

MOTHER INDIA

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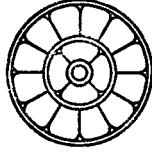
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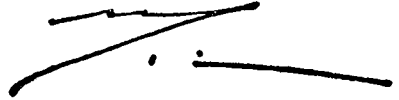


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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"Great is Truth and it shall prevail."

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A TALK BY THE MOTHER

TO THE ASHRAM CHILDREN ON OCTOBER 7, 1953

“The method by which you will be most successful depends on the consciousness you have developed and the character of the forces you are able to bring into play. You can live in the consciousness of the completed cure or change and by the force of your inner formation slowly bring about the outward change. Or if you know and have the vision of the force that is able to effect these things and if you have the skill to handle it, you can call it down and apply it in the parts where its action is needed, and it will work out the change. Or, again, you can present your difficulty to the Divine and ask of It the cure, putting confidently your trust in the Divine Power.”

Questions and Answers 1929 (June 23)

What is this “consciousness of the completed cure”?

THIS does not mean that there is a specific consciousness of the completed cure. It means: “To live in a state of consciousness that’s conformable to a complete cure.” How shall I explain it?... You have in your mind a picture or an image or formation which realises in itself all the necessary relations and elements for the cure to exist and be total. This is called “having the consciousness of a complete cure.” It does not mean that there is a state of consciousness which is in itself a complete cure, and that if you get this consciousness, well, you get the cure. It is not like that. Have you understood the difference?

“In some the aspiration moves on the mental levels or in the vital field; some have a spiritual aspiration. On the quality of the aspiration depends the force that answers and the work that it comes to do. To make yourself blank in meditation creates an inner silence; it does not mean that you have become nothing or have become a dead and inert mass. Making yourself an empty vessel, you invite that which shall fill it. It means that you release the stress of your inner consciousness towards realisation. The nature of the consciousness and the degree of its stress determine the forces that you bring into play and whether they shall help and fulfil or fail or even harm and hinder.”

Questions and Answers 1929 (June 23)

What is the difference between mental aspiration, vital aspiration and spiritual aspiration?

In what way do you aspire in the mind and in the vital or aspire spiritually?

A mental aspiration means that the thought-power aspires to have knowledge, for instance, or else to have the power to express itself well or have clear ideas, a logical reasoning. One may aspire for many things; that all the faculties and capacities

of the mind may be developed and placed at the service of the Divine. This is a mental aspiration.

Or you may have an aspiration in the vital; if you have desires or troubles, storms, inner difficulties, you may aspire for peace, to be quite impartial, without desire or preference, to be a good docile instrument without any personal whims, always at the Divine's disposal. This is a vital aspiration.

You may have a physical aspiration also; that the body may feel the need to acquire a kind of equipoise in which all the parts of the being will be well balanced, and that you may have the power to hold off illness at a distance or overcome it fast when it enters trickily, and that the body may always function normally, harmoniously, in perfect health. That is a physical aspiration.

A spiritual aspiration means having an intense need to unite with the Divine, to give oneself totally to the Divine, not to live outside the divine Consciousness so that the Divine may be all in all for you in your integral being, and you feel the need of a constant communion with Him, of the sense of his presence, of his guidance in all that you do, and of his harmonising all the movements of the being. That is a spiritual aspiration.

Mother, does aspiration come from the psychic?

Not necessarily. Each part of the being can have its own aspiration.

How can the physical manage to aspire, since it is the mind that thinks?

As long as it is the mind that thinks, your physical is something that's three-fourths inert and without its own consciousness. There is a physical consciousness proper, a consciousness of the body; the body is conscious of itself, and it has its own aspiration. So long as one thinks of one's body, one is not in one's physical consciousness. The body has a consciousness that's quite personal to it and altogether independent of the mind. The body is completely aware of its own functioning or its own equilibrium, or disequilibrium, and it becomes absolutely conscious, in quite a precise way, if there is a disorder somewhere or other, and (how shall I put it?) it is in contact with that and feels it very clearly, even if there are no external symptoms. The body is aware if the whole working is harmonious, well balanced, quite regular, functioning as it should; it has that kind of plenitude, a sense of plenitude, of joy and strength—something like the joy of living, acting, moving in an equilibrium full of life and energy. Or else the body can be aware that it is ill-treated by the vital and the mind and that this harms its own equilibrium, and it suffers from this. That may produce a complete disequilibrium in it. And so on.

One can develop one's physical consciousness so well that even if one is fully exteriorised, even if the vital goes completely out of the body, the body has a personal, independent consciousness which enables it to move, to do all kinds of very simple

things without the vital's being there, quite independently. The body can learn how to speak: the mind and the vital may be outside it, very far away, busy elsewhere, but due to the link joining them with matter, they can still find expression through a body wherein there is no mind or vital, and which yet can learn to speak and repeat what the others say. The body can move; I don't mean that it can exert much, but it can move. It can do small, very simple things. It can write, for instance, learn how to write as it can learn to speak. It does speak: a little (how to put it?) slowly, with a little difficulty, but still it can speak clearly (sufficiently clearly) for one to understand. And yet the mind and vital may have gone out altogether, may be completely outside. There is a body-consciousness.

And so, when one has developed this body-consciousness, one can have a very clear perception of the opposition between the different kinds of consciousness. When the body needs something and is aware that this is what it needs, and the vital wants something else and the mind yet another, well, there may very well be a discussion among them, and contradictions and conflicts. And one can discern very clearly what the poise of the body is, the need of the body in itself, and in what way the vital interferes and destroys this equilibrium most often and harms the development so much, because it is ignorant. And when the mind comes in, it creates yet another disorder which is added to the one between the vital and the physical, by introducing its ideas and norms, its principles and rules, its laws and all that, and as it doesn't take into account exactly the needs of the other, it wants to do what everybody does. Human beings have a much more delicate and uncertain health than animals because their mind intervenes and disturbs the equilibrium. The body, left to itself, has a very sure instinct. For instance, never will the body if left to itself eat when it doesn't need to or take something which will be harmful to it. And it will sleep when it needs to sleep, it will act when it needs to act. The instinct of the body is very sure. It is the vital and the mind which disturb it: one by its desires and caprices, the other by its principles, dogmas, laws and ideas. And unfortunately, in civilisation as it is understood, with the kind of education given to children, this sure instinct of the body is completely destroyed: it is the rest that dominates. And naturally things happen as they do: one eats things that are harmful, one doesn't take rest when one needs to or sleeps too much when it is not necessary or does things one shouldn't do and spoils one's health completely.

Sometimes, Mother, when children are interested in something, they don't want to go to bed, then what should be done? Just a few minutes earlier they said they were sleepy, and then they start playing and say they don't want to go to bed.

They shouldn't be allowed to play when they are sleepy. This is exactly the intrusion of vital movements. A child who doesn't live much with older people (it is bad for children to live much among older people), a child left to itself will sleep spontaneously whatever it may be doing, the moment it needs to sleep. Only, when children are

used to living with older people, well, they catch all the habits of the grown-ups. Specially when they are told: "Oh! you can't do this because you are young! when you are older, you can do it. You can't eat this because you are small, when you are bigger you will be able to eat it. At this particular time you must go to bed because you are young...." So, naturally, they have that idea that they must grow up at any cost or at least look grown-up!

"The very intensity of your faith may mean that the Divine has already chosen that the thing it points to shall be done. An unshakable faith is a sign of the presence of the Divine Will, an evidence of what shall be."

Questions and Answers 1929 (June 23)

A dynamic faith and a great trust, aren't they the same thing?

Not necessarily. One should know of what stuff the faith and the trust are made. Because, for instance, if you live normally, under quite normal conditions—without having extravagant ideas and a depressing education—well, through all your youth and usually till you are about thirty, you have an absolute trust in life. If, for example, you are not surrounded by people who, as soon as you have a cold in the head, get into a flurry and rush to the doctor and give you medicines, if you are in normal surroundings and happen to have something—an accident or a slight illness—there is this certainty in the body, this absolute trust that it will be all right: "It is nothing, it will pass off. It is sure to go. I shall be quite well tomorrow or in a few days. It will surely be cured"—whatever you may have caught. That is indeed the normal condition of the body. An absolute trust that all life lies before it and that all will be well. And this helps enormously. One gets cured nine times out of ten, one gets cured very quickly with this confidence: "It is nothing; what is it after all? Just an accident, it will pass off, it is nothing." And there are people who keep it for a very long time, a very long time, a kind of confidence—nothing can happen to them. Their life is all before them, fully, and nothing can happen to them. And what will happen to them is of no importance at all: all will be well, perforce; they have the whole of life before them. Naturally, if you live in surroundings where there are morbid ideas and people pass their time recounting disastrous and catastrophic things, then you may think wrongly. And if you think wrongly, this reacts on your body. Otherwise, the body as it is can keep this confidence till the age of forty or fifty—it depends upon people—some know how to live a normal, balanced life. But the body is quite confident about its life. It is only if thought comes in and brings all kinds of morbid and unhealthy imaginations, as I said, that it changes everything. I have seen instances like that: children who had these little accidents one has when running and playing about: they did not even think about it. And it disappeared immediately. I have seen others whose family has drummed into them since the time they could understand, that everything is dangerous, that there

are microbes everywhere, that one must be very careful, that the least wound may prove disastrous, that one must be altogether on one's guard and take great care that nothing serious happens.... So, they must have their wounds dressed, must be washed with disinfectants, and there they sit wondering: "What is going to happen to me? Oh! I may perhaps get tetanus, a septic fever...." Naturally, in such cases one loses confidence in life and the body feels the effects keenly. Three-fourths of its resistance disappears. But normally, naturally, it is the body which knows that it must remain healthy, and it knows it has the power to react. And if something happens, it tells this something: "It is nothing, it will go away, don't think about it, it is over"; and it does go.

That of course is absolute trust.

Now, you are speaking of "dynamic faith". Dynamic faith is something different. If one has within him faith in the divine grace, that the divine grace is watching over him, and that no matter what happens the divine grace is there, watching over him, this one may keep all one's life and always; and with this one can pass through all dangers, face all difficulties, and nothing stirs, for you have the faith and the divine grace is with you. It is an infinitely stronger, more conscious, more lasting force which does not depend upon the conditions of your physical build, does not depend upon anything except the divine grace alone, and hence it leans on the Truth and nothing can shake it. It is very different.

Sometimes children ask us why we are here. What should we tell them?

That depends upon their age, my child, and upon what they are. It depends upon their sincerity. You can't give the same answer to everyone.

But do the tiny tots sometimes ask?... Do the youngest ask why they are here?

Not the youngest—Purnima, Tarulata.

At that age, already it's the age when one questions and doubts.

The very tiny ones, if they ask this, it is wonderful. There is only one very simple answer to give them: "My children, it is because this is the divine will. It is due to the divine grace that you are here. Be happy, be calm, be at peace, do not question, all will be well." And when they grow older they already begin to reason, then it is no longer so well, no longer so easy. But that depends, as I said, that depends upon how intelligent they are, how great is their opening. There are those who are predestined, who are here because they should be here. With these it is easy. You have only to tell them: "My children, it is because you belong to a future which is being built up, and it is here that it is being built." For them it is very simple, it is true. There are those who are here because their parents are here, for no other reason. So it is difficult to tell them that unless you tell them quite simply: "Because your father and mother are here."

But how can we understand?

Ah! that indeed depends upon you.

The first thing is to learn how to know by identity. That is indispensable when one has the responsibility for others. To learn how to guide other people, the first indispensable step is to know how to enter into their minds so as to know them—not to project one's thought, imagine what they are, but go out of oneself and enter into them, to know what is happening there. Then, in this way, one knows them because one is they. When one knows only oneself in others, that means one knows nothing. One may be completely mistaken. One imagines it is like this or that—one judges by appearances or else through mental preferences, preconceived ideas; that is to say, one knows nothing. But there is one condition in which one doesn't even need to know, to try to know what somebody is like: one can't do otherwise but feel what he is, for he is a projection of oneself. And unless one knows how to do that, one can never do what is necessary for people—unless one feels as they feel, thinks as they think, unless one is able to enter into them as though one were they themselves. That is the only way. If you try to know with a small active mind, you will never know anything—nor by looking at people and telling yourself: "Why, he does this in this way and that way, so he must be like that." That is impossible.

So, the first task of those who have a responsibility—for instance, those who are in charge of educating other children, taking care of others, from rulers to teachers and monitors—their first task is to learn how to identify themselves with the others, to feel as they do. Then one knows what one should do. One keeps one's inner light, keeps one's consciousness where it ought to be, very high above, in the light, and at the same time gets identified, and so one feels what they are, what their reactions are, what their thoughts, and one holds that before the light one has: one succeeds in thinking out perfectly well what should be done for them. You will tell each one what he needs to hear, you will act with each one as is necessary to make him understand. And that is why it is a wonderful grace to have the responsibility for a certain number of people, for that obliges you to make the most essential progress. And I hasten to tell you that ninety-nine times out of a hundred, people don't make it. But that is exactly why things are in such a bad way. Particularly those who have responsibility of governing a country—this is the last thing they think about! They are very eager rather to keep their way of seeing and their way of feeling, and fiercely refrain from realising the needs of those over whom they rule. But indeed one can see that the result is not up to much; so far it is evident that it can't be said that governments have been remarkable institutions. It is the same thing on all the levels: there are small governments, there are big governments. But the laws are the same, for all. And unless, when giving a lesson, you are able, there and then, to take in the entire atmosphere, to gather the vibrations around people, put them all together, keep all that before you, and become aware of what you can do with this stuff (with the vibrations you can spread, the forces you can give out, those which

will be received, those which will be assimilated), unless you do that, mostly you are wasting your time, you too. In order to do the least work, one must make a lot of progress.

“The supramental does not take interest in mental things in the same way as the mind. It takes its own interest in all the movements of the universe, but it is from a different point of view and with a different vision. The world presents to it an entirely different appearance; there is a reversal of outlook and everything is seen from there as other than what it seems to the mind and often even the opposite. Things have another meaning; their aspect, their motion and process, everything about them, are watched with other eyes. Everything here is followed by the supermind; the mind movements and not less the vital, the material movements, all the play of the universe has for it a very deep interest, but of another kind.”

Questions and Answers 1929 (June 23)

In what does the supermind take interest?

It takes interest in the transformation of the world—in the descent of forces in the material world and its transformation, in its preparation so that it may be able to receive the supramental forces. And it is conscious of the difference between the world as it is and the world as it ought to be. Every moment it sees the gulf between what is and what should be, between the truth and the falsehood that is expressed. And constantly it keeps this vision of Truth which broods over the world, so that as soon as there is a little opening, it may descend and manifest itself. And what to the ordinary awareness seems quite natural is for it usually a play of obscure, ignorant, altogether unconscious forces. And it does not find that at all natural. It finds that a detestable accident and tries with all its strength to remedy it. It seeks, looks and if there is any receptivity anywhere, it intensifies its action. It does not see men in their outward appearance but as vibrations more or less receptive and more or less dark or luminous, and wherever it sees a light it projects its force so that it may have its full effect. And instead of treating each being like a pawn on a chess-board, a small, well-defined person, it sees how forces enter, go out, stir, move and make all things move, how vibrations act. And it sees those vibrations which ascend and lead to progress and it sees those vibrations which fling you further and further into the darkness, which make you go down. And at times someone comes to you with ready-made words which he has learnt generally from books, though words of aspiration and goodwill, and he is answered by a strong rebuff and told that he should try to be sincere—he does not understand. This is because the Force sees that there is no sincerity—the Force does not see the words, does not hear the words, doesn't even see the ideas in the head but only the state of consciousness, whether the state of consciousness is sincere or not. There are other instances of people who seem to be quite frivolous and stupid and busy with useless things, and suddenly one helps

them, encourages them, treats them like friends and comrades, for one sees shining in the depth of all that a sincerity, an aspiration which may have a childish form outwardly but which is there and very pure at times. And so one does many things for them which people don't understand, for they cannot see the reality behind the appearance. That is why I say that it is in an entirely different way that the supermind is interested, an entirely different way that it sees, an entirely different way that it knows.

Isn't it more important to know oneself than to try to know others?

Very important, of capital importance! Besides, that's the field of work given to each one. It is this one must understand, that each one—this totality of substance constituting your inner and outer body, the totality of substance with which your being is built from the outermost to the inmost—is a field of work; it is as though one had gathered together carefully, accumulated a certain number of vibrations and put them at your disposal for you to work upon them fully. It is a field of action constantly at your disposal: night and day, waking or asleep, all the time—nobody can take it away from you, it is wonderful! You may refuse to use it (as most men do), but it is a mass to be transformed that is there in your hands, fully at your disposal, given to you for you to learn to work upon it. So, the most important thing is to begin by doing that. You can do nothing with others unless you are able to do it with yourself. You can never give a good advice to anyone unless you are able to give it to yourself first, and to follow it. And if you see a difficulty somewhere, the best way of changing this difficulty is to change it in yourself first. If you see a defect in anyone, you may be sure it is in you and you begin to change it in yourself. And when you will have changed it in yourself, you will be strong enough to change it in others. And this is a wonderful thing, people don't realise what an infinite grace it is that this universe is arranged in such a way that there is a collection of substance, from the most material to the highest spiritual, all that gathered together into what is called a small individual, but at the disposal of a central Will. And that is yours, your field of work, nobody can take it away from you, it is your own property. And to the extent you can work upon it, you will be able to have an action upon the world. But only to that extent. One must do more for oneself, besides, than one does for others.

Is it possible to know others before knowing oneself?

Nothing is impossible. One can't say it is not possible. But if one is unaware of certain movements in oneself, it is certainly an anomaly to be conscious first of these in others. It is an anomaly. It may exist. There may be people so decentralised that they are more sensitive about others than in themselves. But still, usually they are considered a little morbid. This does not give them a very great inner equilibrium, they become unbalanced. There are people who are all at sea, they are like a cork

upon the waves: it goes here and there, jumps this way and that. They have no line of consciousness.... It is not an enviable state. I don't think, truly, sincerely I don't think that it is possible to help anyone unless one has already helped oneself first. If you are unconscious, how do you expect to bring consciousness into others? This seems to me an insoluble problem. That is what people usually do, but that's no reason for approving it. This is exactly why, I believe, things go so wrong. It is like those who seeing others quarrelling rush forward and begin shouting louder than they to tell them, "Keep quiet!"

You said that to each individual is given a problem to solve. So each man upon earth has to live individually, for, in living collectively one has the difficulty of the collectivity also: it is not only one's own difficulty.

Yes, but man happens to be a social animal, and so, instinctively, he forms groups. But that also is why those who wished to go fast and did not feel themselves sufficiently strong retired into solitude. That is the reason, the justification of the ascetic who goes away into solitude, for he tries to cut himself off from the world. Only... there is an "only". One can do that physically to a certain extent, up to a point, cut oneself off from physical nature—not totally. It has been noticed, for instance, that ascetics who went away to sit under a tree in the forest, in a very short while became extraordinarily interested in all the animals living in the forest: it is the need of physical relationship with other living beings. It is possible that some do not need this, but it is a fairly general rule.

But solidarity does not stop there. There is a vital solidarity and a mental solidarity which you cannot prevent. There is, despite everything (though men are more individualised than animals), there is a spirit of the species. There are collective suggestions which don't need to be expressed in words. There are atmospheres one cannot escape. It is certain (for this I know by experience), it is certain that there is a degree of individual perfection and transformation which cannot be realised without the whole of humanity having made a particular progress. And this happens by successive steps. There are things in Matter which cannot be transformed unless the whole of Matter has undergone transformation to a certain degree. One cannot isolate oneself completely. It is not possible. One can do the work, one can choose: there are people who have chosen to go into solitude and try to realise in themselves the ideal they saw—usually they reached a certain point, then stopped there, they could not go further. It has been thus historically. I was saying the other day: "There are perhaps people upon earth whom I don't know who have realised extraordinary things" but exactly because they have isolated themselves from the earth, the earth does not know them. This is just to say that nothing is impossible. It seems doubtful, is all that I can say. But it is impossible, even if one isolates oneself physically, to do so vitally and mentally. There is the vast terrestrial atmosphere in which one is born, and there is a sort of spirit or genius of the human race; well, this genius must have

reached a certain degree of perfection for anyone to be able to go further. It is not that one has to wait till all have done it, no; but it is as though all had to reach a certain level for one to be able to take one's spring and go farther.... Surely the individual will always be ahead of the mass, there's no doubt about that, but there will always be a proportion and a relation.

On what plane are men most united?

You mean "most interdependent"?

No. I mean a common will.

A common will? You must not mix up things. If you are telling me about the goodwill among human beings, this is in the psychic, there's no shadow of a doubt about it. But there is a kind of vital interdependence, quite considerable, more than the physical, I believe. For instance, the first World War was the result of a tremendous descent of the forces of the vital world (hostile forces of the vital world) into the material world. Even those who were conscious of this descent and consequently armed to defend themselves against it, suffered from its consequences. The world, the whole earth suffered from its consequences. There was a general deterioration from the vital point of view, I could say, which was inevitable even for those who consciously knew whence the force came, when the deterioration came, and who could therefore fight against it consciously—they could not prevent certain effects being produced in the earth atmosphere. Naturally, men do not know what happened to them; all that they have said is that everything had become worse since the war. That was all that they could affirm. For example, the moral level went down very much. It was simply the result of a formidable descent of the vital world: forces of disorder, forces of corruption, forces of deterioration, forces of destruction, forces of violence, forces of cruelty.

Why this descent?

Perhaps it was a reaction, for there was another Force coming down which wanted to do its work, and perhaps those forces did not want it—it disturbed their habits. It is like a government which fears that it will be thrown out and so intervenes violently in order to keep in power.

TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of September 1984)

(These talks are from the Notebooks of Dr. Nirodbaran who used to record most of the conversations which Sri Aurobindo had with his attendants and a few others, after the accident to his right leg in November 1938. Besides the recorder, the attendants were: Dr. Manilal, Dr. Becharlal, Purani, Champaklal, Dr. Satyendra and Mulshankar. As the notes were not seen by Sri Aurobindo himself, the responsibility for the Master's words rests entirely with Nirodbaran. He does not vouch for absolute accuracy, but he has tried his best to reproduce them faithfully. He has made the same attempt for the speeches of the others.)

August 23, 1940

Evening

SRI AUROBINDO: The Viceroy, it seems, has wired to Bouvin that the Governor of Bengal wants Baron back to Pondicherry. He won't accept the man who is to go in his place. When Schomberg was told this news, he broke down.

(It came out that Schomberg was a staunch Catholic and had taken Holy Orders and so was as good as a priest. He was therefore working under the influence of the priests here. Baron being in connection with us, the priests had turned against him.)

SRI AUROBINDO: Schomberg is a Jesuit. There is a general opinion that a Jesuit can tell any lie if it serves the glory of God.

(Today's news announced Trotsky's death at an assassin's hand. Somebody said, "Stalin's last enemy is gone! He was in dread of Trotsky, it seems.")

N: But how is it Trotsky was thrown out by Stalin?

SRI AUROBINDO: He was a good organiser, but not a man to lead a revolution. He did not have sufficient vital force to support his action. That doesn't mean he was not a man of action, but he acted with his brain rather than with the vital force. Stalin has more vital force. He has no intellect, but has a clever and cunning brain. Lenin combined both intellect and vital force. Trotsky's actions were more of an intellectual nature. His very cut of face shows that he is more of an intellectual type. Such people work better under a leader, not by themselves. Like Subash Bose, for instance. He did very good work under Das.

(Here P mentioned some people in Gujarat who could work only under somebody's guidance.)

SRI AUROBINDO: Charu Dutt's summary of *The Life Divine* is not bad. But there are one or two mistakes. He says that I have derived my technique from Shankara. What does he mean by technique? I don't know that I have got the technique from anybody. Again, he says that I have laid insistence on service to humanity.

P: That is perhaps the old idea people are repeating.

August 24, 1940

P: Spain is not very eager to join Italy and Germany, it seems.

SRI AUROBINDO: No; this British resistance has removed many dangers.

P: Spain is getting financial help from Britain for reconstruction of her government, and she must be afraid of British blockade if she joins Hitler.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes. It is at least possible to get help from Hitler in financial matters.

Evening

SRI AUROBINDO: The governor has warned Baron against Schomberg saying that he is a scoundrel and will try to do harm to him. The charge against Baron is that he mixed with revolutionaries.

P: Meaning ourselves?

SRI AUROBINDO: Who else could it be? This Viceroy seems to be a *kānpātlā*¹, what Schomberg said he quietly believed, and acted on it, and now what the Bengal Governor says he believes! That is why his conferences are not successful.

P: Yes, he is influenced by the opinion of the Civil Service.

SRI AUROBINDO: This Bengal Governor seems to be a man of will.

August 25, 1940

P: Baudoin is speaking like Hitler.

SRI AUROBINDO: How?

P: He says Britain is continuing the war and will bring ruin on the world because of it. As Hitler says, "I don't see why the war should go on." (*Laughter*)

N: Baudoin says it would have been cowardice and derogatory to leave France and fight from the Colonies.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is cowardice to fight but heroism to surrender: He is another scoundrel and swindler like Laval. Many of these people had their money deposited in Germany before the war and when the war broke out Hitler stopped all payment except to these people in order to keep them in his hands.

August 26, 1940

(*Anilbaran has again asked why the vitality of a nation is lost after a certain time and the nation degenerates. He himself says that it is inexplicable.*)

¹ Credulous.

SRI AUROBINDO: Why inexplicable? There are many factors. It will be too long to list all but the essential thing is that in every civilisation and culture there is a period of decline unless some new force is found, a process of new birth to give a fresh impulse to the life-force. Otherwise the old life-force gets exhausted and, if not renewed, the nation decays. The same thing happened with the Greek and Roman civilisations.

P: Could it be that some higher beings took birth and built the Greek civilisation?

SRI AUROBINDO: How? The Greek civilisation was not spiritual. It was intellectual and aesthetic; more subtle and delicate than the Roman civilisation which was more massive and had more strength and discipline than the Greek. That is why it lasted longer than the Greek civilisation.

Evening

(P spoke of some dealer with occult power somewhere in U.P.—an educated man. He had done many miraculous cures, even cures of mad people. The cases had been verified by Abhay. But one thing peculiar was that he couldn't have that descent of power after food. Hence no cure after eating.)

SRI AUROBINDO: The physical may not be in a proper condition after food. Food lowers the consciousness.

August 29, 1940

(P spoke to Sri Aurobindo about a professor of psychology in Delhi College, who had promised Abhay to give his service to some national cause. Abhay now wants him in Gurukul, according to his promise. But the professor hesitates on many grounds—first no freedom there, then no leisure and the pay is also less. But the main ground is no freedom of expression. So he is in difficulty over the decision.)

SRI AUROBINDO: Abhay is very keen on service.

P: Yes, and also on keeping to one's promise. He couldn't forgive Govindbhai's coming here, only because Govindbhai had given his promise that he would serve under Gandhi.

SRI AUROBINDO: Suppose I promise to go to Calcutta after six months. If it turns out disadvantageous, still must I go because of my promise? He should take some training under Meherbaba. *(Laughter)* What would he say to Meherbaba's bringing people all the way from England to take them to China and then changing the plan and turning them back? But such things are nearer to spirituality than these fixed ideas, because one is not bound to anything.

P: This professor, knowing some psychology, tries to do some psychological treatment by suggestions. But he is not sure if he is doing right or doing harm.

SRI AUROBINDO: A good suggestion is better than a bad one, but what sort of suggestions?

P: Those usual things about suppression.

SRI AUROBINDO: But it is not always true that what is suppressed rushes up some time later on. One has then to consider the contrary thing also, when indulgence may become a habit. Just as suppression may rise up, so by indulgence one doesn't become free either.

September 2, 1940

P: I read Gandhi's queer argument about non-violence with Kher and others. Kher said that during the Bombay riot even the non-violent leaders refused to risk and sacrifice their lives to stop the riot. Gandhi says, "That supports my argument." (*Laughter*) I am simply at a loss to know how it supports his argument. Then he says, "If they had sacrificed themselves, then the riot would have stopped."

SRI AUROBINDO: "If" they had! All depends on "Ifs" and expectations. Gandhi is not a psychologist. During his Dandi march, though they didn't do any act of violence, the leaders' minds were full of violence. In fact it is because of the opportunity violence would give that they joined the movement. And then he supports prohibition. Prohibition under compulsion is violence. There is no compulsion unless there is violence.

P: He says a child has to be forced to do good things and that won't be violence. But so can the British government say that it is for our good that they are doing all these things, it is they who have given unity to India, etc.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is true. Only the trouble is we haven't got that unity. (*Laughter*)

(After this there were 3-4 talks on Science, especially Relativity, started by the term "light-year" which Sri Aurobindo had used in The Life Divine and in relation to which Nolini Sen pointed out that scientists don't use it in that sense. So it was changed to "light cycle". But that gave the start. Jatin Bal supplied many quotations from Jeans, Eddington, etc. on various points. All that I remember is Sri Aurobindo refused to take Time as a dimension of Space. P, in some connection, because of these complicated mathematical formulas, etc., said scientists had first thought Science would be understood by everybody. Now nobody except a scientist can understand anything about Science.)

SRI AUROBINDO: They are becoming metaphysical physicists. It is like poetry. Dr. Lewis said that poetry would be understood gradually by fewer and fewer people, like Science.

P: Scientists say that the sum of universal energy is always the same.

SRI AUROBINDO: I do not agree. Is it proved? If not, why can't there be something behind that is constantly putting forth energy into the universe?

(About the Law of Potential also Sri Aurobindo didn't agree.)

SRI AUROBINDO: Why should water flowing from a higher tap come to a level with the lower? Why shouldn't there be a difference?

(The Law of Entropy also was opposed.)

SRI AUROBINDO: One sun may be losing heat, but another sun may be created and thus perpetual creation go on. Nobody knows when creation began.

P: They say that from a machine, for instance, some energy is not available, is always lost and for that reason a machine can't operate perpetually.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is about man-made machines. Nature is cleverer than man and, besides, in future such machines may be created which will go on perpetually. And what happens to the energy that is lost?

P: That goes to the common stock of spent energy. It is no more available.

SRI AUROBINDO: Why? Why can't it be available in another form? What has been available once is always available.

P: When you burn coal for energy, you can't get back the coal.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is so about coal because it disintegrates.

(Sri Aurobindo also said that quantum theory was taking a tendency towards our Indian Vayu theory without the scientists knowing it. About the deflection of star-light towards the sun, he asked, "Why should it curve towards the sun?")

P: Because the sun contains matter, they say. Suleiman is now questioning Einstein's theory. He stands for Newton.

SRI AUROBINDO: Einstein's theory seems to me fantastic.

(At this time some dogs were barking outside.)

SRI AUROBINDO: There they are protesting against Einstein!

(To be continued)

NIRODBARAN

THE STORY OF A SOUL

BY HUTA

(Continued from the issue of September 1984)

The Mother's Message

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



(39)

It was 1st August 1957. A lovely card showing a white Chrysanthemum came from the Mother accompanied by these words:

“To my dear little child Huta,
With my sweetest love always.”

Life seemed too monotonous. There was no revelation of new things. But the old struggle and strife still continued. My health started failing gradually. Often I got fatigued and needed rest. But where and how to relax when the inner and the outer beings were in conflict.

Three days passed. I got too bored to paint. I started stitching the Mother's dress. My work of cleaning the Mother's private Stores never stopped.

On the 5th the Mother sent me a card illustrating pink roses and these lines followed:

“To my dear little child Huta
With all my love, compassion and sweetness.”

After I had been to the Mother, I remained at Golconde to do some stitching. I skipped the usual Saturday movie.

The following morning I spent tidying up my room thoroughly. I was and am very fastidious.

In the evening the Mother and I had a long meditation as it was a Sunday. I tried to grope for the clue to my standing problems. But nothing was found.

Late at night during my sleep I had terrifying dreams. With a gasp I sat up abruptly in my bed, pressing my throat where my pulse was felt racing, and remained absolutely still for a moment, recovering from the shock of my sudden awakening. I could not sleep again. The clock ticked each second of the interminable hours.

It was a long time before I finally slept. I missed the Mother's balcony darshan.

Champaklal came with a card and the invariable white roses sent by the Mother.

The card displayed different-coloured Pansies: mauve, light-blue, yellow and orange. Underneath the picture the Mother had written:

“Let the Divine fill your thoughts with His Presence.”

On the same card she had added:

“With all my love and sweetest compassion always.”

The Mother met me before the Translation Class. After a short meditation we made for the class. Never did I bother to write down seriously what she dictated. I felt unusually drowsy.

Certainly I needed the Divine's Presence in my thoughts—in my consciousness. Sri Aurobindo has stated in the Cent. Ed., Vol. 22, p. 384 about the Presence:

“It is intended by the word Presence to indicate the sense and perception of the Divine as a Being, felt as present in one's existence and consciousness or in relation with it, without the necessity of any further qualification or descrip-

tion. Thus, of the 'ineffable Presence' it can only be said that it is there and nothing more can or need be said about it, although at the same time one knows that all is there, personality and impersonality, Power and Light and Ananda and everything else, and that all these flow from that indescribable Presence. The word may be used sometimes in a less absolute sense, but that is always the fundamental significance,—the essential perception of the essential Presence supporting everything else."

The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says:

"Who knows this Ruler within, he knows the worlds, and gods and creatures and the self, he knows all."

*

A card depicting three Zinnias in different colours—yellow, mauve and redish-pink—was sent by the Mother. On top of it she had written:

"Endurance—mental, vital and physical."

She had inscribed on the same card:

"With all my love, sweetest compassion, help and force always."

What she meant by the different colours was:

Yellow Zinnia=mental endurance

Mauve Zinnia=vital endurance

Pinkish-red Zinnia=physical endurance.

The Mother has said in one of her books:

"Let endurance be your watchword: teach the life-force in you—your vital being—not to complain but to put up with all the conditions necessary for the great achievement. The body is a very enduring servant, it bears the stress of circumstances tamely like a beast of burden. It is the vital being that is always grumbling and uneasy.... But the very essence of endurance is that the vital should learn to give up its capricious likes and dislikes and preserve an equanimity in the midst of the most trying conditions."

Four days slipped by. I was still busy stitching the Mother's dress.

The morning of 15th August was pleasant. It was Sri Aurobindo's birthday. I received a lovely Japanese card. On top of it were the Mother's words:

“The gate of the temple.”

Further words on the same card were:

“With my sweetest love and compassion and Sri Aurobindo’s Presence.”

A very touching gift she sent me was a flower—Rose-Moss—which she had stuck against a piece of paper with scotch-tape, on top of which she had written:

“Sri Aurobindo’s compassion.”

These words remind me of Sri Aurobindo’s answer to a sadhak in the Cent. Ed., Vol. 26, p. 185:

Q. Why is the flower symbolising your compassion so delicate and why does it wither away so soon?

A. No, the compassion does not wither with its symbol—flowers are the moment’s representations of things that are in themselves eternal.

In the morning I went to the Ashram and saw a big queue of Ashramites and visitors with garlands and flowers in their hands waiting eagerly for the Mother’s darshan.

I approached her and received a message which ran:

“So the Light grows always. As for the shadow it is only a shadow and will disappear in the growing Light.”

SRI AUROBINDO

I went to Golconde and sat quietly in my arm-chair. Once again I read the Message and the card which I had received early in the morning. Sri Aurobindo’s Presence recalls to my mind a beautiful anecdote:

“A friend of Radha taught her how she should never let Lord Krishna get away with his mischievous whims. She advised:

‘Radha, you must have self-respect, do not ever let him offend you.’ Radha smiled and, signing with her lotus eyes while putting her index finger first to her lips and then to her heart, said: ‘Friend, speak slowly, lest the Lord Krishna who is constantly in my heart should hear what you say.’”

I took the varieties of Prasad the Mother had sent to me at midday.

She declared open the Exhibition of paintings and photographs at 4. p.m. I was invited to the Exhibition Hall.

My paintings occupied one whole wall and only four paintings of mine were kept on the side-wall, as previously decided by the Mother. Beneath them was inscribed as she had wished:

“These are meant for concentration.”

The Mother’s eyes sparkled with joy and admiration. We smiled to each other. Afterwards she went to other halls to see the Third Pondicherry International Salon of Photography which had been sponsored by the Ashram photographers. I remembered the Mother to have sent me several copies of selected photographs as cards, on which she had written her perpetual love and sweetness.

Later the Mother’s doctor—Dr. Sanyal informed me:

“Huta, Mother told me after the exhibition:

‘The paintings in the front hall are of my student.’”

My Divine Teacher was proud of me. I felt happy.

As a matter of fact, to have an exhibition of the work of one who had started to paint not long before was incredible. But there was nothing impossible for the Divine’s Grace.

Sri Aurobindo has said:

“What I cannot do now is the sign of what I shall do hereafter. The sense of impossibility is the beginning of all possibilities.”

In the evening, as on other Darshan days, there was a march-past with the band. Then followed some music and then the concentration. After that the Mother distributed the *Bulletin*.

*

Days rolled on. I requested the Mother to send all my previous letters back to me, because some had been written under the adverse influence when I had been terribly disturbed.

She wrote on 20th August 1957:

“I have read your letter and taken note of your good resolution. As for giving you back your old letters, let *one full year* pass during which you will not send once a bad letter, not a single one, and then I shall see.

“My love and sweet compassion, my strength and endurance are always with you.”

It was not possible to follow her plan. I could not help writing to her in what-

ever phase I was passing through, either good or bad. I disliked bottling up things, for otherwise I would keep suffering.

I wanted to put all my defects in front of the Supreme Light to dispel the darkness of my being.

After a big gap once more I started painting. The Mother sent me on the 22nd a Chinese bowl. I painted it. She viewed my work and said:

“The colour is not accurate. If you wish to learn painting perfectly well, you must remember three things:

“(a) *Colour*—That is to say, the play of colours. In one colour there are so many shades. If you mix different colours in different shades, you can make pictures alive and charming.

“(b) *Shadow and Light*—You must be careful about this. You can always find out where on an object there is shadow and where light. According to the reflection of light, you can see the play of colours, the darker and the lighter and also the high-lights.

“(c) *Form, Volume and Outline*—To have an exact form, you must make certain accurate strokes. If it is round, flat, square you have to make the strokes sharp or faint accordingly. Of course, this method applies only to objects and human portraits because they have their precise forms.

“Volume means the whole figure, as in portraits and in objects.

“Outline means the general shape of objects and persons.

“These three things are essential to learn.

“Also, you must have a sense of colours, strokes, forms, lights and shadows and the accurate vision of a thing.”

Next day she sent me an attractive French box to be painted. I did what was desired. But the Mother was not satisfied with the shape and the colours. She asked me to repaint.

Meanwhile she wanted me to paint the pond which is in Golconde. She said:

“The pond should be like a frame—as if one were focusing something in it. It should have its different tone and texture brought out by a special technique.

“You must bring out its particular beauty, a little vibration in the midst of stillness and silence, by giving certain strokes. Then put some patches of white colour and green colour to give an impression of water-lilies and their leaves. They will certainly look as if they were framed in. All this will look truly magnificent.

“By the way, have you marked the entrance and the passage of Golconde? It is like an ancient Egyptian Temple. Well, it can be painted also. You can paint this wonderful thing by skill in your art.

“There should be a play of colours, lights and shadows; and, of course,

accurate drawing of the entrance is indispensable.

“You can start with exact colours and in one corner of the passage you can give a sharp stroke of brilliant white to give an impression of bright sunlight. Then here and there you can give patches of different colours as required.”

Unhappily, I could not do the entrance of Golconde, much as I wished to, though. Golconde—her own creation—was very dear to the Mother.

I started painting the pond. It took me three days to complete the work. I could have done it sooner but it was difficult to paint continuously in bright and strong sunlight.

After lunch people went for their siesta. I was all alone—painting. Sometimes Sutapa—a sadhika and a friend—kept me company which I appreciated.

I recall that while I was painting the pond, M. André and his wife Madam Wanda were going upstairs to their rooms. They stood for a while on the steps and remarked:

“It is classical.”

When the Mother saw the painting, she exclaimed:

“My child, you have done the pond much nicer than I had expected.

“Bring the crayons and the tinted papers I sent you. I shall teach you another technique.”

On 27th August she showed me the new style. She drew a white rose on a tinted paper. It looked fresh and vivid.

The morning after, the Mother sent me a big card representing Ganesha. On top of the card she had written:

“Today is Ganapati’s birthday.”

Underneath the card she had added:

“With all my love, strength and sweet compassion.”

The Mother had a great affinity with Ganesha.

Sri Aurobindo has written in the Cent. Ed., Vol. 22, pp. 392-93:

“Ganesha is the Power that removes obstacles by the force of Knowledge;... Ganesha is the Devata of Spiritual Knowledge....”

I repainted the French box. After seeing the result, the Mother said:

“I like it. Now the colours are more accurate.”

After a moment or two, she looked at me and asked:

“Why don’t you do your own portrait?”

I answered: “Mother, you asked me once before. Now I must try.”

I went back to Golconde and started doing my portrait while looking at myself in a small mirror. Sometimes I found my nose crooked, sometimes I found myself cock-eyed. Somehow I finished the picture.

The succeeding morning I received as always a card and a bouquet of white roses from the Mother.

The day dragged on. I was impatient to show my portrait to her. When she saw it, a gleam of amusement appeared in her eyes. She laughed softly and said:

“Not bad really.”

But I knew how fumblingly I had done it.

Then she drew my lips on a tinted paper with a white crayon. One could see even the moisture on the lips. They were living.

I could realise how much she loved drawing and painting! She said:

“Later on I shall draw your nose and eyes in order to make you understand how these things can be sketched.”

After a short meditation, we went to the class.

When I reached Golconde, the first thing I did was to destroy my portrait. It reminded me of an ape. What else could it be when the person had come from an African jungle?

It was the last day of August. I requested Maniben to give a pose so that I could draw her portrait. I made certain that I would not be drawing any more apes.

In the evening I showed the picture to the Mother. She smiled and commented:

“Ah! this portrait is very aristocratic!”

Night deepened. I sat for a long time in my chair and pondered over my future. I truly had no confidence in myself.

The Mother never lost her patience with me.

This quotation from Kierkegaard comes to my mind:

“Lord, how often was I impatient, about to lose heart, about to give up everything, about to seek the fearfully easy way out: Despair, but you never lost patience. You bore a whole life of suffering to redeem even me.”

I should also like to quote encouraging lines from the book *Light From Many Lamps*:

“Did you ever hear of a man who had striven all his life faithfully and singly towards an object and in no measure obtained it? If a man constantly aspires, is he not elevated?”

Here is yet another quotation which appeals to me and gives me a lot of sustenance:

“When things go wrong, as they sometimes will,
When the road you are trudging seems all uphill,
When the funds are low and debts are high,
And you want to smile, but you have to sigh,
When care is pressing you down a bit,
Rest if you must, but never quit.

Life is queer with its twists and turns,
As every one of us sometimes learns,
And many a fellow turns about
When he might have won had he stuck it out.
Don't give up though the pace seems slow—
You may succeed with another blow.

Often the goal is nearer than
It seems to a faint and faltering man;
Often the struggler has given up
When he might have captured the victor's cup;
And he learned too late when the night came down
How close he was to the golden crown.

Success is failure turned inside out—
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt,
And you never can tell how close you are,
It may be near when it seems afar;
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit,—
It's when things seem worst that you mustn't quit,
DON'T QUIT BUT TURN TO GOD!”

(To be continued)

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THE INSPIRATION OF *PARADISE LOST*

(Continued from the issue of September 1984)

4

Milton's Epic Lyricism

WE have asserted the total effortlessness of Milton's complicated and deliberate-looking poetry. However, in asserting this, we must not imply that he did nothing to make such effortlessness possible. A hint of what he did is found in the mention in Book III of his nightly poetic outpouring—the passage from which we have already quoted some lines. It throws light on several matters. We shall first dwell upon its bearing on that effortlessness itself and, through the aspects disclosed by it in this connection, we shall proceed to the power behind *Paradise Lost*, as distinct from the power beyond the poem—what makes it, in spite of not being composed by Milton at all, so thoroughly Miltonic.

After telling us of his blindness, he speaks of yet not ceasing to wander

Where the Muses haunt
Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill,
Smit with the love of sacred song,¹

and he speaks of the haunts of his mind as being more Hebrew than Hellenic:

but chief
Thee, *Sion*, and the flowering brooks beneath
That wash thy hallowed feet, and warbling flow
Nightly I visit.²

Next, he puts together the names of four ancient personages, all famous but all blind like himself, and the first two of them poets whose fame he would wish to equal as he has equalled their fate:

Blind *Thamyris* and blind *Maeonides*,
And *Tiresias* and *Phineus*, prophets old.³

After naming these men, he continues what he started saying with "Nightly I visit":

Then feed on thoughts that voluntary move
Harmonious numbers; as the wakeful bird

¹ 27-29.

² 29-32.

³ 35-36.

Sings darkling, and, in shadiest covert hid,
Tunes her nocturnal note.¹

Observe what Milton has said. One thing is that he compares himself with the nightingale. This is perhaps the most unexpected comparison an epic poet could have made. We hardly conceive of Homer's *Iliad* or Vyasa's *Mahābhārata* or Dante's *Divina Commedia* as a nightingale's song. Least of all would we normally associate this song with *Paradise Lost*. The nightingale reminds us of Catullus and Campion, Sappho and Sarojini Naidu. It is a symbol of lyricism. And in a very evident sense the grandioseness of Milton's chant is at the opposite pole to the lyrical. But Milton the epic poet *par excellence* has a special purpose in making the comparison between himself and night's "wakeful bird." It is in relation to the essential formative spirit of lyricism that we must understand him. He makes the comparison not merely because both he and that bird get their musical expression in the dark hours. The comparison extends, in the first place, to the spontaneous—that is effortless—nature of expression in either case, for he does not omit to emphasise this nature of his poetry: he says, "thoughts that voluntary move / Harmonious numbers." Milton does not have to force his thoughts to make music: the music comes naturally from the very act of thinking, with an immediate movement that has all the look of the lyrical. No doubt, lyrical poetry is believed to spring from the act less of thinking than of feeling. But thinking is never absent from it—and, though acute reflection does not usually go with it, the intellectual gesture towards things and even the intellectual seizure of them are not ruled out, provided there is, as it were, a thinking with one's organic self, with one's living senses, a warm and concrete turn of the being towards the intellectual act. And this turn is precisely what Milton tells us to be his practice.

Consider the word "feed". He says that at night he would feed on a certain kind of thoughts. The word he employs is at once a piece of inspired art and a disclosure of his psychology. He refers to "harmonious numbers", verbal music, issuing from his mind; and music is primarily associated with the mouth. So he suggests the mouth beforehand by the mention of feeding. That is the artistic touch. But the poetic psychology too is here. The picture of poetry as being produced by the lips because the poet has taken strange unearthly food is a recurrent one in literature: we may cite Coleridge's line in *Kubla Khan* about the bespelled singer:

For he on honey-dew hath fed
And drunk the milk of paradise.

And in this picture we have two implications: the poet has taken into himself the stuff of a spiritual Ananda, a mysterious divine delight, and he has done so with a turn as warm and concrete as eating and drinking, he has brought his organic self and his living senses into play. Milton, when he speaks of feeding on thoughts, dis-

¹ 37-40

closes to us his way with them. It is the way of all true intellectual poetry and most directly the way of the lyricism of the intellect. Thus Milton presents us with two characteristics of lyricism in the poetry of his thoughts: absolute spontaneity and the warm concrete turn.

Nor does the curious truth hinted by Milton himself, that his epic is a peculiar form of lyricism, end with these two characteristics. There are two more, staring every reader of *Paradise Lost* in the face. In lyrical poetry, it is the person of the poet that gets expressed—the individual mind and heart come pulsing through the song. Lyrical poetry has for its main theme the author of it and his personal exultations and agonies. Now one of the things which strike us throughout *Paradise Lost* is the presence of Milton himself. Again and again he speaks in his own person. There are the elaborate introductions which precede the first, third, seventh and ninth Books. And everybody knows that in the figure of his Satan we have a strong dash of Milton the rebel against Charles I, the vehement defender of regicide who remained the unrepentant Republican even when the Stuart Monarchy was restored and who might have been the first to get hanged as Cromwell's bellicose foreign secretary and all-Europe champion. There is also the blending of himself with some of the attitudes and ideas in the great speeches made by Satan's followers: especially when Belial urges the preciousness of "this intellectual being" we feel Milton's own voice breaking out. There is further the gorgeous expenditure of Milton's learning and reflection—history, geography, astronomy, philosophical issues, political problems, social and domestic questions, all that interested or engaged the poet outside his immediate theme and filled his mind and life is poured out. We may characterise these outpourings as superfluities, as Johnson did the autobiographical introductions; but, as he was careful to add, "superfluities so beautiful, who would take away?" Everywhere in the epic we meet with the poet's individual presence and we seem to move within his many-sided richly-stored intelligence. Nor would *Paradise Lost* be the greatness that it is without this presence and this deployment of scholarship: they are of the very essence of its poetry.

The other epic poets are more or less submerged in their subjects. So little of Homer the man is in the *Iliad* that scholars have even hatched the silly theory that Homer is the name of half a dozen different hands that have pooled their works—silly because one Homer is already a mighty freak difficult enough in the economy of Nature. Virgil rarely intruded upon his story: once only he breaks out into a personal cry, a glorious passage all Latinists have by heart: "Fortunati ambo!..."¹ Dante is more felt in his work and that is because the *Divina Commedia* is in the first person, a kind of autobiography: it tells of the poet's own journey through Inferno, Purgatorio and Paradiso. But Dante fills his poem with so much of human interest outside himself, the stories of all those who suffer in Hell, all those who repent in Purgatory, all those who rejoice in Heaven, that he is just one human being amidst a multitude of men and women. In *Paradise Lost* there are no human beings except

¹ *Aeneid*, IX, 446-9. "O fortunate pair!"

Adam and Eve and they by themselves have really little to bring home to us, for they have no experience, the world is quite virgin to them, their contacts with it are elementary and they are quite different from the dreaming, toiling, fighting, loving, suffering, aspiring mass of creatures we find around us and in the colourful history of six thousand years of splendour and folly. The only human being who breathes and passions and moves through *Paradise Lost* is Milton with his knowledge and his experience. Thus, before the Fall, Adam and his angel visitors talk as if to them, as to Milton, the world's processes were familiar matters. John Bailey¹ well observes: " 'War seemed a civil game / To this uproar,' says Raphael, as if he were fresh from reading Livy or Gibbon and had all the wars of Europe and Asia in his memory... and, interesting as the passages are, it is difficult to forget the incongruity of Raphael and Adam discussing the Ptolemaic and Copernican theories of the universe, or Adam moralizing on the unhappiness of marriage as if he had studied the divorce reports or gone through a course of modern novels. Yet few and foolish are the readers who can dwell on dramatic improbabilities when Adam is pouring out the bitter cry wrung from Milton by the still unforgotten miseries of his first marriage...." Adam we find also talking at times "like a weary scholar" or like a student of the Schoolmen of the Middle Ages or "like a doubting Christian in an age of speculation". Raphael once breaks in with a question proper to a Platonic philosopher; and Milton, the chronic sufferer from gout which is one of the most painful diseases, lets us hear his own voice speaking when Nisroch, a rebel angel, refers to wounds received in the battle in Heaven and singles out bodily pain as "the worst of evils" which, "excessive, overturns all patience". In all this personal pervasion Milton can be considered in spirit a lyric poet with an epic subject and style. And when he bursts into directly personal expression we have some of the most effective and appealing things in *Paradise Lost*, things like

Seasons return, but not to me returns
Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;
But cloud instead and ever-during dark
Surrounds me²—

or else:

Standing on Earth, not rapt above the pole,
More safe I sing with mortal voice, unchanged
To hoarse or mute, though fall'n on evil days,
On evil days though fall'n, and evil tongues,
In darkness and with dangers compassed round,
And solitude...³

¹ *Milton* (The Home University Library, Oxford, 1945), pp. 177-78.

² Bk. III, 41-6.

³ Bk. VII, 23-8.

The fourth characteristic showing the lyricism of Milton's thoughts is the celebrated Miltonic music. Criticism, from the beginning, has stood in admiration before the wonderful rhythmic properties of Milton's blank verse. The usual term for them is "organ-music", but that covers the total effect, the massive tone of the verse-paragraph which is the unit of expression in *Paradise Lost*. But within the verse-paragraph there are various movements of delightful sound, with a flux and reflux of words peculiar to the Miltonic composition. In the two quotations just made we may notice this play of forward and backward in

Seasons return, but not to me returns
Day,

and in

though fall'n on evil days,
On evil days though fall'n, and evil tongues...

Or take those lines on Hell:

A dungeon horrible on all sides round,
As one great furnace flamed; yet from those flames
No light; but rather darkness visible
Served only to discover sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell, hope never comes
That comes to all...¹

We have not only alliteration and assonance: we have also direct repetitions of word or phrase, running key-notes, as it were, to link up the various parts, make the new turn reminiscent and resonant of the old. Perhaps the most effective as well as meaning-charged product of this musical recurrence is the description of the discoveries made by Satan's followers in the infernal depths:

Through many a dark and dreary vale
They passed, and many a region dolorous,
O'er many a frozen, many a fiery Alp,
Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of death—
A universe of death, which God by curse
Created evil, for evil only good;
Where all life dies, death lives, and Nature breeds,
Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious things,
Abominable, inutterable, and worse

¹ Bk. I, 61-6.

Than fables yet have feigned, or fear conceived,
Gorgons, and Hydras, and Chimaeras dire.¹

Nor is the music of recurrence suitable only to high-pitched poetry in Milton's mouth. It is equally apt when the utterance is quietly firm, as in the opening sentence of the speech of Jesus after God has declared in Heaven that only a divine sacrifice can pay for man's disobedience. Jesus says:

Father, thy word is passed, Man shall find grace;
And shall Grace not find means, that finds her way,
The speediest of thy wingèd messengers,
To visit all thy creatures, and to all
Comes unprevented, unimplored, unsought?
Happy for Man, so coming!²

Bailey has commented: "Observe the peculiarly Miltonic interlacing of the whole, line leading to line and word to word: the 'grace' of the first line giving the key to the 'Grace' of the second, the repeated 'find' of the second line and the repeated 'all' of the fourth, the 'comes' of the fifth line leading on to the 'coming' of the sixth."³ Bailey further writes of the "cunning variety in the rhythm of the verses: three pauses in the first line, two in the second, only one in the third: the principal pause after the sixth syllable in both the first two lines, and yet the words and their accents so artfully varied that not the slightest monotony is felt; the suggestion of easy flight in the smooth unbroken movement of the third line—

The speediest of thy wingèd messengers."⁴

Sometimes Milton concentrates into single lines a most memorable music of vowels and consonants, either staccato or fluent. An extraordinary hammering in of progressive halts, with even a rhyme in the midst of the skilful assonance and consonance, is the line already cited:

Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of death.

An unimpeded movement, but with every word weighted with a sense of fate, is another practically monosyllabic masterpiece ending a passage descriptive of Satan's entry into Eden at night:

So clomb this first grand Thief into God's fold.⁵

¹ Bk. II, 618-28.

² Bk. III, 227-32.

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 159.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Bk. IV, 792.

A vast crisis is solemnly expressed by means of an utmost simplicity that is yet crowded with the profoundest suggestions through the long vowels tolling, as Bailey¹ has marked, bell-like into the silence of midnight. And, mind you, this is not what is commonly known as onomatopoeia, such as Milton gives us in

Sonorous metal blowing martial sounds.²

Paradise Lost has onomatopoeia in diverse forms, and that too is part of its music; but here is a phonetic manifestation of the rhythm of the inner vision-feeling. This sort of word-vibration on the one hand and on the other the sound-waves which it intersperses of what I have termed the flux and reflux of word and phrase, these constitute the music affining Milton's poetry to lyricism in spite of its epic strength and volume. For, a complete lyric is not only a welling up of poetry by its own inner force, not only a measured cry of excited feeling and seeing and musing, not only a rhythmic language suffused with the personal and subjective element: it is also a poem whose verse is especially musical and brings in a marked manner the appeal of melodic or harmonic recurrence which is essential to all poetic movement. Perhaps no better illustration of the complete lyric in a brief compass can be offered than Landor's two-stanza'd *Rose Aylmer*:

Ah, what avails the sceptred race,
 Ah, what the form divine!
 What every virtue, every grace!
 Rose Aylmer, all were thine.

Rose Aylmer, whom these wakeful eyes
 May weep, but never see,
 A night of memories and of sighs
 I consecrate to thee.

Added to the alliteration and assonance, the music here has the Miltonic flux and reflux—"Ah" twice, "what" thrice, "every" and "Rose Aylmer" two times. In the second stanza we have also instances of the Miltonic enjambment, the running-over from line 1 to line 2 and from the third line to the fourth. The pauses everywhere are diversely disposed. There is, in association with the general directness of statement, a play of choice collocation: "sceptred race", "form divine"—the latter a half echo of Milton's "human form divine". The tone is sweetly grave—deliberation and delicacy fused, as in Milton. And at the end we have both a Miltonic inversion—the object-phrase preceding the subject and verb—and a touch of thoughtful uplifted emotion, which is a typical Miltonism, in the word "consecrate" meaning "to set apart perpetually for sacred uses". Of course the epic pitch of expression is wanting

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 166.

² Bk. I, 540.

in Landor's lyric of love's wakeful night-vigil, but enough dignity is present to make us perceive that this kind of lyricism, comparable in several ways to the song of night's "wakeful bird", could be the seed-form of the musical elevation on which *Paradise Lost* moves.

In Milton's epic lyricism we have the second paradox about him. This paradox may be said to explain in general the first which is the spontaneity, the automatism of his artistically finished and learnedly loaded expression; for spontaneity is the characteristic movement of the lyric inspiration.

(To be continued)

K. D. SETHNA

INTEGRAL PSYCHOLOGY INHERENT IN INTEGRAL YOGA

IN THE WORDS OF SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of September 1984)

Varied Activities of Normal Personality

A Prefatory Note

WHAT are the varied activities or processes of normal human personality in its dealings with the environment and with itself? They are: sensation, perception, action, emotion, instinct, habit, memory, thinking, imagination, sentiment, voluntary action, self, character, temperament, etc.

The natural science of psychology has studied all these empirically in an extensive way and collected a large amount of data, which it has carefully classified. But the empirical approach often gets lost in the superficial multiplicity and detail and later finds difficulty in finding the coherence and unity of things. This is a recurring experience in psychology at this time. About the reactions of personality we know a good deal but of personality itself next to nothing. This is due to not knowing the essential unity of the subject.

For yoga and yogic psychology the first interest is the unity in personality and the essential truth of each activity in the right perspective. Here we do not have a plethora of empirical detail but a clear grip over the whole and a confidence to deal with personality and its problems. As an example we might mention the familiar idea of the three modes of nature and of personality, *viz.*, Tamas, Rajas, Sattwa, the principles of inertia, activity and balance or harmony. If one learns to recognise, appreciate and manipulate these, one more easily gets to control and direct one's life in all its innumerable reactions. The empirical data, because of its vast heap of facts, fails to give convenient keys to handle things. Further, the Yogic psychology has a constant eye on potential capacity, the greater possibilities of activity. And that helps in the due appreciation of present functioning.

The yogic psychology and the scientific psychology are evidently mutually useful, either supplies to the other what the other needs.

Here we have brief excerpts representing the varied activities of the normal personality. Their essential strength consists in giving a deeper unifying truth of the matter in each case and all together give a fine grip over personality as a whole. We mentioned above the conventional terms of psychology. The terms here are fewer, but these cover the entire phenomena. If one tries to act on these terms and gain some experience of the working of personality, one would very likely get a clear idea of what personality is and how it should be managed.

Let us now illustrate the above. The first three excerpts bear upon mind and sensation. The truth they affirm is that mind in its own right is the sensing instrument. Its constant dependence on the sense-organs creates in it a serious limitation. If it could withdraw from this dependence it could see, hear, etc. by itself and more widely. This would mean a new relationship between body and mind and a rational basis for telepathy, clairaudience and other paranormal powers. We may recall McDougall, a distinguished recent psychologist, who observed that if telepathy came to be proved, psychology would have to be re-written. Evidently a re-written psychology will get much nearer to yogic psychology.

Another illustration. We have here two excerpts on emotions. Emotion is said to depend upon a pre-existing conation, *i.e.*, it has a parasitical character. Our excerpts too affirm that a desire is involved in the emotional reactions. But they affirm a deeper emotion of joy and love too, which is the feeling of the Psychic Being, not the superficial mental nature, and which is self-existent and non-parasitical. This is new to our psychology of emotion and opens up a possibility of emotional life beyond the ordinary divided and opposed sets of emotions.

Affection and conation are closely allied and they constitute the dynamic fact of personality. We have here two excerpts on Desire. Desire represents our entire conative side as emotion does the affective. Now Desires are many and they go on multiplying themselves. They arise out of a sense of want. But there is also a deeper will calm and steady, qualitatively different from Desire. This again is a new fact of immense value to personality and its greater possibilities.

We have also here an excerpt on the Ego or Separative I-ness. The science of psychology regards this as final to human self-hood. Here it is stated that it is transitional, a phase in the growth and evolution of personality. Is it not a challenging statement of the deepest interest for psychological inquiry and investigation?

Memory too is taken in its conscious form as we ordinarily know it, but also in its subconscious form in the individual as also in the race. Memory thus becomes a most important base for all functions of consciousness. Judgment and logical reason organise the material accumulated by memory into knowledge. Imagination aids by opening up new possibility. But the ordinary working of reasoning is slow and laborious and lacks directness. These faculties must lead on to intuition and its dependable certitudes. This subject is already actively under investigation in some scientific quarters.

The last four excerpts show the limitations of mind and the expression of the Spirit in consciousness. They greatly enlarge the scope of psychology. The issues raised by the excerpts of this section as a whole demand much reflection.

INDRA SEN

Mind and the Sense-Organs

Mind is capable of a sight that is independent of the physical eye, a hearing that is independent of the physical ear, and so with the action of all the other senses. It is

capable too of an awareness, operating by what appears to us as mental impressions, of things not conveyed or even suggested by the agency of the physical organs,—and opening to relations, happenings, forms even and the action of forces to which the physical organs could not have borne evidence. Then, becoming aware of these rarer powers, we speak of the mind as a sixth sense; but in fact it is the only true sense organ and the rest are no more than its outer conveniences and secondary instruments, although by its dependence on them they have become its limitations and its too imperative and exclusive conveyors.¹

The Sense-Mind

Manas, the sense mind, depends in our ordinary consciousness on the physical organs of receptive sense for knowledge and on the organs of the body for action directed towards the objects of sense. The superficial and outward action of the senses is physical and nervous in its character, and they may easily be thought to be merely results of nerve-action; they are sometimes called in the old books *pranas*, nervous or life activities. But still the essential thing in them is not the nervous excitation, but the consciousness, the action of the *chitta*, which makes use of the organ and of the nervous impact of which it is the channel. Manas, sense-mind, is the activity, emerging from the basic consciousness, which makes up the whole essentiality of what we call sense. Sight, hearing, taste, smell, touch are really properties of the mind, not of the body; but the physical mind which we ordinarily use, limits itself to a translation into sense of so much of the outer impacts as it receives through the nervous system and the physical organs. But the inner Manas has also a subtle sight, hearing, power of contact of its own which is not dependent on the physical organs. And it has, moreover, a power not only of direct communication of mind with object—leading even at a high pitch of action to a sense of the contents of an object within or beyond the physical range,—but direct communication also of mind with mind. Mind is able too to alter, modify, inhibit the incidence, values, intensities of sense impacts. These powers of the mind we do not ordinarily use or develop; they remain subliminal and emerge sometimes in an irregular and fitful action, more readily in some minds than in others, or come to the surface in abnormal states of the being. They are the basis of clairvoyance, clairaudience, transference of thought and impulse, telepathy, most of the more ordinary kinds of occult powers,—so called, though these are better described less mystically as powers of the now subliminal action of the Manas. The phenomena of hypnotism and many others depend upon the action of this subliminal sense-mind; not that it alone constitutes all the elements of the phenomena, but it is the first supporting means of intercourse, communication and response, though much of the actual operation belongs to an inner *Buddhi*. Mind physical, mind supraphysical,—we have and can use this double sense mentality.²

¹ *Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library*, Vol. 21 p. 833.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 623-24.

Abnormal States

The embodied mind in us is ordinarily aware only through the physical organs and only of their objects and of subjective experiences which seem to start from the physical experience and to take them alone, however remotely, for their foundation and mould of construction. All the rest, all that is not consistent with or part of or verified by the physical data, seems to it rather imagination than reality and it is only in abnormal states that it opens to other kinds of conscious experience. But in fact there are immense ranges behind of which we could be aware if we opened the doors of our inner being. These ranges are there already in action and known to a subliminal self in us, and much of our surface consciousness is directly projected from them and without our knowing it influences our subjective experience of things. There is a range of independent vital or *prāṇic* experiences behind, subliminal to and other than the surface action of the vitalised physical consciousness. And when this opens itself or acts in any way, there are made manifest to the waking mind the phenomena of a vital consciousness, a vital intuition, a vital sense not dependent on the body and its instruments, although it may use them as a secondary medium and a recorder. It is possible to open completely this range and, when we do so, we find that its operation is that of the conscious life force individualised in us contacting the universal life force and its operations in things, happenings and persons. The mind becomes aware of the life consciousness in all things, responds to it through our life consciousness with an immediate directness not limited by the ordinary communication through the body and its organs, records its intuitions, becomes capable of experiencing existence as a translation of the universal Life or Prana. The field of which the vital consciousness and the vital sense are primarily aware is not that of forms but, directly, that of forces: its world is a world of the play of energies, and form and event are sensed only secondarily as a result and embodiment of the energies. The mind working through the physical senses can only construct a view and knowledge of this nature as an idea in the intelligence, but it cannot go beyond the physical translation of the energies, and it has therefore no real or direct experience of the true nature of life, no actual realisation of the life force and the life spirit. It is by opening this other level or depth of experience within and by admission to the vital consciousness and vital sense that the mind can get the true and direct experience. Still, even then, so long as it is on the mental level, the experience is limited by the vital terms and their mental renderings and there is an obscurity even in this greatened sense and knowledge.¹

Ordinary Perception and Action

Chitta, the basic consciousness, is largely subconscious; it has, open and hidden, two kinds of action, one passive or receptive, the other active or reactive and formative. As a passive power it receives all impacts, even those of which the mind is

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 839-41.

unaware or to which it is inattentive, and it stores them in an immense reserve or passive subconscious memory on which the mind as an active memory can draw. But ordinarily the mind draws only what it had observed and understood at the time,—more easily what it had observed well and understood carefully, less easily what it had observed carelessly or ill understood; at the same time there is a power in consciousness to send up to the active mind for use what that mind had not at all observed or attended to or even consciously experienced. This power only acts observably in abnormal conditions, when some part of the subconscious chitta comes as it were to the surface or when the subliminal being in us appears on the threshold and for a time plays some part in the outer chamber of mentality where the direct intercourse and commerce with the external world takes place and our inner dealings with ourselves develop on the surface. This action of memory is so fundamental to the entire mental action that it is sometimes said, memory is the man. Even in the submental action of the body and life, which is full of this subconscious chitta, though not under the control of the conscious mind, there is a vital and physical memory. The vital and physical habits are largely formed by this submental memory. For this reason they can be changed to an indefinite extent by a more powerful action of conscious mind and will, when that can be developed and can find means to communicate to the subconscious chitta the will of the spirit for a new law of vital and physical action. Even, the whole constitution of our life and body may be described as a bundle of habits formed by the past evolution in Nature and held together by the persistent memory of this secret consciousness. For chitta, the primary stuff of consciousness, is like prana and body universal in Nature, but is subconscious and mechanical in nature of Matter.¹

Emotional Reactions

But in fact all action of the mind or inner instrument arises out of this chitta or basic consciousness, partly conscient, partly subconscious or subliminal to our active mentality. When it is struck by the world's impacts from outside or urged by the reflective powers of the subjective inner being, it throws up certain habitual activities, the mould of which has been determined by our evolution. One of these forms of activity is the emotional mind,—the heart, as we may call it for the sake of a convenient brevity. Our emotions are the waves of reaction and response which rise up from the basic consciousness, *cittavṛtti*. Their action too is largely regulated by habit and an emotive memory. They are not imperative, not laws of Necessity; there is no really binding law of our emotional being to which we must submit without remedy; we are not obliged to give responses of grief to certain impacts upon the mind, responses of anger to others, to yet others responses of hatred or dislike, to others responses of liking or love. All these things are only habits of our affective mentality; they can be changed by the conscious will of the spirit; they can be inhibited; we may even rise entirely above all subjection to grief, anger, hatred, the duality of

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 620-21.

liking and disliking. We are subject to these things only so long as we persist in subjection to the mechanical action of the chitta in the emotive mentality, a thing difficult to get rid of because of the power of past habit and especially the importunate insistence of the vital part of the mentality, the nervous life-mind or psychic prana. This nature of the emotive mind as a reaction of chitta with a certain close dependence upon the nervous life-sensations and responses of the psychic prana is so characteristic that in some languages it is called chitta and prana, the heart, the life soul; it is indeed the most directly agitating and powerfully insistent action of the desire-soul which the immixture of vital desire and responsive consciousness has created in us. And yet the true emotive soul, the real psyche in us, is not a desire-soul, but a soul of pure love and delight; but that, like the rest of our true being, can only emerge when the deformation created by the life of desire is removed from the surface and is no longer the characteristic action of our being. To get that done is a necessary part of our purification, liberation, perfection.¹

2

All the complexity of our emotions and their tyranny over the soul arise from the habitual responses of the soul of desire in the emotions and sensations to these attractions and repulsions. Love and hatred, hope and fear, grief and joy all have their founts in this one source. We like, love, welcome, hope for, joy in whatever our nature, the first habit of our being, or else a formed (often perverse) habit, the second nature of our being, presents to the mind as pleasant, *priyam*; we hate, dislike, fear, have repulsion from or grief of whatever it presents to us as unpleasant, *apriyam*. This habit of the emotional nature gets into the way of the intelligent will and makes it often a helpless slave of the emotional being or at least prevents it from exercising a free judgment and government of the nature. This deformation has to be corrected. By getting rid of desire in the psychic prana and its intermixture in the emotional mind, we facilitate the correction. For then attachment which is the strong bond of the heart, falls away from the heart-strings; the involuntary habit of *rāga-dveṣa* remains, but, not being made obstinate by attachment, it can be dealt with more easily by the will and the intelligence. The restless heart can be conquered and get rid of the habit of attraction and repulsion.

Attraction and repulsion, liking and disliking are a necessary mechanism for the normal man, they form a first principle of natural instinctive selection among the thousand flattering and formidable, helpful and dangerous impacts of the world around him. The buddhi starts with this material to work on and tries to correct the natural and instinctive by a wiser reasoned and willed selection; for obviously the pleasant is not always the right thing, the object to be preferred and selected, nor the unpleasant the wrong thing, the object to be shunned and rejected; the pleasant and the good, *preyas* and *śreyas*, have to be distinguished, and right reason

¹ *Ibid*, pp. 621-22.

has to choose and not the caprice of emotion. But this it can do much better when the emotional suggestion is withdrawn and the heart rests in a luminous passivity. Then too the right activity of the heart can be brought to the surface; for we find then that behind this emotion-ridden soul of desire there was waiting all the while a soul of love and lucid joy and delight, a pure psyche....

But the purified heart is rid of anger, rid of fear, rid of hatred, rid of every shrinking and repulsion: it has a universal love, it can receive with an untroubled sweetness and clarity the various delight which God gives it in the world.¹

(To be continued)

¹ *Ibid*, pp. 632-33, 633-34, 634-35

IN-GLIMPSES

ONENESS

As upon lifting a floating leaf from a stream
 Undivided becomes again the waters,
 O All-Blissful!
 Remove thus the dualities from my life
 So that unobstructed may flow in me
 The golden waters of Thy Consciousness
 Single, everywhere.

STRIVINGS

High heaven I would not accept
 From someone else.
 All hell I would embrace
 If it came as Thy gift.
 Riches of the gods
 And boons of the sages
 I do not crave.
 Only, one day
 In some way,
 Mayst Thou call me Thine,
 Be it chattel or child.

EXPERIENCE OF THE INNER BEING

My inner being always knew
that time had not yet come
to make a choice and settle down,
as it is mostly done.

The mind tried this,
the body that,
the vital went astray.
There was a miss,
there was a lack
and no sign of a ray.

Then I decided one fine day,
when it was just enough:
“I don’t go on this senseless way,
I find it much too rough!”

Ten years ago,
near to the sea,
there first I found some peace,
and very slow
now came to me
a light-revealing breeze.

It did not stay on constantly,
I wavered like a blade,
and I could only wait and see
If light replaced the shade.

Much trouble, woe and misery
I had to stand for years,
and there was no place where to flee,
Some Heaven without tears.

From time to time
quite patiently
some mystic sign
reminded me
of something great
and high beyond.
Was it my fate:
Renew the bond?

One night, I lay awake in bed,
a sudden thought came to my head:
If I tried now to fly away
from the body's earthly stay!

And hardly could I realize
this unfamiliar scheme,
when I felt consciously the rise,
and it was not a dream.

My inner being travelled high
to worlds of joy and love,
I felt no more dull matter's tie,
but freedom, peace above.

Reluctant, slow and cautiously
it came back to its frame,
Yet I shall know eternally
and never be the same.

The morning after I was filled
with happy confidence.
I felt an urge and inner tilt
to turn my life to deeper sense.

From now on it was good and clear,
the sorrows went away
along with all the useless fear.
It's full of love and song each day.

I am aware
that this is not
the utmost where to rest.
A constant care
and work a lot
are needed for the crest.

Foundations laid,
we must go on
to build with precious stone.
All is not yet
achieved and won
when we are on some peak alone.

WHY SHOULD I READ SRI AUROBINDO?

APPARENTLY it may seem that the question is not only very discouraging but also to some extent insolent. But if we go deep into the rationale of the question and try to comprehend it then we may realise that the question is not at all insolent, rather it is just and pertinent. Of course, we do not know who has put the question but it is clear from the tone of it that the questioner has anyway become aware of a good number of facts which discourage him/her and so he/she does not feel any interest in reading Sri Aurobindo.

First of all it may be that the questioner has come to know that from the high ranking Government Officers and Ministers in charge of different ministries and political leaders down to the rank and file of different political parties, from the eminent social workers and educationists and intellectuals to the ordinary men of humble occupation, from the heads of religious institutions and spiritual leaders to the ordinary believers of religion, from the reputable authors and distinguished research-scholars to the novelists and poets and their ardent readers, most of them either do not accept Sri Aurobindo or think that it is better to remain afar from him and offer salutation from there.

If that be the circumstance then the question naturally arises why a common man like the questioner should take the trouble to read Sri Aurobindo.

The questioner may also have come to know that in the history of our freedom movement as written very recently, the role of Sri Aurobindo was depicted in such a manner that it creates no interest in the mind of the readers to comprehend what was 'Nationalism' to Sri Aurobindo or why he at all took part in active politics, although it is a fact that Sri Aurobindo had to lead the nation and the nation got the guiding gospel from him to carry on the freedom movement. We will surely do injustice to the historians if we think that they did not know how Sri Aurobindo's powerful pen inspired the moribund people of India to shake off all sorts of inertia and impotence and stand erect with strong determination to sacrifice everything for the salvation of Mother India. It may, therefore, be supposed that the history was written as dictated and devised by some higher official authority.

Besides, the questioner may not be unaware of the fact that Sri Aurobindo's sincere appeal, made during the Second World War to the then leaders of the nation, was ruthlessly rejected because the leaders were acutely eager to win freedom even at the cost of India's partition. Even now, after nearly four decades of partition, the people of India can easily realise how the situation of the country—both internal and external—is worsening as days pass on because none of the problems arisen from partition can yet be solved. Those who had little capability of correctly assessing the world-situation, far less political insight, rejected the proposal of a wise yogi who once was a nationalist leader and their predecessor in the battle for freedom. So the issue needs a bit of explanation.

In 1942 when the Second World War took a very serious turn and Indians were

getting ready under the guidance of their great leader to launch the famous '*Quit India*' movement—at that historical moment, there arrived in India Sir Stafford Cripps with a very purposeful proposal from the British Cabinet. His appeal to Indians to consider favourably the offer of the Cabinet and ultimately accept it was broadcast, and Sri Aurobindo heard it with profound attention from his room in the Ashram where he had been practising yoga in seclusion. He was so moved that he wrote a letter to Sir Stafford congratulating him and wishing success to his noble endeavour. The letter was written on 31.3.42 and runs thus:

“I have heard your broadcast. As one who has been a nationalist leader and worker for India's independence, though now my activity is no longer in the political but in the spiritual field, I wish to express my appreciation of all you have done to bring about this offer. I welcome it as an opportunity given to India to determine for herself and organise in all liberty of choice her freedom and unity and take an effective place among the world's free nations. I hope that it will be accepted, and right use made of it, putting aside all discords and divisions. I hope too that friendly relations between Britain and India replacing the past struggles will be a step towards a greater world union, in which as a free nation, her spiritual force will contribute to build for mankind a better and happier life. In this light, I offer public adhesion, in case it can be of any help to your work.”

Sir Stafford's reply on the next day (1st April 1942) also reveals how he was enthused and became sure of success:

“I am most touched and gratified by your kind message allowing me to inform India that you, who occupy a unique position in the imagination of Indian youth, are convinced that the declaration of His Majesty's Government substantially confers that freedom for which Indian Nationalism so long struggled.”

Then Sri Aurobindo of his own accord took up the responsibility to send one of his devotees and friends, Mr. S. Duraiswamy Iyer—an Advocate of the Madras High Court—as his personal messenger to Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru. But the endeavour failed. The leaders ruthlessly rejected his sincere proposal without going through it very deeply.

The questioner might have observed another very significant event and realised that the same had some sort of direct bearing on the facts just stated above: It was that on the eve of transfer of power at the zero hour on the 14th-15th August 1947 Sri Aurobindo's great declaration was officially broadcast from Trichinopoly Radio though none of the National leaders requested him to convey his good wishes on the historical happy occasion. The request came from the erstwhile Trichinopoly ad-

ministration. But never in any subsequent years has the declaration been re-heard from any station of All India Radio. The newspapers and other periodicals of the country which published, in their special supplements issued on the occasion of the anniversary day of independence in many a subsequent year, erudite articles on the history of the freedom movement, significantly kept mum in respect of Sri Aurobindo's historical declaration on which the Mother once commented: "Sri Aurobindo's declaration on the occasion is a most precious and revelatory autobiographical document which should be more carefully read by every Indian."

But how many Indians are aware of it?

The questioner might have presumed that the A.I.R. and the Newspapers etc. remained silent on the issue because in that declaration Sri Aurobindo clearly stated:

"... But the old communal division into Hindus and Muslims seems now to have hardened into a permanent political division of the country. It is to be hoped that this settled fact will not be accepted as settled for ever or as anything more than a temporary expedient. For if it lasts India may be seriously weakened, even crippled. Civil strife may remain always possible, possible even a new invasion and foreign conquest. India's internal development and prosperity may be impeded, her position among the nations weakened, her destiny impaired and even frustrated. This must not be; the partition must go..."

And the National Government which was set up on that fateful day by accepting 'Partition' as a settled fact and the newspapers and other periodicals which are run mainly with the help of Government-advertisements are not in a position to utter the words—"the partition must go", because that would be tantamount to a very serious political offence. And that is why they had to keep mum and because nothing has developed to change the situation they maintain the *status quo*, and as a result the people of India are quite in the dark of it. If Sri Aurobindo is treated thus, then how will a common man like the questioner feel enthused to study Sri Aurobindo?

The questioner may be supposed to have anyway come to know that Sri Aurobindo felt the necessity of bringing about a revolutionary change in the system of education in India to enable posterity to build up a New India. So Sri Aurobindo provided the nation with *A System of National Education* in 1909. But unfortunately neither the public nor the private sector dealing in education took up any programme of education based on that system after independence, though they have been experimenting in various systems of education since then. It is a pity that the whole education-society in India either underestimated him or tried to keep him with due respect at a safe distance. If Sri Aurobindo had to receive such treatment from the education-society, why would a commoner read him?

Maybe the questioner has got the information that Sarat Chatterjee—the famous Bengali novelist—once requested his close friend the late Dilip Kumar Roy to ask Sri Aurobindo how he liked his writing and Dilip Kumar Roy, though he did

not ask the question in the form it was put by Sarat Chatterjee, asked in course of some discussion on Bengali literature Sri Aurobindo's views and Sri Aurobindo replied:

“As for Bengali, we have had Bankim and have still Tagore and Sarat Chatterjee—that is sufficient achievement for a single century.”

How beautifully Sri Aurobindo explained in a single sentence the splendid contributions of the three marvellous pens in the field of contemporary Bengali literature! It is indeed a glorious episode in the history of our cultural progress that we had the good fortune of having these three within the span of one hundred years. It is not unknown to any person interested in literature how they played their respective roles in upgrading the position of Bengali literature and glorifying the resourcefulness of the Bengali language. Then is not the literary genius of him unquestionable who is capable of appraising the whole Bengali literature so nicely in a single sentence?

One wonders how it was possible for Sri Aurobindo to study Bankim Chandra so intensively within one year of his learning the Bengali language. He wrote a series of articles (of course in English) in *Indu Prakash* in 1894 to pay homage to the great soul of Bankim after his passing away. In those articles he estimated Bankim's place in world-literature by comparing his works to those of Henry Fielding, Scott and Meredith.

This shows that he who had mastered so many European languages and gone through several of their original masterpieces had a profound insight not only into Bankim but also into the Bengali language. But the questioner has anyhow come to know that just a few Indians, particularly Bengali litterateurs, feel interested in studying Sri Aurobindo. Sri Aurobindo's erudite, educative and informative discussion with his friends, devotees and disciples on various subjects relating to poetry and other branches of Western as well as Indian literature can no doubt be regarded as a most valuable contribution by any person interested in literature. But unfortunately only a small number know about it. And therefore the question arises: Why should a common man read Sri Aurobindo?

The questioner has surely been apprised of the fact that the purpose for which Sri Aurobindo practised so difficult an austerity as the Integral Yoga was something which even Sri Krishna himself had not attempted to achieve and therefore his yoga created confusion in the minds of contemporary Sadhaks who very rudely criticised his Sadhana (some are still criticising). When Sri Aurobindo came to know of this he wrote a letter to Dilip Kumar Roy on 10th February 1935 which may here be recollected:

“It is not for personal greatness that I am seeking to bring down the Supermind. I care nothing for greatness or littleness in the human sense. I am seeking to bring some principle of inner Truth, Light, Harmony, Peace into the earth-consciousness;...I feel it ever gleaming down on my consciousness from

above and I am seeking to make it possible for it to take up the whole being into its own native power instead of the nature of man continuing to remain in half-light, half-darkness... If greater men than myself have not had this vision and this ideal before them, that is no reason why I should not follow my truth-sense and truth-vision. If human reason regards me as a fool for trying to do what Krishna did not try, I do not in the least care.... Let all men jeer at me if they will or all Hell fall upon me if it will for my presumption—I go on till I conquer or perish.”

Lately many adverse remarks on his vision of Supramental manifestation are also heard from Sadhaks of other folds. So, Sri Aurobindo remains beyond the reach of many religious persons and spiritual seekers and is not considered to be their dear one. And therefore the questioner asks, ‘Why should I read Sri Aurobindo?’

Up till now one aspect of the question has been dealt with and that is its negative aspect. From the question as put, the intention of the questioner is not clear, for the question seems to be equivocal: it may mean that the questioner has sufficient reasons for which he or she does not feel any inclination to read Sri Aurobindo. So far we have pin-pointed and discussed some such probable reasons. This is one aspect.

If the question be judged from another point of view then it may seem that the questioner simply wishes to know what benefit can be derived from the study of Sri Aurobindo. This is the positive aspect of the question.

In reply to this aspect two reasons may be pointed out with an explanation which, it is presumed, may also nullify the rationale of the negative aspect of the question discussed earlier.

Firstly—in Bengal, nay, in the whole of India at present there is no political leader within or without the legislature, no educationist or educator, no littérateur or lover of literature who does not have any respect for Rabindranath. And Rabindranath though older than Sri Aurobindo paid due respect and offered salutation to him in 1907. He hailed Sri Aurobindo as:

“O friend, my country’s friend, O Voice incarnate, free,
Of India’s free soul... Rabindra, O Aurobindo, bows to thee.”¹

In 1928 Rabindranath came to Pondicherry. Sri Aurobindo had gone into seclusion in 1926 and was not seeing anybody. But he relaxed the rule for Rabindranath and saw him on 28th May, 1928. Recording his impression Rabindranath said:

“At the very first sight I could realise that he had been seeking for the soul and had gained it, and through his long process of realisation had accumulated within him a silent power of inspiration. His face was radiant

¹ From K. C. Sen’s translation.

with an inner light.... I felt that the utterance of the ancient Hindu Rishi spoke from him of that equanimity which gives the human soul its freedom of entrance into the All. I said to him, 'You have the Word, we are waiting to accept it from you. India will speak through your voice—Harken unto me.'¹

So, it is glorifying for any Indian who loves and respects Rabindranath to know Sri Aurobindo. And that is why Sri Aurobindo is to be read and realised.

Secondly, there is no gainsaying that the peoples of the vast land from Kashmir to Kanyakumari have very deep reverence for Swami Vivekananda. Six years after his passing away Swamiji's spirit appeared before Sri Aurobindo in his solitary cell at Alipore Central Jail and spoke to him for a fortnight on certain aspects of his yoga. The youth of the country who have been organising groups to fulfil the ideal of Swamiji are perhaps not aware of the above strange incident due to some reason or other. If they come to know of it then they will at once raise a very serious question—why Swamiji selected Sri Aurobindo, neglecting his own *Gurubhais*—that is to say, other direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna and also his own disciples who were then living? But, since it did not so happen, it may be taken as granted that Swamiji had come to know something more than what he had written and spoken in his life-time and that he wanted to convey it to any Indian spiritual seeker who was quite fit to receive it. And he chose Sri Aurobindo whom he had never met when he had been in his physical body. This very supernatural event explains and justifies Sri Aurobindo's place in the cycle of spiritual Sadhana in India. If this momentous significance of the memorable event can be truly comprehended by any spiritual seeker then he will realise that to read Sri Aurobindo means to know even Swamiji more fully. And that is why Sri Aurobindo is to be read and realised.

In conclusion we may draw the attention of the questioner to the undernoted two comments of Sri Aurobindo with the hope that they may wipe out all sorts of scepticism by which his/her mind is possessed:

(a) People do not understand what I write because the mind by itself cannot understand things that are beyond it... Each mind puts its own ideas in place of the Truth.²

(b) I do not believe in human judgments because I have always found them fallible—also perhaps because I have myself been so blackened by human judgments that I do not care to be guided by them³

SAMAR BASU

¹ From *The Modern Review*, July 1928.

² From a letter to a disciple dated 6.6.1936.

³ From a letter dated December 1934.

MAIN TRENDS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY TO-DAY

A REVIEW of the chief currents of recent Indian Philosophy needs a brief historical recapitulation of the development of philosophical speculations in India. This is all the more necessary on account of the fact that the ancient seers and savants of this country understood 'philosophy' in a sense dissimilar to its popular western conception. Notwithstanding the fact that human beings are everywhere human and that they think in a similar way and cherish almost similar values, two distinct currents of philosophical activity, namely, Eastern and Western, as evidenced in the recorded history of human culture, cannot really be ignored.

The classical conception of Indian philosophy which is 'Darsana' denoting both 'vision' and 'instrument of vision' had its grounding in a religio-metaphysical and spiritual culture. It is fairly well known that by 'Darsana' the ancient seers, who had a penetrating mystic insight and a keen metaphysical mind, meant an immediate and intuitive vision of Truth or Reality. The search for truth is mainly concerned with the realization of ultimate Truth and Reality, leading to the life of truth and justice, self-control and equanimity. Evidently, the aim of Indian philosophy is not a mere intellectual apprehension of Reality, but an intuitive realization of it. All systems of Indian philosophy therefore consider philosophy to be both an intellectual and a practical discipline to be cultivated in order to find out how life can be best led. Philosophy, according to the time-honoured tradition of India, is not simply a view of life, it is a way of life as well. The practical motive is a unique feature of the Indian philosophic tradition which distinguishes it from the philosophy of the West. Evidently, the Indian view is pragmatic, but it is purified and ennobled pragmatism bereft of the shortcomings of sensationalism. Thus there is an ocean of difference between the 'practical' as understood in Indian philosophy and in the Western tradition. It is not the view that truth is measured in terms of the practical as understood by the pragmatists like James, Schiller and others, but rather that truth is the most dependable guide for practice. Further, a close collaboration between religion and philosophy is found to dominate the philosophical speculations of the traditional Indian Philosophy. And, to be fair, this should not always be taken as a definite sign of its weakness; for that has not degraded it to the level of Theology as has been erroneously alleged by some hostile critics from the West. As a matter of fact, ancient Indian Philosophy takes an integrated view of life and experience. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan has forcefully argued that this intimate alliance between religion and philosophy has not put any impediment in the way of free pursuit of philosophical speculations in India.¹

The Vedas are the common fountain-head from which Indian philosophy originated in the hoary past and the old and authentic principal Upanishads containing the sublime metaphysical thoughts laid down the general conceptual framework of

¹ Dr. S. Radhakrishnan: *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. 1, London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1962, p. 25.

Traditional Indian Philosophy. The Epics and the Puranas helped the continuation of the same thoughts and ideas through various myths, legends and symbols. The Bhagavad Gita and the Brahmasutra afforded expositions of the mystic-metaphysical ideas in a fairly systematic manner. All these along with nine important philosophical systems, both orthodox and unorthodox, and commentaries and sub-commentaries on important treatises and classical texts written in Sanskrit, Pali, and Prakrit may be regarded as the most significant pillars of traditional Indian philosophy. In other words, by 'traditional Indian philosophy' is meant the entire corpus of philosophical doctrines and dissertations which were expounded by the seers and scholars extending over a pretty long period of two millenniums and communicated from generation to generation. Nevertheless, the most fundamental living forms of it include the main schools of Vedanta and some of the Saiva and Vaishnava philosophies like Siva-siddhanta and Pancharatra. The momentum of development of the philosophic reflections in India has not all along been progressively steady and emotionally satisfying. As a matter of fact, Indian philosophy had its days of decay and stagnation.

The nineteenth century saw the revival of Indian Philosophy. English education was introduced in India by the British rulers which alienated a large segment of the English-educated Indians from their own multi-faceted cultural heritage. These Westernised Indians were the victims of psychological uprootedness and cultural debasement. But the picture was not so gloomy all around. Fortunately, there had been a revival of Indian philosophy through the ungrudging sustained efforts of great savants and thinkers like Ram Mohun Roy, B.G. Tilak, Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Dayananda, Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, J. Krishnamurti, Krishna Chandra Bhattacharaya, Ramana Maharshi, B. N. Seal, S. Radhakrishnan, Sri Aurobindo, to mention some of the most eminent of them, who distinguished themselves in different fields of thought and action such as politics, poetry, religion, philosophy and mysticism. Of them, only three are academic philosophers, viz. K. C. Bhattacharya, B. N. Seal and S. Radhakrishnan, though all of them are accredited representatives of the Indian philosophic tradition. They reinterpreted the traditional Indian thought in a new light in the changed socio-cultural situation and thus made us familiar with India's hoary religious-philosophic tradition. The contributions of some orientalists and linguists of the 19th century and the early part of the present century, most of whom were Europeans, deserve to be gratefully acknowledged. In a sense, the revival of Indian philosophy was mainly due to the effort of those Indians who had English education, and training in Western learning. With the introduction of new systems of education, philosophy, though principally Western, was introduced as a subject in the degree and post-graduate courses of Indian universities. A band of professional philosophers, most of them more acquainted with the Western philosophic tradition than their own, became a part of the Indian intelligentsia.

In the 20th century, due to the improved means of communication and constant

cultural exchange, there has been a cultural cross-fertilisation and Indian philosophy to-day stands at the confluence of divergent currents of thought, some of which are certainly not indigenous. At least, three distinct trends of thought can be clearly discerned at present in the realm of philosophy in India. First, since the political independence of India, there has been considerable growth of national pride and a group of energetic scholars employed their talent and scholarship in writing objective histories of Indian philosophy with copious reference to original Sanskrit, Pali and Prakrit texts. Moreover, a handful of orthodox Indian scholars principally interested in classical Indian philosophy have been doing a magnificent job in translating many outstanding treatises into English and, in some cases, into different regional languages. These scholars also put forward elaborate annotations and explanatory notes. Nobody can reasonably deny the usefulness of such an enterprise because it makes us, especially those who are not conversant with the classical languages, familiar with the original thoughts and ideas. This, therefore, enables us to dispense with our dependence on the second-hand information some of which is even of doubtful authenticity. But this activity of the faithful presentation and annotation of the texts of classical Indian philosophy should not be confused with doing philosophy. Apart from that, an exclusive study and exposition of the ancient wisdom runs the risk of inviting stagnation in the world of ideas. An objective presentation of the authentic histories of Indian philosophy has undoubtedly a historical relevance, academic importance and cultural significance, but that too cannot be considered a creative philosophical activity.

Secondly, some modern academic Indian philosophers have been utilising their dialectical skill and scholarship in expounding the rich philosophic tradition of India. These scholars have been reinterpreting, and offering critical exposition of, the principal systems of Indian philosophy, especially, Nyaya, Buddhism, Yoga and Vedanta with a view to establish the thesis that these systems contain precious thoughts which are not totally devoid of contemporary relevance. It is presumably their conviction that these systems of philosophy, when stripped of their ambiguities and vagueness, can even now enlarge the horizon of our thought. Most of them very often refer to traditional Indian thoughts and ideals for inspiration and guidance. Again, some of these scholars interpret the traditional Indian philosophy in such terms and concepts as might be intelligible and acceptable to the Westerners. In their eagerness to popularise traditional Indian thoughts to Western scholars and readers, they, we are afraid, have not always presented a very faithful picture of the vast panorama of traditional Indian philosophy. It is well-nigh impossible to render Sanskrit philosophical classics into English, for each language has its own characteristic genius. Consequently some sort of unintentional distortion becomes unavoidable, for in the very process of rendering them into English and adapting them aright to the conceptual framework of Western philosophy, the possibility of marginal distortion of the exact significatory stress of these thoughts cannot be totally ruled out. But what seems to be somewhat amazing is the apologetic tone in which they present their points of view.

It is intellectually profitable and culturally significant to have a fresh look at the philosophic tradition of our land, for which however a sympathetic approach and an in-depth study are the essential prerequisites. A firm footing on, and a right perspective of, the cultural tradition cannot be conducted in a historical or cultural vacuum. So to develop some sort of intellectual rapport with the traditional Indian philosophy may not, as a rule, be considered a liability, an impediment in the way of meaningful and creative philosophizing. It cannot be denied that cultural debasement might very often prove counter-productive. But this does not invariably mean that we must cling tenaciously to the old ideas and learning. By gloating over one's past philosophic glories, one allows himself to be a victim of philosophical Narcissism. In other words, thinking and living too much in the past produces a sense of self-sufficiency which makes an individual insensitive to the worthwhileness of other views with contemporary relevance. Seldom can a serious thinker afford to remain confined within the four walls of traditional thoughts and ideas, for that would be a false cultural patriotism and a harmful nostalgia. To take a balanced view without cutting oneself off from the situational context is what is needed.

Thirdly, some of the modern academic philosophers keeping the Western model of philosophical activity in view, feel very apologetic of the present-day Indian philosophy. These scholars do not find anything worthy and illuminating in Indian philosophy and therefore unhesitatingly reject the entire body of traditional Indian philosophy as dogmatic, magical, romantic, speculative and what not. They argue: what we had in traditional Indian philosophy is religion, dogma, uncritical doctrine and not philosophy in the real sense of a disinterested investigation into the nature of things. Hence they advocate a complete cutting off of all ties and bonds with the past heritage and ask us to begin philosophizing *de novo*. They have, however, found a good deal of wisdom in the most dominant and remarkable recent philosophic movements of the West, such as Logical Positivism, Analytical and Linguistic Philosophy, Phenomenology, Existentialism. It is fairly well known that the attempts of the philosophers of the Vienna Circle towards the unification or synthesis of sciences has not proved fruitful. Unification or synthesis of sciences, if at all feasible, can very well be performed by the scientists themselves for their own work in which they are intellectually well-equipped and to which they are legitimately entitled. The philosophers would simply make a muddle of it. Moreover, the myth of the verification theory of meaning, once supposed by its champions to be a tool sufficiently sharp to demolish metaphysics, has already been exploded and its edge has considerably been blunted. Metaphysics still continues to be a meaningful and worthy pursuit.

(To be concluded)

RANJIT KUMAR ACHARJEE

CONSCIOUSNESS

(1) Theory

CONSCIOUSNESS is an absolute, a mode of expression of the Divinity which is itself beyond verbalisation or even symbolic description. The Divinity can be experienced, not known. "The Tao which is named is not the true Tao." The Divinity experiencing Itself is Consciousness. There is no such thing as unconsciousness, only a lack of awareness, a loss of memory.

Consciousness, this self-experience of the Divinity, seems to take on two modes especially as it manifests in the human being: (1) rational, logical, linear, directed, aware, self-reflective, controlled, cerebral, specialised, causal, descriptive, masculine, non-hierarchical, *Yang*; and (2) non-rational, symbolic, global, non-directed, unaware, non-reflective, spontaneous, autonomic, generalised, synchronistic, experiential, feminine, hierarchical, *Yin*.

The two fundamental modes of experience in the Cosmos—Space and Time, or Form and Energy—parallel this distinction with Space or Form being related to Yin and Time or Energy being related to Yang. The two modes are in fact one and interpenetrate each other totally. Modern Physics, while realising Space and Time as different forms of the same reality, nonetheless still utilises the distinction in its effort to comprehend existence through the rational, descriptive path.

Psychologically, these two aspects of consciousness must be fused, must be used as different ways of experiencing what is *one thing*. If Physics in its rationality does not ultimately surrender itself to the symbolism implicit in its descriptions, it will flounder interminably in a sea of useless data. If the non-rational, symbolic realm does not offer up an island of awareness in its sea of pure experience, an island from which the fixed stars can offer orientation, then experience remains a non-sense field of inchoate, undifferentiated energies. The symbol unexperienced and neither perceived as such nor related through description to the rational realm remains unfertilised by the active sperm of awareness and cannot reproduce itself in new and more potent forms.

The rationalist immersed in fact and devoid of the flesh of a symbolic quest is arid and endlessly boring.

The symbolist swamped by energies and devoid of the solidity of fact and sensory experience is incoherent and endlessly meaningless.

Each alone is dangerous.

(2) Parable

Once upon a very long time ago there was a being both male and female, united in itself and wholly happy. It could 'at will' perceive all around it from either its left 'female' half or its right 'male' half, or in moments of Great Delight from both together.

The being had been instructed at birth (from it knew not where) to reproduce itself only in the moments of Great Delight when it perceived the world from both halves together, for then its children would also be whole and happy, one in themselves and complete.

But there was a delight in the left half different from the right and a delight in the right half different from the left. And the delight of capricious alternation was again another thing different from the Great Delight.

The being found that when it was in its left half it could experience and touch and dance with a whirl of energies within and around and, when it was in its right side, it could observe and describe and will what should happen next. When it capriciously alternated between the two, there was a delight almost as great as that of the Great Delight, missing only the poise which true wholeness gives.

This game of alternation had the great advantage that the being could will it to happen when it was in its right half. And it enjoyed that immensely. It could change the rhythm of the alternation, the intensity, the tempo or make it angular and sudden or soft and gentle. All the variations could be arranged as it wanted in the moment. This experience gave a sense of freedom and buoyancy which, as Time and Space came to exist, it enjoyed more and more.

For a very long time it was so enthralled by this internal game that it forgot to multiply itself (and the multiplication of wholeness was its true aim). It began to feel a nagging within itself, a sort of discrepancy between its insideness and its outsideness.

One day it realised its purpose of multiplication, but by then it had been enjoying its wilful game of alternation for so long that it had altogether forgotten the Great Delight and the instruction given it. So the being multiplied as best it could which was when it was in one part or the other, but never when it was in both together, as it had long forgotten how to do that. For to do that it had to be will-less and beyond itself.

But there was a delight in this mode of creation also, an echo almost of the Great Delight, for it created out of its different rhythms of alternation, out of its tempos and intensities and its angularity or its softness, and it seemed that the multiplication could go on thus for a very long time with little if any duplication.

So into the world went two types of beings, one male and the other female. And a great travail began, the details of which are very well documented elsewhere and need not be repeated here.

At first the problems were not so serious, for the being would give instructions on how to resolve the conflicts which would obviously arise from this division. It would be in his feminine side for the male beings to show them how to feel and touch and console. And it would be in its masculine side for the female beings to remind them of direction and decision and will. And most of all it tried to remind both the types of the delight it had felt while creating them and how they could remember that when together.

An odd thing happened which the being could not have predicted. In a kind of generational inversion, the male and female beings seemed to be compelled to remember the need to multiply which the being itself had for so long forgotten. And with this came the vague sensation that this had something to do with some sort of delight. So multiply they did. And they found that they had to do that together. Try as they might, they could not produce from themselves alone. They needed that 'other', that enigmatic being whose impulses seemed so different and mysterious.

They did know some delight, some transient yet compelling reflection of an echo of the Great Delight about which they knew nothing. For the being had itself forgotten the Great Delight and could not have told them.

Now all this multiplying between male and female beings greatly perplexed the being, for this was something totally unforeseen. Also unforeseen was that the male and female beings—perhaps because of the division between them—were not immortal and they seemed to just wither away after some time and decompose. This caused serious problems for everyone, especially for the being who itself suffered very great anguish at the sufferings and loss of its children who, after all, were a part of itself.

As happens with children sometimes, they paid less and less attention to their parent. An endless round of multiplication occurred and aeons passed. The being, ignored, retired quietly to a cave and was completely forgotten.

Sometimes the energies of the males would dominate and then there would be history and great events. Sometimes the energies of the females would dominate and there would be no history but great myths and visions of beings within and beyond.

In some lands there would be a teasing memory, a flash of the Great Delight in a few individuals. These flashes would perturb the world and immense energies would be expended to describe how it came to defend the way it came and to formulate ways to make it come. So compelling became the pursuit of this Great Delight that some people forgot entirely their normal activities and did nothing else but try to re-create this original, all-encompassing oneness and sense of what came to be called Love. Every possible experiment was tried, every possible experience attempted in order to try to know this Great Delight, and, once known, to keep it.

But so mixed were these male and female beings and so confused by their separation from one another and in such anguish from the seeming inevitability and permanence of death that they could not, except rarely, live any sort of life fully and completely. So the compulsion to multiply continued and the need to heal this horrible rift pervaded their whole life and all their world. Occasionally, however, they did know something like happiness, though usually small in relation to their dream and brief compared to the eternity which they sensed behind and within all.

Now in its cave which was of course dark the being could see nothing and, as aeons passed, it could hear nothing. Then it could not touch or taste or smell or remember. So it no longer played its game, and it certainly had no heart to multiply again.

In this emptiness it remained for a very long time. But finally it awoke. And it awoke to the fullness of the Great Delight, for there was nothing else. It wondered how such a wondrous experience could ever have been forgotten. And in its wonder it came out of its cave and then remembered its children. So as not to confuse them it came appearing as man and woman though in fact divided not at all. It found great confusion and division and suffering and death. Its heart was overwhelmed and it vowed not to rest until this anguish caused by its forgetfulness was healed.

So the being in two parts went among its descendants for long ages and in many forms and taught the many men and the many women who all suffered from confusion and division and death. It taught them how to begin to be whole within themselves and thus how to be whole without. It taught them that they could thus multiply their wholeness and be full in knowledge and love and that they would conquer death.

But that part of the story has only just begun and has yet to be written. Perhaps it will never be written for perhaps it is beyond history, beyond myth, beyond the power of speech or word.

For that will be the story of the Great Delight where wholeness begets wholeness and light shines without shadow forever. .

DHRUVA

COMMON DAWN

(Through My Study Window)

CLASH of brass pots
women's unlexiconed rhyme
at the street tap
drown
the early siren.
The disturbed sun
red with anger
darts out his rays.

Sleepy cows
udders heavy
with milk
dawdle their way
to the crowded
milkbar.
Their emaciated calves
trudge behind their tails.
Toothless men
with empty pails and
soiled pass-books
escort
their beasts of honour.

Energetic cock
in liberated vigour
like villain in the celluloid
rape-chases the prankish hen.
Watchful cur
like knight of the old order
barks the cock on to the hut top.
The disappointed hen
cackles her ill-luck away.

Young women
their *kumkum* smudged
sanctify the floor
with broom and dung.
With powdered rice

they draw *kolam*
counting the dots
with care
lest
it look
a child's scribble.

Half-naked toddy-tappers
like Darwin's ancestors
clamber swiftly.
Swifter they slide
laden with juice
to cheer dried-up men.

Unpowdered women
in soiled saris
walk in rows
from groves and gardens
their heads balancing
baskets
with greens and brinjals,
plantains and tomatoes.
To the morning market they race,
their unfettered breasts
dancing to the tune
of glass bangles
rhythmic
to the swing of their hands.

P. RAJA

STORIES FROM TAMIL LITERATURE

I

AVVAIYAR AND THE HIGHWAYMAN

PAARI and Avvaiyar were good friends. In addition to delighting Paari with her poems Avvaiyar was also a wise counsellor to him. But she was the most itinerant of poets in those days. She would not stay at a court for many days. All the kings and princes of the Tamil-speaking world were friends to her and so to meet them all she had to be always on the move.

On one occasion Avvaiyar was the guest of Paari. Paari was, at that particular period, preoccupied with the affairs of the state and so had not much time to share with Avvaiyar. After a few days, Avvaiyar expressed her desire to leave. "So soon?" Paari seemed surprised, and added, "I haven't talked to you much or listened to many of your poems. You must stay a few days more and then I will be completely free." But Avvaiyar was very insistent and no amount of Paari's persuasion could stop her. Sadly Paari gave in and ordered a large bag of gifts to be brought. He personally hung the bag on Avvaiyar's shoulder and bade her farewell.

Avvaiyar with the heavy bag on her shoulder stepped out of the castle and descended the hill. After an hour or so the path led into a jungle, but she who knew her way trudged on. The bag was heavy and she was a little angry with Paari. Usually Paari did not send her walking like that when she had something to carry. He always arranged for her transport. "Perhaps he has taken a pique against me for leaving," she thought.

Suddenly there came a sound of horse's hooves. In a few seconds a masked highwayman appeared before Avvaiyar, blocking her path. At the point of his sword he snatched the bag from her, turned back his horse and disappeared into the forest. Avvaiyar stood dazed and angry. A highwayman in the land of Paari! Unbelievable! Paari had been a very able administrator and jealously guarded his people from such ills. But here in broad daylight she was robbed of her possessions. It was not only a loss to Avvaiyar, but also an open affront to Paari. She should immediately report the matter to him.

So she traced back her steps with vehemence and reached Paari's castle in a shocked and angry mood. Paari seemed surprised to see Avvaiyar back.

"What is the matter, Avvaiyar? You were in such a hurry to go and now you are back."

"Paari, I thought very highly of your kingdom's law and order. But a highwayman on horseback snatched away the bag you had given me. It should never have happened in your kingdom. It is disgraceful; it is shocking." She panted out her words.

"I am very sorry that such a thing happened in my kingdom. I will take steps

to find the culprit. Meanwhile please calm yourself and be seated. I will now compensate you for what you have lost." So saying Paari went inside and brought something on a silver platter. It was covered with a cloth. He presented it to Avvaiyar and when the poet removed the cloth she saw there the selfsame bag snatched away from her in the jungle!

Avvaiyar could not believe her eyes. Was it possible that the robber was apprehended so soon and the bag so quickly recovered?

Paari smiled at Avvaiyar and his eyes twinkled with mischief. "You have got back the thing. Now you want to meet the robber?" So saying he put on a mask and the highwayman was there!

"You must forgive me, Avvaiyar, for playing this trick on you," he said, removing the mask. "I wished to have your company for a few more days. But you were bent upon leaving. I saw no other way to bring you back immediately. Are you vexed with me?"

Words failed Avvaiyar. Her hands gently reached for Paari's. Tears of tenderness trickled down her cheeks.

2

THE NOBLE HEART OF ADIYAMAN

Once during his wandering over the highest mountains of his kingdom, Adiyaman noticed a Nelli tree growing in the crevice of a steep rock. It was of a special kind yielding fruit once in twelve years. The fruit was believed to contain rare elixirine properties that prolonged the life of the eater. Access to the tree was difficult, for there were big boulders around and the mere slip of a foot could send one hundreds of metres hurtling down into the valley. With great difficulty Adiyaman climbed the boulders and reached the tree. He looked for the fruits but there was only one. He climbed the tree, plucked the fruit and took it down with him very carefully. The fruit would give him a long life and he might continue the glory of his conquests for many more years.

Adiyaman returned to his palace with the fruit. He did not eat the fruit at once. After dinner and an hour of rest, he thought that it was the proper time for him to eat the rare prize. He sat down to cut it when his friend Avvaiyar came to see him. Normally, a person in possession of such a rarity would instinctively put it away to be eaten afterwards when the visitor left. Adiyaman did not behave like that. There was the Nelli fruit on the plate when Avvaiyar came and sat before him. They were glad to see each other and talked of many things. While they were talking, Adiyaman, quite casually, pushed the plate in front of Avvaiyar. The poet did not have any idea of the rareness of the fruit or its wondrous qualities. She took it and chewed it. Adiyaman waited till she had finished it. Then he asked her about the taste and she replied that it was very good. Adiyaman said, "I am very glad you came

just now. Or I would not have had the opportunity to offer that fruit to you." Avvaiyar looked surprised and asked, "Was that anything special?" Adiyaman smiled and told her all about it. The smile disappeared from Avvaiyar's lips. "Oh, I feel very bad about this. Why didn't you tell me before I ate it?" She was bitter with remorse. Adiyaman smiled. "If I had told you, you would not have eaten it, and I would not have had the satisfaction of placing it in the right hands." "But did you not intend to eat it yourself?" asked Avvaiyar. "Yes," replied Adiyaman, "but on seeing you I changed my mind immediately. I decided to give it to you. Poets serve the world better than soldiers do."

Avvaiyar was overwhelmed with Adiyaman's affection and magnanimity and could not speak for some time. Then she took out her palm leaf and style and wrote a poem then and there. It was an eulogy for Adiyaman and it celebrated the whole event in beautiful language. Adiyaman derived more delight from that poem than he would have from eating the fruit.

Avvaiyar and Adiyaman are long dead and gone. Centuries have passed. But the poem of Avvaiyar lives still and through it the greatness of Adiyaman. That Nelli fruit has given Adiyaman a long life indeed!

(To be continued)

M. L. THANGAPPA

EUROPE 1974

A TRAVELOGUE

(Continued from the issue of September, 1984)

(53)

To a Western mind Kathmandu is equated with Xanadu and Shangrila and the most musical of place-names like Samarkand and Kandahar, Yarkhand and Bukhara, Isphahan and Yukatan. It becomes so typically vocal in Han Suyin's book *The Mountain is Young*. There she insights and inhears "Kathmandu" as "a peal of bells, sweet and grave, bronze bells with a prodigious echo calling among mountains". The Oriental world's end, the Third Pole, our mountains and places have endeared themselves to the west in modern times as never before. The sentiment of the ancients is not well recorded, but they say Kubla Khan's place in Xanadu was built by Newari (Nepalese) artisans who had for their leader Balbahadur, an architect-cum-sculptor-cum-painter. It sounds fantastic.... Well a story is a story.

The very fact that we had actually been to Nepal and had lived there sufficiently long fired the imagination of our friend. His mind ran riot at being near two persons who had resided in Kathmandu. Other descriptions I gave him were after all knowledge acquired from books and relatives who had been to places. But here he was getting firsthand information.

When we were in Nepal it was ruled by the Ranas. I started my story rather self-consciously seeing his wide-eyed wonder at every word I said. But the Ranas were not exactly Nepalese—they were of Rajput extraction. On the Eastern side of the town there used to be an enormous parade-ground. Every now and then military tattoos were held there to impress the common people of the strength of the Ranas. In the middle was a stand with chairs where we the diplomatic corps and the Prime Minister (Sri Teen) Sri Sri Sri Maharaja Mohan Shum Sher Jung Bahadur Rana, and the senior Ranas assembled to witness the demonstration. On the western side beyond the barbed wire fencing gathered the common people of the town. Once in a while the King was invited (Sri Panch) Sri Sri Sri Sri Sri His Majesty king Tribhubana Bir Bikram Shah Deva. He came with his three sons, the eldest Mahendra became King after him. Dressed in white-silk national dress he looked handsome. He shook hands and even perhaps spoke a word but never smiled. Odd as it may sound, the King too was not a full-blooded Nepalese. In the 16th century a band of Rajputs fled the plains in face of the Pathan invaders and took shelter on the hills. However, they were loyal subjects. The Indian Emperor conferred on their ruler the title of Shah (King). In 1742 Prithvi Narayana Shah, a war-like prince, wanted to extend his kingdom. The vale of Kathmandu lay before him on the east like an Elysian field. He came down like a panther and made the emerald paradise his own. Prithvi

Narayana was a bit of a hilly-billy Napoleon and is considered as the Founder of the Nation. Tribhuban came from this line.

From Tundikhel, the parade-ground, the land sloped down some 100 or 200 ft. on the east and from this slightly lower terrain rose the most magnificent Mammoth of a Palace called the Singha Durbar (Lion Palace). Here we were invited every now and then for evening receptions. The basement and the ground-floor rooms were the Prime Minister's offices. The whole of the 1st floor was the reception-hall. The Palace could take pride of place anywhere in the world among other such structures with columns ornamented by baroque work and sometimes painted gold. The hall would amaze even one who has seen all the famous halls of the world. In a drawing-room attached to the reception-hall sat the Bada Maharani wearing a sari which would now cost Rs. 10,000 and diamonds the size of coffee-spoons. She spoke no English but knew some Hindi and as I spoke good Hindi we got on very well. I was very young then and she kissed me and patted me as if I were her daughter. Her son's wife and her daughters had a smattering of English, so the evening parties went off splendidly. The flood-light on the front façade and the coloured light on the trees and the waters of fountains catching the colours made the whole show a wonderland. From miles around the Singha Durbar could be seen and the lights showed the people all was well. The people were still innocent of political ambitions but that made no difference. Nepal had enough food and as the Nepalese had never known any other type of government there was no serious discontent. Every week men arrived carrying huge baskets of fruit: "To Mrs. Banerji from the Bada Maharani with compliments."

In leisure-hours we went sight-seeing or trekking. It was like living with two canvases. When one is tired of seeing the arts and crafts and the temples and pagodas and stupas, one can become bird-watchers or mountain-watchers. Trekking under the Diplomatic aegis brought no difficulty at all. But it could happen without the Embassy protection too. Grandma and father and some other members of our family went on a pilgrimage to Badrinath, Kedarnath and Amarnath. They took with them their own tents, collapsible furniture, bath-tubs, mobile commodes, personal servants and ayas and a cook. I used to tease grandma, saying that they got only half the blessings travelling so luxuriously. "Oh, no," replied grandma in her brisk voice: "If we were not allowed to travel that way we would not have gone at all, and that would not have pleased the gods, for they like people to come to them, rich or poor." She would tell me, "Take it, take it, I will give you half." Years later when I returned from Kathmandu, having seen Pasupatinath, another of that cadre of gods, grandma jeered, "Look, I told you I would give you half."

*

The Ranas wielded all the power of the State and got all the money. They were enormously rich. They used to say that every time one of the Prime Minister's sons

came of age he was given nine crores as a present by his father. By the year 1844 there appeared on the scene one Jung Bahadur Rana, a ruthless person who would not even stop at murder if it meant money for him. In fact he soon assumed the role of a hired assassin. He could kill a tiger with a kukri, so strong was he. On the instigation of a junior queen he killed the then Prime Minister. Thereupon the king had the queen's favourite killed. The enraged queen Kancha invited all the noted people of the town to the Kot, that is, the palace grounds. The treacherous queen shrieked, "Kill my enemies", and Jung Bahadur's men killed right and left without discrimination. The ghastly scene over, the queen ordered Jung Bahadur to kill the two princes, sons of the Bada Maharani so that her sons might become kings eventually. But this was too much even for Jung Bahadur. He refused. Things became more and more complicated. Finally Jung Bahadur went to the king for permission to deal with the whole situation. He was given permission. He deported queen Kancha and brought peace and order in Kathmandu. Henceforward the Prime Minister became the virtual ruler and the king a shadow.

The East India Company thought it wise to keep Jung Bahadur on their side. Now that things were settled, Jung Bahadur went for a holiday to England. Queen Victoria was kept blissfully ignorant of his recent grisly escapades. The Queen fêted him like any other prince from any part of her Empire. In Kathmandu the king, although looked upon by the common people as the very incarnation of Vishnu, lived like a golden bird in a gilded cage.

(To be continued)

CHAUNDONA S. BANERJI

CHAMPAKLAL'S NUMBERS

A LETTER FROM A READER

8-4-1984

Long ago in an issue of *Mother India* the following series of figures which Champaklalji wrote down without any conscious effort or purpose was published:

$0 \times 12 \times 60 \times 100 \times 4 \times 800 \times 9600 \times 720 \times 84 \times 32 \times 2 \times 0 \times 1 \times 0$
and the readers were invited to interpret it.

At the time I could not make head or tail of it, but jotted it down in my diary.

A few days back I tried my luck. The following is the result.

With so many significant numbers, so many signs of multiplication and so many zeros, according to the well known mathematical rule—anything multiplied by zero is zero—the value of the whole series comes to zero.

To arrive at such a result only one significant number multiplied by one zero is enough and so such a long series loses meaning. Something else must be looked for.

Based on this reasoning, I removed all signs of multiplication and all zeros. The result comes to this. 1.2.6.4.8.9.6.7.2.8.4.3.2.2.1.

Looking at the head and tail of this series I was struck by the symmetry, 1.2—2.1, but further on it did not hold.

Hence I inserted one sign of addition and two signs of multiplication between some adjoining numbers thus, 1.2.6.1 \times 4.8.9.6.7 \times 2.8.4.3 \times 2.2.1

Simplified it comes to—1.2.6.4.8.9.6.9.8.4.6.2.1

Perfect symmetry with 6 in the centre. I know this is not “Interpretation” of the Champaklal series; only one of its properties. However, thinking that this might stimulate somebody to try his or her luck on a perhaps forgotten problem I send it to you.

CHANDRAVADAN C. BHATT