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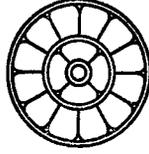
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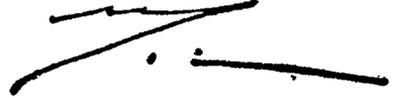


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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No. 1

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail."

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THE OLD YOGAS AND THE INTEGRAL YOGA

A LETTER OF SRI AUROBINDO TO DILIP KUMAR ROY*

I BELIEVE K's comment was on a passage in which I wrote that this Yoga was not like the old ones in that it aimed not at an ascent or passing beyond life but at a descent of the divine consciousness into life. Its aim is double—two movements fusing themselves into one—an ascending into divine consciousness and a transformation of earth-life by the divine consciousness coming down here. All the old Yogas put the emphasis on going to Nirvana or to heaven, Vaikuntha, Goloka, Brahmaloaka etc. for good and so getting rid of rebirth. My emphasis is on life here and its transformation and I put that as the aim at once of my Yoga and of the terrestrial manifestation. I am quite unaware that any of the old Yogas hold this as the aim before them. Even Vaishnavism and Tantra are in the end otherworldly; *mukti*¹ is the aim of their efforts and anything else could be only incidental and subordinate or a result on the way. If my view is correct, then my statement was not an error.

I have not denied that the ideal of a change on earth is of old standing. It is there vaguely in the human mind perhaps since the beginning, though more often perfection is put in some golden age of the past and deterioration and a cataclysm is the law of the future. Christianity foresees a descent of Christ and his rule on earth, but this is figured as an outward event, not as a change produced by an inward power and process or by Yoga. A reign of the saints is also foreshadowed in some Hindu scriptures, but that equally is something different from my conception. As for sainthood itself or the *siddhis*² of Yoga including a *siddha*³ body, that too is not what I mean by transformation—it is a radical change of consciousness and nature itself that I envisage. I do not know also that these things were sought by the process of descent—the Tamil Shaiva saints for instance sought for the *siddha* body by tremendous austerities; the *siddhis* they sought were all there in the *sūkṣma*⁴ mental and vital worlds and by a stupendous effort and mastery of the body they brought them down into the physical instrument. I have always said that these things and these methods are out of my scope and eschewed by me in my Yoga. I tried some of them once but after achieving some initial results I saw it was a bypath and I left it.

To get rid of or mastery over *kāma-krodha*⁵ is not the transformation, it is at best a preliminary step towards it provided it is done not in the moral way by mental self-control but in the spiritual way. Sainthood is not my object. I do not know how far Ramakrishna had gone towards the transformation as I conceive it; the metaphors you quote contain nothing precise with which I can compare my own experience or my own intuitions about the change. According to certain accounts there was a descent of Kali into his body which made it luminous, but he repressed it as something

* First published in *Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education*, November 1980, pp. 52, 54.

¹ Liberation.

² Occult powers.

³ Perfected.

⁴ Subtle.

⁵ Desire and anger.

contrary to what he was seeking after. If there is something anywhere in the past which coincides with the aim and conceived process of my Yoga I shall be glad to know of it; for that would certainly be an aid to me. I put no value on the newness of what I am doing or trying to do. If the path was already there open and complete, it is a great pity that I should have wasted all my life cleaving it out anew with much difficulty and peril when I could just have walked on a clear and safe avenue towards the goal of my endeavour. But the nearest I could get to it were some things in the Veda and Upanishads (secret words, veiled hints) which seemed to coincide with or point towards certain things in my own knowledge and experience. But after incorporating certain parts of the Vedic method as far as I could interpret or recover it, I found it was insufficient and I had to seek farther.

TO BE

THE second harks awhile, hoping,
 But man decides with usual disdain,
 And it departs—a little astir,
 Another second leaves like an arrow from a quiver.

The second hand moves a space
 And time flows on the same quest
 Searching for one who has gathered
 All his parts for a single throw.

Some seconds are short, others long,
 Some men are short, others tall;
 With mind in chaos and heart on a thin stalk
 Man swings like a ball with a rise and a fall.

The dog flows with time, so does the cat,
 And the teak and the toad and even the bat,
 But man likes to struggle,
 There are no eddies in time's stream
 But only in man's heart and mind.

DINKAR PALANDE

EPIC POETRY

A CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO

Nirodbaran's Introduction

THIS is a small fragment of the correspondence that passed between Jyotirmoyee and Sri Aurobindo when she was writing Bengali poetry under his inspiration. Jyotirmoyee and I were the two who aspired to develop a literary faculty and Sri Aurobindo took us especially under his direct guidance. Dilip, Amal and Nishikanto had already acquired sufficient mastery in the vocation.

Jyotirmoyee and I were working in close collaboration: she was writing in Bengali and I starting with Bengali took up English poetry as my means of expression. But for reasons known to Sri Aurobindo, I was made, for the most part, the channel for her poems, sending them to him with my comments, questions, interpretations, etc. And he was explaining to me the meaning of her poems when needed, as he had done with my English poems. For, her poetry was entirely out of the tradition of Bengali poetry. She had struck a mystic source quite different from those of Bengali mystic poets or even of English ones because her ideas and imagery were Indian in origin and colour. She made rapid strides and, arriving at some pitch of perfection in lyrics and especially in sonnets, she aspired to try her hand at blank verse and at epic form. It is apropos of this aspiration that she asked all those questions and received Sri Aurobindo's answers. As the subject has a general interest, it is now presented to the public and to the students of literature in particular. One will, incidentally, observe Sri Aurobindo's untiring patience and eagerness to help a person when a genuine will and interest to do something creative were found. He has said in one of our talks, "A lot can be done for a person if there is a persistent will."

20.4.37

Q.: What is the epic style? What elements are required for successful blank verse?

A.: I spoke of epic style because you talked of austerity and force. Special austerity and ojas needed for epic style, not necessary in other blank verse.

Q.: Speak of English blank verse, if you plead ignorance of Bengali.

A.: Good Lord! you don't want me to expatiate on all that now? I believe I wrote about it to Amal—I mean for English blank verse. For Bengali I decline all authority.

3.5.37

Q.: How may I learn the epic style of blank verse?

A.: I suppose it is best done by reading the epic writers until you get the epic rush or sweep.

Epic writing needs a sustained energy of rhythm and word which is not easy to get or maintain. I am not sure whether you can get it now. I think you would first have to practise maintaining the level of the more energetic among the lines you have been writing. I have doubly marked the lines that seem to me to have the necessary epic elevation in 49, 51 (the two instalments) and this last one so as to indicate the kind of line I mean.

4.5.37

Q.: *Is your Love and Death an epic, and Urvasie and Baji Prabhau ?*

A.: Love and Death is epic in long passages. Urvasie is written on the epic model. Baji Prabhau is not epic in style or rhythm.

Q.: *Are your 12 recent poems too in epic style ?*

A.: No, they are lyrical, though sometimes there may come in an epic elevation.

Q.: *Will Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained help ? Kindly mention all the epic writers in all the languages—it is good to know, at least.*

A.: Paradise Lost, yes. In the other Milton's fire had dimmed.

In English Paradise Lost and Keats' Hyperion (unfinished) are the two chief epics. In Sanskrit Mahabharat, Ramayan, Kalidasa's Kumar Sambhav, Bharavi's Kiratarjuniya. In Bengali Meghnadbodh. In Italian Dante's Divine Comedy and Tasso's (I have forgotten the name for the moment)¹ are in the epic cast. In Greek of course Homer, in Latin Virgil. There are other poems which attempt the epic style, but are not among the masterpieces. There are also primitive epics in German and Finnish (Nibelungenlied, Kalevala)—

5.5.37

Q.: *This afternoon, in a kind of sleep, I read a whole passage of an epic in English. All fled like vapour. I caught only this:*

"Néed we | our mór|tal blóod"....

A.: This is only part of a line, three feet—the blank verse line is five feet. As far as it goes, it is quite correct. Full lines could be something like this:

Néed we | our mór|tal blóod | to sprínk|le eárrh
That mán | may grów | by the | réd sác|rífice.

A foot in the pentameter blank verse is of two syllables; normally the accent is on the second syllable of the foot, but for variety's sake it can fall on the first. e.g. Néed we/. Or there can be a foot without stress e.g. by the/ followed sometimes by a/foot of double stress as réd sác/rífice. Sometimes an anapaest, very light, can be put in place of the 2 syllable foot, e.g. In the súd/dén fáll/and trá/gic énd/of things/. Other variations there can be, but they are more rare.

¹ *Hierosolyma Liberata (Jerusalem Liberated)*—Editor

Q.: English metre seems a fearful thing to learn.

A.: English metre is simple on the contrary. It is the management of the rhythm that makes a more difficult demand on the writer.

II.5.37

Q.: Is there a difference between blank verse and poetry which is quite epic and blank verse and poetry which is written only in the epic style, model or manner?

A.: I don't quite understand the point of the question. Poetry is epic or it is not. There may be differences of elevation in the epic style, but this seems to be distinction without a difference.

Q.: Surely there must be some difference between an epic, true and genuine throughout and a poem which is only in the epic style or has the epic tone?

A.: An epic is a long poem usually narrative on a great subject written in a style and rhythm that is of a high nobility or sublime. But short poems, a sonnet for instance can be in the epic style or tone, e.g. some of Milton's or Meredith's sonnet on Lucifer or, as far as I can remember it, Shelley's on Ozymandias.

Q.: What are the qualities or characteristics that tell one—"This is an epic"?

A.: I think the formula I have given is the only possible definition. Apart from that, each epic poet has his own qualities and characteristics that differ widely from the others. For the rest one can feel what is the epic nobility or sublimity, one can't very well analyse it.

Q.: In Sanskrit epics, e.g., Kumarsambhavam, what has made up the rhythm? And how does it sound so grave, lofty, wide and deep?

A.: It is a characteristic that comes natural to Sanskrit written in the classical style.

Q.: How can one have all these qualities together?

A.: Why not? They are not incompatible qualities.

Q.: English seems to have the necessary tone more easily, but is it possible in Bengali?

A.: I don't know why it shouldn't be. Madhu Sudan's style is a lofty epical style; it is not really grave and deep because his mind was not grave or deep—but that was the defect of the poet, not necessarily an incapacity of the language.

Q.: Kumarsambhavam was my textbook in I.A., but I have not read all of it. May I ask Kapali Shastri to help me read it?

A.: I don't know if it is necessary for a poetic, not scholarly reading of the poem. It is only the 1st seven cantos that need be read.

Q.: Please don't abbreviate your answers if there is a lot to say. I would like to know from you everything about an epic.

A.: That would take too long.

12.5.37

Q.: Are the other cantos (after the 8 or 7) of Kumarsambhavam not so good?

A.: Many say they are not Kalidasa's. If they are his, they are probably unrevised, without the perfecting touches.

Q.: To read with K.S. I did not think of Kumarsambhavam but Ramayan, Mahabharat etc. Shall I be able to read them by myself?

A.: That I can't say. What I meant was there need be no scholarly study of Sanskrit.

13.5.37

Q.: I would like my present poems to come in a few lines, but the epic tone to be more and more perfect every day.

A.: The epic movement is something that flows; it may not be good to try to shut it into a few lines. There might be a danger of making something too compact. If that can be avoided, then of course it is better to write a few lines with a heightened epic tone than many with the lesser tone.

27.5.37

Q.: Please tell me why I often jump back to the sonnet source instead of steadily keeping to the epic source. The more I try to be 'fine' the more I lose the epic source.

A.: It is a matter of habit. Also the attempt to be "fine" is not good for epic writing. None of the great poets wrote "finely"—nobility or power or a clear and great strength of style and substance and spirit is their characteristic.

2.6.37

Q.: Here is a poem. This attempt sounds sonnet-like. Does it not?

A.: The style and verse are epic—but there is something in the substance that is not epic. It is here that the main defect lies. Perhaps if you tried to write short narratives in the epic style, this might go. In the epic there must always be a definite subject worked out with a clear beginning and end.

3.6.37

Q.: By narrative did you mean a story? Meanwhile I wrote this piece of a few lines which does not seem successful as epic.

A.: It is not epic, but it is excellent narrative poetry. It is a good exercise for the building necessary for an epic.

4.6.37

Q.: Here is the continuation, not epic in tone. Is there something in the manner of telling also that hinders a narrative from being an epic?

A.: It is the level of the style and the spirit in the writing that differs.

Q.: How can I write a narrative in the epic style?

A.: There is no how. It is a power that comes.

Q.: P says he is going to write an article on "the only vernacular epic", Tulsi Ramayan in Hindi. But Meghnadbodh is an epic too in a vernacular. How can he then say such a thing? Won't it be wrong to write like that publicly?

A.: Of course, it is a wrong idea. There is not only Meghnadbodh but Kamban's Ramayan in Tamil—But I suppose P knows neither Bengali nor Tamil.

6.6.37

Q.: As narrative poetry and epic are not the same, why should the former give me a training in the latter? Many have written narratives but that did not lead them to an epic.

A.: It is necessary to be able to work out a subject at length in a clear well-built way—epic is usually of a narrative build, so narrative poetry is the best training for that. The narrative writers you speak of did not aspire to be epic poets.

13.7.37

Q.: Is your Love and Death a narrative poem?

A.: Certainly.

Q.: Narratives then can be made or written very poetically, not like a mere fact-to-fact story-telling?

A.: But what do you mean by poetically? A fact to fact story telling can be very poetic. Poetry is poetic whether it is put in simple language or freely adorned with images and rich phrases. The latter kind is not the only "poetic" poetry nor is necessarily the best. Homer is very direct and simple; Virgil less so but still is restrained in his diction; Keats tends always to richness; but one cannot say that Keats is poetic and Homer and Virgil are not. The rich style has this danger that it may drown the narration so that its outlines are no longer clear. This is what has happened with Shakespeare's Venus and Adonis and Lucrece; so that Shakespeare cannot be called a great narrative poet.

Q.: How did you find Monomohan Ghose's poems on Love and Death?

A.: I don't remember anything about them and am not sure that I have read.

THE PERFECT GIFT—THE POWER OF SINCERITY— THE JOY OF PROGRESS

FROM THE MOTHER'S TALK ON JANUARY 11, 1956
TO THE ASHRAM CHILDREN

Mother, on January 6 you said, "Give all you are, all you have, nothing more is asked of you but also nothing less."

YES.

What is meant by "all you have", "all you are" ?

I am going to tell you in what circumstances I wrote this; that will make you understand:

Someone wrote to me saying that he was very unhappy, for he longed to have wonderful capacities to put at the disposal of the Divine, for the Realisation, for the Work; and that he also longed to have immense riches to be able to give them, to put them at the feet of the Divine for the Work. So I replied to him that he need not be unhappy, that each one is asked to give what he has, that is, all his possessions whatever they may be, and what he is, that is, all his potentialities—which corresponds to the consecration of one's life and the giving of all one's possessions—and that nothing more than this is asked. What you are, give that; what you have, give that, and your gift will be perfect; from the spiritual point of view it will be perfect. This does not depend upon the amount of wealth you have or the number of capacities in your nature; it depends upon the perfection of your gift, that is to say, on the *totality* of your gift. I remember having read, in a book of Indian legends, a story like this. There was a very poor, very old woman who had nothing, who was quite destitute, who lived in a miserable little hut, and who had been given a fruit. It was a mango. She had eaten half of it and kept the other half for the next day, because it was something so marvellous that she did not often happen to get it—a mango. And then, when night fell, someone came in and told her he wanted shelter and was hungry. So she said to him, "Well, I have no fire to warm you, I have no blanket to cover you, and I have half a mango left, that is all I have, if you want it; I have eaten half of it." And it turned out that this someone was Shiva, and that she was filled with an inner glory, for she had made a perfect gift of herself and all she had.

I read that, I found it magnificent. Well, yes, this describes it vividly. It's exactly that.

The rich man, or even people who are quite well-off and have all sorts of things in life and give to the Divine what they have in surplus—for usually this is the gesture: one has a little more money than one needs, one has a few more things than one needs, and so, generously, one gives that to the Divine. It is better than giving

nothing. But even if this “little more” than what they need represents lakhs of rupees, the gift is less perfect than the one of half the mango. For it is not by the quantity or the quality that it is measured: it is by the sincerity of the giving and the absoluteness of the giving.

But in ordinary life, when rich men want to give their wealth to the Divine, and the Divine is not in front of them, then to whom are they to give? They don't know where to give their money!

Yes, but then the question doesn't arise. If they haven't met the Divine either within or without, it doesn't come into the question. They are not asked to give to someone they do not know.

If they have found the Divine within themselves, well, they have only to follow the indication given by the Divine for the use of what they have; and if they follow quite sincerely and exactly the indications they receive, this is all that can be asked of them. But until then nothing is asked of anyone.

One begins to ask only when someone says, “Here I am, I want to consecrate myself to the Divine.” Then it is all right, from that moment one asks; but not before. Before that, even if you casually pull out a coin from your pocket and put it there, it is very good; you have done what you thought you ought to do and that's all; you are not asked for anything at all. There is a great difference between asking the Divine to adopt you, and making a gesture of goodwill, but without the least intention of changing anything whatever in the course of your life.

Those who live the ordinary life, well, if they make a gesture of goodwill, so much the better for them, this creates for them antecedents for future lives. But it is only from the moment you say, “There, now I know that there is but one thing which counts for me, it is the divine life, and I want to live the divine life”—from that moment one asks you, not before.

Mother, there are people who come here, who have money and are very devoted, who show their devotion, but when the question of money comes up, they bargainThen how shall we remain on friendly terms with them?

What?

They are devoted, they show devotion...

In what way? By taking from Him all they can?

...but when the question of money comes up, they bargain, they calculate.

I tell you, I have already answered, that's how it is. They come with the idea of taking

from the Divine all they can: all the qualities, all the capacities, all the conveniences also, all the comforts, everything, and sometimes even powers, and all the rest. They come to take, they don't come to give. And their show of devotion is simply a cloak they have thrown over their wish to take, to receive. That covers a wide field: from saving one's soul, having spiritual experiences, obtaining powers, to leading a petty quiet life, comfortable—more or less comfortable, at least with a minimum of comfort—without cares, without botheration, far from the worries of life. That's how it is. That covers a wide range. But when they give, it is a kind of bargaining; they know that to obtain these things, it would be well to give a little something, otherwise they won't get them, so they make a show of being very devoted. But it is only a pretence, for it is not sincere.

Unfortunately for them, it deceives no one. It may be tolerated; but that doesn't mean that anybody is deceived.

The bargaining is everywhere, in all the parts of the being. It is always give and take, from the highest spiritual experiences to the tiniest little material needs. There is not one in a thousand who gives without bargaining.

And the beauty of the story I told you—moreover, there are many others like it here—is just this, that when the old woman gave, she didn't know that it was Shiva. She gave to the passing beggar, for the joy of doing good, of giving, not because he was a god and she hoped to have salvation or some knowledge in exchange. (*Looking at the disciple*) There is still some mischief in his mind. Now then, what is it?

I wanted to say that these desires begin with the desire for the work, and this is also guided by the Divine. But when one has understood that now there should no longer be any desire but an absolute giving, still that does not become a giving; and this continues indefinitely. Why?

I can't make out what he means! (*To another disciple*) Translate!

One begins by mixing up desire with one's aspiration...

Yes, that is what Sri Aurobindo has written.

Then, one realises that a desire is mixed up there, but cannot manage to reject this desire.

(*To the first disciple*) Is that it?

No! (Laughter)

It is and it isn't!

Mother, you said that it may be tolerated, but there is a period of tolerance. But when it goes beyond the period of tolerance and does not want to stop—that's the question.

And so what, what happens?

He wants to ask what one must do, what should be done?

Ah! at last.

What should be done?... Be sincere.

That's it; always, the little worm in the fruit. One tells oneself, "Oh! I can't." It is not true, if one wanted, one could.

And there are people who tell me, "I don't have the will-power." That means you are not sincere. For sincerity is an infinitely more powerful force than all the wills in the world. It can change anything whatever in the twinkling of an eye; it takes hold of it, grips it, pulls it out—and then it's over.

But you close your eyes, you find excuses for yourself.

The problem recurs all the time.

It comes back because you don't pull it out completely. What you do is, you cut the branch, so it grows again.

It takes different forms.

Yes. Well, you have to take it out every time it comes, that's all—until it doesn't come back any more.

We have spoken about it, where was it?... Oh! it was in *Lights on Yoga*, I think. You push the thing down from one part of your consciousness into another; and you push it down again and then it goes into the subconscious, and after that, if you are not vigilant, you think it is finished, and later from there it shows its face. And next, even when you push it out from the subconscious, it goes down into the inconscient; and there too, then, you must run after it to find it.

But there comes a time when it is over.

Only, one is always in too great a hurry, one wants it to be over very quickly. When one has made an effort, "Oh! well, I made an effort, now I should get the reward for my effort."

In fact, it is because there is not that joy of progress. The joy of progress imagines that even if you have realised the goal you have put before you—take the goal we have in view: if we realise the supramental life, the supramental consciousness—well, this joy of progress says, "Oh! but this will be only a stage in the eternity of time. After this there will be something else, and then after that another and yet another,

and always one will have to go further.” And that is what fills you with joy. While the idea, “Ah! now I can sit down, it is finished, I have realised my goal, I am going to enjoy what I have done”, oh, how dull, it is! Immediately one becomes old and stunted.

The definition of youth: we can say that youth is constant growth and perpetual progress—and the growth of capacities, possibilities, of the field of action and range of consciousness, and progress in the working out of details.

Naturally, someone told me, “So one is no longer young when one stops growing?” I said, “Of course, I don’t imagine that one grows perpetually! But one can grow in another way than purely physically.”

That is to say, in human life there are successive periods. As you go forward, something comes to an end in one form, and it changes its form.... Naturally, at present, we come to the top of the ladder and come down again; but that’s really a shame, it shouldn’t be like that, it’s a bad habit. But when we have finished growing up, when we have reached a height we could consider as that which expresses us best, we can transform this force for growth into a force which will perfect our body, make it stronger and stronger, more and more healthy, with an ever greater power of resistance, and we shall practise physical training in order to become a model of physical beauty. And then, at the same time, we shall slowly begin and seek the perfection of character, of consciousness, knowledge, powers, and finally of the divine Realisation in its fullness of the marvellously good and true, and of His perfect Love.

There you are. And this must be continuous. And when a certain level of consciousness has been reached, when this consciousness has been realised in the material world and you have transformed the material world in the image of this consciousness, well, you will climb yet one more rung and go to another consciousness—and you will begin again. *Voilà*.

But this is not for lazy folk. It’s for people who like progress. Not for those who come and say, “Oh! I have worked hard in my life, now I want to rest, will you please give me a place in the Ashram?” I tell them, “Not here. This is not a place for rest because you have worked hard, this is a place for working even harder than before.” So, formerly, I used to send them to Ramana Maharshi:¹ “Go there, you will enter into meditation and you will get rest.” Now it is not possible, so I send them to the Himalayas; I tell them, “Go and sit before the eternal snows! That will do you good.”

(*Questions and Answers, 1956, pp. 14-21*)

¹ A Sage of South India who left his body in April 1950. He founded a traditional ashram for meditation and contemplation.

AT THE FEET OF THE MOTHER AND SRI AUROBINDO

RECOLLECTIONS BY SAHANA

(Continued from the issue of December 1983)

Sri Aurobindo's Letters

THE thoughts and feelings expressed in your letter are born of the depression and have no truth in themselves apart from it. Your being here does not in the least take up space that could be occupied by 'better' sadhaks. For a good sadhak there will always be a place in one way or another. The incapacity which you discover in yourself is simply the resistance of the habitual external and physical nature, which everyone has and which none, however good a sadhak, has yet been able to transform radically, because it is the last thing to change and its resistance is acute just now because it is against this that the power of the sadhana is now pressing, so that the change may come. When this presents itself it always tries to appear as something unalterable, incapable of change, impervious to the sadhana. But it is not really so and one must not be deceived by this appearance. As for the fear of madness, it is only a nervous impression which you should throw away. It is not vital weakness that leads to such upsettings—it is an obscurity and weakness in the physical mind accompanied by movements of an exaggerated vital nature (*e.g.* exaggerated spiritual ambition) which are too strong for the mind to bear. That is not your case. You have had long experience of inner peace, wideness, Ananda, an inner life turned towards the Divine and one who has had that ought not to speak of general incapacity whatever the difficulties of the external nature,—difficulties common in one form or another to all.

11.3.1935

A weeping that comes with the feeling you speak of is the sign of a psychic sorrow—for it translates an aspiration of the psychic being. But depression and hopelessness ought not to come. You should rather cling to the faith that since there is a true aspiration in you—and of that there can be no doubt—it is sure to be fulfilled, whatever the difficulties of the external nature. You must recover in that faith the inner peace and quietude while at the same time keeping the clear insight into what has to be done and the steady aspiration for the inner and outer change.

17.3.1935

The conversion which keeps the consciousness turned towards the light and makes the right attitude spontaneous and natural and abiding and rejection also spontaneous is the psychic conversion. That is to say man usually lives in his vital and the body is its instrument and the mind its counsellor and minister (except for the few mental men who live mostly for the things of the mind, but even they are in subjection to

the vital in their ordinary movements). The spiritual conversion begins when the soul begins to insist on a deeper life and is complete when the psychic becomes the basis or the leader of the consciousness and mind and vital and body are led by it and obey it. Of course if that once happens fully, doubt, depression and despair cannot come any longer, although there may be and are difficulties still. If it is not fully, but still fundamentally accomplished, even then these things either do not come or are brief passing clouds on the surface—for there is a rock of support and certitude at the base, which even if partially covered cannot disappear altogether.

Mostly however the *constant* recurrence of depression and despair or of doubt and revolt is due to a mental or vital formation which takes hold of the vital mind and makes it run round always in the same circle at the slightest provoking cause or even without cause. It is like an illness to which the body consents from habit and from belief in the illness even though it suffers from it, and once started the illness runs its habitual course unless it is cut short by some strong counteracting force. If once the body can withdraw its consent, the illness immediately or quickly ceases—that is the secret of the system. So too if the vital mind withdraws its consent, refuses to be dominated by the habitual suggestions and the habitual movement, these recurrences of depression and despair can be made soon to cease. But it is not easy for this mind, once it has got into the habit of consent, even a quite passive and suffering and reluctant consent, to cancel the habit and get rid of the black circle. It can be done easily only when the mind refuses any longer to believe in the suggestions or accept the ideas or feelings that start the circle. 13.3.36

You feel as you do only because you are largely identified with the part that has to undergo change and so you feel the difficulty, even the impossibility of changing. But although the difficulty is there the impossibility does not exist. Even this identification may be helpful, for so the change can be radical by a direct action in the part itself, instead of an indirect influence upon it through the mind or higher vital. Rest and restore your physical forces, open so that the Mother's force may freely work on you, all trouble pass away and a new stronger movement commence.

22.3.1936

It is perhaps that the attitude you took of going on with the calm within and slowly changing what had to be changed, postponing certain things for the future—though not a wrong attitude in itself—made you somewhat lax, allowing things to play on the surface (desire etc.) which should have been kept in check. This resolution may have opened the way for the old movements to rise through this part which was not yet ready to change at all and the hostile forces finding you off your guard took the opportunity to push the attack home. They are always vigilant for an opportunity and there must be a sufficient vigilance on the sadhak's side to refuse it to them. It is also possible that as the Force descending in the general atmosphere has carried in it some pressure on the consciousness of the sadhaks to be more ready, more awake,

less engrossed in the movements of the ordinary nature than they are now, it fell upon this part and the resistance in it which was mostly passive for a long time became suddenly active under the pressure. 29.3.1936

What you write is quite accurate about the true soul, the psychic being. But people mean different things when they speak of the soul. Sometimes it is what I have called in the 'Arya' the desire soul,—that is the vital with its mixed aspirations, desires, hungers of all kinds good and bad, its emotions, finer and grosser or sensational urges crossed by the mind's idealisings and psychic stresses. But sometimes it is also the mind and vital under the stress of a psychic urge. The psychic so long as it is veiled must express itself through the mind and vital and its aspirations are mixed and coloured there by the vital and mental stuff. Thus the veiled psychic urge may express itself in the mind by a hunger in the thought for knowledge of the Divine, what the Europeans call the intellectual love of God, hankering after the Divine. This can bring much suffering because of the nature of the vital, its unquiet passions, desires, ardours, troubled emotions, cloudings, depressions, despairs. The psychic can have a psychic sorrow when things go against its diviner yearnings, but this sorrow has in it no touch of torment, depression or despair. Nevertheless all cannot approach, at least cannot at once approach the Divine in the pure psychic way—the mental and vital approaches are often necessary beginnings and better from the spiritual point of view than an insensitiveness to the Divine. It is in both cases a call of the soul, the soul's urge—it only takes a form or colour due to the stress of the mind or vital nature. 29.5.1936

SURELY THIS LOVE

O SURELY this love is that which can catch the Moon,
 The ever-eager slumberer through a sun-entranced Noon.
 Surely this lilt of a time-enchanted cry
 Can lure the purest and the loveliest from its still abode on High.

Is it not the pleasure-game of a Heart that knows no pain
 To seek and charm the Very Best to stand on earth again?

P. P.

NOLINIDA

HIS COMING BIRTHDAY

ON January 13, 1984, Nolinida, as Nolini Kanta Gupta is affectionately as well as respectfully called in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, will be full 95. The Mother's Grace and his will have collaborated to achieve this high landmark of human longevity.

We offer our profound gratitude and hearty felicitations to both of them.

Nolinida has carried on a persevering battle against the recalcitrances of the body and effectively held them at bay. We rejoice over it. We wish him a continuing victory for the future—a long while.

He has been much withdrawn and for quite a length of time. We have missed him. We could only stealthily peep at him. But we know he is there and that is enough—a great solace, a wonderful assurance, a deep certitude, a warm reliance.

The Mother told us that Sri Aurobindo had left his body to command a greater power of action. The Mother's power of action too must indeed be greater now. But still they need an instrument receptive of Their Forces at our level. We cherish Nolinida's uplifted consciousness as an outstanding instrument.

We ask with joy and thankfulness his blessings.

INDRA SEN

TWO TREE POEMS

Like a Haiku . . .

My tree has caught the stars
like fishes in its net
But just one little one
has slithered through—
A glow-worm glittering in the grass.

Rune

Two trees beside our door
Have roots beyond the reach of mind or eye :
The rune that's written in their lines
Is God's calligraphy upon pure sky.

SHRADDHAVAN

THE STORY OF A SOUL

BY HUTA

(Continued from the issue of December 24, 1983)

The Mother's Message

(30)

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



I WAS not well at all, due to a severe backache. I could not finish the painting of the Chinese vase.

The Mother saw the half-finished painting. While I was telling her why it was incomplete, my eyes blurred with tears.

She leaned forward from her couch and looked at me. Oh, those incredibly

bright blue-grey eyes with that glowing warmth in them! Her sympathy touched me deeply. She said:

“When you get used to the work of painting, you won’t feel pain—and that will come: you see, I know very little about the future!”

I thought: “Indeed the Mother could make jokes—at the same time assuring me and disclaiming knowledge.” She added with a smile:

“Child, do everything smiling and not weeping, because weeping spoils your big eyes. Relax and take proper rest, you must imagine Sri Aurobindo smiling at you.”

As a matter of fact, I was too exhausted to imagine anything. Moreover, I was not acquainted with the Lord. I knew only the Mother.

Then the Mother went into a trance. As usual I was sitting near her feet on the carpet. Quietly I put my head on the couch and closed my eyes in sheer relief.

The next morning a lovely card came from the Mother presenting a butterfly resting on the flowers of Forget-me-not. Along with it came these words:

“Here is a pretty sample of Nature’s art.

I hope you could rest yesterday and you are quite well this morning.”

Yes, I felt better physically. One moment I was quite cheerful and the next I was plunged into shadows of sorrow. Mental torment far exceeded the pain of the physical.

I finished the painting of the Chinese vase and showed it to the Mother in the evening at the Playground. She looked at it for quite some time. Her eyes kindled with admiration. She said:

“It is excellent, you are getting on quite well with painting. By the 15th August, we shall have a good collection. Then there will be an exhibition of your paintings.”

I said: “Oh! Mother, you astound me! I have just started painting, how is it possible to exhibit my paintings which are hardly satisfactory?”

I saw a gleam of amusement in her eyes. She smiled lovingly, which assured me that she would see me through in spite of everything.

The well-known verse from *Savitri* is to the point:

“All can be done if the God-touch is there.”

The morning of the following day the Mother sent me a fine card accompanied by these lines:

“I am sending the Chinese bowl and red cloth for the background. There are some white designs on the cloth—you need not do them.

My love and blessings and the Presence of the Divine Grace never leave you even for a moment.”

Ah! that very bowl which had put me in an awkward position when I had tried to put it in the right place in the glass cupboard. I could recognise each object which I had cleaned the previous year.

In the evening I showed her only the drawing. She said:

“I like it. You see, I have many more objects for you to paint.”

I thought: “Yes, I know, and I shall have to paint them despite my incapacity.”

The next morning I completed the Chinese bowl. The Mother liked the work a great deal. She looked at me with a quick almost eager smile, which lighted up her face and made her eyes acquire a new depth of colour. Slowly she closed them and went into a trance for a few moments. Then she said:

“Some paintings look pretty but they have no life, while I find your painting not only pretty but also living.

“Tomorrow I shall send you the French vase.”

She leaned back on her couch, closed her eyes and passed into a deep meditation. A slight smile lingered around her mouth when she awoke. She narrated to me her vision:

“I saw your two hands lifted a little towards me. A white rose was in the hollow of your right palm and a deep-red rose on your left palm.”

I was so dazed that I forgot to ask the meaning of her vision.

She bent forward from her couch, took my hands into hers and looked at my face, then kissed my forehead. After receiving different kinds of flowers, I took my leave.

While going to Golconde I was brooding over the Mother’s remarks about my painting and her vision. I wondered how long it would take me to see visions as the Mother did.

The following morning a card came from her. She had written:

“I am sending you the French vase I spoke of yesterday. It is cut glass done

by the artist himself directly on the vase. On a white background it will look very fine.”

First I did the drawing of the vase, which the Mother liked. After a short meditation we made for the French translation class.

The next day I was completely immersed in my work. But unhappily, I had to scrape off the colours three times from the canvas board and start afresh. Finally the painting was done.

The Mother saw it in the evening. She was extremely pleased and began patting my hands and kissed me again and again on my forehead. She said:

“My child, the painting has come out nicely. It looks real—better than I had expected. Shall I send something tomorrow?”

I answered: “No, Mother, tomorrow I shall be giving finishing touches to the curtain with sequins which I have been making since December. Now it is almost ready. I wish to offer it to you personally. It is meant for the Darshan room where you and Sri Aurobindo used to give Darshan.”

She gave me a most amiable smile and nodded.

The morning of 19th February the Mother sent me an attractive card with a coloured photograph of herself on it: she was sitting in a high-backed chair—immaculately dressed in a sari and about to give blessings and her message. She had written on the card:

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

This is to say to my sweet child, on the occasion of my birthday, how glad I am of the progress she is making both spiritually and in her painting—and to assure her of constant and affectionate help so that this progress will increase without stop.

“My love and blessings and the Presence of the Divine Grace never leave you.”

Tears of gratitude filled my eyes. What more could I expect?

Everybody was busy preparing many types of gifts to offer to the Mother on the 21st—on her birthday.

On its eve I received a card with the Mother’s photograph on it, signed by her. She had inscribed :

“I am sending you the small Chinese vase and this picture and blessings. The Presence of the Divine Grace is constantly with you.

À tout à l’heure.”

It did not take much time to paint the small vase. So along with the curtain I took to the Mother the painting also.

She greeted me with a cordial smile. First I opened the box of the curtain. She widened her eyes with admiration. I could feel her happiness from her gesture. Then she saw the painting in the other box. She found it satisfactory.

After a short meditation, she gave me a bouquet of various flowers and the un-failing kiss on my forehead.

I was so glad that the Mother had liked the curtain and the painting.

In the evening, she once again appreciated my work. A smile rippled across her lovely mouth. Then she fell deeply into a trance. Gradually she awoke from it and described her vision:

“Just now I saw in my vision a full-bloomed white lotus near your mouth and you were merged in deep concentration.”

Much later I painted the vision and she gave its meaning “Bliss”.

That very night I sat for quite a long time in my arm-chair, closed my eyes and let the pictures of beautiful hidden worlds drift by. Then suddenly I recalled one of my writings on a piece of paper. I have been writing poems, short stories, inner experiences ever since my childhood. But I have destroyed almost all my attempts.

Many years back when I was in East Africa I felt inspired to write as follows:

“When I awoke from a deep slumber of many births and ages, I saw a lovely bloomed lotus before me. I gazed at it and began to think whether it was real. My eyes closed and opened alternately in sheer amazement.

“When my eyes were closed, I felt darkness oppressing them; when my eyes were opened to the luminous lotus, at once all the dark clouds of unconsciousness, ignorance and falsehood dispersed and the radiant lotus communicated with me in subtle speech:

‘O consciousness drowned in obscurity, awake and mingle in the fragrance of my soothing light and peace. O soul, merge in my infinite Consciousness and Bliss.’ ”

There were quite a number of celebrations preceding the occasion of the Mother’s birthday.

On the 19th she visited the Common Dining Room, because the new kitchen was opened. On the 20th she went to the Ashram Library to view her own works.

Later I went to the exhibition at the Library and was fascinated to see her numerous manuscripts and the specimens of her charming handwriting in diverse languages such as French, English, Hebrew, Chinese, Japanese, Sanskrit and Bengali.

Now came the grand day—21st February—when the Mother entered her 80th year.

I got up very early and took my bath before anybody had a chance to go to the particular bathroom where I used to bathe. There are three ladies' bathrooms in Golconde. But the visitors who stayed in Golconde occupied the bathrooms indefinitely. Some of them were not even clean. Right from the very beginning of my childhood I have had a disgust for using common bathrooms.

I was in time to have the Mother's Balcony Darshan at 6.15. a.m.

In spite of her heavy work, she sent me a card—her symbol on it. Around the symbol there were pictures of lotuses. The border of the card was in golden paper. Also there was a photograph of her in a sari. She had written on the card:

“Bonjour to my dear little child, to my sweet Huta,
With all my love and blessings. The Presence of the Divine Grace is constantly with you.

À tout à l'heure.”

At 10.a.m. I went first into Sri Aurobindo's room which was filled with his Presence. Coming out of its other door my glance fell on the entrance of the small room where he and the Mother used to give Darshan. My curtain with its glittering sequins was hanging there. Then I went to the Mother who sat in a high-backed carved chair which was in the Meditation Hall. She was impeccably dressed in a gorgeous gown. Her smile was entrancing and her lucent glance compassionate. We received her blessings and a message which ran:

Who art thou that camest
Bearing the occult Name,
Wings of regal darkness,
Eyes of an unborn flame?

Like the august uprising
Of a forgotten sun
Out of the caverned midnight
Fire-trails of wonder run.

Captured the heart renouncing
Tautness of passion-worn strings
Allows the wide-wayed sweetness
Of free supernal things.

—SRI AUROBINDO

Then in the afternoon we all went to the Sports Ground clad in white uniforms. The March Past took place at 4 p.m. with a band. The Mother took our salutes.

After that she declared the swimming pool open. There were demonstrations of

swimming, diving and life-saving. Later all went to the Ashram Theatre where the Mother distributed *Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education* which appeared on every Darshan day. There were also programmes of music, singing and a short drama.

Thus the day ended.

*

It is stated in the booklet *Truth Cures*:

“Sometime in the year 1956, the Mother expressed to somebody her wish that Kesarimal should come here and take up the work of an Ayurvedic Dispensary. When one of the inmates showed willingness to write to Kesarimal, she said:

‘Tell him I shall be very happy if he comes here and takes up the work. I like this system of medicine more than Allopathy.’

“In response to the call Kesarimal came to the Ashram for good in 1957 and took up the work.

“As a result the Ayurvedic Section was started on 22-2-1957. The Mother herself performed the opening ceremony and gave the following message on the occasion:

‘In this new activity the knowledge of the past must be illumined by the revelation of to-day.’

“After that, she used to take keen interest in the Section and gave a completely free hand to Kesarimal to develop it.”

Kesarimalji started the Ayurvedic Section from scratch and it flourished abundantly. He passed away on 29th July 1975. He was a selfless, dedicated and noble soul. I knew him personally. He gave me medicines which the Mother approved.

Now Smt. Kikiben not only prepares the numerous medicines but looks after the whole Department efficiently. Vaidya Himmatbhai assists her.

Sri Aurobindo, as quoted in the booklet *Truth Cures*, has aptly said:

“Truth is supreme harmony and supreme delight. All disorder, all suffering is falsehood. Thus it can be said that illnesses are the falsehoods of the body, and consequently doctors are soldiers of the great and noble army fighting in the world for the conquest of Truth.”

Of course, the ultimate truth in this sphere goes beyond the best doctoring. Here is an appropriate quotation from Sri Aurobindo—again from the booklet:

“God within is infinite and self-fulfilling Will. Unaffected by the fear of death canst thou leave to Him, not as an experiment, but with a calm and entire faith thy ailments? Thou shalt find that in the end He exceeds the skill of a million doctors.”

*

I felt unwell and terribly uneasy. It always happened when the Ashram was crowded with visitors who changed the whole atmosphere of the place.

The Mother has written acutely in *Mother India*, August 15, 1961, p. 6:

“If a man’s eagerness to come here does not go down to his pocket, it is not worth very much. People want everything made easy. If the journey does not cost them anything and if they have to spend nothing here, they are prepared to come. But if there is difficulty and travelling touches their pocket and things are not easily provided to them, they begin to consider, and are not very eager. It is thought that we are anxious to have visitors. The truth is the opposite. Most visitors are a nuisance. It is not one in a thousand who is really keen and who therefore is worth having here. The Ashram is not benefited by visitors: it is the other way round.

From the way a man approaches us, you can judge the colour of his aspiration and sincerity. When easy conditions are demanded, the colour is very faint. When a man is willing to give sacrifices and undergo difficulties, then I can say that there is some genuine seeking in him.

The Ashram is pictured as an important place and people are given the idea that they must visit it—and they expect from us a social welcome. But the Ashram is not a social institution—I am not a social being: I am the last person to receive in a social manner.”

One day elapsed. I did nothing except laze in my bed reading books. I did not feel like going out to imbibe the suffocating atmosphere and feel the adverse vibrations.

I never thought of myself being superior to visitors or anybody. But I was and still am too sensitive to alien vibrations and strange atmospheres. Besides, from my childhood I was not a social and mixing type.

People misconceived me and imagined things. They magnified my retiring nature into a serious fault as if I were conceited and self-important.

On the 23rd a card came from the Mother, depicting a bouquet of red roses and bearing these lines:

“I am sending you a pretty ivory vase which will look quite nice on a white background.

Along with a lot of courage to face the difficulties. These difficulties are there for all those who seek for the Divine. Nobody can hope for an easy way,

but the *Victory is certain* and this certitude gives the strength to endure.

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

Sri Aurobindo has been quoted in *Bulletin*, August 1952, p. 22:

"Endurance is the power to go through effort, difficulty or trouble without getting fatigued, depressed, discouraged or impotent and without breaking off the effort or giving up one's aim or resolution."

In the evening the Mother saw only the drawing of the ivory vase. She altered it a little. I also showed her my new canvas boards.

A sudden light shone in her eyes when she said:

"Oh ! but on these boards you can compose many things."

It was true that so far I had painted just a single object on a small board, but now the Mother wanted me to paint many things on a single board.

She was a genius and the Divine Teacher full of tact.

*

It was Sunday. The Mother sent me a fine card with these words:

"I have received a few pictures of fruits. This is the first one showing some cherries."

This is how the Mother gave me new ideas by sending many cards and how she prepared the ground for me to do big paintings.

I finished my painting of the ivory vase and put it before the Mother in the evening. She said:

"I like it. I still have many objects which can be painted. But for a change, you must paint fruits which I shall send you, so that you may know how to compose things and paint them nicely.

"You must also know how to sketch them in a perfect harmony. Then, of course, you must observe carefully the objects and their colours. Remember also that you cannot possibly start to paint here and there, but right from the top and gradually you must come down. In case, you cannot finish the painting in a day, leave it. Next day you can start where you have left off, but *never* paint again on the top where you have already painted: otherwise, colours will get mixed up and the whole painting will be ruined.

“Even then, if you wish to continue a half-finished painting from one end to the other, you must be very careful—the joints in the painting must not be shown. You must have skill to keep harmony and rhythm.

“Finishing touches can be given when the painting is completely dry.”

I registered her advice in my mind.

On 25th February the Mother sent me fruits along with a card illustrating apples, flowers, leaves and a butterfly. She explained in the card what was to be done:

“I am sending you the fruits to be painted on a pale green background. The line of the table or stool must be marked as on the sketch I have made to show you how to arrange the fruits. I hope you will be able to reproduce it. The fruits will easily keep for two days if you arrange them on a plank and cover them with a cloth when you are not working.

“I have put a frame line showing the proportion of the fruits with the whole picture. Of course your picture must be bigger than my sketch. You can use a canvas board like the one you brought yesterday.

“You can make the first drawing and show it to me this afternoon.”

I did the drawing. The Mother saw it and said with a smile :

“It is good. You see, I too love very much to paint, but how am I to find the time for it?”

Not once but several times she expressed her inclination and love for painting.

The following morning I received a card from her displaying white Chrysanthemums. Underneath them she had written:

“Purified life energy.”

She continued on the same card:

“Yesterday afternoon I had brought a small bag with your monthly money at the Playground and forgot to give it to you. You will find it enclosed.

“My love and blessings and the Presence of the Divine Grace are always with you without fail.”

I arranged everything to commence the painting of fruits. I must confess that it was the first time that I had prayed to the Mother before painting.

I showed the result to her. Her joy was something to look at. Words alone cannot convey it. Taking my hand in her own warm clasp she said:

“O child, it is excellent! This very morning I questioned myself whether this girl was born an artist. I had seen the whole painting in my vision before you showed it to me. The shine you have given on the tomatoes by a sharp stroke of white colour impressed me a lot! I had not been sure whether you would give the final finishing touch. But you did it! I am really very happy with the painting.”

The size of that compliment struck me dumb, because to me it was a mystery how the whole painting had come about.

Oh, yes! the Mother could not keep her happiness to herself. So she sang my praises to several people and said:

“The girl is doing such luminous things!”

During that time the Mother spoke about me to Gauri Bhattacharya who was looking after the Mother’s room at the Playground and attending to her needs.

These were the Mother’s words:

“Elle a quelque chose de très gentil en elle. Je vais sortir ça.”

Gauri’s translation:

“She has something very nice in her and I am going to bring it out.”

That day I realised fully that it was not I who had done the painting but some unknown divine Force had been at work. I was just an instrument of this Force.

The Divine’s Force has its own just mode of working. It disregards all outer pomp and superficial glory. It is not partial to colour, creed, position, power, money, status and so on. It looks into human beings and sees the genuine stuff inside which is receptive and responds to the Divine’s Force.

This calls to my mind the story of a balloon man in the *Catholic Digest*:

“A little Negro boy stood watching the balloon man at the country fair. There were all shapes of balloons in all colours. Suddenly a red balloon broke loose, and soared high into the air until it could scarcely be seen. So many people were attracted by the sight that the vendor thought it might be good business to let another go. He let a bright yellow one slip free. Then he released a white one.

“The little Negro stood looking for a long time. Then he asked, ‘Mister, if you sent the black one up, would it go just as high as the other?’

“The balloon man, with an understanding smile, slipped the black one from its place and said, ‘Sonny, it isn’t the colour—it’s the stuff inside that makes it rise.’ ”

The next morning the Mother wrote:

“I am sending you a vase with a flower to be painted on a white background.
“You will do the line of the table as you did with the fruits.”

I painted the vase with the flower—the Chrysanthemum. But the Mother was not satisfied with the shape of the vase. She made a hurried sketch to teach me how it should be done.

I also showed her some rough-surfaced canvas boards. She said:

“The rough canvas boards are good for doing portraits.”

Then suddenly she took a pencil and started doing my portrait and finished it in a jiffy. Gosh! I wish I could do sketches with such rapidity and ease.

It was the last day of February. The Mother wrote this letter regarding my painting of the day before which had not been up to the mark. She made me understand the technique through her letter:

[See opposite page]

The “others” mentioned by the Mother in her letter were various paintings of mine done so far. They were all hung in the small Darshan room upstairs. The particular picture which she wanted to be kept with these was the painting of the fruits.

In the morning I did only the sketch of the Chinese carved stone. The Mother saw it in the evening. She said that it was all right. After a little concentration we made for the translation class.

How quickly the month of February ended!

What Omar Khayyam says is true:

“....What boots it to repeat
How time is slipping underneath our feet?
Unborn tomorrow and dead yesterday—
Why fret about them if today be sweet?”

(To be continued)

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28.2.57

Bonjour

To my dear little child

To my sweet Herta

I have received your picture and I am keeping it. I shall have it framed and kept with the others. The difference with the model I sent you is that on your painting the vase is more fat than the original. I mean to say that on your painting the vase is somewhat like this  while in the original it is like that  but apart from that the picture is quite good. Today, I am sending you a Chinese carved stone which is beautifully carved and will look quite nice on a pale green background.

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

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND THE INDIAN SPIRIT

(Continued from the issue of December 1983)

From Kathleen Raine

I WRITE in Cumberland, looking over the Fells, with thick falling snow. I must thank you for your lovely Christmas card, and now for your letter on Anglo-Indian poetry. Of course if India is determined to adopt the English language nobody can stop you. The blame lies with the English, who as a "ruling race" for two hundred years impressed India with the power and prestige of our brief moment of material supremacy. Western civilisation—material power and prosperity, and who am I to say to any Indian, confronted with the desperate problems of feeding the multitude, and surviving in a mechanised world, that to be drawn into that vortex is disaster?

But, alas, your analogy with America is just what I feared. Yes, American immigrants from all races adopt the English language. They also adopt "the American way of life". In the streets, 'buses and subways of New York you see faces with the ethnic features of all the races of the world—Chinese, American Indian, German, Jewish, Italian, Puerto-Rican, Negro; and all wear the same expression—the soul is American, the racial memories of these people blotted out and replaced by whatever "Commercial" broadcasts, Planter's Pea-nut advertisements, work in some factory like the Ford motor-works I went over at River Rouge, absence of religion and belief in material progress and sending projectiles into outer-space can write upon the faces of the lost. Yes, India could no doubt absorb our language along with our mechanised barbarism. But for God's sake do not do so—for if all the surviving traditional civilisations renounce their heritage, the world will indeed be in darkness. The Indian young I meet here frighten me—they are worse than we are, because the most intelligent *here* see the dangers that the young Indians (Japanese, Turks, Ceylonese and many others) have not perceived as they blithely imitate us and are drawn into the vortex. One cannot sufficiently admire the instinctive, blind, intransigent resistance of Catholic Ireland to the English Juggernaut. They would rather perish than be absorbed. I wish India could realise in time—or, rather, I hope you *do* realise.

No, I have no photographs. I was born in 1908, so you can imagine the rest.

With kindest wishes for the New Year...

(14.1.1962)

From K. D. Sethna

It is now more than eight months since we last corresponded. As I wrote by air-mail and you by surface-mail, our letters crossed and both of us can grouse about a letter

unanswered, yours of 14.1.62 from Cumberland and mine of 4.2.62 from Pondicherry as usual.

Well, I am at last breaking the spell of silent expectation. Let me say that I was, as ever, happy to hear from you. What you say about materialistic western civilisation, with English as its world-speech, is quite true and it would be a pity if India and the other Asiatic nations were drawn into the vortex. But surely modernism as such and the English language in itself are not evils, even if they come with scientific materialism? I should think that the English language, holding as it does the most deeply spiritual poetry of modern times, is just the power that could touch modernism to nobler and higher issues. In England itself and perhaps more in America, this power may be in danger of being stifled by the too loud and rampant materialism that has developed with the modern spirit. But here in India where the voice of the Vedic Rishis is still vibrant and

Ever we hear in the heart of the peril a flute go before us—

the flute of Sri Krishna sounding from an eternal Brindavan in the collective consciousness—and the revelatory rhythms of Sri Aurobindo's message,

Sight's sound-waves breaking from the soul's great deeps,

are about us stronger than the titan roar of the machine—here in India the language of Vaughan and Wordsworth, Blake and Coleridge, Shelley and Keats, Yeats and AE, coming with the Mechanical Age, comes as a guardian angel of the true mind of science which is not alien to the true mind of poetry, and enables us to take the best that both these minds have to give:

And now I see with eye serene
The very pulse of the machine....

Please don't judge us—especially us the Aurobindonian moderns—who write in English, by the Indian young “gone west” in wisdom whom you meet in England and whose blithe unconsciousness of the dangers of westernisation frightens you.

You have referred admiringly to “the instinctive, blind, intransigent resistance of Catholic Ireland to the English Juggernaut”. Well, Ireland is very close to the Modern Monster and the reactions of her soul are bound to be a little violent; but, if they are as extreme as you say, I think they are a trifle unhealthy. After all, Modernism has to be accepted in its essence which Sri Aurobindo defines as “an ever widening and deepening intellectual and imaginative curiosity, a passion for knowledge, a passion for finding, an eye of intelligence awakened to all the multiform possibilities of new truth and discovery.” Its distortions and perversions are to be guarded against, but to shy away from its complex straining of free thought in a thousand

directions is to miss the secret of the future. To be instinctive, blind, intransigent is no solution of the problem. Even to be Catholic is not to find the way in a world which has once for all broken away from the religious forms of the past. Nor, I may add, has the Catholic form of Christianity always kept Europe safe from

The Titan and the Demon and the Ghoul

lurking in our depths either in the Mediaeval Age or in the Modern (Franco's Spain!). I am not condemning Catholicism, mind you. I know its beauties and exaltations with something of an inner acquaintance, for I have studied it well enough, prompted by my education from start to finish in a Catholic school and college at Bombay. But the Irish type of Catholicism is hardly quite what we need in our times. What can be a glorious part of the best of the modern *Zeitgeist* is the Catholicism of a Teilhard de Chardin, mystic and scientist of (according to my reading) a "pan-en-theistic" evolution, whom the Church has suppressed and whom, judging by the recent *Monitum*, she may ultimately put on the Index.

Now to more personal matters. Oh it's been such a weary wait for your book on Blake! Where is it? Why hasn't it come out? Surely you have finished lecturing in America months ago? (By the way, tell me something about your trip to the States.)

I have been reading your poems and making several notes. Would you like me to string them together for you? (17.9.1962)

From Kathleen Raine

I cannot prove this, but in the last few days I had suddenly found myself thinking about you and wondering why you had not written for so long, and hoping that all was well. And this morning your letter arrived. I am very glad indeed to hear from you again. As you see I have now returned to London—the Square where I formerly lived for 16 years—and I am thankful to be again under a roof of my own—I am sharing the house with friends—and able to forget Academe and return, thanks to the Bollingen Foundation, to poetry. I have meanwhile been planting my garden with flowers that I have great hopes of, *some* of which may be realised.

I think your letter says the last word on the English language question; history has made English a world-language, and all the world will be drawn in, more or less. Useless to resist, whether this be the last age of the world (as a Negro prophetess in New Orleans told me) or only the beginning of another. Perhaps language will in any case no longer play the part it once did in communicating ideas; perhaps telepathy will be perfected. Anything may happen. But decadence of English as a *literary* language is inevitable from the influx of so many races which have forgotten their own without perfectly mastering English (how can they, their history and landscape being different?) and of the barbarous illiterate populace produced in England and

America by industrialisation. (Our own barbarians are the worst, having *no* past.) Modern "literary" English is stage-cockney, a language vulgar and inexpressive, like the writers who use it.

I was sorry that the Church turned down Teilhard, but there are certainly questions unanswered by his theory; such as the Fall, and Original Sin? But it does seem unlikely he will be placed on the Index; the Jesuits themselves are proud of him, and the Dominicans enthusiastic (with, of course, certain reservations). I myself found him imaginatively most stirring, somewhat like the poetry of St. Jean Perse (whom I saw a good deal of in U.S.A.)

Please do write again with anything you find to say about my poems *good or bad*.

(21.9.1962)

From K. D. Sethna

"Perhaps telepathy will be perfected"—that's what you say in considering the future of communication of ideas. We seem to be already practising for the future, the way you started thinking about me at just the time I was doing it about you.

I am indeed glad you wrote your reply on the very day you got my letter. The gap of silence has been a little too wide, though filled enough with friendly gesturing phantoms of the past. Now that it was bridged I wanted to follow up soon with notes on your poems. But one thing and another have come in the way of setting them in order and adding new ones. So I have decided not to wait too long but reply asking you to wait awhile.

It's extremely pleasant to picture you in my mind: a quiet gardener sowing, in moods leaf-pricked and flower-scooped, the seeds of future poems. What a relief it must be to walk in your own private garden at last after years of Academe and its loud groves! But how exactly did the Bollingen Foundation come to your aid? Was it as a result of your Blake lectures in the United States? Do tell me something about your visit there. Apart from a side-remark on St. Jean Perse you don't refer at all to it.

And this side-remark, I may say, didn't strike me as quite complimentary to Teilhard de Chardin in connection with whom you had made it. Of course, Teilhard would have been happy to learn that Kathleen Raine found him "imaginatively most stirring", but the spiritual scientist in him would have wanted another kind of response too than of a poet to poetry. Perhaps, in the deepest sense, a poet's response to poetry covers everything—it is what Teilhard himself calls "our resonance to the All"—but when a thinker, with no matter what profoundly stirred imagination, has written *The Phenomenon of Man* rather than *The Noumenon of Man* he wants a more intellectual response, particularly with a scientific discrimination.

Teilhard's vogue today is not simply because of his lifelong "pan-en-theism" (as his vision may most naturally be labelled), though surely without it he would fail to touch the finer fibres in us. His vogue comes from the scientific shape his intui-

tions have taken—or, to put it more thoroughly, the organic form in scientific terms his feeling of the Cosmic Christ, “in whom we live and move and have our being”, has created for itself. The many-sided scientific “incarnation” of his soul of mysticism, the brilliant clear-cut adjustment of this soul to concepts which draw their life from physics and biology—these are the things that render him so momentous to the modern mind. Others have tried similar things—Lecomte du Noüy, for instance—but none before with such depth of inspiration accompanied by such self-steeping in the spirit of science at its most passionately modern. Not the rankest anti-religious materialist can outdo Teilhard in his passion for evolution, his whole-hearted commitment to the phenomenalist vision of development. He asks for no concession from the biology of the day and is quite sharp in oblique criticism of his fellow-religionists who accept its fundamental tenets with reservations. But at the same time he reveals possibilities in those tenets, which point far beyond science: he makes intellectually possible a “hyperbiology” as well as a “hyperphysics”. And it is just because he speaks wholly from within science, at one with its most fervent followers, that his new interpretative concepts go home. Just in a few places, towards the end of his great book, he lets in a breath of religion from outside. These are his weak points, unwelcome though not quite ungraceful intrusions of the priest on the palaeontologist. But they do not spoil his book on the whole or twist the main lines of his thought. And I should say that it is to the credit of his book as a piece of scientific philosophy that it leaves unanswered such questions as the Fall and Original Sin.

These questions must seem to Teilhard rather meaningless from the standpoint of super-evolutionism that was his. An Original Sin implying a Fall irreparable in the natural scheme of things would rule out the spontaneous intrinsic movement Teilhard reads in Nature of an evolution towards and into the Omega Point, man’s growth by the very drive of life and mind implicit in the Alpha Point into a universal consciousness, a totality of being, a supra-individualised but never depersonalised participation in the Cosmic Christ, a real organic fulfilment of the vague dream abroad today of “One World”.

It seems to you unlikely that just because his theory takes little account of matters like the Fall and Original Sin he will be placed on the Index. But have you studied the recent *Monitum* of the Church against him? I have written, apropos of this *Monitum* and of an excellent article in the *Times Literary Supplement* on Teilhard, a letter to this journal, discussing his future standing with the Church. I have explained why I think his official condemnation inevitable and also why I consider such an open condemnation good for the true import of his message. The Editor expressed his great interest in my letter, but for some reason or other the *T.L.S.* later seemed to fight shy of publishing it. If my letter does get shoved aside, I’ll send you the copy I have of it with me. At the moment I may remark that what offends the Church most is perhaps the cosmic nature of Christ which Teilhard posits in addition to Christ’s divine and human nature. The *Osservatore Romano*, the Vatican’s mouthpiece in general, picked out this doctrine of Teilhard’s to label it as

“heresy”. Do you think the Church can continue long to house a heretic? But, of course, she will find it extremely painful to thrust out so fine a soul, one truly devoted to Christ.¹

Now a word about my immediate concerns. What has happened to your book on Blake? Why is it not published yet? Or have you forgotten to send me a copy? At least, you have forgotten to answer the inquiry I had made about it in my last letter.

(17.10.1962)

From Kathleen Raine

I am always glad when I find a letter from you. As to your friend Dr. Seturaman's article, it seems to me rather slight, but possibly it could be published in the *Modern Languages Review*, or *The Aryan Path*. I never publish in these or any other journals (I am not a professor, by the way, thank God) and I suggest Miss Coburn or Mr. Whalley could help him better than I about Canadian or American journals, if neither of these want it.

I hope Arabinda Basu will visit me soon, with news of you. Better still your own letters, of course.

(I hope you will write something on me.)

(11.1.1963)

¹ EDITOR'S NOTE. The prophecy that Teilhard would be put on the Index did not come true, but this did not mean that the signs had been misread or Teilhard misjudged. The *Times Literary Supplement* itself, in a review on November 18, 1965 (p. 1027) of *The Appearance of Man* by Teilhard de Chardin and *The Faith of Teilhard de Chardin* by Henri de Lubac, said: "A place in the index seemed inevitable, but the tide of official opinion has turned." By the turn in the tide Teilhard has actually been de-Teilhardianised in order to be fitted into orthodoxy. The Index has been avoided by means of a massive act of wishful thinking. And this hits us in the eye the moment we read another passage in the same English weekly: "There is, however, one deficiency in Teilhard's thought when measured by traditional Catholic theology which Fr. de Lubac is unable, and does not seek, to conceal. This is the relatively small place given to evil and sin. From his point of view, evil is an 'evolutionary by-product' resulting from 'resistances to the spiritual ascent inherent in matter'. This is startlingly different from, say, the centrality of the Fall of Man in such Christian doctors as St. Augustine." De Lubac tries to suggest that Teilhard fell short of orthodoxy because he never attempted a philosophical synthesis outside the points of view which he adopted, dictated by an objective science. Here is an assumption for which there is no basis in Teilhard. Teilhard wrote sufficiently, both by way of unpublished book and private correspondence, to get a chance to elucidate his position. Nor was he invariably obliged to confine himself to "an objective science"'s dictation of viewpoints. There are intractable areas in his spiritual-scientific vision which cannot be assimilated into an Augustinian or else Thomist theology. A proper understanding of them has to come through another religious view of the universe than the Christian, an understanding which would be able to take Teilhardian evolutionism in its stride and not have to boggle at the notion of the material world as the self-concealed Divinity gradually self-revealed. Of course, an orthodox interpretation is possible of small sectors of Teilhard's scheme; but, on the whole, he must baffle his fellow-Christians on many scores, divided as he himself was between, on the one hand, his spiritual intuitive experience which became intellectually clarified through his science and, on the other, his dogmatically trained theology eager to Roman-Catholicise his new vision. Perhaps the religion which would best accommodate both the heterodox import of his philosophy and the Christian elements which too are there would be a Christified version of the Bhagavad Gita turned in the direction of Sri Aurobindo.

From K. D. Sethna

I am sorry I haven't replied to you yet. I must thank you for going through Dr. Seturaman's article. He was disappointed at your saying no more than that it seemed to you rather slight. He says he wanted a critical estimate so that he might improve its quality and also its size. He adds: "I should have felt happy even if she had called it fantastic or stupid." Could we know what exactly was connoted by your comment? Did you mean that there was little substance in the thesis or that the substance was not properly brought out by the treatment?

Arabinda Basu must have visited you by now. Did you think it impertinent on my part to have given him a little quotation from Jung apropos of something he had said about your desire to return to the Roman Catholic tradition? I understood that what was troubling you was part of that very wide-spread modern illness, the neurosis of rootlessness as well as of what Wells in his last days called "the mind at the end of its tether". Perhaps Arabinda has lost the piece of paper on which I had scribbled Jung's words? Could I add to my impertinence by repeating them here?—"The neurotic is ill not because he has lost his old faith, but because he has not yet found a new form for his finest aspirations."

Possibly you will work out a new form through that exquisite exposure—which is the poetic consecration—of the dreaming mind to

...the noise of a nameless sea
On an undiscovered isle.

But how will you be the poet in Paulton's Square, you who have not been able to write poetry at all unless you are in Northumberland, Cumberland or Scotland? Have you succeeded sufficiently in subduing landscape to inscape?

I have not forgotten to write something on your poetry. My notes in your *Collected Poems* have increased, but I haven't been able yet to come to a fusion-point, so to speak. I'll certainly do something in the near future. But repeatedly I wonder why you want my views. Am I not, as an Indian whose mother-tongue is different from yours, unfitted in your eyes to appreciate a creation like English poetry, which is your language at its subtlest?

Of late I have been much at my typewriter—doing what must seem ridiculously opposite things: a long archaeologico-linguistico-historical book on the Harappa Culture and the Rigveda, and a short one on Wordsworth's famous "A slumber did my spirit seal". The latter does not attempt a critical literary appraisal: I have simply called it "An Interpretation from India". It runs to 86 typed sheets. Do you think you could favour me with a reading of it? And would Sir Herbert Read who is a keen student of Wordsworth be kind enough to go through it after you? I don't think he has made any comment on this particular poem of Wordsworth's. Most probably he won't agree with what I have said, and you too will possibly not endorse

it, but comments from both of you will be very welcome because both of you have deep Wordsworthian affinities though with the difference that yours are consciously acknowledged and are part of your spiritual life whereas his are inwardly felt just as authentically yet outwardly changed a little to suit an intellect whose activity on the surface is somewhat conditioned by a strange amalgam which I may label as Marxist individualism and Freudian idealism. Of course, apart from agreement or disagreement with my interpretation, there is the question whether I have argued my case well or ill.

(1.4.1963)

(Concluded)

NOTICE

I HAVE received several requests for permission to print copies of the paintings of *Meditation on Savitri* and the paintings of *About Savitri* for various purposes, such as making the covers of books, greeting cards and so on. But it was the Mother's view that it would be best if these paintings were not used in the ways proposed. It is felt that they will have their best value if they appear only in the series of books—*Meditations on Savitri* and *About Savitri*—as planned by the Mother herself. *Savitri* is sacred and should be left untouched, otherwise the truth behind each painting which is the creation of the Divine Mother will be distorted and everything will become common and meaningless. The Light and Power will not be there any more.

I am also asked to give my permission to record the commentaries of the Mother from the book—*About Savitri*. The same idea and feeling hold for this matter too.

Many of my other paintings directed by the Mother are already printed as greeting cards without my permission. Besides, the writings from my books are taken without my knowledge and without acknowledgment of their sources. So I request all the Centres and their members, disciples and devotees of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother to consider the matter seriously.

Whatever the Mother has given to me I shall be very happy to share with everybody. Everything will surely appear in book-form in the course of time, according to the Mother's Will and Vision.

Let us all respect Her wish. Thank you.

HUTA

THE LEAP OF ROUSHAN BEG

MOUNTED on Kyrat strong and fleet,
His chestnut steed with four white feet,
Roushan Beg, called Kurrog'ou,
Son of the road and bandit chief,
Seeking refuge and relief,
Up the mountain pathway flew.

Such was Kyrat's wondrous speed,
Never yet could any steed
Reach the dust-cloud in his course.
More than maiden, more than wife,
More than gold, and next to life
Roushan the Robber loved his horse.

In the land that lies beyond
Erzeroum and Trebizond,
Garden-girt his fortress stood;
P.undered khan, or caravan
Journeying north from Koordistan,
Gave him wealth and wine and food.

Seven hundred and four score
Men at arms his livery wore,
Did his bidding night and day.
Now, through regions all unknown,
He was wandering, lost, alone,
Seeking without guide his way.

Suddenly the pathway ends,
Sheer the precipice descends,
Loud the torrent roars unseen;
Thirty feet from side to side
Yawns the chasm; on air must ride
He who crosses this ravine.

Following close in his pursuit,
At the precipice's foot,
Reyhan the Arab, of Orfah,
Halted with his hundred men,
Shouting upward from the gien,
"La il Allah-A'llah-la!"

Gently Roushan Beg caressed
 Kyrat's forehead, neck, and breast;
 Kissed him upon both his eyes;
 Sang to him in his wild way,
 As upon the topmost spray
 Sings a bird before it flies.

“O my Kyrat, O my steed,
 Round and slender as a reed,
 Carry me this peril through!
 Satin housings shall be thine,
 Shoes of gold, O Kyrat mine,
 O thou soul of Kurroglou!

“Soft thy skin as silken skein,
 Soft as woman's hair thy mane,
 Tender are thine eyes and true;
 All thine hoofs like ivory shine,
 Polished bright; O, life of mine,
 Leap, and rescue Kurroglou!”

Kyrat, then, the strong and fleet,
 Drew together his four white feet,
 Paused a moment on the verge,
 Measured with his eye the space,
 And into the air's embrace
 Leaped as leaps the ocean surge.

As the ocean surge o'er silt and sand
 Bears a swimmer safe to land,
 Kyrat safe his rider bore;
 Rattling down the deep abyss
 Fragments of the precipice
 Rolled like pebbles on a shore.

Roushan's tasselled cap of red
 Trembled not upon his head,
 Careless sat he and upright;
 Neither hand nor bridle shook,
 Nor his head he turned to look,
 As he galloped out of sight.

Flash of harness in the air,
Seen a moment like the glare
 Of a sword drawn from its sheath;
Thus the phantom horseman passed,
And the shadow that he cast
 Leaped the cataract underneath.

Reyhan the Arab held his breath
While his vision of life and death
 Passed above him. "Allahu!"
Cried he. "In all Koordistan
Lives there not so brave a man
 As this Robber Kurroglou!"

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

INTEGRAL PSYCHOLOGY INHERENT IN INTEGRAL YOGA

IN THE WORDS OF SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of December 1983)

Principal Domains of Consciousness

A superficial observation of our waking consciousness shows us that of a great part of our individual being and becoming we are quite ignorant; it is to us the Inconscient, just as much as the life of the plant, the metal, the earth, the elements. But if we carry our knowledge farther, pushing psychological experiment and observation beyond their normal bounds, we find how vast is the sphere of this supposed Inconscient or this subconscious in our total existence,—the subconscious, so seeming and so called by us because it is a concealed consciousness,—what a small and fragmentary portion of our being is covered by our waking self-awareness. We arrive at the knowledge that our waking mind and ego are only a superimposition upon a submerged, a subliminal self,—for so that self appears to us,—or, more accurately, an inner being, with a much vaster capacity of experience; our mind and ego are like the crown and dome of a temple jutting out from the waves while the great body of the building is submerged under the surface of the waters.

This concealed self and consciousness is our real or whole being, of which the outer is a part and a phenomenon, a selective formation for a surface use. We perceive only a small number of the contacts of things which impinge upon us; the inner being perceives all that enters or touches us and our environment. We perceive only a part of the workings of our life and being; the inner being perceives so much that we might almost suppose that nothing escapes its view. We remember only a small selection from our perception, and of these even we keep a great part in a store-room where we cannot always lay our hand upon what we need; the inner being retains everything that it has ever received and has it always ready to hand. We can form into co-ordinated understanding and knowledge only so much of our perceptions and memories as our trained intelligence and mental capacity can grasp in their sense and appreciate in their relations; the intelligence of the inner being needs no training, but preserves the accurate form and relations of all its perceptions and memories and, though this is a preposition which may be considered doubtful or difficult to concede in its fullness,—can grasp immediately, when it does not possess already, their significance. And its perceptions are not confined, as are ordinarily those of the waking mind, to the scanty gleanings of the physical senses, but extend far beyond and use, as telepathic phenomena of many kinds bear witness, a subtle sense the limits of which are too wide to be easily fixed. The relations between the surface will or impulsion and the subliminal urge, mistakenly described as unconscious or sub-

conscious, have not been properly studied except in regard to unusual and unorganised manifestations and to certain morbidly abnormal phenomena of the diseased human mind; but if we pursue our observation far enough, we shall find that the cognition and will or impulsive force of the inner being really stand behind the whole conscious becoming; the latter represents only that part of its secret endeavour and achievement which rises successfully to the surface of our life. To know our inner being is the first step towards a real self-knowledge.

If we undertake this self-discovery and enlarge our knowledge of the subliminal self, so conceiving it as to include in it our lower subconscious and upper superconscious ends, we shall discover that it is really this which provides the whole material of our apparent being and that our perceptions, our memories, our effectuations of will and intelligence are only a selection from its perceptions, memories, activities and relations of will and intelligence; our very ego is only a minor and superficial formulation of its self-consciousness and self-experience. It is, as it were, the urgent sea out of which the waves of our conscious becoming arise. But what are its limits? How far does it extend? What is its fundamental nature? Ordinarily we speak of a subconscious existence and include in this term all that is not on the waking surface. But the whole or the greater part of the inner or subliminal self can hardly be characterised by that epithet; for when we say subconscious, we think readily of an obscure unconsciousness or half-consciousness or else a submerged consciousness below and in a way inferior to and less than our organised waking awareness or, at least, less in possession of itself. But we find, when we go within, that somewhere in our subliminal part,—though not co-extensive with it since it has also obscure and ignorant regions,—there is a consciousness much wider, more luminous, more in possession of itself and things than that which wakes upon our surface and is the percipient of our daily hours; that is our inner being, and it is this which we must regard as our subliminal self and set apart the subconscious as an inferior, a lowest occult province of our nature. In the same way there is a superconscious part of our total existence in which there is what we discover to be our highest self, and this too we can set apart as a higher occult province of our nature.

But what then is the subconscious and where does it begin and how is it related to our surface being or to the subliminal of which it would seem more properly to be a province? We are aware of our body and know that we have a physical existence, even very largely identify ourselves with it, and yet most of its operations are really subconscious to our mental being; not only does the mind take no part in them but, as we suppose, our most physical being has no awareness of its own hidden operations or, by itself, of its own existence; it knows or rather feels only so much of itself as is enlightened by mind-sense and observable by intelligence. We are aware of a vitality working in this bodily form and structure as in the plant or lower animal, a vital existence which is also for the most part subconscious to us, for we only observe some of its movements and reactions. We are partly aware of its operations, but not by any

means of all or most of them, and rather of those which are abnormal than those which are normal; its wants impress themselves more forcibly upon us than its satisfactions, its diseases and disorders than its health and its regular rhythm, its death is more poignant to us than its life is vivid: we know as much of it as we can consciously observe and use or as much as forces itself upon us by pain and pleasure and other sensations or as a cause of nervous or physical reaction and disturbance, but no more. Accordingly, we suppose that this vital-physical part of us also is not conscious of its own operations or has only a suppressed consciousness or no-consciousness like the plant or an inchoate consciousness like the incipient animal; it becomes conscious only so far as it is enlightened by mind and observable by intelligence.

This is an exaggeration and a confusion due to our identification of consciousness with mentality and mental awareness. Mind identifies itself to a certain extent with the movements proper to physical life and body and annexes them to its mentality, so that all consciousness seems to us to be mental. But if we draw back, if we separate the mind as witness from these parts of us, we can discover that life and body—even the most physical parts of life—have a consciousness of their own, a consciousness proper to an obscurer vital and to a bodily being, even such an elemental awareness as primitive animal forms may have, but in us partly taken up by the mind and to that extent mentalised. Yet it has not, in its independent motion, the mental awareness which we enjoy; if there is mind in it, it is mind involved and implicit in the body and in the physical life: there is no organised self-consciousness, but only a sense of action and reaction, movement, impulse and desire, need, necessary activities imposed by Nature, hunger, instinct, pain, insensibility and pleasure. Although thus inferior, it has this awareness obscure, limited and automatic; but since it is less in possession of itself, void of what to us is the stamp of mentality, we may justly call it the submental, but not so justly the subconscious part of our being. For when we stand back from it, when we can separate our mind from its sensations, we perceive that this is a nervous and sensational and automatically dynamic mode of consciousness, a gradation of awareness different from the mind: it has its own separate reactions to contacts and is sensitive to them in its own power of feeling; it does not depend for that on the mind's perception and response. The true subconscious is other than this vital or physical substratum; it is the Inconscient vibrating on the borders of consciousness, sending up its motions to be changed into conscious stuff, swallowing into its depths impressions of past experience as seeds of unconscious habit and returning them constantly but often chaotically to the surface consciousness, missioning upwards much futile or perilous stuff of which the origin is obscure to us, in dream, in mechanical repetitions of all kinds, in untraceable impulses and motives, in mental, vital, physical perturbations and upheavals, in dumb automatic necessities of our obscurest parts of nature.

But the subliminal self has not at all this subconscious character: it is in full possession of a mind, a life-force, a clear subtle-physical sense of things. It has the same capacities as our waking being, a subtle sense and perception, a comprehensive ex-

tended memory and an intensive selecting intelligence, will, self-consciousness; but even though the same in kind, they are wider, more developed, more sovereign. And it has other capacities which exceed those of our mortal mind because of a power of direct awareness of the being, whether acting in itself or turned upon its object, which arrives more swiftly at knowledge, more swiftly at effectivity of will, more deeply at understanding and satisfaction of impulse. Our surface mind is hardly a true mentality, so involved, bound, hampered, conditioned is it by the body and bodily life and the limitations of the nerve-system and the physical organs. But the subliminal self has a true mentality superior to these limitations; it exceeds the physical mind and physical organs although it is aware of them and their works and is, indeed, in a large degree their cause or creator. It is only subconscious in the sense of not bringing all or most of itself to the surface, it works always behind the veil: it is rather a secret intraconscient and circumconscient than a subconscious; for it envelops quite as much as it supports the outer nature. This description is no doubt truest of the deeper parts of the subliminal; in other layers of it nearer to our surface there is a more ignorant action and those who, penetrating within, pause in the zones of lesser coherence or in the No-man's-land between the subliminal and the surface, may fall into much delusion and confusion: but that too, though ignorant, is not of the nature of the subconscious; the confusion of these intermediate zones has no kinship to the Inconscience.

We might say then that there are three elements in the totality of our being: there is the submental and the subconscient which appears to us as if it were inconscient, comprising the material basis and a good part of our life and body; there is the subliminal, which comprises the inner being, taken in its entirety of inner mind, inner life, inner physical with the soul or psychic entity supporting them; there is this waking consciousness which the subliminal and the subconscient throw up on the surface, a wave of their secret surge. But even this is not an adequate account of what we are; for there is not only something deep within behind our normal self-awareness, but something also high above it: that too is ourselves, other than our surface mental personality, but not outside our true self, that too is a country of our spirit. For the subliminal proper is no more than the inner being on the level of the Knowledge-Ignorance luminous, powerful and extended indeed beyond the poor conception of our waking mind, but still not the supreme or the whole sense of our being, not its ultimate mystery. We become aware, in a certain experience, of a range of being superconscient to all these three, aware too of something, a supreme highest Reality sustaining and exceeding them all, which humanity speaks of vaguely as Spirit, God, the Oversoul: from these superconscient ranges we have visitations and in our highest being we tend towards them and to that supreme Spirit. There is then in our total range of existence a superconscience as well as a subconscious and inconscience, overarching and perhaps enveloping our subliminal and our waking selves, but unknown to us, seemingly unattainable and incommunicable.

But with the extension of our knowledge we discover what this spirit or over-

soul is: it is ultimately our own highest deepest vastest Self, it is apparent on its summits or by reflection in ourselves as Sachchidananda creating us and the world by the power of His divine Knowledge-Will, spiritual, supramental truth-conscious, infinite. That is the real Being, Lord and Creator, who, as the Cosmic Self veiled in Mind and Life and Matter, has descended into that which we call the Inconscient and constitutes and directs its subconscious existence by His supramental will and Knowledge, has ascended out of the Inconscient and dwells in the inner being constituting and directing its subliminal existence by the same will and knowledge, has cast up out of the subliminal our surface existence and dwells secretly in it overseeing with the same supreme light and mastery its stumbling and groping movements. If the subliminal and subconscious may be compared to a sea which throws up the waves of our surface mental existence, the superconscience may be compared to an ether which constitutes, contains, overroofs, inhabits and determines the movements of the sea and its waves. It is there in this higher ether that we are inherently and intrinsically conscious of our self and spirit, not as here below by a reflection in silent mind or by acquisition of the knowledge of a hidden Being within us; it is through it, through that ether of superconscience, that we can pass to a supreme status, knowledge, experience. Of this superconscient existence through which we can arrive at the highest status of our real, our supreme Self, we are normally even more ignorant than of the rest of our being; yet it is into the knowledge of it that our being, emerging out of the involution of Inconscience, is struggling to evolve.¹

(To be continued)

Compiled by INDRA SEN

¹ *The Life Divine*, (American Ed.) pp. 456-502.

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

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

(Continued from the issue of November 24, 1983)

Now Sri Aurobindo formulates the problem of Ignorance: "How could this manifold Ignorance or this narrowly self-limiting and separative knowledge arise and come into action or maintain itself in action in an absolute Being who must be absolute consciousness and therefore cannot be subject to Ignorance?"¹ To solve this problem with finality he goes back to the Veda. Even when we admit all is Sachchidananda, the process by which that reality has turned itself into this phenomenon of the world must be unravelled. We have the infinite substance but the process by which it turned itself into the world must be shown. Sri Aurobindo answers: "It is then a self-determining power in universal consciousness, a capacity in self-awareness of infinite existence to perceive a certain Truth in itself and direct its force of creation along the line of that Truth, which has presided over the cosmic manifestation."² Up springs the Adwaitin questioning the interposition of any special power or faculty between the infinite Consciousness itself and the result of its working. He questions, reasonably too, why this self-awareness of the infinite cannot range freely creating forms that remain at play in the cosmic drama so long as that self-awareness does not bid them cease. Sri Aurobindo, therefore, further explains along the following lines.

We have the old Semitic revelation that tells us, God said, 'Let there be Light and there was Light.' Here in the fiat of God commanding that there should be light, we assume a directing faculty corresponding to the original perceptive power, selecting light from all that is not light, because Infinite Consciousness in its infinite action can produce only infinite results; to settle upon fixed truth or order of truths and build a world in conformity with that which is fixed, demands a selective faculty of knowledge commissioned to shape finite appearance out of the infinite Reality.³

This power is known to the Vedic seers as Maya. Etymologically Maya means *māyate anena iti māyā*. Maya is that by which forms are measured or limited. It is by Maya that the static truth of essential being or *sad* Brahman "becomes ordered truth of active being, for Maya is the power of infinite consciousness to comprehend, contain in itself and measure out, that is to say, to form—for form is delimitation—Name and Shape out of the vast illimitable Truth of infinite existence."⁴

¹ *The Life Divine*, Vol. I, p. 331.

² *Ibid.*, p. 137.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

⁴ *Ibid.*

I notice the sardonic smile on the lips of the Nirvishesha Adwaitin, for the very word Maya has been brought in to explain the working out of a cosmos from Brahman, Maya that has been dubbed mental Maya creating a universe that is an inexplicable paradox and nightmare. But Sri Aurobindo clarifies the distinction between the Maya of Shankara and this Vedic Maya. This is not the lower but the higher Maya "that is the link in thought and in cosmic Fact which the pessimistic and illusionist philosophies miss or neglect."¹ It is the lower Maya that would create the universe of Shankara, because to create a real universe "infinite consciousness must first translate itself into infinite faculty of knowledge, or, as we call it from our point of view, omniscience".² But the highest mind is not a faculty of knowledge; it is a seeker of knowledge and must necessarily create only a mayic manifestation. This omniscience is active will and knowledge, superior to mind, and the creatrix of the world. This is the link-consciousness, the intermediary power, which is simultaneously in self-possession of the One and of the flux of the Many. This is what Sri Aurobindo calls the Supermind, Truth-Consciousness, Rita-Chit or Real-Idea or Vijnana which the Master culls from the cryptic verses of the Veda, as he himself says. "The type of all perfection towards which we grow," says the modern Rishi, "the terms of our highest evolution must already be held in the divine Real-Idea; they must be there formed and conscious for us to grow towards and into them: for that pre-existence in the divine knowledge is what our human mentality names and seeks as the Ideal."³ This Supermind has the full awareness of each thing both in its potentiality and in its actuality. Therefore its creation is a truth-creation in which there is no place for Ignorance. "Our Vedic seers were conscious of such a divine self-manifestation and looked upon it as the greater world beyond the lesser, a freer and wider plane of consciousness and being, the truth-creation of the creator which they described as the seat or own home of the truth, as the vast truth or the Truth, the Right, the Vast."⁴ This world in which we live "seemed to them to be a mingled web in which truth is disfigured by an abundant falsehood."⁵ Here the one light has to be born and immortality and godhead have to be built from an existence that is under the yoke of death, disease, sorrow, weakness, suffering and limitation. But the great merit of this creation is that it is not typical but evolving, not static but progressive, not disjunctive but integrative, and to achieve its miraculous fulfilment the plunge into Ignorance has been undertaken, for without Ignorance there cannot be limitation and without limitation there cannot be multiplicity. "The distinction between Knowledge and Ignorance begins with the hymns of the Rig-Veda, called there *citti* and *acitti*⁶. Ignorance is the absence of the divine eye of perception that does not give the sight of the supramental truth."⁷ In actual operation, it is a knowledge based on the division of the undivided being, *adevi māyā*, undivine Maya supported by the Sons of Darkness and Division, enemies of the divine endeavour in man. Originally

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 39. ² *Ibid.*, p. 141. ³ *Ibid.*, pp. 195-6.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol II, pp. 229-30. ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 230.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 231. ⁷ *The Life Divine*, Vol. II, p. 238.

Maya meant only the formative and delimiting power of knowledge, the true magic of the Supreme Maya, but it came to be used also for the adverse formative power of a lower knowledge, the magic of the Rakshasa. That is how the distinction into higher and lower Maya came about, but finally Maya got settled in the pejorative use only. Ignorance in the Vedic conception, though limited, is still taken as a kind of knowledge.

In the Vedantic thought of the Upanishads the terms were replaced by Vidya and Avidya: Vidya the knowledge of the One and Avidya the knowledge of the Many. "Still the later exaggerated idea of the absolute separation from the truth of the Self and Spirit, of an original illusion, of a consciousness that can be equated with dream or hallucination did not at first enter into the Vedantic conception."¹ This can be illustrated from the Isha Upanishad, perhaps the earliest Upanishad, although opinions differ and the Chhandogya and Brihadaranyaka are taken to be the earliest. R.D. Ranade in his book, *Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy*, 1968, published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, advances at page 11 the view that the Chhandogya and Brihadaranyaka are earlier than the Isha and Kena Upanishads. But there is no dispute regarding the antiquity of the Isha and Kena next to Chhandogya and Brihadaranyaka. Sri Aurobindo's view is that the Isha is the oldest, because it accords an equal status to knowledge and works: Vidya and Avidya are treated as two sides of the same truth. This is exemplified especially by mantras 9 and 11.

Mantra 9 runs: *Andhantamaḥpraviśanti yah avidyāmuṣāsate tato bhūya wa te tamo ya u vidyāyām ratāḥ*"—Into a blind darkness they enter who follow after the Ignorance, they as if into a greater darkness who devote themselves to Knowledge alone." (Sri Aurobindo's translation). According to Shankara, Vidya means Devata jnana leading to the Abode of the Devata propitiated and Avidya is ritualistic Karma. This meaning is wriggled out of the mantra by Shankara to suit his Advaita System. A modern missionary of Shankara Advaita in his book, *Īśa Upaniṣad*, is constrained to admit that Shankara's interpretation is not quite an appropriate theme in the Upanishad, as these topics have been exhausted in its Karma Kanda portions. Yet he must support the view as a missionary. So he turns round and asserts that we cannot emphatically say they are totally absent in the Upanishads, and then drags in grammar, feeling probably the artificiality and superficiality of his explanation, and adds that the prefix 'A' in Sanskrit can mean either a mere negation or a negation and assertion, emphasising something similar to, but really different from, the thing negated. This, he says, is called *prasajya pratiṣedha*. There is another negation called *pariyudāsa pratiṣedha* into which we need not go. Hence the learned missionary says Avidya can mean not Vidya but something like Vidya, though different from it. He does not go into the circumstances when the negative prefix 'A' can thus be interpreted differently. Nor is it necessary for us, since it is admitted that the negative prefix 'A' means something like Vidya though different. So Ignorance is admitted to be like Vidya though different, and that is enough for our purpose.

¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 239.

The 11th Mantra is this: *vidyām cāvidyām ca yastadvedo bhayam saha avidyayā mṛtyum tīrtvā vidyayām ṛtamaśnute*—“He who knows that as both in one, the knowledge and the Ignorance, by the Ignorance crosses beyond death and by the knowledge enjoys immortality” (Sri Aurobindo’s translation). Shankara could not say anything in the teeth of such a direct statement regarding Vidya and Avidya and therefore declares that knowledge and works are not of equal importance: Vidya is knowledge and Avidya is works for Shankara. The modern missionary cleverly escapes out by saying that, if we consider them as an integral whole with a mutual relationship as *anga*, organ, and *angī*, organism, it is enough. He further says that rooted in Vidya or Knowledge, one must act in the world of Ignorance or works. But the missionary does not tell us how by Avidya one crosses or is enabled to cross death. He simply says that by Knowledge-experience (Vidya) he crosses the death caused by Ignorance (Avidya). But the Upanishad says that, by Avidya, one crosses death, not by Vidya. So we have to look up to Sri Aurobindo. Brahman embraces both Vidya and Avidya in manifestation and the one who knows Avidya, the knowledge of the multiplicity, crosses death, and by Vidya takes possession of immortality, and so both Vidya and Avidya are necessary for manifestation and the great unity is the goal towards which this evolving manifestation is progressing in the Divine Scheme.

So Vidya and Avidya are still considered not as opposed but as complementary even in the Vedantic time, and it is on account of these insurmountable difficulties that legend has it that a great disciple of Shankara suggested that this Upanishad should be excised from the list of the main Upanishads. Says Sri Aurobindo: “The development of the separative distinction could not stop there: it had to go to its logical extreme; since the knowledge of the One is knowledge and the knowledge of the Many is ignorance, there can be in a rigidly analytic and dialectic view nothing but pure opposition between the things denoted by the two terms.... There is no essential unity between them, no reconciliation possible.”¹ Therefore Vidya alone is knowledge and Avidya is pure Ignorance. Then “if pure ignorance takes a positive form, it is because it is not merely a not-knowing of the truth but a creation of illusions and delusions of seemingly real unreality, of temporary valid falsehoods.”² So the substance of these illusions and delusions can have no abiding value but only temporary valid falsehood. Hence the Many are an illusion and as a result the world is Mithya, really unreal or unreally real.

(To be continued)

P. KRISHNAMURTY

¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 239.

² *Ibid.*

THE DARSHAN

A NOVELLA

The Story so far

Kunjanath was the priest of Narasinhbabu's famous Vishnu temple situated on a hill-top in the town. He resided with his lovely little daughter of ten, Banchhita, in a small stone-house at the foot of the wooded hill. Every afternoon it was his habit to receive with fruit and sweetmeat his affectionate daughter as she returned home from school.

One day, coming back from school Banchhita did not find her father at home. She got very anxious and worried and after dusk went down to the street in search of him with a lighted lantern in hand. But she was kidnapped on the way and taken to a secluded building beside the forest.

Kunjanath also was captured while returning home from work by four ruffians who were bent on stealing the golden Idol from the Vishnu temple.

The next morning, Dev, the grandson, and Deepa, the granddaughter, of Sinhababu, were on their way home after an early walk. Suddenly Deepa got inspired to ask her brother about the origin and history of the dilapidated temple at the hill-top. Dev did not know, he could not reply. Just near the town they came across three strangers who had come to see the Idol of the Vishnu temple. That being an odd hour for Darshan, Dev took them to his grandfather for permission.

II

“DADU, dadu.” Deepa climbed the steps calling affectionately.

“Hello, didi, you have come! but why so late? Where is Dev?”

“He is with some strangers.”

“Strangers!”

“Yes, three gentlemen have come, dressed all in white—dhoti, punjabi and chaddar.”

“Oh I see, they have come already, and will come upstairs I think.” He was all enthusiasm and did not even care to look at his granddaughter's face which betrayed signs of disgust. She had not liked the visitors at all.

“Perhaps not. Dada has taken them to the rest-room downstairs,” she replied.

“Oh no, why there? You had better ask Sidhu to show them to my drawing-room upstairs. And, listen, put on a nice sari and do a little make-up. When I'll call you, please come to the drawing-room.”

“I'll go there even uncalled. I want to know what they want.”

“Want!... Oh, I understand. No, don't bother yourself about their demand for dowry. That is my look-out.” Dadu stood up, stretched his bent body as much as he could and then moved....

Dadu was sitting in the drawing-room, still as a statue. He was grave and thoughtful. The three strangers beside him were whispering amongst themselves. Dadu did not seem to pay any heed to that. His gaze was fixed on the oil-painting of his grandfather hanging on the opposite wall.

As the strangers stopped whispering, Sinhababu muttered as though to himself, "In fact this Idol is not of today, nor even of yesterday, but is very old. It has been inherited by our ancestors, generation after generation, from one of our ancient forefathers. The tradition goes that he used to have the Darshan of the Lord Vishnu not only during sleep or meditation but in his waking state also. Nay, he used even to talk with Him. He was a poet, a musician and an artist and wrote poems and sang songs extempore in praise of the Lord. Later with the utmost skill and dexterity he fashioned a gold Image of the god of his vision. It was indeed an Image sublime and superb, a true replica in concrete golden form of his ethereal vision, Vishnu in his exquisite pose with conch, disc, club and lotus in his four hands. The news spread far and wide and people from all walks of life came crowding to have the Darshan of the unearthly creation. The rush increased day by day and in the long run it became simply impossible to accommodate the huge crowd on the precincts of the house. So a temple was built at the top of the hill nearby and the Image was installed there with due rites and ceremonies according to the scriptures. The new temple in the town was built by my grandfather as he preferred to live in close proximity to his family deity. Moreover, the old temple on the hill-top became very dilapidated. Here also the visitors continue to come as before if not more."

Now dadu turned his gaze to the visitors and added, "People come following hearsay or getting direct indication or *adesh* in dreams. Some bring precious presents for the Idol, others simply offer fruit, flowers and incense. Many others again come empty-handed, only carrying in their heart of hearts unalloyed love and devotion for the Lord. They pour out their feelings to the deity and pray in languages best known to them for the grace, blessings and protection of the Lord. In this world of hardship, tussle and turmoil, anxiety, sorrow and suffering, tell me who doesn't want solace and safety from the Supreme? But you say you have not come for anything of the kind. Still you press so much to go to the temple and see the Image at this odd hour. May I ask you what for? Why do you want to go to the temple and see the Image?"

"Please take this and read it. You will know why." One of the visitors handed dadu a piece of paper.

Looking at it dadu's eyes flashed fire but he controlled himself immediately. He became calm and poised as ever and went through the communication quietly. Then he spoke gently, "All right, as you wish. Since it is a part of your duty to see the Image, see it." He called to Dev aloud, "Dev, Dev, come this side for a while, please."

Dev and Deepa had been just near the door listening to the conversation inside. Dev entered. "Do you want me, dadu?"

"Yes, yes, take this key. At the right-hand corner of the topmost shelf of my

almirah you will find an ivory casket which contains the keys of the temple. Bring them and escort the gentlemen there. Show them all they want to see inside the temple. They have come with a government warrant to search the temple, particularly the Idol to see if there are any precious stones, gold or money hidden therein. Another thing, please send Sidhu to Kunjanath asking him to come to the temple immediately. Now that Shivrath, his father, is no more, he is the sole in-charge of all affairs concerning the temple and the deity."

Sinhababu's poise and steadfastness perplexed the visitors. They doubted the correctness of their mission. One of them went even to the extent of appealing, "Please don't take any offence, sir, we simply carry out orders."

"Offence? Who am I to take offence? I am simply the servant of the Lord and carry out his will and intention as far as possible. To take offence is beyond my scope and capacity. He who moves and rules the universe from the minutest atoms to the galaxy of stars and meteors of the vast sky is the lone authority to take offence or not. He is the key of creation and the master of its destiny including yours and mine." Dadu closed his eyes and sank within himself.

Reaching the temple the strangers were overwhelmed by the profound silence, sanctity and cleanliness of the place. The Natmandir, *i.e.*, the big hall in front of the temple, had on both its sides extensive gardens of fruits and flowers with artificial hills, rivers, forests and fountains at places. Here and there amidst them stone-statues of different gods and goddesses had been installed. The marble floor of the hall was clean without a speck of dust. The air was laden with the fine fragrance of different flowers. The visitors inhaled deeply the sanctified air and forgot the purpose for which they had come. They sat down quietly and closed their eyes in a meditative mood.

Dev unlocked the collapsible gate of the temple and pushed apart the grills. The sound made the visitors conscious of their mission. They got up and hurried to enter the broad verandah decked with many-coloured stones. Dev scaled the marbled steps leading to the huge silver door of the central shrine. He opened the large golden padlock and pushed the door while signalling to the strangers to step up.

The strangers reached the doorway and saw that the throne on the altar inside was covered with a magnificent golden-coloured screen which had many artistic designs embroidered on it. With throbbing heart and trembling hand Dev drew the curtain aside. "My God, where is the Idol?" he exclaimed at once. The visitors shouted almost at the same time, "What's this, where is the Idol?"

*

Dadu was sitting at the same place with closed eyes in front of the painting of his grandfather. Sidhu rushed in excitedly but then controlled himself and called calmly, "Babu...."

Narasinhababu opened his eyes and looked at him.

“Babu, Kunjanath is not at home, nor nearabout his house. I couldn’t find him anywhere.”

“I see, but Banchhita, the little girl?”

“She is not there either, there are only marks of struggle inside and at the doorway of the house....”

*

With tied-up hands and feet and mouth, Kunjanath lay flat in a cave-like place deep inside the forest. At night the ruffians had carried and left him there. While leaving they had warned him, “Kunjanath, there is still time for you to think over and decide if you will give us the keys and lead a healthy and normal life. Or would you prefer to spend your whole life blind and lame and with a disfigured face? We shall come again.”

Kunjanath could not find time to think the matter over or to decide. Throughout the whole night he had remained busy driving away the bloodthirsty mosquitoes. Mosquitoes in hundreds flew around sonorously and at the slightest chance perched upon him to suck his blood. His hands and feet having been bound he could only roll from one side to the other but that had brought him hardly any respite from their concerted attacks. His smooth skin was now spotted with countless marks of mosquito-bites.

Only at sunrise when the tender rays started peeping through the leaves did they recede to darker cracks and corners of the cave. At the same time the soft and soothing warmth, the chirping of birds, the fragrance of wild flowers soothed Kunjanath’s suffering a little and he felt somewhat happy. His mind felt refreshed on hearing the melody of sehnai coming from afar. But then he doubted whether he actually heard the tune or it was only his imagination.

However, he touched his forehead with folded hands and muttered, “O Lord, I am dying of worry and anxiety for Banchhita. It is for her that I took refuge at your lotus feet. Now not only am I parted from her; my very life is at the mercy of the ruffians. But I don’t care much about that. What tortures me is the thought of Banchhita’s safety. O Lord, I offer her to you, take pity on her, protect her from evils and injuries in all circumstances. Her life and death, joy, suffering, hope and happiness all rest with you alone.”

But Kunjanath didn’t feel any relief; instead the intensity of his inner pang increased. As if some unseen hand had been cruelly squeezing his heart, tears rolled down his cheeks. He remembered how he had been impelled to nestle both Vishnu and Banchhita equally within him, how he had cherished both of them with the same care, love and adoration. As a result they both had mingled in his consciousness in such a way that he could hardly have done without either of them. They had become indispensable to his existence.

Now practically being separated from both of them he felt empty within and

his yearning soul lamented. He was desolate and forlorn. By and by the sense of emptiness increased and finally it became all-engulfing. It almost came to efface his existence, as it were. He grew terribly afraid and tried his utmost to have a pin-pointed concentration on life for support. Just then he seemed to hear a faint voice, "कौन्तेय प्रतिजानीहि न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति" ("O son of Kunti, know it for certain that my devotee does not perish").

A very well-known verse of the Gita, but who had pronounced it and where-from? Whoever he might be, was it applicable to him? No, no, he was not a devotee in the true sense of the term. He had been an agnostic and a non-believer from the beginning of his life. He was a priest only under the pressure of circumstances. As he thought, his fear vanished and the memory of his early life came floating to him without his knowing...

"Kunja, Kunja, come over here," the commanding call of his father. Kunjanath did not reply nor did he budge an inch from the place where he was busy feeding his pet cat, squirrel, hare and dog from the same vessel.

"What's it? Don't you hear me? Leave them and come over here at once," his father walked up and stood behind him.

"No, I won't leave them. Bah! after the trouble I have taken to gather them together..."

"But you have your studies, you cannot spoil your studies for them, eh?"

"Why, I shall read all right, but not now."

"Not now! Then when? Haven't I told you that this is the best part of the day for studies? Come along..." He caught him by the hand and dragged him into the study.

In spite of his father's threat, scolding and even corporal punishment Kunjanath could not be rectified. He was too obstinate and whimsical to follow his father's will and intention. He must do what he himself wanted to, not what his father intended unless, of course, that was in line with his own moods and motives. To go to the Vishnu temple, to pray, worship and read scriptures were not in his nature. So each time Shivnath, his father, forced him to do these things he failed and was disappointed.

But at school Kunjanath was liked very much by his teachers for his original thinking and thirst for scientific knowledge. His schoolmates loved him for his rectitude and amiable nature.

Shivnath's repeated failure to convert his son did not altogether dishearten him. He consoled himself thinking, "He is too young to discern what is good for him. When he grows up and attains maturity of body and mind everything will be all right."

So in due course when Kunjanath finished his final examination in school Shivnath came forward and observed suavely, "Listen, Kunjanath, by now you have enough English education; at least that is my idea and opinion. Now the time has come for you to try things the other way round. I mean, you should try now to share

the profound knowledge and learning our forefathers kept in store for posterity in the Sanskrit scriptures and other religious books. You are the son of the priest of the Vishnu temple and deserve most to be in charge of it after me. But, for that, preparation is necessary. There is enough time still. Please think over it calmly and let me know your decision at your convenience.”

Kunjanath was pushed into a precarious state. What to do now? What was the way out? Would he give up his long cherished aim and ambition of life in favour of his father's wish and aspiration with regard to him or break through and clear off from this house to somewhere else? But how? He was quite helpless without his father's money. More so, considering the huge expenditure for higher studies.

He discussed the matter with his teachers and then following their advice paid repeated visits to Sinhababu. An understanding was reached and he left home quietly without informing a single soul there. In due time with the money sanctioned by Sinhababu he got himself admitted in a Medical College.

Now Kunjanath was a free bird. He had lost his mother at a very early age. He no longer remembered her, nor the taste of her love for him. He did not even recall the taste of love and affection received from his father. Loss of love from his mother had not been compensated by the love of his father; no, not even partially. In fact he doubted if his father had any capacity to love. Perhaps his vast learning and scholarship had devoured the tender qualities of his heart.

In the same way Shivnath also thought that God had forgotten to sow the seeds of love and devotion in Kunjanath's heart. That is why Kunjanath was so hard, rigid, obstinate and wayward and did not show any sign of tender feelings towards him, the father, or of devotion to Vishnu, the Lord.

As a result, in their case the natural relation of love and affection between father and son had not been formed or rather it had not been apparent. There had always been a gap between the two. At the outset the gap had not been very perceptible but with the lapse of time it had widened and assumed such magnitude that it had been almost unbridgeable.

Meanwhile five long years had passed. The final examination having been over, Kunjanath returned home to spend some days with his father. The old man became happy, very happy indeed. After all, Kunjanath was his only son. But as it was his nature he hardly gave vent to his feelings. He did everything in right earnest as fatherly duties, concealing behind them his deep-rooted love for his son. But after a few days this hidden self-indrawn affection of the father for his son got terribly shaken by the attitude and action of Kunjanath.

Kunjanath was not a man to while away his time sitting idly at home. After a few days' rest he went out daily into the nearby jungles and adjacent villages, struck up friendship with the tribesmen and managed to collect a number of rats, frogs, hares, guineapigs and squirrels. He brought them home not for taming but for making experiments.

He kept on putting them to sleep and then cutting and dissecting these poor

creatures for days together. Shivnath, a great Vaishnava and a Pundit, deemed the procedure not only nasty and cruel but also a brutal blow to the sanctity of his house. At last it became impossible for him to remain a silent observer. He called Kunjanath and explained, "Kunjanath, considering my name and position, please find some other place for your work. Such nastiness and cruelty can no longer be permitted to take place in my house."

Owing to deep concentration on and involvement with his experiments, Kunjanath failed to follow his father's intention and did not pay any heed to what he said. He continued with his work undisturbed and with full attention. But then on one fine morning, stepping into his laboratory he was terribly shocked to find everything pell-mell and topsy-turvy—the test-tubes broken, the instruments upside down and the results of arduous research spoilt. Stunned and speechless he stood for a while and left home again without uttering a single word of protest.

This departure, however, turned out to be for him a boon in disguise. For, this is how he came in contact with the famous pathologist Dr. Mondal who appointed him shortly his assistant in research-work. It did not take him long to prove his worth and become an efficient and favourite helper of Dr. Mondal.

*

The Bombay Mail was running at top speed. Kunjanath sitting relaxed in a first-class compartment was turning the pages of a medical journal. He has been chosen to represent Dr. Mondal at a conference in Bombay. The other two passengers in the compartment were engaged in a hot argument about something which did not interest Kunjanath at all. Rather he preferred to look at the clear moon-lit night outside. The full moon seemed to pour down the white of its loving heart on the yearning green of the earth.

Suddenly a terrible jerk threw Kunjanath out of his seat. He stumbled to the floor and hurt his shoulder and right knee. He stood up immediately but with much difficulty. He turned his eyes towards his co-travellers to find them lying on the floor as if in a wrestle to resolve the issue of their argument. The train came to a dead stop.

"Surely there must be an accident," thought Kunjanath and instantly grew aware of the duty of a doctor under the circumstances. He hurriedly got down and headed towards the site of the accident. Perhaps a few bogies had been derailed. He strove to move faster but could not, his knees pained. While limping ahead his eyes surveyed the surroundings. The natural beauty of the place simply enchanted him. It was a jungle area with scattered trees, bushes and thickets on the long and green overgrowth of grasses. They seemed to smile gleefully under the shower of silvery rays from above. A soft, green, pretty landscape indeed! He wondered why on earth cruel death had selected this lovely place to hide its vile, ugly face.

Just then he heard a peculiar feeble sound coming from within the grasses down

below the high railway lines. What was this sound? Who made it? He could not brush aside the intense appeal it appeared to make. He hesitated for a moment and then crept down the slope and reached the spot. He was full of awe and wonder at what he saw. Amidst the grasses, beside a bush, a baby-girl of ten months or so was crying at the top of her voice, her uplifted hands and feet were fidgetting vigorously. "What a pretty little thing!" thought Kunjanath. "As if it were a portion of the moon magically dropped down, now striving to get back to the place of its origin."

Like an automaton Kunjanath picked up the child. She stopped crying at once and grew absolutely quiet. Then she ran her tender fingers over his chin and face as though to caress him. At this he was overwhelmed with a sublime feeling hitherto unknown to him. Was it a sudden upsurge of love, pity or affection for the child? His rational mind failed to discern it clearly. Extremely perplexed he simply gazed on at the vast open sky above. The full moon appeared to smile at his most awkward and perplexed condition.

The child pointed with her finger at something on the other side of the bush. Kunjanath became conscious of the situation and moved to the place as directed. He found to his utmost surprise a healthy young woman lying motionless on the ground with her clothes torn. No mark of hurt or wound could be traced on her almost bare body. He lifted up one of her hands and felt its wrist. No, there was no pulsation, he checked her respiration, observed her eyes and concluded, "Yes, she is dead and gone." But how? Had she been thrown out of the train by the jerk of the accident? Quite probable; perhaps she had been standing in front of an open door with the child in her arms and had been hurled out. The thick carpet of grasses had prevented her from receiving any serious hurt but her heart had failed at the sudden shock and fear. The baby, hung on her breast, had escaped death by chance.

At the nearest town Kunjanath waited for about three days amongst the dead and half-dead. No claimant of the child or the body of her dead mother came along.

Then, as he decided to hand the child over to the hospital authorities, he felt an intense anguish within; the strings of his heart appeared to tear asunder. To part with the child became impossible for him. He wondered how her little, tender fingers could have such a powerful grip over him, a confirmed rationalist! Normally it might seem impossible but actually it was so, so far as Kunjanath at the moment was concerned...

He felt a yearning to see his own father. He remembered the small stone-house where he had spent playfully the days of his boyhood and adolescence. The vision of the surrounding jungles inhabited by birds, beasts, insects and butterflies rose before his eyes. An unaccountable joy surged up in him. But then he doubted if his father would accept this orphan girl without any name, caste or creed. He was a staunch Brahmin; would he break the norms of Brahminic regulation for the sake of this poor waif? "Whether he breaks them or not, I will see to it afterwards," he thought and made for home with the child, his mind oscillating.

"Father, you have to keep the child with you," beseeched Kunjanath.

"Who is she?"

"My daughter."

"Your daughter! You never informed me of your marriage!"

"No, didn't get time, it happened all on a sudden," he answered mechanically.

"H'm..., now where is her mother?"

"Died in an accident the other day."

"Died...!" The old man was shocked beyond words. He remembered the untimely death of his own wife and looked at the child helplessly. The child in return extended her eager hands towards her newly-found grandfather. Seeing the sweet smile and moon-beam beauty of the girl's face, the old man was moved to the very core of his heart. He took her into his arms and clasped her endearingly. The child started fingering gently her grandfather's grey beard. It reminded him of the boy Kunjanath, who also had liked to play with his beard during his childhood but his beard had been pitch-black then. Shivnath tried in vain to hide a deep sigh and spoke gravely, "Yes, she can stay if you also stay with her."

"No, no, how is it possible? I have yet a lot of work to do. Besides, Dr. Mondal will..., however, I shall come to see her often, no doubt."

"No, you have to see her always. My days are numbered and in my absence you have to look after both Vishnu and this much-wanted little girl..."

(To be continued)

CHUNILAL CHAWDHURY

SILVER BRUSH, SILVER BROOM

PICK and sweep away
 From each corner and nook
 Cobwebs of centuries
 With silver brush and silver broom.
 Enlighten old premises and beliefs
 Full of long-gathered gloom.
 Not mind and life alone
 But the clodlike body
 Also illumine.
 With the detergent of divine plasticity
 rub each pore
 and wake up in each cell
 An immortal bloom.

SHYAM KUMARI

EUROPE 1974

A TRAVELOGUE

(49)

WHEN I was packing our suitcases before we started on our journey, Sanat advised not to take too many warm clothes "You won't need many at this time of the year even in Europe," he said. In spite of that I had put two woollies lovingly in one corner thinking surely we would need them in Switzerland.

Climbing Jura was pleasant, we sat back expectantly for some Alpine Zephyr any moment. It was only when we were nearing the very top that a whiff of cool breeze visited us. Only one and it was gone before we could say Jack Robinson. Then it was all a down-hill drive and warmer and warmer as we descended towards Geneva, which is situated in a trough surrounded by hills on all sides. It seemed all day the valley had absorbed all the heat of the sun and retained it as no Alpine breeze came to relieve it. Geneva was positively hot and we were much disappointed. As there was no time for sight-seeing we were shown the lake and the Boulevard where all the fashionable shops were, shops that sold only watches. Some of the party went in to buy some but for us there was no question of buying any. Some excellent watches were there at home belonging to Sanat and father, and also the heavy gold watches with monograms on them belonging to grandfather. So we opted for the Lake. It was cooler there, but nothing much to see, only grey water and one fountain called Eaux Vives rising some sixty feet high, water spouting up and falling back. We took out a map of Switzerland and some pictures to study the country's geography.

An oval-shaped country with hills on all sides, it yet had a flat land in the middle where it seemed they did some cultivation. There are some lakes. The lake of Geneva was forty-five miles on the south border and fifty-five on the north. What surprised us most was the fact that it was only the southern semi-circle that was called the real Alps, the part that crowns Italy. On the west where the hills go down to meet the sea they are the French Alps, on the east is the Tyrolean country divided into Italian Tyrol, Austrian Tyrol and Bavarian Tyrol. This part we had already seen. There are several passes: St. Bernard, the little St. Bernard, St. Gotthard, Mont Cenis and of course Simplon associated with the famous Orient Express that starts from Istanbul and terminates at Paris. The tunnel under Mont Blanc we were yet to see on our way to Chamounix. The most important cities are all situated on the north and there are a few isolated peaks none more than fifteen thousand feet high. All the cities looked pretty, decorated nicely like doll-houses.

Even if I don't go very far I must say I have yet to see mountains more gorgeous than those we see as we enter the Doon valley. As Dehra Doon is Sanat's home-town,

naturally we had travelled that way countless times. I have read books of travellers in Switzerland airing their views as to how they had felt the insignificance of man in face of the mountains there. I wonder what these people would say if they were to see our mountains. In the Doon valley one is gripped by the overpowering sense of their grandeur. Man's natural posture in front of them is kneeling. Even such words as "magnificent", "superb" seem too small to describe them. Small wonder our Rishis thought that our gods and goddesses lived on the Himalayas. Looking at these mountains the Ancients must have heard the word OM. I feel compelled to quote a piece by Sir Francis Younghusband. He was a much-travelled man in the Himalayas.

"I lay down on the ground and gazed and gazed upon the scene, muttering to myself deep thankfulness that to me it had been given to see such glory. Here was no disappointment, no trace of disillusionment. What I had so ardently longed to see was now spread out before me. Where I had reached no white man had ever reached before. And there before me were peaks of 26,000 feet, and in one case 28,000 in height, rising above a valley bottom only 12,000 feet above sea level. For mountain majesty and sheer sublimity that scene could hardly be excelled. And austere though it was it did not repel, it just enthralled me. This world was more wonderful by far than I had ever known before. And I seemed to grow greater myself from the mere fact of having seen it. Having once seen that, how could I ever be little again!"

And there stands our Pamir knot, the grandest and the most splendid mountain system in the world. Flanked by the Himalayas and the Karakoram and the Hindu-kush it stands there like Father Time observing man's progress through millenia. There are mountains here of 28 thousand feet high and green grazing fields at 17 and 20 thousand feet above sea level. Apart from the more famous passes out of India, the Khyber pass, the Gomal pass, the Bolan pass, the Leh-Ladakh pass, the Karakoram pass, there are innumerable passes in the neighbourhood of the Pamir. But most of the passes are over 15 or 17 or 20 thousand feet high. The inexorable and merciless face of a mountain gives way to verdant valleys on the obverse side. In Hunza they say the Mir had ordered not to light a fire for cooking during the summer months as fruit and nuts and milk literally flow over Hunza. Nor are these mountain retreats devoid of human beings. There are at least twenty principalities on the roof of the world. I say principalities as the peoples are neither nations nor states yet ethnically all different. Some pay a nominal homage to Kashmir, some to Afghanistan. The northernmost peoples of Khokand, Darwaz, Roshan are coveted by Russia. From Sinkiang on the east, China too wants to extend its influence over the Karakoram.

The whole area could be a wonderful playground for ethnologists and anthropologists and philologists. The people of Kafiristan are blond with blue eyes and fair

skin. If for a generation or two they were taken out of their country and educated they could be passed off as Europeans.

Thus our country spreads out with real mountains—no dilly-dallying with hills.

(To be continued)

CHAUNDONA BANERJI

IN view of the importance of February 29 no less than February 21 of this year—February 29 which is the 7th anniversary of the Supramental Manifestation upon Earth—the prices of the first two of the following three publications of Huta have been reduced.

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BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Towers and Mountains. Five Small Poems in large Pictures. By *Sri Sundaram* and *Bhakti Shah*. Published by Sri Aurobindo Society, Peddar Road Branch, Bombay. 1983. Price: Rs. 75/-

FIVE years of my acquaintance with the editor of *Mother India* and the experience of reviewing nearly forty books for this monthly have given me the privilege of reviewing a bag.

“What? A bag for review! And that too in *Mother India!*” Your words are audible to me.

Yes. It is a thick polythene bag, 18"x15" in size, with a plastic cord for its handle. But the bag is after all a container like our physical frame which shelters the soul. Now let us go into the heart of the matter.

Open the bag and pull out its contents. What comes out is a file, nearly the size of the bag. A beautiful picture of a lovely red rose adorns the front side of the file.

What does the file hold? A pleasant surprise awaits one. A few loose drawing sheets and a paper bag. A bag again! Hm... It contains four drawings—1. Dancers at Chidambaram Temple, 2. OM—“the word, the Eternal and the Mantra, 3. The Elephant-face God—Lord Ganesh, and 4. Rose—‘Mental Love under psychic influence’.

As regards the loose sheets in the file, the first one contains five poems—1. Tower of T, 2. Lake of Love, 3. At the Cross Roads, 4. Mountain Meru and 5. Jump into Your Inner Self—by Sri Sundaram, in English and in Hindi.

In the first poem there is a lot of word-jugglery and it reads very much like a nursery rhyme. The second one is about a Lake with the “waters of Love” and on its banks stand children “looking in its mirror of thought” and request the “Lake of Love” to move “where there is no love”. The third poem is an advice to all children of the world, both old and young. “Work... Work... Work.” That is the advice. In the fourth poem Mt. Meru is proud to say that Gods are residing on all its tops, but at the same time feels sorry that “the glory divine—Sweet Mother of all the Worlds” has not come to her. And so Mt. Meru herself prepares to go to Her. The last one again is an instructive piece. It tells one to understand one’s self and have a “precious find subtle and sweet”. In these poems the dominating figure is the Mother. She is the “guide and the guidance”, “A Lake with the Waters of Love”, “The Tower of T”; “Supreme and sweet” and finally the “unfathomed oceans of Bliss”. That much for the first sheet.

The file holds five more sheets bigger in size, folded twice and in a few cases three times. Unfold these sheets. They in turn unfold to you a grand sight. Every sheet carries a poem discussed in the preceding paragraph and every line in the poem is illustrated by Bhakti Shah. The words spring to action. These multi-coloured pictures form a visual commentary. “To learn is great. To listen is greater”, so goes

a Tamil saying. To this can be added "To see is the greatest", for here we see the poems and they remain green in our memory. Who can ever forget the admirable piece: Mt. Meru in pictures?

This unusual book is certainly a collector's item. These pictures need not remain in the bag. They can very well be used to beautify the walls of any decent drawing room.

P. RAJA