms:

¹ Vide *Glances of World Religions*—Jaico Publishing House, Third Impression, 1966, p. 61.

first, all life is sorrow and, second, always keep the path of the mean, the middle. How sorrow came into life is a question that is not answered. In fact the Buddha did not discuss any metaphysical question.

Mahavira is said to have been a conqueror of all past Karmas. So he received the title, Jina (conqueror), from which Jainism takes its name. His first disciple was Gautama Indrabhuti. Mahavira's main teaching is that Karma is all in all and Karma must be destroyed. How first Karma came to be is a question for which there is no answer.

Confucius—whose Chinese name is K'ung-fu-tze, that is, K'ung who is Statesman and Philosopher—did not give any new religion or any new ethical code. His is a forceful re-statement of the fundamental principles of human morality and ethics. He believed in a Supreme Being or Deity. Voltaire speaks highly of him. Confucianism is not a religion in the customary sense. It is one of the three religions practised in China along with Taoism and Buddhism. The early European scholars found its founder's name hard to pronounce and turned it into the Latin Confucius. It was the dream of Confucius that all society should be composed of Supermen. He asserts that every man is divinely good and intuitively wise. In one of his Odes he sings, "All men are good at birth but not many remain so to the end."¹ It is assumed that somehow this happens. Taoism is another religion practised in China. In the classical writings of the Chinese the first cause came to be known as "Heaven", the "Almighty Ruler" and the "Way". The first cause was known and worshipped in primitive times under the name Tao. The original exponent of Taoism is Lao-Tze, a pre-Confucian philosopher. We are told in Tao-Teh-King that Tao as Teh ruled and the world was in a heavenly state. But Tao-Teh-King does not tell us how long this state lasted. Lao-Tze says that it lasted till Tao ceased to be observed. If Tao is the Great First Cause, Teh is the Universal Mother and King is the book which contains the great force of the First Cause and the living force which is Teh. But how Tao ceased to be observed is unanswered.

Sufism is Islamic in origin. It is believed that prophet Mohammed received a two-fold revelation: Ilm-I-Safina and Ilm-I-Sina. Ilm is knowledge and Safina is a book or book of verses. Safina gives book-knowledge. Sina means heart and this revelation is the knowledge of the heart. Prof. Zaehner wrote a book called *Sufism is Vedanta in Muslim Dress*. It must be said to the credit of Sufism that it recognises and takes into consideration evolution, though not as modern scientists conceive it or as Sri Aurobindo spiritually sees it. The teacher known in India as Mehar Baba was a Sufi, and Nirodbaran has recorded something interesting about him in his talks with Sri Aurobindo². Jalaluddin Rumi, called Maulana Rumi, is the greatest Sufi poet. He says that he died as an animal and became a man. Finally he sings that he will become what no mind has ever conceived. But the Sufi view is almost Vedantic

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

² Vol. II, pp 13-18.

regarding Ignorance. The word Sufi, although it has many meanings, is generally taken to mean "wise."

Shintoism is one of the three religions practised in Japan. Japan had no writing until the introduction of Chinese learning and today Japanese is Chinese with a syllabary called *kāna*. All the same it must be admitted that the old Shinto owes little to outside influence. Confucian influence is conspicuous in the sphere of legal, civil and educational institutions, Buddhism supplied the yearning for the beyond and latterly gave vitality to the religious life. Thus Shintoism is the root, Confucianism the trunk and Buddhism the flower and fruit of the Japanese life-tree. Shinto is also called *Kami-no-michi* which means the "Way of God" or the "God-like Way". The Sun Goddess from whom the Japanese race claims to have descended has a brother called Swift Impetuous. He or a tribe descended from him was the source of evil, and ignorance is at the root of it.

Now let us look at Sikhism. The word Sikh comes from *Śiṣya*, a disciple. Sikhism was born out of historical necessity from Hinduism. Sikhism says that man takes his birth in this world with his past Karma and he inherits his past character and the matrix of his family and race. It teaches that the source of evil is none other than the ego placed by God in the human heart. So the source of ignorance is ego, which is inherent.

We now come to the most ancient of all religions so far referred to—I mean Zoroastrianism or Zarathustrianism. Zoroastrians are called *Atesh Parast*, fire-worshippers by Muslims. Like most religions, this one takes its name from its founder Zarathustra whose Greek version is Zoroaster. The Zoroastrians came to India and settled down on account of the Muslim invasion of their native Persia—or Iran, the name given by the Aryans to their country. They are called in India *Parsis*, even as they call themselves. Zoroastrianism is thought to admit *Ahriman*, the evil god, and *Ahura Mazda*, the virtuous or good god, as both coeval twin sons of Fate. But the general *Parsi* belief is in the basic as well as ultimate supremacy of *Ahura Mazda*. Man is free in his choice, as he can select good or bad, and so he alone is responsible for his actions. Zoroaster is the messenger of God, the Ever-Existent and the Never-Changing. He preached the religion as propounded in the *Zend-Avesta*.

We have seen in a swift survey how organised religions view the origin of ignorance as sin or evil or ego, and all admit that it is at the root and take it for granted as a fact of life, needing no explanation. It is a remarkable fact that all religions, whether practised in the East or the West, originated in the East.

We now turn to Western philosophy as distinct from religion. It is not possible to go into the different philosophies, for the aim of this article is a critical study of how ignorance in its origin and necessity is viewed by the *Nirveśeṣa Adwaita* and by the *Integral Adwaita*. So it is enough if we take an aerial view of the problem of Ignorance in Western philosophy in general.

A. N. Whitehead has said in his book, *Process and Reality*, "The safest general

characterisation of European philosophical tradition is that it consists in a series of footnotes to Plato.”¹ This may be an exaggerated statement, for the influence of the Christian Church and the impact of modern science on Western culture are ignored. Yet it is true that one of the main formative elements in Western philosophy is Platonism. So if we observe what Plato has to say on Ignorance, we shall have heard what a great representative of Western philosophy says, and in the result the view of Western philosophy itself. Plato regards evil as a permanent condition of human life inherent in man as error and ignorance. Professor C.E.M. Joad in his book, *God and Evil* (p. 236) summarises the position of evil in the Universe thus: “Evil was a real and irreducible factor in the universe.” Western philosophy in general makes a frank confession that evil is a permanent feature of the world.

(To be continued)

P. KRISHNAMURTI

¹ Quoted in *The Meeting of the East and the West in Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy* on p. 272 by Dr. S. K. Matra, published by Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1968.

THE THREE SADHUS

A SHORT STORY

If you go to the ashram one of the first questions you ask of the ashramites is, "What brought you here? How did you first decide you wanted to live in an ashram?" After hearing a great number of stories myself, I would say that not five per cent of them are those of people who will tell you, "I have been attracted to this spiritual life since an early age." Even if they do say this, they go on to say, "But afterwards I forgot all about it and became a very bad young man smoking and swearing." Or "I became the naughtiest girl in the class," or "Then I suddenly began to laugh at my relatives and wanted to wear jeans or shorts and didn't believe in anything," or, as the young doctor declared, "I dissected bodies but never did I find any trace of the soul, so how could I believe?"—always until... the road to Damascus.

It has been my pleasure as well as habit to sit near the samadhi of an ashram in which my cousin lives. I am a devotee of the guru of that ashram who happens to have left his body but his presence is there like a sweet balm to the spirit and from time to time I go to sit beside the samadhi and have satsang with my cousin and other devotees, satsang being the sweetest of indulgences during which laughter is allowed, for you repeat the stories the guru used to tell and recount the things that happened to him and the things that were made to happen to disciples. In fact anything that touches on spiritual matters, whether ridiculous or sublime, comes under the heading of satsang and I never tired of hearing the stories of people who had settled in the ashram.

One day I was sitting down with my cousin far enough from the flower-laden samadhi to be able to converse in low tones without disturbing the meditation of the devotees. We had fallen into a most pleasant silence ourselves and were half watching the scene and half meditating, when a very soldier-like figure walked past us, a handsome man of about sixty with white hair and white handlebar moustache. But the most noticeable thing about him was his straight back. I wondered whether he could possibly have been anything else but a soldier and asked my cousin.

"Used to be an Inspector of police," he whispered. "It is a most interesting story," and knowing my fondness for stories he led me off to his room. Before we turned the corner I looked back to see the ex-Inspector of police kneeling down at the samadhi but his back still as straight as though he wore a steel corset.

My cousin (his ashram name is Shanti) always prepared tea for me on a primus stove in his room. Once he had finished pumping and the flames were going on, he began the story.

Inspector Vijayan had indeed been to a Madras Military School whose imprint he still bore on his spine and then he had been selected to the police training centre in Vellore. This police training centre, as so many other such institutions, had been founded by the British and was still being run here on British lines. Vijayan was one

of those fanatical anglophiles, who spoke with a ridiculously affected British accent and kept on saying that this could not have happened and that could not have happened under the Raj. For him India's greatest tragedy was independence and the second greatest was the enormous number of fakirs, sadhus, holy men and so-called saints who lived like parasites on the blood of India. He had of course never visited any ashram with a sense of devotion but had once gone to one while investigating a robbery and he was delighted to relate that the thief had been caught although he had posed as an ashramite.

It was an ashram somewhere on the Coromandel coast. And Vijayan had found that the place confirmed his worst opinion of such institutions. Disciples spent their time grovelling and cringing before a fat, well-oiled Swami, who allowed himself to be fanned continuously by his disciples with a peacock-feather, and fed by the hands of women who seemed to spend most of their waking hours cooking for him. They all of course believed in his divine power and made the most extraordinary statements about them and not one word of sense did Vijayan hear for all the time that he was there. People lived in a dream and illusion, a medieval world entirely obstructive of progress. And nobody did any constructive work which might be called a contribution to the country. Apparently he dined out on the story for months and years.

While he was considered by many a bore he had the gift of mimicry, which made his cruel imitations of Indians bowing and rolling their eyes and speaking in ungrammatical hyperbole of their guru amusing enough. He was pitiless with people who spoke bad English. A perfectionist, he could not stand slovenly habits. He would walk into a bank in a small town and, seeing a servant on a side verandah washing cracked tea cups in buckets of muddy-looking water, he would say, "You see! That's why India will make no progress." India is full of such side verandahs and such buckets. And one day he actually went and kicked over a metal bucket full of crockery and dirty water, breaking several cups. And of course being an Inspector of police he got away with it; he was always doing things like that. When he heard of a case of a food manufacturer adulterating his product he would be on the scene himself in no time. And no colonel could have been more enraged than he. Once it was reported to him that an ice-cream factory had been buying tons of blotting paper. He checked with the manufacturers of blotting paper who were reluctant to admit that the ice-cream factory was their largest customer. Then he paid the ice-cream factory a surprise visit. Apparently blotting paper gives ice-cream a fluffy texture much appreciated by the public. In fact fluffy was one of the key words in their advertisements. "Enjoy!!! Beautiful light fluffy Golden-girl ice-cream. It melts on your tongue. Enjoy! Enjoy! Enjoy!" I myself was reduced to buying one from a vendor on a station platform one day when my train was late. And I remember thinking that somehow it did taste light and fluffy. And I did quite enjoy it. Anyhow, that was the last time the blotting paper factory sold its products for ice-cream.

Vijayan was a bloodhound for this sort of thing. He nabbed the man who exported papaya seeds for pepper corns. The top layer would be pepper corns and

all the rest papaya seeds. Of course he did good work, because numberless people had been made ill and poisoned by a crude sort of adulterating. Anyhow in his region people thought twice about meddling with their food products. It was too risky. He had several enterprises closed down and licenses taken away. He had spies everywhere. Sometimes he was warned months in advance that so-and-so intended using such-and-such a prohibited colouring for a food product which was not yet on the market. After months of waiting he would pounce the moment things were ripe. Sometimes he seemed to know before the criminals themselves in what way they intended to break the law.

He absolutely detested drug pedlers and of course everybody agreed with him there. But his obsession with people who travelled on trains without paying drew smiles. It was said that he never made a train journey without acting as assistant to the Inspector to check ticketless travel. He developed an eye, indeed a sixth sense for those who travelled without having paid their fare. Whether they were well-dressed or even affluent-looking or poor peasants he always knew. And though he came down most heavily on the rich he would never let a poor man get away with it either. He would give long speeches to a dazed-looking villager explaining the ill turn he was doing his country by cheating the railways, for if everybody acted like this railways would run at a terrible loss, wouldn't they?—and then would not be able to run at all and so nobody would be able to take a train and see his relatives far away or go to the wedding of niece or grand-daughter. He would prove to the miscreant how by avoiding payment he was unravelling the woof and weft of society. "Imagine the country without the railways that the British built," he would say. The railways had saved the lives of many people who had been taken to hospitals in the big towns for operations. They had saved the lives of small children. He was quite capable of making a man feel like a potential murderer and one who was digging away at the foundations of human life itself. He was by no means cruel and when a poor man dissolved into tears and said that he was on the way to the death-bed of a father or brother or wife, he would pay for the ticket himself, or sometimes take up a collection from the compartment. But nobody was allowed to travel free.

And of course the worst people of all were those no-good filthy mendicants in the dress of sadhus who pretended to be holy men and didn't have tickets. But, as he would always say with a crooked smile, they always had enough to buy a little bhang which you found rolled up in the waists of their lungies. These cheats he particularly delighted in chasing out of trains and for them he had never been known to make a collection or pay out of his own pocket. One day he saw three of these fellows sitting in a first-class compartment, and without asking for their tickets he tore into them. He ranted and raved. At that time he had a stomach ulcer. He had given a number of other people stomach ulcers but it had taken its toll on him too. Well! By his own admission he nearly went mad at the sight of these three rascals riding along in a first-class carriage. And he gave what was probably the longest and most savage speech of his career, telling them that such seats were reserved for people who

did useful jobs of work and contributed something to society and their fellow-men and not for the scum of the earth like themselves. Then he told them exactly what sort of scum they were and why they were scum and parasites. They listened to him calmly, half smiling, it seemed, and with half closed eyes. He knew the look. They all smoked bhang and just as he was beginning to get to the end of his speech the train pulled into the next station. He opened the door of the compartment and just as he was about to grab the man nearest to it, the sadhu said in impeccable English:

"We are dreadfully, dreadfully sorry, Sir. We never realised these seats were meant for others and if they are required we would not want to occupy them." Well! As you could imagine, Vijayan stared at this dusky, bearded, orange-robed man and for the first time in his life probably he began to stutter. Spluttering he had done plenty of but now he stuttered. And then he lashed out. "You should be thoroughly ashamed of yourself. A man with your education behaving like a rotter. What an absolutely shabby thing to do for a man who speaks the King's English as you do. You're a disgrace to..." He wanted to say, "Somebody who is as well educated as you should not be travelling without a ticket." But the sadhu who had been fumbling at the waist of his lungi now produced a ticket. And the other two followed suit.

"We are honest men, Sir," said the sadhu with a friendly yet shy smile. "But why should we occupy the seats so badly needed by the others?" and rolling his eyes back he quietly sailed up in the air until his head was about a foot from the ceiling. The second sadhu followed suit and the third one, apparently a beginner, had to make two or three attempts before joining them. So there they were, three orange-robed bearded sadhus sitting on top of nothing in the middle of a first class compartment. It was more scandalous than anything that Vijayan had to tackle in his whole career. It shocked him. It unnerved him. He said in an unhappy voice:

"Please, gentlemen, please take your seats." The first sadhu gave a blissful smile and made a sign to Vijayan not to disturb himself as they were quite happy up there. But Vijayan was very unhappy down there, rooted to the floor of the compartment and staring up at them. He must have conveyed his unhappiness and since the three young sadhus were in every way friendly they floated down again and if it had stopped at that he might have come to believe that it had all been an illusion but Vijayan was a man of persistence who pursued any inquiry to its end. He called the first young sadhu into his own compartment, apologised handsomely and asked him what it was all about.

"Nothing," said the sadhu. "It is absolutely nothing. Nor is it an illusion. But it has no importance. Otherwise we should hardly be occupying the seats which, as you so rightly say, many others might profit by."

"Well then?" asked Vijayan still badly shaken and insecure and perhaps in his turn trying to shake the sadhu. "What is important?"

He says that even now he does not know whether he meant it as a rhetorical question or whether it came from the depths of his being—but that in any case an excep-

tional grace was granted to him, for the sadhu leaned forward. He did not smell of bhang and sweat as some of these fellows do. A wonderful fragrance as of sandal-oil and another unrecognised fragrance filled the air and the sadhu whispered something into his ear.

Vijayan apparently broke down and started weeping. He says that he has never been able to find the words that were said to him though they sometimes came back to him in dreams. But the sadhu quite simply had answered his questions and told him what the important thing was. Apparently it was not catching criminals, nor even protecting honest citizens from being poisoned or from being habituated to drugs, for he handed in his resignation the next day.

The sadhu had sailed out of the door at the station calling cheerfully, "We have to change trains now." Vijayan had seen them all three sailing away into the distance. The train moved out before he realised that more than anything else in the world he wanted to spend more time, much more time with the sadhu.

For one year he rolled up and down the country on trains searching for these three men and asking all and sundry whether they had seen three sadhus travelling together in first class. And then he came to this ashram and on the first night he dreamt of the sadhu who again leaned forward and told him what the important thing was. When he woke up his room was filled with the smell of sandalwood and that undefinable fragrance. My cousin handed me a cup of tea.

MAGGI LIDCHI

WE SHALL COOK OUR OWN FOOD

A FOLKTALE FROM PONDICHERRY

A DRUMMER, an astrologer and a country physician lived in a village. They were very close friends from their boyhood days. Whatever might be their place of work they met together a little after sunset. Though their huts were in different parts of the village not a day passed without their chatting together.

Their meagre income did not allow them to think of marriage and so they were forced to lead a bachelor's life. However, they didn't cook their own food. They bought it from an old woman who sold iddli, aapum and cooked rice near the Kali temple at the entrance of the village. When they had no money to buy food they drank a few mugs of water and went to bed without any complaint.

As they were unable to earn regularly, they decided to leave for a better and bigger village.

On their way they discussed the ways and means of living together. The astrologer suggested: "We shall stay in a *chattram*. We shall go to different places of the village and seek work. In the evening we shall meet, put our earnings together and buy vegetables and rice, firewood and cow-dung cake and cook our own food. And whatever is left over in cash will be saved for the next day."

The drummer and the physician happily agreed to this suggestion. A few seconds later a doubt arose in the mind of the drummer. He didn't hesitate to ask, "If I can't get any work and if I can't bring any money, have I to go hungry?"

"No! No!" replied the physician. "People don't fall ill every day. And sometimes I won't be able to earn even a *kasu* for a week. Nor will our astrologer friend here be able to get work regularly... So it goes without saying that even if one among us earns some money it will be shared equally."

"Yes! That is what I meant," said the astrologer.

Everyone liked the idea.

They took rest in the village *chattram* and on the morning of the next day, they went in different directions in search of work.

When they met in the evening they were all very happy. Everyone had been given some work and, when they put their earnings together, it counted to fifteen annas.

"Aha! We will cook fine food today," shouted the drummer.

"Yes! Let us buy vegetables and rice and cook our food," said the physician and the astrologer in unison.

The drummer went to the market to buy rice and firewood. The astrologer went in search of a gardener to buy plantain leaves to eat on. The physician went to purchase good and nutritious vegetables.

The first one to come back was the drummer. He lighted the oven. Placing the pot half filled with water on the oven he poured the measure of rice into it. He went

on kindling the fire. Soon the water boiled and the rice was cooked.

It was time to remove the pot from the oven. But the drummer didn't do it. Fascinated by the sound of music the boiling rice in the pot produced, he felt as if he was witnessing a dance recital, of course without a drummer. He ran and fetched his drum and started playing it to the accompaniment of the boiling rice.

He was so immersed in his own music that he closed his eyes and comfortably forgot about the rice.

When the astrologer came in, he saw to his great disappointment the entire pot of cooked rice over-boiled and foamed out, thereby extinguishing the oven. Dumb-struck he stood still.

Soon the physician too came in. It didn't take much time for him to understand the situation. He slapped the drummer on his pate. The music came to a sudden halt. The drummer blinked at the sight of wasted rice. He then confessed his mistake, and felt sorry for his deed.

"I too am sorry," apologised the astrologer, "I was unable to get even a single plantain leaf."

"Why? Is there such a demand for them?" enquired the drummer.

"No.. available in plenty... but, you see, whichever I took to buy, I heard it prophesy 'This leaf will hold no food.' Since I felt the words were inauspicious I came back empty-handed."

The physician too had his own share in the confession. He said, "I didn't find nutritious vegetables at all. These brinjals, tomatoes, drum-sticks, mangoes, lady's fingers and bitter gourds—oh! who wants to eat them? Many of them are worm-eaten and some of them are rotten. They are in one way or another very bad for health ...So I came back empty-handed. Every vegetable that I could lay my hands on had its own demerits. Better go empty-stomached than eat rotten stuff... Drinking a few mugs of water and going to bed is not new to us."

The three stared at one another, gritted their teeth... Then they laughed to their hearts' content and started walking abreast towards the market to buy food from the food-vendors.

"We can't cook our own food and eat it too," they said in a chorus.

Collected and Retold by P. RAJA

CROSSWORD

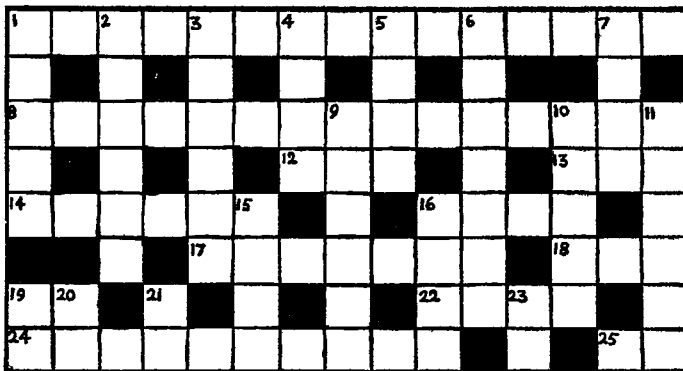
Clues Across

- 1 A hidden Power is the true Lord and over-ruling Observer of our acts and only he knows through all the ignorance and perversion and deformation brought in by the ego their entire sense and (8, 7)
8. Even in those things in which Nature is herself very plainly the worker and we only the witnesses of her working and its containers and supporters, there should be the same constant memory and insistent consciousness of a work and of (3, 6, 6)
- 12 Not one with all, we are spiritually . . . divine. (3)
- 13 Only the . . . who can give everything, enjoys the Divine All everywhere. (3)
14. Even for those whose first natural movement is a consecration, a surrender and a resultant entire transformation of the thinking mind and its knowledge, or a total consecration, surrender and transformation of the heart and its emotions, the consecration of works is a . . . element in that change. (6)
- 16 But still to the seeker standing at the opposite pole of the Duality another line of experience appears which justifies an intuition deeply-seated behind the heart and in our very life-force, that personality, like consciousness, life, soul, is not a brief-lived stranger in an impersonal Eternity, but contains the very meaning of existence. This fine flower of the cosmic Energy carries in it a forecast of the aim and a . . . of the very motive of the universal labour (4)
- 17 The life of the human creature, as it is ordinarily lived, is composed of a half-fixed, half-fluid mass of very imperfectly ruled thoughts, perceptions, sensations, emotions, . . . , enjoyments, acts mostly customary and self-repeating, in part only dynamic and self-developing, but all centred around a superficial ego (7)
18. Adj. (3)
19. Int. (2)
22. There is another basic realisation, the most extreme of all, that yet comes sometimes as the first decisive opening or an early turn of the Yoga. It is the awakening to an ineffable high transcendent Unknowable above myself and above this world in which I seem to move, a timeless and spaceless condition or entity which is at once, in some way compelling and convincing to an essential consciousness in me, the one thing that is to it overwhelmingly (4)
24. In the field of action desire takes many forms, but the most powerful of all is the vital self's craving or seeking after the fruit of our works. The fruit we covet may be a reward of internal pleasure, it may be the accomplishment of some preferred idea or some cherished will or the satisfaction of the egoistic emotions, or else the pride of success of our highest hopes and ambitions Or it may be an external reward, a entirely material,—wealth, position, honour, victory, good fortune or any other fulfilment of vital or physical desire. But all alike are lures by which egoism holds us. (10)
25. Prep (2)

Clues Down

1. What then are the lines of Karmayoga laid down by the Gita ? Its key principle, its spiritual method, can be summed up as the . . . of two largest and highest states or powers of consciousness, equality and oneness. (5)
2. As long as we live in the ignorant seeming, we are the ego and are subject to the modes of Nature. Enslaved to appearances, bound to the dualities, . . . between good and evil, sin and virtue, grief and joy, pain and pleasure, good fortune and ill fortune, success and failure, we follow helplessly the iron or gilt and iron round of the wheel of Maya (6)
3. A Yoga of works, a union with the Divine in our will and acts—and not only in knowledge and feeling—is then an indispensable, an inexpressibly important element of an integral Yoga. The conversion of our thought and feeling without a corresponding conversion of the spirit and body of our works would be a . . . achievement (6)

4. The unsatisfying surface play of our feeble egoistic emotions must be ousted and there must be revealed instead a secret deep and vast psychic heart within that waits behind them for its hour; all our feelings impelled by this inner heart in which dwells the Divine will be transmuted into calm and intense movements of a . . . passion of divine Love and manifold Ananda. (4)
5. In the ordinary human existence an outgoing action is obviously three-fourths or even more of our life. It is only the exceptions, the saint and the seer, the rare thinker, . . . and artist who can live more within themselves, these indeed, at least in the most intimate parts of their nature, shape themselves more in inner thought and feeling than in the surface act. (4)
6. Attaining to a perfect equality in the soul, mind and heart, we our true self of oneness—one with all beings, one too with that which expresses itself in them and in all that we see and experience. (7)
7. The sign of the immersion of the embodied soul in Prakriti is the limitation of consciousness to the ego The vivid stamp of this limited consciousness can be . . . in a constant inequality of the mind and heart and a confused conflict and disharmony in their varied reactions to the touches of experience (4)
9. There is behind all this life the look of an eternal Being upon its multitudinous becomings; there is around and everywhere in it the envelopment and penetration of a manifestation in time by an unmanifested timeless Eternal. But this knowledge is valueless for Yoga if it is only an intellectual and metaphysical . . . void of life and barren of consequence; a mental realisation alone cannot be sufficient for the seeker. (6)
10. It is an integral knowledge that is being sought, an integral force, a amplitude of union with the All and Infinite behind existence (5)
11. Only then are we unified with those separated from us by the divisions of Nature, when we annul the division and find ourselves in that which seemed to us not ourselves. (6)
15. Our sacrifice is not a giving without any return or any fruitful acceptance from the other side, it is an interchange between the embodied soul and conscious Nature in us and the eternal Spirit. For even though no return is demanded, yet there is the knowledge . . . within us that a marvellous return is inevitable. (4)
16. For the Supreme who transcends the universe, is yet . . . too, however veiled, in us and in the world and in its happenings; he is there as the omniscient Witness and Receiver of all our works and their secret Master. (4)
19. Conj. (2)
20. Pron. (2)
21. Prep. (2)
23. Conj. (2)



SOLUTION. Refer *The Synthesis of Yoga*—Part I—Chapters 3 & 4

HYMN TO VINAYAKA

VINAYAKAR *Ahaval* is a well-known ancient Tamil classic, a spontaneous composition of the saint-poetess, Auvvaiyar in a moment of revelation addressed to the Lord of Truth, Vinayaka, who is the remover of obstacles. In profuse strains of an initiate's poetic vision the whole hymn develops part by part starting with the magnificent and delightful appearance of the Lord in the first fifteen lines, then giving an account of the special powers and gifts the deity offers, pointing out how He helps the seekers in their sadhana, the way of the Tantra, and takes the sincere sadhak to the very sanctuary of Shiva. The chosen metre and form are very well adapted to the vision and its poetic rendering, and millions of devotees have taken this composition as the mantra of a very high order and benefited by meditation on it. Some readers consider the work an excellent piece which contains the quintessence of Śaiva Siddhānta. The following translation is a maiden attempt, and therefore may have limitations but for one who is familiar with the style and rhythm of the poetry of Sri Aurobindo it may have a special charm, associations and surprises. If this free-rendering takes the reader to the original in Tamil and helps him in his meditation and concentrated living the purpose will be amply fulfilled.

The Hymn

Around the feet like the chill red lotus bloom,
The anklet bells ringing with a rhythmic cry,
The gold waistband over the immaculate white linen,
The huge belly and the sturdy tusk,
Elephant-faced with the red mark on the forehead,
The five hands and the *ankusa* and the noose,
The flaming-blue form stationed in the heart,
The dangling proboscis with twice-four broad shoulders
Three-eyed and with the three symbolic stripes.
The two ears and the radiant golden crown,
The three-stringed sacred thread shining over the chest,
The Wordless-beyond-state of trance and transcendent wisdom,
Thou! the awe-inspiring Elephant lavish like the Kalpaka Tree,
The rider on the mouse, the taster of the three fruits—
The plantain, the jack and the mango,
To make me a slave of thee here and now
Standing before me as the Mother Incarnate
Cutting the very chain that links up many lives,
Entering the innermost recesses of the heart
With the Supreme Word that combines the five original sounds,

Assuming the physical form of the World-Teacher,
 Pressing Thy feet on this earthy soil,
 Inculcating the foundation of the imperishable truth,
 Granting the tireless inviolable ecstasy,
 Tearing with the tusk the rooted sin,
 Instilling in the ears the insatiable supreme secret,
 Revealing the insatiable immortal clarities of wisdom,
 Teaching graciously the skill to tame the five senses,
 The endless levels of sweetness and delight,
 The still point where the senses stay and grow quiet,
 Severing the knot of the two-fold karmic law,
 Dispelling the darkness that surrounds with ignorance,
 Offering ananda of nearness, contact, mutual presence,
 Mutual reflection, likeness and even identity.
 Shearing the three impurities of the braggart ego,
 The accursed sins of the past and present,
 The enchanting illusion of the material reality,
 Giving a single mantra that stays the senses
 And shuts up the nine gateways in the body
 And ascends the six tantric centres and leads
 To a stable poise where all speech is mute,
 Indicating the sound-source of the two streams of breath
 And the middle stream that reaches the top in the end
 And touches the three columns of fire that find their source below,
 Awakening the Serpent Power with the Word that ushers in
 The hidden sound and makes explicit the clue
 To kindle the fire that lies coiled at the bottom
 And the bliss at hand as it reaches the top
 And the twice eight centres of the physical frame
 And the central circle that supports the orbits,
 The subtle six-lettered mantra and the subtler four-lettered sound
 Revealing the eight fortresses of light from below,
 Showing the supernal light to the awakened intelligence,
 Granting the potent powers and the state of bliss,
 The awareness of the Self within the self,
 Digging at the roots of the past karmic crust,
 Pointing to a state beyond thought and speech,
 Rapt in a clear, shadowless, luminous wisdom,
 The one and the same source of the Light and the Dark,
 Plunging me in sweet strains of gracious delight,
 Annulling all troubles and revealing the path of the Right, the True,
 Revealing the eternally silent Shiva beyond mortal thought and speech,

Revealing the form of the Linga, the congealed energy in the illumined
mind,
Remaining the atom within the atom and beyonding the Beyond,
Pouring endless levels of delight like the sweetly notched sugarcane,
Imprinting the immortal clarity of the form of Shiva
Through the proper signs and the sacred ash,
Linking me with the crowd of the devout, the simple and the sincere,
Exposing the bare feeling of my secret heart,
Sealing in my heart the secret five-lettered mantra—Na-Ma-Si-Va-Ya,
Granting me sunbelts of knowledge and grappling me with an all-
swallowing Immensity,
O! Lord of Wisdom, let my surrender ever be total at Thy hallowed
Feet.

C. SUBBIAN