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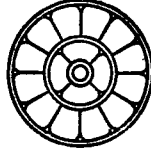
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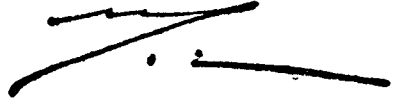


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

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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INDIRA GANDHI AND THE ASHRAM

A BROADCAST BY M. P. PANDIT ON THE ALL INDIA RADIO
ON NOVEMBER 3, 1984

WE in the Ashram have very pleasant recollections of Indira Gandhi's visits to the Mother. On her first visit, when she was the President of the Congress, Jawaharlal Nehru—her father—presented her to the Mother and said: 'Mother, bless her.' And the Mother did. In a photograph taken immediately afterwards you will find seated near the Mother: Pandit Nehru, Lal Bahadur Sastri, Indira Gandhi, Kamraj. Both Lal Bahadur and Indira Gandhi became Prime Ministers, Kamraj almost did.

Indira Gandhi developed a very happy relation with the Mother. She would decline a chair and sit at the Mother's feet in the intimate posture of a child. She would accept whatever food or drink was offered to her, dispensing with the usual protocol. Her visits were mostly hurried but she was very particular that the Mother should not have to wait for her.

She corresponded with the Mother seeking her guidance and spiritual support which the Mother readily extended to her. Not many know that the late Prime Minister had sought special help from the Mother during the 1971 elections and the Mother had assured her of a larger victory than she had hoped for. The Mother saw in Indira the best available instrument for the Divine's Work at the hour and poured her spiritual energies in an abundant manner.

Indira Gandhi had special appreciation for the system of education developed at the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education and she had sent special study teams from Delhi to explore its possibilities in the national field.

When the Mother had sent all her jewelry to the Prime Minister's Fund on the outbreak of hostilities with China, Pandit Nehru handed the contents to Indira who in turn read out the Mother's covering note and explained to him that the contribution was symbolic of the Divine's support and help. Indira had deep faith in the Grace of God.

During her last visit to the Ashram, she stayed with us for a night. She went to the Mother's room and meditated for quite sometime near the Mother's chair. She walked into Sri Aurobindo's room and paid her homage. The next morning she observed to a friend in Madras that she had visited so many places in her life but nowhere had she got such sound sleep as in the Ashram.

When Jawaharlal passed away the Mother wrote that Nehru had merged in the Soul of India. Today when Indira is no longer with us, I daresay that her brave spirit continues to work for India for whom she had to lay down her heroic, dedicated, beautiful life.

INDIRA GANDHI

A TRIBUTE AND A VISION

I

ON the 31st of October, 1984 Indira Gandhi was assassinated in her residence at 9:18 in the morning. The ghastliness of the act is all the more repulsive because of the fact that she was felled by the bullets of the same men whose avowed duty it was to defend her and protect her person even at the risk of their own lives. It is a dastardly act. It is also un-Indian and anti-Indian tradition. Bhishma, the grand old man of the Mahabharata, even at the gravest provocation in the battlefield, refused to shoot arrows at Shikhandi who charioted the car of his adversary, for the latter had been a woman in his previous birth.

The tragedy has been followed by almost a spate of condolences and pious wishes, even from those who yesterday would have liked her crucified. Indian politics today is not really objective and it is more a quarrel of personalities and vicious animosities among men—the country always taking the back seat. Pious wishes perhaps are good and platitudes customary on such occasions. If half of them had been genuine and expressed before the calamity overtook the nation a great service would have been rendered to the country, and perchance a rare and precious life saved. But this is a hypocritical world where words mean nothing or are just uttered to hide anything.

I first met her in 1976 when she came to Pondicherry to spend a quiet night at the Ashram. I had a very minor part in arranging this programme for her, the major being Sir C.P.N. Singh's. And I was allowed the privilege of paying a return visit to her at her Delhi residence on the 17th of October, 1976, just on the eve of her African tour. Since then the exchange of correspondence between us had become frequent and friendly, she even placing a good deal of confidence in me while broaching matters of national importance. Annual visits to Delhi, and sometimes oftener than that, to meet her were for me a dream come true. I used to see her sometimes alone and sometimes accompanied by my friends. She was always gracious to me and never grudged the time in spite of her heavy engagements throughout the day.

Love she had in boundless measure for all and malice for none. The idea of revenge never tinged or tainted her thoughts. For all the repugnant removal of her from the Parliament on flimsy grounds, for all the harassment and incarceration inflicted upon her under the wheel of various commissions, for all the insult heaped on her by being sent to Tihar jail, anybody in her place would naturally and justifiably have retaliated. But when victory came she stood magnanimous and without a trace of rancour in her heart. A virtue even the gods would have envied.

I saw her at her beaming best in her Parliament House office on a March after-

noon when she had come back to power after the Janata fall. That was the day when we saw from the visitors' gallery the then Home Minister Zail Singh adroitly proposing in the Rajya Sabha the dissolution of a number of State assemblies.

I met her for the last time on September 10, 1984 at her house office at 1, Akbar Road. She very kindly allowed two of my friends and relatives to accompany me. She gave me full 35 minutes of her invaluable time that day and was so frank in her conversation that I was amazed. She literally spoke her heart out—spoke of the anguish and ordeal she was passing through, and more so the country. At the end she also very graciously granted my request to take a few colour photographs of her sitting with my friends. Next, it was saying a few pleasant words before parting.

It is not for me to judge what she was in the political arena. I had known her grow up to great heights in spirituality, intimate with the Inspiration of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Their works always adorned her study. Their words always adorned her mind and thoughts.

She was truly Priyadarshini, gentle, graceful, sweet and luminous. But she had also a diamond firmness at the core of her being—all these attributes making her what she was, incomparable Indira Gandhi.

31. 10. 1984

2

Evolution does not proceed in a straight line, nor always uniformly at the same pace. It proceeds, pauses, retraces its steps, sometimes takes a detour or a sudden jump. At times atavistic forces also seek to hold it back and thwart it, if they can, on its journey towards the divine goal. These are moments of crises when mulish human nature prefers stagnation to new urges and inertia to newer levels of consciousness and joy. Nature uses then her harsher methods, imparts shocks, sometimes agonising and painful blows—to awaken it from stupor and make it resume with redoubled energy. Indira Gandhi's passing away has provided the country and humanity at large with such a shock, a poignant *katharsis*, to be reborn. The Divine has chosen to withdraw its instrument so that a deeper search within could follow, a deeper urge to realise the ideas and ideals it represented regarding the individual, the country—India—and the world.

5.11.1984

SAMIR KANTA GUPTA

SPIRITUAL EGO, ATTITUDES, THE DIVINE MOTHER IN THE WORLD

A TALK BY THE MOTHER TO THE ASHRAM CHILDREN
ON DECEMBER 9, 1953

"We are always surrounded by the things of which we think"

Words of the Mother, 1949 Ed., p. 221

THIS is very important.

If you think of nasty things, you will be surrounded by nasty things.

"To get over our ego is not an easy task.

"Even after overcoming it in the material consciousness, we meet it once more—magnified—in the spiritual."

Ibid. p. 220

How can one meet one's ego in the spiritual consciousness?

There is a spiritual ego even as there is a physical, vital and mental ego. There is a spiritual ego. There are people who have made a great effort to overcome all their egoism and all their limitations, and attained a spiritual consciousness; and there, they have all the vanity and the sense of their importance and contempt for those who are not in the same condition as they. Indeed, all that is ridiculous and bad in the ego, they find there once again. There are many, many like that. They have overcome what was there in the physical or vital consciousness but the very effort they have made to master themselves and this victory they have gained give them the sense of their extreme importance. So they become puffed up and assert their authority.

This happens so frequently that it is not even noticed.

I didn't understand this: "The so-called forces of Nature are but the exterior activities of beings out of proportion with man by their size and the powers at their disposal."¹

Didn't understand? ...For instance, take the wind which blows; now scientists will tell you: "These are manifestations of forces of Nature, and it is the result of such and such a phenomenon", they will speak about heat and cold, high and low, etc., and they will tell you: "That's the cause of the wind's blowing, these are currents of air produced in the atmosphere." But it is not this. There are entities behind, only they are so huge that their form eludes us. It would be like your asking

¹ *Words of the Mother, 1949 Ed., p. 220.*

an ant to describe the form of a man—it couldn't, could it? It sees at the most the tiny end of the little toe and it takes a walk on the foot—it is a great journey, and it would not know what a man's form would be like. Well, it is almost the same thing. These forces which bring about wind, rain, earthquakes, etc. are manifestations of—call them gestures, if you like—of movements of certain beings so formidably huge that we hardly see the end of their foot and don't realise their size.

Still, the spiritual ego is better than the ordinary ego, isn't it?

It is much more dangerous than the ordinary one! For one is not aware that it is the ego. Outwardly, when one is egoistic, not only does one know it oneself but others make you realise it still more, and circumstances prove it to you every moment. But there, as unfortunately you meet people who respect you highly, you are not even aware that you are terribly egoistic.

Very dangerous. Spiritual vanity is much more serious than physical vanity.

Then, Sweet Mother, with the ego can one realise the Divine?

Not at the moment one unites with Him. It is evident that at that moment the ego disappears. But that state does not last. Or in any case we can put it in another way: those who have brought along their ego with them cannot keep the consciousness for long. They become aware of themselves again whilst having the experience. It is that which is most terrible. They look at themselves having the experience and admire themselves. And they feel they are exceptional beings, much higher than others, and then that becomes deplorable.

Here, you have said: "Whether Thou chooseth for me life or death, happiness or sorrow, pleasure or suffering, all that comes to me from Thee will be welcome."

Does the Divine give suffering or sorrow?

Well, my child, that text, you know what it is: it is Radha's prayer to Krishna. And so, it is such a personification of divine forces that one is obliged to extend human feelings to the Divine in order to be able to express oneself. To understand it in its true form a whole long explanation would be required, and then it is no longer artistic—it becomes dogmatic or in any case pedagogic. It is to give the idea that all is in the Divine and all is divine. And necessarily, if one changes the state of consciousness and is identified with the Divine, that changes the very nature of things. For example, what seemed pain or sorrow or misery—one becomes aware quite on the contrary that it is an opportunity for the Divine's growing closer to you, and that from this event perhaps one may draw a still greater joy than that experienced from something satisfying. Only, you must understand it like that, in that spirit and with that consciousness, for otherwise, if taken in the ordinary sense, it is the

very contradiction of the principle that all is divine.

The same thing, exactly the same vibration, according to the way in which it is received and responded to, brings either an intense joy or considerable despair, exactly the same, according to the state of consciousness one is in. So there is nothing of which it could be said: it is a misfortune. There is nothing that could be called suffering. All that is necessary is to change one's state of consciousness. That is all. Only (I have written this somewhere, I don't know where now), if you yourself succeed in changing your state of consciousness and enter this condition of bliss, you can see others still quarrelling, fighting, being unhappy, suffering and feeling miserable, and you yourself feel that everything is so harmonious, so wonderful, so sweet, so pleasant, and you say: "Well, why don't they do what I do?" But the trouble is that everybody is not ready to do that! And for those who remain in the ordinary consciousness, for them suffering is something very real.

Now, there are people who don't care to be happy all alone and agree to renounce this perfect bliss in order to help others to walk a little farther on the path.

Attitudes in the world—attitudes towards virtue—are very subjective. And what may succeed with one may not do so with another. And every one must follow his own path. That is why it is always difficult to say to people: "Do what I do." This is what all gurus usually say: "Do as I do and you will reach the goal." All that one may say is: "Do as I do and you will be like me."

(*Silence*)

Ah! I wanted to ask you a question. We said at the beginning: one is surrounded by what one thinks about. You understand quite well what this means? (*Turning to a child*) Every time you think of something, it is as though you had a magnet in your hand and were attracting that thing towards yourself—you understand. Now, there are people who have a very, very bad habit of always thinking about all possible catastrophes, and are in a sort of constant apprehension about some calamity befalling them the next moment. I know many like that, there are some here. And so, those people have as though a magnet in their hands to attract calamities, not only upon themselves but upon others also. That lays a big responsibility upon them. And if one can't stop all the time from thinking about something—some have a head that runs on and they haven't found a way of stopping it—well, why not make it run on the right lines instead of letting it run on the others! Once your head begins to run, let it run on all the good things that can happen. If it is obliged to turn round and round, well, turn then to the good side! That is, if somebody is ill, instead of saying: "What is going to happen, perhaps this is going to be very serious, and if it is that disease...and a calamity comes so quickly", instead of all that, if one thinks: "Oh! that is nothing, illnesses are outer illusions translating some deeper vibrations which are not seen, that is

why one doesn't speak about them, but that's how it is. And these deeper vibrations may come and set in order what has been disturbed. And this imbalance, this illness or bad thing that has come, well, it will be absorbed by the Grace and will disappear, no trace of it will remain, except that of things agreeable and pleasant." One may continue to think in this way uninterruptedly.... People always need to make their mind run, run, run, but then make it run on the right lines, you will see that it has an effect. For instance, let it go like this: that I shall learn better and better, shall know better and better, become healthier and healthier, and all difficulties will vanish, and wicked people will become sweet and good, and ill people will be cured, and houses which should be built will be built, and those things which should disappear will disappear, but giving place to better things, and the world will move in a constant progress, and at the end of that progress there will be a total harmony, and so on, and continue thus.... You can go on endlessly. But then you will have around you and around your head all kinds of pretty things. Those who perceive the atmosphere see certain inky stains, like an octopus there, yes, like that, with its tentacles to try and upset your mind—instead of that, one will see happy formations, formations of light or rays of sunlight or perhaps beautiful pictures, all that. One will see beautiful things—there are painters who do that and they always catch thoughts.

Sweet Mother, you have said: "Each meditation ought to be a new revelation, for in each meditation something new happens."¹ After the meditation, is one conscious of what has happened?

But that's exactly the thing; I say: Pay attention and become conscious. If one is very attentive, one becomes conscious. One must be very concentrated and very attentive, then one becomes conscious.

Mother, suffering comes from ignorance and pain, but what is the nature of the suffering and pain the Divine Mother feels for her children—the Divine Mother in Savitri?

It is because she participates in their nature. She has descended upon earth to participate in their nature. Because if she did not participate in their nature, she could not lead them farther. If she remained in her supreme consciousness where there is no suffering, in her supreme knowledge and consciousness, she could not have any contact with human beings. And it is for this that she is obliged to take on the human consciousness and form, it is to be able to enter into contact with them. Only, she does not forget: she has adopted their consciousness but she remains in relation with her own real, supreme consciousness. And thus, by joining the two, she can make those who are in that other consciousness progress. But if

¹ *Words of the Mother*, 1949 Ed., p. 221.

she did not adopt their consciousness, if she did not suffer with their sorrow, she could not help them. Hers is not a suffering of ignorance: it is a suffering through identity. It is because she has accepted to have the same vibrations as they, in order to be able to enter into contact with them and pull them out of the state they are in. If she did not enter into contact with them, she would not be felt at all or no one could bear her radiance.... This has been said in all kinds of forms, in all kinds of religions, and they have spoken very often of the divine Sacrifice, but from a certain point of view it is true. It is a voluntary sacrifice, but it is true: Giving up a state of perfect consciousness, perfect bliss, perfect power in order to accept the state of ignorance of the outer world so as to pull it out of that ignorance. If this state were not accepted, there would be no contact with it. No relation would be possible. And this is the reason of the incarnations. Otherwise, there would be no necessity. If the divine consciousness and divine force could work directly from the place or state of their perfection, if they could work directly on matter and transform it, there would be no need to take a body like man's. It would have been enough to act from the world of Truth with the perfect consciousness and upon consciousness. In fact that acts perhaps but so slowly that when there is this effort to make the world progress, make it go forward more rapidly, well, it is necessary to take on human nature. By taking the human body, one is obliged to take on human nature, partially. Only, instead of losing one's consciousness and losing contact with the Truth, one keeps this consciousness and this Truth, and it is by joining the two that one can create exactly this kind of alchemy of transformation. But if one did not touch matter, one could do nothing for it.

Did Savitri foresee what she was going to do?

She said so. You have not read it? She had even been told that she would be alone. And she said: I am ready to be alone. You have not read it? It is in the canto they recited last year.¹

Did she know she would meet the "Mother of Sorrows", the "Mother of Might"?

Indeed she did. It is said all along that she knew all that was going to happen. It is written clearly. Indeed, to each of them she says clearly: I shall bring to you what you need. Consequently, she knows it. Else she would not say so. If she did not know it, how could she say so?

In Savitri the "Mother of Sorrows" says:

*"Perhaps when the world sinks into a last sleep,
I too may sleep in dumb eternal peace."*

Cent. Vol. 29, p. 505

¹ Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri*, Cent. Vol. 29, pp. 503-21, recited at the School Annual function of 1st December 1953.

Ah! that, that is the human consciousness. It is the human consciousness. It is the idea of the human consciousness that when all suffering will be over, well, "I shall sleep." It is indeed of this that Sri Aurobindo speaks. When there is this aspiration for a supreme peace, one feels that if there were a *pralaya* and the world disappeared, well, at least there would be peace. But the phrase itself is self-contradictory, for if there were a *pralaya*, there would be no more peace to be felt—there would be nothing at all any longer!

But this is just one of the contradictions of the human consciousness: "As long as the world is there and suffering there, I shall suffer with the world. But if ever the world enters into peace, disappears in the peace of Non-Being, then I too shall rest." It is a poetic way of saying that as long as misery is there in the world, I shall suffer with the world. Only when it ceases to be there, it shall cease for me also.

Then what will the "Mother of Sorrows" do? What else can she do?

She will be the "Mother of Delight."

Savitri represents the Mother's Consciousness, doesn't she?

Yes.

What does Satyavan represent?

He is the Avatar, isn't he? He is the incarnation of the Supreme.

(Questions and Answers 1953, pp. 383-391)

Corrections

In "Talks with Sri Aurobindo", October, please read "Bonvin" instead of "Bouvin" on p. 429, line 1 and "least" instead of "at least" on p. 430, line 10.

TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of November 24, 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.)

September 13, 1940

Evening

P: Anilbaran seems to hold that the individual has no selective action. He is only an instrument, a puppet, an automaton of the Divine Will. He has no individual choice.

SRI AUROBINDO: The individual is also the Supreme.

S: Yes, it is the Supreme that has become Transcendent, Universal and Individual.

SRI AUROBINDO: How does Anilbaran come to his view of the individual?

P: He quotes the Gita where Arjuna is said to be an instrument of the Divine.

S: But why then does Krishna ask him also to be *manmanā*, *madbhakta*?¹

SRI AUROBINDO: Quite so. And why does he ask Arjuna to get rid of *ahankār*? (*Sri Aurobindo quoted the passage*) Who is that "You" there? If he makes the individual a mere puppet, an automaton, my whole philosophy comes to nothing. Doesn't Anilbaran know that the individual has a Purusha who is free to choose, accepting or rejecting? If according to his idea, everything is done by the Divine Will, then a murderer can say that it is the Divine who is committing the murder and in that case there is no necessity of doing Yoga because everything is being done by the Divine Will and so everything is perfect; there is nothing to change. And we shall have to concede to Shastri's demand of supplying him 2000 books because it is the Divine Will! He says everybody doing anything here is right, because it is the universal Divine Force that is acting through him. About Arjuna, even if he was an instrument, he was acting according to his nature, in his own way with his bow, and not like Bhishma and Bhima. There the selective action comes in. Besides, he has been asked *nimitta mātra bhava*, to be an instrument for a particular purpose.

It is true that whatever is the ultimate Divine Will must fulfil itself, but that doesn't mean the individual has no choice and is an automaton. These are fundamental metaphysical facts true in another plane of consciousness or spirituality. When one brings them down into the practical field, they create great difficulties.

S: Only one who has gone into such planes of consciousness can say that every-

¹ "be my-minded, my devotee".

thing is done by the Divine. In the plane of ignorance, one can't say that, we would all come to Maya then.

P: Mother also said that each truth has its own plane. What is true of one plane may not be so in another.

SRI AUROBINDO: The Supreme takes three positions: Transcendent, Universal and Individual. But it is the position that makes the difference. Here if the individual doesn't choose, where is the place of effort? Why do we insist and demand consent? If we were to act without consent, it would create much difficulty. And if one, after proceeding on a wrong path, realises it, he won't be able to come back because it is the Divine Will that has led him there. Then Nolin Behari and some others would be quite right in saying that the Divine Will was behind all their actions. Even when we contradicted him, he was quite right in insisting on his own way.

P: Anilbaran would say that even the selective action would be chosen by the Divine.

SRI AUROBINDO: Then the individual is the Divine and there is no more any individual and we come to Shankara. What is the meaning of my insistence on One and Many? Anilbaran seems to have a rigid mind. If he reads my philosophy in that way, he will never understand it. It has to be taken as a whole.

(After some time to P) You have seen that the Pétain government is in difficulty.

P: Yes. The Axis is threatening them with complete occupation. But it would be good if they did. The French will be obliged to put up resistance again.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes. I hope the news is true.

P: People have submitted to all this mainly because of Pétain.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, they have thought "After all it is Pétain!"

P: And now if Pétain is forced out, then it will be difficult to hold the people.

SRI AUROBINDO: Then also "after all Pétain?" (Laughter)

September 14, 1940

P: Anilbaran says you have written in *The Mother* that one has or is to be an instrument of the Divine.

SRI AUROBINDO: But that is about work only. An individual is not only an instrument. He is a lover, *bhakta* and knower, *Jñāni* as well. If I have written about the instrument, I have also written about effort and rejection in the earlier part. If he says that passivity is an intermediate stage, that is another matter. Otherwise by simple passivity you expose yourself to various forces, as Lele did, thinking everything was being done by the Divine.

P: Besides, one can't lift one passage out of its context and apply it in a general way.

SRI AUROBINDO: I have very clearly said the individual is not an automaton. His consent is required. He has to be a conscious, living and consenting instrument. I think Anilbaran is unconsciously influenced by the Advaita idea of the One being real and the Many being Maya. The One is real and the Many also real, just be-

cause the One is real. If that is correct, then the individual must be real.

P: Yes, otherwise there is no individuality. Each one would be like everyone else.

SRI AUROBINDO: If he says the individual is a passive automaton, one may ask, "What are *you* doing all the time?" or "There is no *you*, is there?"

P: Another point he wants to know: you have spoken of two Mayas, the higher and the lower. He is asking where does one go after passing beyond both? To the Akshara?

SRI AUROBINDO: Damn the Kshara and Akshara. Why does he want to bring in the Akshara? One overpasses the higher Maya and goes to the Transcendent. Firstly, as I said, one embraces the lower Maya to overpass it and then overpasses the higher—*Parā prakṛti*—after embracing it.

S: He seems to be influenced by the Gita.

P: Yes, so he wants to know if, after overpassing these Mayas, one can remain in Akshara *Purusha*.

SRI AUROBINDO: He can if he wants to. But that is withdrawing from all nature, not transcending it. You have to pass through all these aspects to go to the originating Source.

Evening

(A quotation was supplied from The Life Divine—p. 379, Vol. 2, Part I—in which the individual has been described as a dynamo or channel and afterwards it is said that the individual is merged in the Cosmic. Sri Aurobindo read the passage and said, "There is no difficulty. I have said here 'the dynamo selected'—I haven't said who selects. It may be the Divine Will or Nature. And even when the individual is merged in the Cosmic, the individual characteristic remains. But the question of selective action of the individual doesn't arise from this passage." All this was done before the walk.

After the walk as he sat on the bed, C beckoned to me to take the chamber-pot to Sri Aurobindo as it was his occasional need at this time, after the exercise. I was hesitating. Then he himself asked for it. Dr. B had not noticed it and so C gave him a call too. As C was insisting on it, all of us looked, Sri Aurobindo too, at C and laughed.)

SRI AUROBINDO: The question is now who calls? The dynamo, Nature or C? If not C, is it I or Nature? (*Laughter*) But I think it is C because my need was not urgent. (*Laughter and C abashed*)

Take the example of a machine. The machine is driven by an electric force. Now, is the Force driving the machine or is there a man behind it? Whoever it is, if a pig is put into the machine to be cut, it will bring out bacon or sausages. It won't bring out anything else. You can't make the machine move like a railway. It has its own characteristic according to which it will work. If such be the case with a machine, how much more so with man who is a conscious being? It makes it all the

more complicated. And even if an individual is a perfect automaton, a passive instrument of the Divine Will, there too he has to act only according to that Will. He has to reject and choose amongst all other forces which are not that. Then he has the action of rejection. He is no more an automaton. And his very calling for the Divine Grace may be an interference.

S: Besides, one has first to know what the Divine Will is.

SRI AUROBINDO: Quite so. It is true that everything works out according to the Divine Will and fulfils the Divine Purpose ultimately. But that doesn't mean that the individual has no choice, no selection.

S: These are truths of a higher spiritual consciousness where one knows what the Divine Will is and sees or perceives it acting everywhere through Nature.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, here in the ignorance there are various forces and possibilities and one has to choose from all these. When the Soul came into the manifestation, it was not that God threw it down into earth by force, but the Soul willingly chose to come down. There was no compulsion of the Divine.

Anilbaran may be influenced by the determinism of Nature in the Gita. But that is not the whole thing. There the Purusha also comes in. The Purusha may dissent but still Nature carries out a thing or the Purusha may assent to a thing while Nature refuses. That is what happens in Yoga. Nature goes on repeating its own habits and preferences against the Purusha's consent till the Power of the Purusha so increases that it can assert itself over the Prakriti. Anilbaran may also be speaking from an ideal point of view, but there too discrimination comes in by the individual. Will you remember all that?

P (*laughing*): At least the substance I will remember.

SRI AUROBINDO: Have you read Anilbaran's article in the *Vedanta Kesari*? I just glanced through it. He says that it is the Soul that enjoys and suffers—a very astounding remark to make. And he seems also to have said that the Soul chooses a new mind, life and body in the next birth. What then becomes of the Karma theory? No wonder the Editor will contradict him.

P: I haven't read it. I will go through it. But how can he say that the Soul enjoys and suffers?

SRI AUROBINDO: In a way you can say that the Soul takes up the essence or *rasa* of all experiences, holds and supports them. But the way he has put it, makes the Soul subject to the experiences. Anilbaran has a fighting mind. So his statements are put in such a way as to evoke protest, contradictions, etc.

If the Soul or the psychic being took a new mind, vital and body, then the law of Karma would not be binding in the next life. It is not a *tabula rasa* that it begins with. It collects and gathers from the past life's experiences whatever is necessary for the next and adds what new force it can bring in and takes up an instrument to fulfil that evolution.

(*To be continued*)

NIRODBARAN

A MAGNIFICENT MYSTIC DARSHAN

RELATED BY CHAMPAKLAL

I WAS with The Mother. It was an extremely beautiful, fascinating, ethereal and futuristic place. To write about its uniqueness, there are simply no words. I am obliged to use the word 'place' as I can think of no other word. Inexpressible, marvellous lights were constantly changing. It seemed that we were in a golden light. This golden light was of an entirely different radiance than any on earth. I could even feel its touch on my body.

Sri Aurobindo was also seen there in a golden, transparent, luminous, radiating and altogether new body. One after another, all were seen doing pranam to Sri Aurobindo. From where they came and to where they went, it was not possible even to imagine. They came, did pranam and disappeared! All of them were seen doing pranam in their own different ways. Some did pranam only, some did 'sashtang' (whole body) pranam, some—after doing 'sashtang' pranam—stood up and turned round and round on the spot, and after that, some folded their hands and stood still. Some of them stretched their folded hands up and down and were seen uttering something. Their voices, though quite audible, were not comprehensible. It was not clear what language it was.

One person appeared and, standing on one leg, spun round and round, extended arms up and down, did pranam and disappeared! Another entered, formulated a variety of Mudras, turned into a child and there and then vanished! Some had closed their eyes while some kept them open. The one who was perceived as coming last was crystalline, did 'pradakshana' (circling round) of Sri Aurobindo, and after 'sashtang' pranam, stood up and, lifting up both the hands in salutation, chanted 'Om' in a continuous and prolonged tone in a sky-rending but extremely sweet voice. In a uniform note, the person went on prolonging this one Word. During that time, a variety of beautiful, bright and lustrous colours were seen in space. Finally, a shimmering golden light slowly started descending. This person disappeared in a distinct manner by gradually expanding and widening in all directions and finally becoming imperceptible. Thereafter the sound of 'Om' was heard intermittently in a melodious music like The Mother's. The music continued for a long time. At the end, only the 'Om' sound was heard in a single chant.

Beholding all these sights, I stood fascinated and spellbound! Then I heard The Mother's extremely sweet and magnetic note—'Champaklal!' The Mother appeared before me in an entirely new and beautiful form and put Her right hand on my right shoulder. Next, She placed both Her hands on my two shoulders. After that, She put both Her hands on my head. Thereupon She softly stroked my forehead, horizontally, with both Her hands. Then, very tenderly, She covered my one eye with Her one palm and the other eye with Her other palm. Now She softly caressed my whole body from top to toe and from down upward. I became in-drawn. Yet

I was aware of everything. I could even see all that was happening around. I kept standing still for a long time.

Once again, a very tender note was heard: "Champaklal! Champaklal! Champaklal! Come!" And clasping my hand, She took me forward. When The Mother had appeared, I had sighted Sri Aurobindo at a little distance. That distance remained constant. I felt I was rising higher and higher. Sri Aurobindo was also visible the same way at the same distance. After I had ascended quite high, Sri Aurobindo was not seen. I could not recollect actually when I lost sight of Him.

I rose higher and higher and on reaching a great height, a very bright, radiant, golden and vast sun was viewed overspreading the whole space. This too was at a little distance which remained constantly the same. I experienced intense heat and felt as if my body would be immediately burnt to ashes. But when The Mother, seizing my hand, declared, 'Champaklal! now you sit here', and kept both Her hands on my head, instantly I felt an extraordinary peace accompanied with a pleasant coolness in my whole body. Once again, The Mother pronounced, 'Champaklal, now you will only sit here, peacefully. Do not open your eyes. You shall open them only when you feel the touch of my hands on them. Don't even try to open them because they will not open even if you make an effort! So sit quietly and observe whatever happens. I shall come in my own time'. Instantaneously a mighty transformation came on my entire body. It is not possible to express in words all that happened. I have no idea how long I sat there.

A soft touch opened my eyes. There was no limit to my delight! I experienced ananda, ananda, ananda, a celestial ecstasy! I found myself just in front of that august sun which had hitherto been at a distance. Holding my hand, The Mother led me right inside the dazzling and resplendent sun which radiated ethereal coolness. There I had Darshan of Sri Aurobindo in His luminous new form. Retaining my hand in Her grip, The Mother brought me straight to Sri Aurobindo. Sri Aurobindo gazed at me fondly. His sweet familiar voice summoned, 'Champaklal!' And the next instant I spontaneously laid my head in His lap. He stroked my head caressingly with his soft silken hands. Sri Aurobindo lifted my head. I got up in my usual natural way and stood before Him. And I saw The Mother instead in the same place! After a moment, once again, I had Darshan of Sri Aurobindo! Wonderstruck, I stood immobilised! Then a Darshan of 'two-in-one' body left me stupefied. It was a transcendental Darshan! I have used the word 'body' as I have no appropriate word. Their body was not like what they had been in Their physical form. It was a radiant, lustrous, translucent and indescribable form. What a Supernal, Supernatural Darshan!

Champaklal, in the form of a lovely baby, was seen lying and happily playing and enjoying himself in Their lap. Their glowing, gracious, tender, smiling glance held Champaklal's eyes. They were caressing his whole body with both Their hands, in a gesture of blessing. They lifted him slowly and gently and pressed him tenderly to Their mighty and radiant bosom. They seemed to have merged him in Them

and thereby made Champaklal very much blessed indeed. What a boundless beatitude!

The vision is over but its impact persists. I have formulated it in words though much of it is beyond expression.

On 13.7.1984 — the pure, sacred, blissful and extremely auspicious Guru Purnima (full moon) day.

In Bharuch, Kamalaben's brother's Bungalow which had been named 'Kripa' (Grace) by The Mother.

In this place, Grace descended also on Champaklal.

(Translated by Sushilaben from the original Gujarati with the help of Kamalaben and Champaklal)

THE SAMADHI

THE Samadhi is beautiful, It moves, It thrills, It infuses peace and gives rest. It brings joy and force. Its flowers are charming and the workers there are so quiet and devoted. All is wonderful at and around the Samadhi.

It touches and awakens the deep soul in us, our true blissful reality, it makes concentration spontaneous, time passes imperceptibly.

And that calls for a spiritual Action, a Divine Descent, the Grace of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

We receive it all, we rejoice and we prosper.

The Samadhi is our centre, we all turn to it, it inspires our aspiration, it draws forth our adoration, it spontaneously attracts; it evokes oneness and harmony.

It powerfully moves us in our united pursuit of the Sadhana of our beloved Gurus and, following the yoga ever more enthusiastically, we grow into higher states of consciousness.

A SADHAK

SRI AUROBINDO

A TALK BY NIRODBARAN TO THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE SRI AUROBINDO SOCIETY ON AUGUST 14, 1984

(Revised Version)

FRIENDS,

Tomorrow is the anniversary of the birth sublime. The world's desire compelled his mortal birth. I am indeed happy to renew my contact with you and to join in the adoration of the Supreme on this occasion. May you celebrate it year after year with an increasing perfection till it becomes a consecration and a rite.

I wish my role had ceased here. For obvious reasons, you want me to say something but as I was on my way to the meeting somebody gave me this message of the Mother: "The more I go, the more I know that it is in work that Sri Aurobindo's integral yoga is best done." Well, after this I feel tongue-tied. Secondly, I gave a grandiloquent title to my talk, "Sri Aurobindo." It sounds as a challenge to the title of my colleague Manoj Das's talk, "Can one speak on Sri Aurobindo?" Had I known this beforehand I would not have mentioned my title. He poses a very pertinent question, indeed, for, who can speak on Sri Aurobindo? Who knows him? Once in my adolescent days, I wrote to him, "For me Sri Aurobindo pure and simple. I don't know anybody else." He replied, "No objection. But I don't know who is this pure and simple Sri Aurobindo. If you know, I congratulate you." There you are! He always spoke in double terms, covering truth with truth. Under the guise of Aswapati, the father of Savitri in his colossal epic, he called himself a colonist from immortality, Eternity's delegate, the masked Transcendent, his human self coating the All-wise, the Son of Lightning, etc., etc. Supreme poet that he was, he had no end of terms in his repertory. In fact he had passed his entire life in concealment and went away incognito. He played a hide-and-seek game with us. Only in the Mother's case he spoke in unambiguous terms. The Mother, in her turn, spoke about him clearly saying that he was the Avatar.

My actual subject, however, is neither grand nor eloquent. It may appear dull, even egoistic to you, it is my role as the scribe of *Savitri*. The choice of the subject has something to do with our respected friend Dr. Srinivasa Iyenger, for, last year at the end of my talk, he asked me, "Why didn't you say something about *Savitri*?" I felt ashamed and even guilty. But since so many great critics like K. D. Sethna, Iyenger and others have done it, I made a humbler choice on which I could speak from experience. The Master has made me a poet, that too by forceps delivery—but not a critic.

I have passed through three phases of my literary fame. When the *Correspondence* was out, people called me Nirodbaran of the *Correspondence*; then I became known as Nirodbaran of *Twelve Years with Sri Aurobindo*; the last phase was referred to by some sensitive readers as scribe of *Savitri*. To appreciate rightly this role,

I have to take you back to the year 1938 when we gained entrance into the Master's private sanctuary. You know the story of the accident to his right leg. After he had recovered, the new Darshan in April was instituted. After the Darshan, the Mother thought that Sri Aurobindo had had sufficient rest; he should now engage himself in some work. Opportunely there came a call for a new book from Arya Publishing House, Calcutta. The Mother had a portable table made and placed before Sri Aurobindo with pens, pencils and papers upon it. Sri Aurobindo had to start. *The Life Divine* was the book of choice. He poured, as it were, his heart and soul into it and went on writing and writing morning and afternoon. As soon as the first part was revised it went to the Calcutta press and the book was out. There was jubilation all around. A sadhak composed a doggerel; Purani brought it to Sri Aurobindo. He anticipated it and said, "Life Divine.... Wine?" "Yes," Purani answered smiling, "You have caught it—

Life Divine,
Mother's wine,
The book is out,
Let us shout."

This was followed in quick succession by two other volumes. I believe it took one year, 1940. Here I witnessed for the first time what I wanted to see so much, how one writes from a silent mind. The Mother told us how Sri Aurobindo wrote the whole of the *Arya*: "It was neither a mental knowledge nor even a mental creation which he transcribed: he silenced his mind and sat at the typewriter, and from above, from the higher planes, all that had to be written came down, all ready, and he had only to move his fingers on the typewriter and it was transcribed." This typewriter has been shown in the Exhibition Hall. Sri Aurobindo's completion of three volumes of *The Life Divine* was as if he had taken a deep breath, 'Kumbhak' and released it only after the work was finished.

What would be the next choice, we were wondering. Naturally, we were thinking of *Savitri*. He had told us at the beginning that *Savitri* would take a long time. He had whetted my appetite by speaking of it during my correspondence period. I remember the line he quoted for the first time to illustrate a bare style:

This was the day when Satyavan must die.

It came with such force that I could not forget it. He also said that he had revised the first book of *Savitri* twelve times! Hence our interest in the poem was alive. One morning I remember clearly, as he was sitting on his bed, he called me and said, "You will find in the drawer some long exercise books with coloured covers. Bring them." This was the first time in two years that I touched his papers. I brought some books, but I made a mistake. "No, not these," he said. My second attempt

was a success and he gave a sweet smile. It was the *Savitri* MS. I believe he read through or part of it. Then one day he started writing, sitting in a chair in the morning. Here too he went on writing for days and days. How could one write poetry in this unremitting way?, I wondered. Small poems, even long ones, are possible, but to have a continuous command over inspiration for days on end! Except for Shakespeare, was there any other poet who had been credited with such a marvellous feat? After two or three months, he asked me, "I want two notebooks." I rushed to the market and bought two neat ones at my own cost. Please remember that we were far from affluent at that time. Sri Aurobindo received them with a broad smile. We had no idea, however, what he was about.

From time to time we fished for some news—that's all. He continued unabating with the composition every morning till 1944 and recopied, I believe, the whole thing in a beautiful script; after which the Mother wanted it to be typed by Nolini. Sri Aurobindo wanted that it should be read out first and, as his eye-sight had got affected, the Mother suggested that thenceforth I should take up the reading-and-writing work. This is how I came into the picture. The manuscript thus passed into my hands, and for the first time I had the chance to see that he had finished and copied the entire first three books in double columns in a neat and clear hand. When I saw all this, I was simply stunned and exclaimed, "My God, how much he has worked!"

Now, I was asked to read daily this final copy, to which again he began to add numerous lines at various places. I had no option except to desecrate the delicate beauty of the writing in the process. Writing himself, he added farther lines in small pads, later on. When the first revision was over I had again to copy the whole thing in a blue ledger-book given by the Mother. My slothful nature needed two or three proddings from her before I started. Every morning I would take my seat behind Sri Aurobindo's bed, and leaning against the wall, using his foot-stool for my table, I went on copying like a diligent student of the old Sanskrit *tois*. The Mother would cast a side-glance at my dutiful studentship. It must have taken about three months. By that time, the ridge of the wall which I used as my back-rest had crumbled. I feared a stern look from Maharaj (Champaklal) who was the custodian of the room. Again, the entire copy was revised with farther additions. You can imagine then that our progress was very slow and Sri Aurobindo would not be easily satisfied. When the three books were completed, they were typed by Nolini and our Press printed them in fascicules. You would like to know how my poetic soul received this avalanche. I must confess that much of this Overhead poetry went over my head except at times when my solar plexus did thrill with something nearer to my perception. We shall speak about it hereafter. Sri Aurobindo had remarked that my solar plexus thrilled only when it received a pathetic or romantic punch. And there was none of it in the three books.

It was 1946 when this part was over. Then he asked me to look for a red notebook. There he had completed in a way the fourth and fifth Books and the Book of

Fate, to go by his letter to Amal. Here too, as I went on reading, expansion followed and the Book of Yoga was almost entirely new like Book Eleven. It was expanded into many cantos. I came to observe for the first time his dictation flowing in a slow steady deliberate cadence as if he were sorting out high-value coinage from the manifold products of a mint.

So far, the work was fairly easy. The complication started with the so-called Book Three. I had to bring out all the old versions. Perhaps we started with this part after 1946. Amal had begun his correspondence with Sri Aurobindo on the revised copies sent to him at his request because at that time he was writing his book *The Poetic Genius of Sri Aurobindo*. He showed them to one of his literary friends. That Professor's copious comments were sent to Sri Aurobindo who answered them at great length. This was followed by Amal's elaborate exchange of letters with Sri Aurobindo in continuation of the correspondence several years back on the growing epic. All these letters of Sri Aurobindo are collected at the end of the published volume of *Savitri*. The third part of the poem had quite a number of alternative versions and they were in a sort of manuscript confusion, to quote Sri Aurobindo's phrase. They were written on separate loose sheets; the paper had become brown, the writing faint, and they had to be recast. Book Eleven—"The Everlasting Day"—was written almost anew. I don't remember whether we gave a rapid reading to all the versions or took each book separately and finished it first. I am inclined towards the former possibility. When they were being read out, I was asked to mark certain passages. Out of three versions, for instance, one version was discarded and, from the other two, selected passages were taken up and developed farther or added to the old version. As he was dictating, he would say, "Now take that passage." I wonder how He used to remember all these details. As you can imagine, it was quite a complicated affair for me too. I had to piece them together in a connected whole. In this respect I leaned on Amal's invaluable help afterwards. And I don't know, either, how I, vital man that I was, went on working regularly and docilely as if I were under a charm.

The work, however, proceeded very much like a slow-motion picture and it was done in the evening. The Mother had a special electric lamp made for the purpose. There were in addition other tasks to be attended to: Amal's letters already noted, letters to Dilip, outside letters, articles by sadhaks and miscellaneous matters. So we had very little time left for *Savitri*. One day he complained that his real work was being delayed, but he did nothing farther. Like Ramana Maharshi he resigned himself to his fate. Once we had half-an hour's time. He remarked, "Only half an hour? Still, let us do something." Maharaj chuckled at my discomfiture, for I had wanted to escape.

When the Mother started going out in the afternoon, the work shifted to the morning. All correspondence was suddenly stopped except to Amal and Dilip. The time was fixed from 11 a.m. to 1.30 p.m., and this routine was strictly followed till the completion of *Savitri*. As soon as the usual morning duties were over and the

clock had struck 11 a.m., there was I squatting by his bed with papers, pen and files, Champaklal behind sitting in yogic posture and the poet Vyasa on the bed. You may have noted the fictitious picture in my book. I wish it were a true one. Sitting upright against the back-rest, sometimes leaning on the left-side cushion, bending towards me or looking in front, once looking behind for Champaklal for personal need, he would dictate—the words pouring in a steady shower.

There was no rise, no fall in the rhythmic voice. I was simply struck dumb by this continuous flow for days in succession. About four to five hundred lines of Book XI were dictated at a stretch. The book itself ran to about 1400 lines altogether. And, surprise of surprises, they needed very little revision. It will be presumptuous on my part to fix the plane from which the verses descended. When you read them, you feel as if they were all light and light. “Everlasting Day” is, by the way, the plane or zone between the Supermind and the Overmind, according to Nolini-da, and the poetry verily embodied something from that plane. Is it also a prefiguring of the New Creation that Sri Aurobindo had envisioned and worked for?

Once in my callow days I asked him saucily why when he had all the planes of inspiration at his command he should meet with so much difficulty in writing *Savitri* and labour like us mortals. Why should it not burst like champagne bottles, to borrow his own phrase? In reply I got a letter which was revelatory of the *Savitri*-technique, of the secret of his work, and vibrant with indulgent-pungent humour—one of the best letters in my possession. He answered:

“That is very simple. I used *Savitri* as a means of ascension. I began with it on a certain mental level, each time I could reach a higher level I rewrote from that level.... In fact *Savitri* has not been regarded by me as a poem to be written and finished, but as a field of experimentation to see how far poetry could be written from one’s yogic consciousness and how that could be made creative. I did not rewrite *Rose of God* or the sonnets....

“The highest planes are not so accommodating as all that. If they were so, why should it be so difficult to bring down and organise the Supermind in the physical consciousness? What happy-go-lucky fancy-web-spinning ignoramuses you all are! You speak of silence, consciousness, overmental, supramental etc. as if they were so many electric buttons you have only to press and there you are. It may be so one day, but meanwhile I have to discover everything about the working of all possible modes of electricity, all the laws, possibilities, perils etc... construct modes of connection and communication, making the whole far-wiring system, try to find out how it can be made fool-proof and all that in the course of a single lifetime. And I have to do it while my blessed disciples are firing off their gay or gloomy a priori reasonings at me to divulge everything to them not in hints but at length. Lord God *in omnibus!*”

Now our tempo was speeded up. At this rate I thought *Savitri* would not take long. On everyone’s lips was the eager query: “When will it be completed?” But something went amiss. It was the middle of 1950. His physical trouble had increa-

sed. Since 1949 we had noticed a change in his mood; he was no longer expansive; humour, wit, talk had been coiled back; he was near yet far away. All our attempts to draw him out failed; we were met with a monosyllabic yes or no. Satyendra, a man affectionate and gentle by nature, could not bear this cold austerity and taking courage in both hands he asked, "Why are you so serious, Sir?" "The time is very serious," came the answer. We were mystified, non-plussed.

The work went on all the same, without interruption. At this time the press wanted a new book from him. *The Future Poetry* was given preference and some passages were written. But since he wanted to write something on Modern Poetry, I was asked to read the poems of a few modern poets like Eliot and Spender. More books were ordered from Madras. Meanwhile, when I was wondering what the next choice would be, he said in a distinct voice, "Take up *Savitri*. I want to finish it soon." The phrase 'finish it soon' startled me. I asked myself, "Have I heard it aright?" I looked at him but met an impassive face. In those twelve years, this was the first instance that he, who was a monument of patience, was reckoning with the time-factor. We went back to the intractable "Book of Fate." Significantly this book was the last book to be completed, though he had said that it had been finished before. Now some new lines were added which appeared to me meaningless repetitions, but actually turned out to be deliberate and prophetic. Very probably the destiny he referred to in these lines must have been of a later development when he had taken the decision to depart. But naturally, we took no account of them till the truth of those searing verses knocked us down and we were left on perilous seas forlorn. Here are some of the lines:

A day may come when she must stand unhelped
On a dangerous brink of the world's doom and hers....

If that tremendous silence lone and lost....

Cry not to heaven, for she alone can save....

She only can save herself and save the world....

When the finishing touch was given and the cantos were wound up, I said, "It is finished now." "Ah, it is finished?" He greeted me with an impersonal smile and added, "What is left now?" "The Book of Death and the Epilogue." "Oh, that? We shall see about that later on," was the enigmatic reply. That 'later on' never came and was not meant to come.

Thus on *Savitri* was put the seal of incomplete completion two weeks before the November Darshan 1950. And it had been in November 1938 that we had got access to his cavern solitude. On December 5th he left his body and the most appropriate epitaph would come from "The Book of Fate":

It is finished, the dread mysterious sacrifice
Offered by God's martyred body for the world.

Well, this is the old story, retold perhaps with a tragic touch.

Have you any questions? None? You could have asked me how I came to be the scribe and what my feelings were about it. Let me imagine you asking me, and answer you. Regarding the scribe-role, it was circumstantial as well as providential, if I may say so. "Circumstantial", because, among the few of us attendants, Purani and myself were alone capable of it. But Purani being part-time, I had an advantage over him. Moreover, I had been trained by Sri Aurobindo in the technique of the poetic art, an additional advantage. These are, as the Master would say, our human readings. As for "providential", I leave it there. In regard to my feelings, I must confess that it did not seem to me at that time an exceptional privilege. I took it as a matter of course, quite natural like my attendance upon him, and the whole relationship was on a normal, natural, almost human basis. There lay the whole beauty. When I try to define it to myself, the European, rather the English, idea of it comes to my imagination. Sri Aurobindo, an aristocrat *par excellence* and myself an obedient, respectful pupil, or son, if you like. The Master grave, calm, silent and affable, and the pupil ready to respond to his behest. It was not at all like the correspondence-relationship.

Thus the work became congenial, not like, I fear, Milton's dictation to his three daughters. Sri Aurobindo used to correct my wrong accents. When I failed to reproduce the Greek intonations or some words, in his faultless manner he taught me the right way. My Sanskrit pronunciations too were corrected. Above all, his calm, composed, natural and—if I may use the epithet—human posture in the bed waiting for me and asking, "Where do we begin?" is unforgettable. Now more than thirty years have gone since the completion of his Ultimate Word and my humble role as its scribe. Mighty changes have rocked the world, the wheels of circumstance have rolled on with a crashing sound in consequence of the tremendous Light that had manifested. Leaving these cosmic phenomena, when I look back and compare the past with the present, I notice significant changes, almost a sea-change, in my perception of the beauty and wonder that is *Savitri*. Wisdom has come and vision has grown within. As I pore more and more over *Savitri*, the lines, the passages that had seemed to me only intellectual or even spiritual truths or bare facts devoid of poetic beauty present themselves with a deep inner glow and I thrill with the delight of unexpected discoveries.

This experience came home to me with an overwhelming force when we went to see the Exhibition on Sri Aurobindo. I had a phoenix-birth, as it were. As I went on reading the mighty and massive lines from *Savitri* arranged in a serried march, I wondered how I had been blind and deaf to the sight, sound and truth-images of these lines. I asked myself again and again, "Could I be the same person to whom they were dictated by Sri Aurobindo? Was 'The flame-child' delivered to

the world through these hands without my being aware of it?" Along with this experience came a greater revelation. As I went on following at a glance the entire life of Sri Aurobindo from his divine childhood to the final stage of supreme ripeness, and reading the apt quotations beneath every aspect and phase of his mysterious life, the truth about who he was dawned upon me like a sudden illumination, specially in the last phase which was so well inscribed in our memory. His identity which he had hinted through a mask of words was no longer in doubt, though the full measure of the truth lay beyond my human vision. Again, I felt the inexpressible thrill of being so close to the One who has called himself by many names. I shall cite again here that phrase in the two awesome lines he added to *Savitri* as his last testament touch: "It is finished, the dread mysterious sacrifice." Yes, of the many boons, invisible and visible, I have received from him, the boon of being the scribe of *Savitri*, next to being allowed into his ineffable physical Presence, appears to me the most enviable one.

Farther, I felt myself to be, like Carlyle when he said that even if England went down into the sea, it would not matter so long as Shakespeare remained. I said to myself, "Let *Savitri* remain and nothing will be lost. It will recreate a new world." You may point out, "The present situation leaves no such hope." True, it is dismal. The other day I met a young Frenchman. He said that they in the West were living under a perpetual menace of nuclear war, while in India people seemed to be very unconcerned. "Yes," I answered. "We are free from the fear of such dark doom. We have the faith that there is a greater Power than the nuclear threat. Hitler was once the menace of Europe, of the world. Where is he now? Great times are ahead of us."

Savitri gives us that hope. It is replete with passages which fortify our conviction. Read, for instance, Book XI and the Epilogue completed before his passing. After the grim duel with Death in Book X and after the spectacle of Yama's body eaten up by Light, his spirit devoured, follows this Book XI, of "The Everlasting Day". The paean of victory rises in a crescendo and *Savitri* and Satyavan descend upon the earth transformed. Certainly the miracle is not on the threshold. Sri Aurobindo has envisaged the death-agony and the harsh world drawing its breath in pain for a long time to come, the world's cup of misery must be full but the deliverance is as sure. The orgy of violence Dr. Iyenger sees everywhere is the last mortal struggle with the dark Adversary. Here are the formidable lines of the Bard:

When the darkness deepens strangling the earth's breast
 And man's corporeal mind is the only lamp,
 As a thief's in the night shall be the covert tread
 Of one who steps unseen into his house.
 A voice ill-heard shall speak, the soul obey.
 A power into the mind's inner chamber steal,
 A charm and sweetness open life's closed doors

And beauty conquer the resisting world,
The truth-light capture Nature by surprise,
A stealth of God compel the heart to bliss
And earth grow unexpectedly divine....
Thus will the masked Transcendent mount his throne.

The masked Transcendent who dictated all these sublime mantras remained incognito to me till the day of the Apocalypse on the 5th December. The pity of it! How I yearn for those simple felicitous days when every day I would hear the quiet, unhurried voice in an unassuming intimate relationship! But the past does not return.

We do not know when the seer-poet's prophecy will be fulfilled, probably not in our day. The Mother said about herself, "I may not be there, but my children shall carry on the work." Similarly, we are on the way out, but you, young members with minds full of faith and hearts full of love and dedication, will hold aloft the torch of the Truth. As Nolini-da said, we are not immortal, but the young generation rises.

"And on our heels a fresh perfection treads."

THE STORY OF A SOUL

BY HUTA

(Continued from the issue of November 24, 1984)

The Mother's Message

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



40

SEPTEMBER gave way to October. A lovely card along with a bouquet of white roses came from the Mother.

As always on the 1st in the afternoon the Mother sat in her high-backed chair in the Prosperity Room. She gave flowers and blessings to all in order to commence the new month well.

In the evening when I entered her room at the Playground she received me with a radiant smile. We meditated together in her soothing aura.

The following morning the Mother went to the Meditation Room downstairs to distribute a Message as the Puja days had already begun. She looked charming in her colourful sari and crown.

The Message of the day was:

“For those who use their physical eyes alone, the victory will be apparent only when it is total, that is to say, physical.”

It was a Sunday. The Mother and I had a long meditation. After that she lifted those wonderful eyes to meet mine, and said:

“If you put everything into the hands of the Divine Grace, and worry less, you will be all right much quicker.”

Then after a pause she added:

“I have a beautiful card. I will send it to you tomorrow morning. There is also a nice quotation in French.”

The next morning the promised card came, showing a picture of the Buddha Amida Nyorai (Amitabha) carved in wood. She had written on the card:

“To my dear little child Huta,

Here is the picture of the Buddha of which I spoke yesterday, with the translation of what is written below. I am sending it to you.

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

The French version was:

“Il n’y a pas de feu comparable à la passion,
Pas de malheur égal à la haine,
Pas de misère comparable à l’agitation de l’esprit.”

Her translation ran:

“No fire can be compared to passion,
No misfortune is equal to hate,
No misery is comparable to a restless mind.”

In the evening before the French class, the Mother met me in her room and asked me:

“Do you like the card and the quotation I sent you this morning?”

I replied: “Very much, thank you, Mother.”

Then we made for the class. Whenever our eyes met we both smiled to each other.

A faint memory of a past life and affinity with Buddhism touched my consciousness. The Mother told me, when she revealed my several past births, that one of them was in Buddha’s time and that I had been a disciple of his.

Sri Aurobindo has stated in the Cent. Ed. Vol. 22, p. 423 about the Buddha:

“He had a more powerful vital than Ramakrishna’s, a stupendous will and an invincible mind of thought. If he had led the ordinary life, he would have been a great organiser, conqueror and creator....”

On the 4th, in the evening, the Mother told me after a little concentration:

“People should open themselves to the Divine and pray to the Divine to let them be free from falsehood.

But surely their aspiration must be sincere so that the Divine Force can work freely and wonderfully in their beings.

In Buddha’s teaching it is said that death must come to everyone. But the Buddha knew that death can be conquered. Only, the world at that time was not ready to understand this truth.

Sri Aurobindo has said that death can indeed be conquered. But, of course, it cannot be done in everyone.

People, while dying, should always remember the Divine and aspire for the Truth. Thus very easily and peacefully they can pass onward and start the new journey towards the Truth.”

She went into a trance for a moment or two. Then she wrote down on a piece of paper:

“Dhammapada”

(from the Pali)

While handing it to me she said:

“Child, get this book and read it. You will be profited by Buddha’s teaching.”

The Mother has spoken about the Dhammapada in her Collected Works, Vol. 3, p. 183:

“Every Friday I shall read out to you a few verses of the Dhammapada, then

we shall meditate on that text. This is to teach you mental control. If I think it necessary I shall give you an explanation.

The Dhammapada begins with conjugate verses; here is the first one:

*In all things the primordial element is mind.
Mind predominates. Everything proceeds from mind.*

Naturally, this concerns the physical life, there is no question of the universe.

If a man speaks or acts with an evil mind, suffering follows him as the wheel follows the hoof of the bullock that pulls the cart.

That is to say, ordinary human life, such as it is in the present world, is ruled by the mind; therefore the most important thing is to control one's mind; so we shall follow a graded or 'conjugate' discipline, to use the Dhammapada's expression, in order to develop and control our minds.

There are four movements which are usually consecutive, but which in the end may be simultaneous: to observe one's thoughts is the first, to watch over one's thoughts is the second, to control one's thoughts is the third and to master one's thoughts is the fourth. To observe, to watch over, to control, to master. All that to get rid of an evil mind, for we are told that the man who acts or speaks with an evil mind is followed by suffering as closely as the wheel follows the hoof of a bullock that ploughs or draws the cart.

This is our first meditation."

The Mother quotes and explains the last verses of the Dhammapada thus:

One who knows his previous lives, one who perceives the heavens and the hells, who has come to the end of births, who has attained perfect vision, the Sage accomplished in all accomplishments, him in truth I consider to be a Brahmin.

"Such is the conclusion of the Dhammapada and if we have put into practice—to use its image—only a mustard seed of all that has been taught to us, well, we have not wasted our time.

There is one thing which is not spoken of here, in the Dhammapada: a supreme disinterestedness and a supreme liberation is to follow the discipline of self-perfection, the march of progress, not with a precise end in view as described here, the liberation of Nirvana, but because this march of progress is the profound law and the purpose of earthly life, the truth of universal existence and because you put yourself in harmony with it, spontaneously, whatever the result may be.

There is a deep trust in the divine Grace, a total surrender to the divine Will, an integral adhesion to the divine Plan which makes one do the thing to

be done without concern for the result. This is the perfect liberation.

That is truly the abolition of suffering. The consciousness is filled with an unchanging delight and each step you take reveals a marvel of splendour.

We are grateful to the Buddha for what he has brought for human progress and, as I told you at the beginning, we shall try to realise a little of all the beautiful things he has taught us, but we shall leave the goal and the result of our endeavour to the Supreme Wisdom that surpasses all understanding.”

It is indeed very interesting to read in her *Prayers and Meditations* that the Mother received a Message from Shakyamuni, the Buddha, on 20th December 1916:

“As you are contemplating me, I shall speak to you this evening.... ‘Turn towards the earth and men’, is this not the command you always hear in your heart—in your heart, for it is that which carries a blessed message for those who are athirst for compassion? Henceforth nothing can attack the diamond. It is unassailable in its perfect constitution, and the soft radiance which shoots from it can change many things in the hearts of men. You doubt your power and are afraid of your ignorance? It is precisely this that covers your power with this dark mantle of starless night. You hesitate and tremble as if on the threshold of a mystery, for, now the mystery of the manifestation appears to you as more terrible and more unfathomable than that of the Eternal Cause. But you must take courage and obey the injunction from the depths. It is I who say it to you, for I know and love you as you knew and loved me before. I have appeared clearly before your eyes, so that you may not doubt my words in the least. And also to your eyes I have shown your heart, so that you may thus see what the supreme Truth has willed, and discover in it the law of your being. The thing still appears to you very difficult; a day will come when you will wonder how the truth could seem to you other than what it is.”

I got the *Dhammapada* a copy with introductory essays, Pali Text, English translation and Notes by S. Radhakrishnan.

The Mother saw the book and was very pleased.

I found the teaching of the Buddha extremely uplifting and inspiring.

When I was in my early teens I was bespelled by *The Light of Asia*, that long poem of Sir Edwin Arnold.

These verses moved me greatly:

“Oh! Summoning stars! I come! Oh, mournful earth:
For thee and thine I lay aside my youth,
My throne, my joys, my golden days, my nights....

On the evening of 6th October I showed the Mother the postcard-photograph of the world-renowned Mona Lisa and expressed my feeling: "Mother, I am touched by this picture. I do not know why."

Her eyes sparkled and with a smile she took the picture from me and, holding it against her bosom, said enthusiastically:

"Ah! but this is my portrait—this is me!
I will take this to my apartment and send it to you tomorrow with my blessings."

The succeeding morning I received a card to which the picture had been attached and underneath it the words of the Mother were:

"To my dear little child Huta
With all my love, strength and sweet compassion."

I fixed my gaze on the picture and marvelled at the expression of Mona Lisa's face—especially the most ethereal smile.

I read in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, *Micropaedia Ready Ref. & Index* Volume VI, p. 988:

"Mona Lisa, also called La Gioconda, portrait of the wife of Francesco del Giocondo, painted by Leonardo da Vinci between 1503 & 1506.

The face enigmatic in expression, has tantalized millions. The landscape behind her increases the mystery, it is so much sheer fantasy that it seems related to the world of imagination rather than fact. The Mona Lisa hangs in the Louvre in Paris."

Now while I am seeing the picture of Mona Lisa, these verses from *Savitri* flit across my mind:

"A halo of the indwelling Deity,
The Immortal's lustre that had lit her face
And tented its radiance in her body's house,
Overflowing made the air a luminous sea."

In *Codex Madrid II*, Leonardo states that the human face and body are defined by the light surrounding them. He notes that reflected and refracted light as well as coloured shadows are all that he calls 'the truth of colour.'

The secret of Leonardo was that he played with light and shadow in order to express the enigmatic smile and lovely eyes. In *Codex Madrid II*, Leonardo advises the painter to strive for a subtle blend of shadows which he describes as the gracefulness of shadows, smoothly deprived of every contour. By so doing he has given us

his secret of how he achieved such delicately nuanced forms in his models.

*

Puja days continued. Once again the Mother came down to the Meditation Hall.

The Message of the day, 8th October 1957, was:

“He sang of a divine day that comes,
The human godhead of the golden Child
And heavenly Nature intimate with man.
He sang of the descending feet of Light
And alchemy of Night’s defeat and marvellous change
And strife grown laughter of the soul’s embrace,
And pain transfigured in the fiery floods
And joy transmuting to a magic touch,
And sin delivered from itself by love
And sorrow that shall die in a white bliss,
And immortality surprising earth.”

As always the Mother and I meditated in the evening. I felt so secure and comfortable when I was with her.

The morning that followed, she sent me an unusual card made out of a bamboo sheet, with a beautiful scene painted on it. Beneath it she had inscribed:

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

In the evening before her class, she asked me whether I liked the card. I answered that it was lovely. She smiled and said:

“I have some more with different paintings on them. I will send them to you one by one. I brought them with me from Japan.”

The next morning once again I received a Bamboo card with the picture of a shrine on it. Her constant love and compassion never ceased.

I was still unsteady on the path with a sense of utter desolation and a host of tangled thoughts. All those crazy, unanswered questions hammered to be heard until my head pounded from trying to solve them. I was completely lost in a variety of illusions which dimmed my consciousness.

My work in the Mother’s Private Stores still continued. I stopped painting and drawing for the time being.

In the evening when the Mother saw me, she asked me once more about the card. Then suddenly she plunged into deep contemplation. After that she spoke:

‘People should never think of themselves: on the contrary, they should fix their thoughts on the Divine, and all their difficulties will go. They must put themselves into the Divine’s arms, for His arms are always ready to hold His children. All troubles will go if people take refuge in the Divine.’

She kissed my forehead and embraced me tenderly. After receiving fresh and fragrant flowers from her I made my exit.

At night I pondered over the Mother’s talk to me and thought desperately: “Oh! how can I put myself into the Divine’s arms as He is not visible? How to find Him?” All this puzzlement led me nowhere. I could not sleep, but stared up at the ceiling, as an intolerable weight of depression settled upon me, crushing my spirit.

Many a time I gave up hope, I wanted to run away from the Ashram or I wanted to end my life. But the Mother’s love held me tight.

So beautiful are Sri Aurobindo’s words! —

“You are the Mother’s child and the Mother’s love for her children is without limit and she bears patiently with the defects of their nature.”

(To be continued)

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THE INSPIRATION OF *PARADISE LOST*

(Continued from the issue of November 24, 1984)

6

Derivative Originality and Artistic Puritanism

THE paradox of the immense mood-cultivation by Milton for the inspired effortless composition of *Paradise Lost* leads us to yet another curiosity connected with him. We have spoken of the poetry of the past in which he steeped himself. From the literary point of view, what most constitutes his long preparation of the inner mood for his masterpiece is his constant immersion in the high holy fire of the Old and New Testaments, the wide steady light of the Greek and Roman Classics, the strange or sombre or changing chiaroscuro of the Mediaeval and Renaissance writers. Out of this immersion resulted not only a poetic style at once reminiscent of past tones and typical of the sheer Milton: there resulted also the paradox that Milton is at the same time a most original and a most derivative poet, one who directly borrows again and again from his predecessors without ceasing to be unique and individual.

Let me give a few extreme instances of Milton's intense derivative novelty. We are familiar with the simile he offers when speaking of Satan's army of Angel-forms lying in a stupor on the fiery flood of Hell:

Thick as autumnal leaves that strew the brooks
Of Vallombrosa, where the Etrurian shades
High over-arched embower...¹

Here he echoes, as critics have remarked, several poets but mainly Virgil. Virgil has written about the ghosts of the Underworld:

Quam multa in silvis autumni frigore primo
Lapsa cadunt folia...

We may render the hexameters in English:

Even as in forests of autumn at the break of frost a myriad
Leaves drift and fall...

Marlowe has caught from both Virgil and the Greek poet Bacchylides the stimulus for his own phrase about Tamburlaine's troops:

¹ BK. I, 302-4.

In numbers more than are the quivering leaves
Of Ida's forests...

But how unforgettable is Milton's expression—compact yet elegant, gathering up all the meaning in the opening stressed monosyllable "thick" and then suavely loosening it out into the picture of a fall helpless yet touched with beauty, and finally collecting the sense again in the polysyllabic place-name "Vallombrosa", literally meaning "Valley of Woods" and its very sound suggesting gleam and gloom and waver and whisper as in a great forest haunted by winds and threaded by streams. Another instance of Milton's derivative originality is a line of geographical evocation:

Mombaza, and Quiloa, and Melind,
And Safala...¹

We are reminded of the Portuguese Camoës's:

De Quíloa, de Mombaça, e de Safala...

Quite a rhythmic phrase, but lacking in the art-touch introduced by the name "Melind" to close the line with an alliteration to its beginning, so that the strange catalogue is saved from being just a drift and acquires for the ear a satisfying point. A further example is Milton's famous vaunt about his own adventurous song that "pursues"

Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.²

Ariosto has substantially an almost exact analogue serving as Milton's model:

Cosa non detta in prosa mai, ne in rima,

which, in a faithful translation, would read:

Things spoken not in prose yet or in rhyme.

Milton has transfigured the expression. In Ariosto the line is a little pedestrian and the internal jingle of "cosa" and "prosa" cheapens rather than embellishes the poetry, and the repeated "in" though unavoidable looks somewhat like rhetorical padding. Milton has made everything more concise and breathed a high bravery and a mighty rarity into the significance by the suggestively long "unattempted" immediately after the short and simple yet strong vocable: "Things." Even in his most derivative moments Milton asserts his intense originality.

¹BK. XI, 399-400. ²BK. I, 16.

And his derivativeness can be extreme not only in scattered lines. The scheme itself of his epic owes to older writers. By Milton's day many had tackled the subject of the revolt in Heaven and the fall of Man in Eden. A Dutch poet named Vondel, author of *Lucifer* and *Adam in Banishment*, the one printed in 1654 and the other in 1664, is often mentioned as having supplied Milton with precedents which he freely imitated. We are also told of a drama in Italian, *Adamo*, by Giovanni Battista Andreini, published in 1613, and another drama in Latin, *Adamus Exul*, by Hugo Grotius, which came out in 1601 and from which Andreini himself is said to have borrowed. But hardly any book specifically devoted to Milton points to the work to which Milton owed the greatest debt. As shown by Norman Douglas for the first time,¹ Milton drew the most from a little-known Italian contemporary, the poet-playwright Serafino della Salandra who put before the public in 1647 his *Adamo Caduto*. Salandra's development of his theme is repeated by Milton in Book after Book of *Paradise Lost*. Even the details tally in many places and there are passages in Milton running parallel to those in Salandra with close verbal similarity, so that we may speak of *Paradise Lost* translating several parts of *Adamo Caduto*. But these very passages are yet typically Milton's, full of what has been called his "grand style". Literary pilfering is an old profession. Virgil first lifted chunks out of Homer, and Shakespeare took most of his plots from Bandello and versified Plutarch in many places. But Milton stands at the head of those who have made a pastiche or mosaic of pilferings. And his own attitude to this kind of literary activity is clearly stated in a prose work of his, *Eikonoklastes*: "Borrowing, if it be not bettered by the borrower, among good authors is accounted plagiary." Evidently Milton has all the past of good authors behind him in what he did, but he is unique by borrowing much more than any good author has done, and yet losing not one inch of his giant stature. That is the miracle of his genius. What in Salandra has gone dead down to the dead has lived immortally in Milton. Whatever he touched he suffused with a poetic personality of the greatest distinction and power. This personality had its limitations, but when its positive qualities are exercised we have effects which no other poet has surpassed and very few have equalled and which in a certain respect have no analogue either before or after him.

Sri Aurobindo² has well hit off what this respect is—he has called it "that peculiar grandeur in both the soul and manner of the utterance and in both the soul and the gait of the rhythm which belongs to him alone of the poets". Sri Aurobindo³ has further remarked on Milton's grandeur as well as the other qualities given to English poetic speech by him: "these qualities are... easily sustained throughout, because with him they are less an art, great artist though he is, than the natural language of his spirit and the natural sound of its motion." Here Sri Aurobindo bears on several sides of our discourse. First, on what we have characterised as the essential

¹ *Old Calabria* (London, 1956), "Milton in Calabria", pp. 165-176.

² *The Future Poetry* (Pondicherry, 1953), p. 117.

³ *Ibid.*

spontaneity or effortlessness of Milton's artistically elaborate utterance. Secondly, on what we have marked as part of the lyric impulse in his epic expression—the extreme personal pervasion by him of his poetry. Thirdly, on the epic proportions into which he grew before writing *Paradise Lost*, so that his singing was the direct echo, as it were, of his very being. Another statement of Sri Aurobindo's can be related in general to our conception about Milton's spontaneous derivativeness and originality, his blending of excessive book-lore and of old expressive turns with a new psychological impetus and poetic fire. Sri Aurobindo¹ writes: "It is true that he had not an original intellectuality, his mind was rather scholastic and traditional, but he had an original soul and personality and the vision of a poet."

Thus our four paradoxes about Milton can find points of indirect support in Sri Aurobindo who did not set out to write on the problems we have discussed. A fifth paradox we may frame about Milton apropos of Sri Aurobindo's recognition of him as a "great artist" and apropos of Sri Aurobindo's observation² that, even where "the supreme vitalising fire has sunk", "Milton writing poetry could never fail in a certain greatness and power, nor could he descend, as did Wordsworth and others, below his well-attained poetical level."

This sustainment of poetical level signifies an unfailling certainty of style, a constant gift of construction, a persistent play of varied significant rhythm. A poet may achieve the sustainment by an acute striving or by a keen instinct: it is in either case a living sense of Form, and it is by the living sense of Form and not necessarily by a self-critical shipshaping that the poet is distinguished as an artist. Milton is acknowledged to be the pre-eminent artist among English poets. Only five others qualify to come anywhere near him: they are, in order of time, Spenser, Keats, Tennyson, Rossetti, Yeats. Out of them Keats is the most original: in originality he is far superior to Milton. Sri Aurobindo calls Keats "the first entire artist in word and rhythm in English poetry,—not grandiose, classical and derived like Milton, but direct and original in his artistry."³ Rossetti stands next in subtle pictorial directness, Yeats is as masterly—though more mystical—in musical suggestions deepening the sight. Tennyson is at times fine both in eye and ear but often gives an impression of decoration. Spenser is a most melodious rhythmist and a sensitive word-painter, but tends to monotony. And, except for Spenser, none of them has such an *amount* of accomplished work as Milton, and nobody rivals him in the long drawn-out structure of modulated harmony. But our fourth paradox lies in the queer conjunction that the greatest artist in English poetry is also the greatest Puritan in England's literature.

We have already said that he was Cromwell's Foreign Secretary; like Cromwell, he belonged to the sect of those who wanted to make religion "pure" and called themselves Puritans. They held that God should be worshipped in barest simpli-

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

² *Ibid.*, p. 120.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

city, with no elaboration of ritual and ceremony, and that man should live strictly, banning all lightness of mood, standing vigilant over all pleasures, even the pleasures of Art. We may remember they closed all theatres. They wanted to do away with the painted windows of Churches, the burning of incense, the chanting of prayers: they went straight to the stern and primitive teachings of the Old Testament: they were harsh with themselves and harsh with others. We know that Milton was a Spartan disciplinarian with the students whom he coached and that he mercilessly made his daughters read out to him in Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Syriac, Italian, French and Spanish which he had taught them to pronounce without understanding a single word: he caustically remarked that "one tongue was more than enough for any woman". About *Paradise Lost* itself John Richard Green has said: "Its scheme is the problem with which the Puritan wrestled in hours of gloom and darkness—the problem of sin and redemption, of the world-wide struggle of evil against good. The intense moral concentration of the Puritan had given an almost bodily shape to spiritual abstractions before Milton gave them life and being in the forms of Sin and Death." The Puritan in Milton is also responsible for the claim he set up about the didactic part of his poem. John Bailey has well noted: "He claimed to justify the ways of God to men. Perhaps he did so to his own mind which, in these questions, was curiously matter-of-fact, literal, legal and unmythical.... Everybody who stops to reflect now feels that the attitude of his God to the rebel angels and to man is hard and unforgiving, below the standard of any decent human morality, far below the Christian charity of St. Paul. The atmosphere of the poem when it deals with these matters is suggestive of a tyrant's attorney-general whose business is to find plausible excuses for an arbitrary despot."¹ 'Waldock traces to Puritan theology the fact that "it does not come very naturally to Milton to suggest a loving God". This theology accounts for the woodenness so often observed of God's speeches. We have a verbose and argumentative Deity who seems to want considerably, if not altogether, in the feeling of the poetic. Again, Milton had very little humour: if he had been un-Puritan enough to have more sense of it he would have realised how absurd his God often sounded. In one speech² where God blames Adam and Eve in advance He gives even a strong impression, as Waldock points out, of nervousness, insecurity and doubt. Milton's defective humour goes hand in hand with the defect that is his in the sympathetic understanding needed for human actions. As we may expect of a Puritan, his picture of Adam and Eve not only lacks insight into the human soul's subtler motions but is also somewhat crude in its adjustment of rights as between man and woman. It has been observed that to Eve Adam is more the author and dispenser of her life than her dear husband and to Adam she is more a devoted disciple than a loving wife and, when they meet, the atmosphere is more of religion than of love.

Yes, Puritanism was powerful in Milton. But in spite of it he was English

¹ *Milton* (The Home University Library, Oxford, 1945), pp. 148-49.

² Bk III, 80-134.

poetry's greatest artist because there were two other forces at work in him. Both of them carried the spirit of the Renaissance. One was Humanism, which revived the culture of Classical antiquity, affirmed the beauty of the natural world, the right of the senses and the emotions to self-fulfilment, the ability of the intellect to find truth by probing the discoveries of eye and ear. The other was Individualism, the self-assertion of personality, the confidence of the mind in its own judgments, the passion for freedom and independence, the urge to be original and unique. If powerfully Puritanical, Milton was still more Miltonic than Puritanical or, rather, Puritanical in a keenly individual fashion. While with the Puritans he criticised the despotism of Kings and the loose life of the Royal Court, he shared nothing of the Puritans' contempt for culture or their repressive intolerance towards other sects or their recoil from the pagan glories of old Greece and Rome. He dissented even from many of their dogmas and embraced the "heresies" known as Arianism and Mortalism. He scared them by demanding vehemently the abolition of censorship. He shocked them by advocating divorce on the simple ground of mutual disagreement and went so far as to regard polygamy as permissible. In fact, he was quite heterodox in several respects and, during the period when he composed *Paradise Lost*, he stood aloof from all denominations. Having a sensuous nature and a rich imagination, he could not toe the firm line of Puritanism: he indeed exercised a strong ethical will, but only to sublimate and not extirpate the spirit of the Renaissance in him. And partly it was this spirit and partly a vein of noble cheerfulness in his own nature that mingled with the Puritan to make even his religious self not altogether a hard one. None can miss receiving from him (to quote Bailey's phrase) "his high emotional consciousness of life as the glad and free service of God".¹

His daily contacts with fellow-creatures also were no series of severities. His biographers have left ample evidence to this effect.² "As he was severe on one hand, so he was most familiar and free in his conversation to those to whom most sour in his way of education. He could be cheerful even in his gout-fits, and sing." And "though he had been long troubled with that disease, insomuch that his knuckles were all callous, yet was he not ever observed to be very impatient". His daughter Deborah who read the most to him in his blind days remembered him with tenderness and said he had been "delightful company, the life of the conversation—and *that* on account of a flow of subject and an unaffected cheerfulness and civility". "He had an excellent ear, and could bear a part both in vocal and instrumental music."

The consequence, to *Paradise Lost*, of so complex a nature, with several opposite traits held together, is that the matter rather than the manner is Puritan, and even in the matter the basic theme alone is such, for around this theme Milton erects a magnificent edifice of references to the wide world's culture.

However, when we label his poetic manner as non-Puritan we must make a reservation just as we have made when labelling his matter as Puritan. There is, for

¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 145-46.

² J. H. Hanford. *A Milton Handbook* (1946).

all its opulence, an austerity, a kind of high calm Puritanism, in Milton's manner. Sri Aurobindo has drawn a valuable distinction between the austere in outward form and the austere *au fond*—austerity of expression and austerity of temper. The former he defines: "to use just the necessary words and no others...the one expressive or revealing image, the precise colour and nothing more, just the exact impression, reaction, simple feeling proper to the object—nothing spun out, additional, in excess."¹ According to such a definition, Milton on the whole can hardly pass as austere: "his epic rhetoric, his swelling phrases, his cult of the grandiose" would rule him out and perhaps even "his sprawling lengthiness" would by itself, in the eyes of the extremists of the bare and spare, exclude him. If we judge by a set technical method we are likely to lose the essential temper. Austerity can be felt in the spirit of the writing, "as a something constant, self-gathered, grave and severe; it is the quality that one at once is aware of in Milton, Wordsworth, Aeschylus and which even their most fervent admirers would hardly attribute to Shakespeare, Shelley, Keats, Tennyson, Euripides..."² There can be a very real spirit and power of underlying austerity behind a considerable wealth and richness of expression. Arnold in one of his poems gives the image of a girl beautiful, rich and sumptuous in apparel on whose body, killed in an accident, was found beneath the sumptuousness, next to the skin, an under-robe of sack-cloth. If that is admitted, then Milton can keep his claim to austerity in spite of his epic fulness and Aeschylus in spite of the exultant daring of his images and the rich colour of his language. Dante is, I think, the perfect type of austerity in poetry, standing between the two extremes and combining the most sustained severity of expression with a precise power and fulness in the language which gives the sense of packed riches—no mere bareness anywhere."³ It is a sort of inner *tapasyā* or discipline, an *ātmasamyama* or self-possession that renders Milton, like Aeschylus and Dante, austere although outwardly he is lavish of splendour and strength and sweep, even as Aeschylus is audacious in colour and image, Dante burdened with beauty and significance in the midst of his forcefully cut conciseness. We may add, with Sri Aurobindo—especially apropos of Dante's *Divina Commedia* but also to some extent in relation to Milton's *Paradise Lost*—that "austerity... is not incompatible with a certain fineness and sweetness".⁴

(To be continued)

K. D. SETHNA

¹ *Letters of Sri Aurobindo*, Third Series (Pondicherry, 1949), p. 18.

² *Ibid.*, p. 17.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

EVENTIDE

TWO POEMS

Come Now

It is eventide.
Temples are ringing their bells
And the first stars have come out.
My friends have gone home.
I am alone,
Come now.
From morn till noon,
Many a caravan has passed,
And through the night glided
Many a moon.
Enrapt I have gazed
At the world's splendid sights.
Long have I wandered
From show to show,
From town to town.
They thought I was an orphan—
But I know, by my heart's pathway
Which none else can tread,
Thou wilt come one day.

Evening Star

Like a fairy wand sparkling afar,
O evening star!
Your gleam slowly suffuses the darkening dusk.
Mistlike spreads your mystic light.
Surely, ere long, the radiant moon
Will rise victory-bright,
Crowning the blossoming dawn.
O tiny herald of a beauty queen
Who spangles the sky with her jewelled stole,
Each trepidant ray shall silver the scene.
Whatsoever the obstacle,
Howsoever dense the fog,
Each foot-hold gained on the road
Is like you, a glow
In the mystiered vast of God.

SHYAM KUMARI

CORE

TWO POEMS

(The author's letter to the Editor: "Recently after some rather intense experiences of the 'Core', the incarnate Will, I felt inclined to express something of my experience in poetry. Here are my two 'experiments'. I chose the sonnet form first, but found it did not express adequately the power of the experience. Later I decided to 'steal' the form of Sri Aurobindo's 'Rose of God' and see what came. I was more satisfied with it. I would be interested to know whether you would consider the poems appropriate for Mother India." The answer is: "They are certainly worth publishing.")

I

O THROBBING core of vision in the soul,
Pulse forth the force to break the clouding veils,
Extend thy web of Truth that never fails,
Unfold the plan for earth, reveal thy goal.

In measured beats let Love attune our lives:
That Eye give mind its all-seeing source of Light,
Our actions know from where their power derives,
Thy ray's descent defeat the reign of Night.

O widening ever widening warming Gleam,
Vision for us the wonder of whole Time,
Your children lead into the City of Dream,
And make this planet midge dance out your rhyme.

Pulse of Light and Love with rhythmic Breath,
Extinguish from the earth the need for Death.

2

Core of Light, still, immobile in the silence of the soul.
Rhythmic Pulse, with thy immense power to make Time whole.
Inseminate this womb of night, leave pregnant with thy bliss,
Let birth here be fulfilment and life divinity's kiss.

Core of Light, invincible sword of the Truth supreme,
Impeccable sight, intimate seeing by that incarnate Gleam.

CORE

Devastate this Ignorance, hew for man the way,
That we may see along with Thee and know eternal Day.

Core of Light, glimmering Ray hiding Mystery's face;
Terrible might, impetuous rapture of the Mother's grace,
Gift earth thy measured beats of Love and to our hearts here bring,
Power that slays, Power that saves, Power to end Death's sting.

9

Core of Light, sheer mountain peak of godhead Thrill,
Force divine, swift galloping steed of inviolate Will,
Panic the dark Adversary with thy bugle battle sound—
Behold! the City's gates are open, the sunlit path is found!

DAVID HOGG

A GARLAND FOR HIMALAYA

I

NIGHTFALL in the high hills,
slow turning from green-blue to black,
to a black made darker by lights,
a glooming black above and below,
protective and menacing,
anchor of clouds,
more dark and silent
than mere sleep.

II

The dark hills rise up through the night,
rise and enter softly the room
to whisper words older than hills,
sounds that creep under rocks,
sounds from deep within the dark
that have not been named.

III

White mountains unchanging
stand high over the hills
with a startling whiteness
that takes no part of the hills,
that leaps out of the clouds
to confound the dark valleys.

IV

No sounds come from Kanchenjunga.
It will not be touched or loved.
A shiver
 in the warm wind,
quick glance
 at nothing,
an awesome presence
 pulling, pulling. . .

V

Morning mountain-viewing
in Darjeeling
finds Kanchenjunga's family
lined up across the long valley,
huge and silent,
taking no notice
 of the inane
little dance
 I do before them.

VI

The patriarch looks out on the world
From an impossible height.
His beard flows down the snows,
down the long dark valleys,
down to the quick white river.
His arms reach out to massive sons
and draw them into his high house.
His long arms reach down to green daughters
and hold them straight before him.
His endless arms delve down
into the depths of the blind earth
and grasp its rocky foundation.
The patriarch looks out over the curling clouds
and stares unblinkingly into the burning sun.

GORDON KORSTANG

INTEGRAL PSYCHOLOGY INHERENT IN INTEGRAL YOGA

IN THE WORDS OF SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of November 24, 1984)

Practical Guidance

A Prefatory Note

INTEGRAL Yoga is practical psychology and Integral Psychology inherent in it is, therefore, essentially educational, *i.e.*, intending and promoting progressive integration in personality. Here is an entire section of excerpts affording precise direct guidance on the most concrete issues of life: brooding and difficulties, circumstances and difficulties, difficulties of character. We have then an excerpt on 'The Practical Way' to deal with our problems of anxiety, grief, etc., and on how to learn to look straight at ourselves and to trace the difficulty to its source. This discovery of truth itself has a marvellous healing power. But what helps most is the persistent cultivation of a general attitude of wideness, of universalisation, of non-insistence on self-will as against the self-will of others, of appreciation of the authority of truth over all and search for the same. In brief, it is the attitude of the ego's self-surrender to the Supreme and thus of cultivating in life a wideness, an all-comprehensiveness and a commanding height.

The human ego is most touchy and sensitive and gets easily hurt. Sensitiveness is an extremely common problem. One excerpt is on this subject.

In the end, there is a larger piece on 'The Cultivation of Integral Personality'. It sets out how one can go about building up a wholesome and harmonious personality for oneself.

INDRA SEN

Difficulties and Perplexities

Difficulties and perplexities can never be got rid of by the mind brooding on them and trying in that way to get out of them; this habit of the mind only makes them recur without a solution and keeps up by brooding the persistent tangle. It is from something above and outside the perplexities that the solution must come.

It is this change of stress, a change in the poise and attitude of the mind that will be the more helpful process.¹

¹ Sri Aurobindo Centenary Library, Vol. 24, pp. 1688-9.

Circumstances and Difficulties

That is the inconvenience of going away from a difficulty,—it runs after one, —or rather one carries it with oneself, for the difficulty is truly inside, not outside. Outside circumstances only give it the occasion to manifest itself and so long as the inner difficulty is not conquered, the circumstances will always crop up one way or another¹

Difficulties of Character

The difficulties of the character persist so long as one yields to them in action when they rise. One has to make a strict rule not to act according to the impulses of anger, ego or whatever the weakness may be that one wants to get rid of, or if one does act in the heat of the moment, not to justify or persist in the action. If one does that, after a time the difficulty abates or is confined purely to a subjective movement which one can observe, detach oneself from and combat.²

The Practical Way

If these things (trouble, anxiety, grief, revolt, disturbance in the mind) come, he must at once detect their source, the defect which they indicate, the fault of egoistic claim, vital desire, emotion or idea from which they start and this he must discourage by his will, his spiritualised intelligence, his soul unity with the Master of his being. On no account must he admit any excuse for them, however natural, righteous in seeming or plausible, or any inner or outer justification. If it is the prana which is troubled and clamorous, he must separate himself from the troubled Prana, keep seated his higher nature in the buddhi and by the buddhi school and reject the claim of the desire soul in him; and so too if it is the heart of emotion that makes the clamour and disturbance. If, on the other hand, it is the will and intelligence itself that is at fault, then the trouble is more difficult to command, because then his chief aid and instrument becomes an accomplice of the revolt against the divine will and the old sins of the lower members take advantage of this sanction to raise their diminished heads. Therefore there must be a constant insistence on one main idea, the self-surrender to the Master of our being, God within us and in the world, the supreme Self, the universal Spirit.

When the trouble is too strong to be kept out, it must be allowed to pass and its return discouraged by a greater vigilance and insistence of the spiritualised buddhi. Thus, persisting, it will be found that these things lose their force more and more, become more and more external and brief in their recurrence, until finally calm becomes the law of the being.³

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1697.

² *Ibid.*, p. 1708.

³ *Ibid.*, Vol. 21, pp. 694-5, 695.

The Imperturbable Calm

The calm established in the whole being must remain the same whatever happens, in health and disease, in pleasure and in pain, even in the strongest physical pain, in good fortune and misfortune, our own or that of those we love, in success and failure, honour and insult, praise and blame, justice done to us or injustice, everything that ordinarily affects the mind.¹

True Remedy for Sensitiveness

One has not to cure oneself of one's sensitiveness, but only acquire the power to rise to a higher consciousness taking such disenchantments as a sort of jumping board. One way is not to expect even square dealings from others, no matter who the others are. And besides, it is good to have such experiences of the real nature of some people to which a generous nature is often blind; for that helps the growth of one's consciousness. The blow you wince at seems to you so hard because it is a blow the world of your mental formation has sustained. Such a world often becomes a part of our being. The result is that a blow dealt to it gives almost physical pain. The great compensation is that it makes you live more and more in the real world in contradiction to the world of your imagination which is what you would like the real world to be. But the real world is not all that could be desired, you know, and that is why it has to be acted upon and transformed by the Divine Consciousness.

The thing is to learn to detach oneself from any such experience and learn to look at such perversions of others from a higher altitude from where one can regard these manifestations in the proper perspective—the impersonal one. Then our difficulties really and literally become opportunities. For knowledge, when it goes to the root of our troubles, has in itself a marvellous healing-power as it were. As soon as you touch the quick of the trouble, as soon as you, diving down and down, get at what really ails you, the pain disappears as though by a miracle. Unflinching courage to reach true Knowledge is therefore of the very essence of Yoga.²

Evil Persona

What you say about the "Evil Persona" interests me greatly as it answers to my consistent experience that a person greatly endowed for the work has, always or almost always,—perhaps one ought not to make a too rigid universal rule about these things—a being attached to him, sometimes appearing like a part of him, which is just the contradiction of the thing he centrally represents in the work to be done. Or, if it is not there at first, not bound to his personality, a force of this kind enters into his environment as soon as he begins his movement to realise. Its busi-

¹ *Ibid*, 696.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. 24, pp. 1393, 1394.

ness seems to be to oppose, to create stumblings and wrong conditions, in a word, to set before him the whole problem of the work he has started to do. It would seem as if the problem could not, in the occult economy of things, be solved otherwise than by the predestined instrument making the difficulty his own. That would explain many things that seem very disconcerting on the surface.¹

The Cultivation of Integral Personality

If one stands back from the mind and its activities so that they fall silent at will or go on as a surface movement of which one is the detached and disinterested witness, it becomes possible eventually to realise oneself as the inner Self of mind, the true and pure mental being, the Purusha; by similarly standing back from the life activities, it is possible to realise oneself as the inner Self of life, the true and pure vital being, the Purusha; there is even a Self of body of which, by standing back from the body and its demands and activities and entering into a silence of the physical consciousness watching the action of its energy, it is possible to become aware of a true and pure physical being, the Purusha. So too, by standing back from all these activities of nature successively or together, it becomes possible to realise one's inner being as the silent impersonal Self, the witness Purusha.²

*

The Purusha has to become not only the witness but the knower and source, the master of all the thought and action, and this can only be partially done so long as one remains on the mental level or has still to use the ordinary instrumentation of mind, life and body. A certain mastery can indeed be achieved, but mastery is not transformation; the change made by it cannot be sufficient to be integral: for that it is essential to get back, beyond mind-being, life-being, body-being, still more deeply inward to the psychic entity inmost and profoundest within us—or else to open to the superconscient highest domains. For this penetration into the luminous crypt of the soul one has to get through all the intervening vital stuff to the psychic centre within us, however long, tedious or difficult may be the process. The method of detachment from the insistence of all mental and vital and physical claims and calls and impulses, a concentration in the heart, austerity, self-purification and rejection of the old mind movements and life movements, rejection of the ego of desire, rejection of false needs and false habits, are all useful aids to this difficult passage: but the strongest, most central way is to found all such or other methods on a self-offering and surrender of ourselves and of our parts of nature to the Divine Being, the Ishwara. A strict obedience to the wise and intuitive leading of a Guide is also normal and necessary for all but a few specially gifted seekers.³

*

¹ *Ibid*, p. 1660.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. 19, p. 906.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 906-7.

As the crust of the outer nature cracks, as the walls of inner separation break down, the inner light gets through, the inner fire burns in the heart, the substance of the nature and the stuff of consciousness refine to a greater subtlety and purity, and the deeper psychic experiences, those which are not solely of an inner mental or inner vital character, become possible in this subtler, purer, finer substance; the soul begins to unveil itself, the psychic personality reaches its full stature. The soul, the psychic entity, then manifests itself as the central being which upholds mind and life and body and supports all the other powers and functions of the Spirit; it takes up its greater function as the guide and ruler of the nature. A guidance, a governance begins from within which exposes every movement to the light of Truth, repels what is false, obscure, opposed to the divine realisation: every region of the being, every nook and corner of it, every movement, formation, direction, inclination of thought, will, emotion, sensation, action, reaction, motive, disposition, propensity, desire, habit of the conscious or subconscious physical, even the most concealed, camouflaged, mute, recondite, is lighted up with the unerring psychic light, their confusions dissipated, their tangles disentangled, their obscurities, deceptions, self-deceptions precisely indicated and removed; all is purified, set right, the whole nature harmonised, modulated in the psychic key, put in spiritual order. This process may be rapid or tardy according to the amount of obscurity and resistance still left in the nature, but it goes on unflinching so long as it is not complete. As a final result the whole conscious being is made perfectly apt for spiritual experience of every kind, turned towards spiritual truth of thought, feeling, sense, action, tuned to the right responses, delivered from the darkness and stubbornness of the tamasic inertia, the turbidities and turbulences and impurities of the rajasic passion and restless unharmonised kinetism, the enlightened rigidities and sattwic limitations or poised balancements of constructed equilibrium which are the character of the Ignorance.

This is the first result, but the second is a free inflow of all kinds of spiritual experience, experience of the Self, experience of the Ishwara and the Divine Shakti, experience of cosmic consciousness, a direct touch with cosmic forces and with the occult movements of universal Nature, a psychic sympathy and unity and inner communication and interchanges of all kinds with other beings and with Nature, illuminations of the mind by knowledge, illuminations of the heart by love and devotion and spiritual joy and ecstasy, illuminations of the sense and the body by higher experience, illumination of dynamic action in the truth and largeness of a purified mind and heart and soul, the certitudes of the divine light and guidance, the joy and power of the divine force working in the will and the conduct. These experiences are the result of an opening outward of the inner and inmost being and nature; for then there comes into play the soul's power of unerring inherent consciousness, its vision, its touch on things which is superior to any mental cognition; there is there, native to the psychic consciousness in its pure working, an immediate sense of the world and its beings, a direct inner contact with them and a direct contact with the Self and with the Divine,—a direct knowledge, a direct sight of Truth and of all

truths, a direct penetrating spiritual emotion and feeling, a direct intuition of right will and right action, a power to rule and to create an order of the being not by the gropings of the superficial self, but from within, from the inner truth of self and things and the occult realities of Nature.¹

*

A highest spiritual transformation must intervene on the psychic or psycho-spiritual change; the psychic movement inward to the inner being, the Self or Divinity within us, must be completed by an opening upward to a supreme spiritual status or a higher existence.²

*

As the psychic change has to call in the spiritual to complete it, so the first spiritual change has to call in the supramental transformation to complete it. For all these steps forward are, like those before them, transitional; the whole radical change in the evolution from a basis of Ignorance to a basis of Knowledge can only come by the intervention of the supramental Power and its direct action in earth-existence.³

(To be continued)

¹ *Ibid.*, 907-9.

² *Ibid.*, 910.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 917-18.

FROM SINGING WHALES TO...

THE delightful discovery that whales sing, and that, moreover, their immensely long and varied harmonics, when appropriately speeded-up, remarkably resemble bird-song, seems to have inspired a number of normally sober scientists to surprising imaginative flights which will take a great deal of experiment to confirm or undermine, no doubt, but which are deeply suggestive to one like me, who finds symbols more significant than 'facts', and indeed believes that 'facts' *are* symbols—of something immensely richer and more astonishing than everyday reality.

Lewis Thomas, in a delightful essay entitled 'The Music of *This Sphere*'¹ suggests:

If, as I believe, the urge to make a kind of music is as much a characteristic of biology as our other fundamental functions, there ought to be an explanation for it. Having none at hand, I am free to make one up. The rhythmic sounds might be the recapitulation of something else—an earliest memory, a score for the transformation of inanimate, random matter in chaos into the improbable, ordered dance of living forms. Morowitz² has presented the case, in thermodynamic terms, for the hypothesis that a steady flow of energy from the inexhaustible source of the sun to the unfillable sink of outer space, by way of the earth, is mathematically destined to cause the organization of matter into an increasingly ordered state. The resulting balancing act involves a ceaseless clustering of bonded atoms into molecules of higher and higher complexity, and the emergence of cycles for the storage and release of energy. In a non-equilibrium steady state, which is postulated, the solar energy would not just flow to the earth and radiate away; it is thermodynamically inevitable that it must rearrange matter into symmetry, away from probability, against entropy, lifting it, so to speak, into a constantly changing condition of rearrangement and molecular ornamentation. In such a system, the outcome is a chancy kind of order, always on the verge of descending into chaos, held taut against probability by the unremitting, constant surge of energy from the sun.

If there were to be sounds to represent this process, they would have the arrangement of the Brandenburg Concertos to my ear, but I am open to wonder whether the same events are recalled by the rhythms of insects, the long, pulsing runs of birdsong, the descants of whales, the modulated vibrations of a million locusts in migration, the tympani of gorilla breasts, termite heads, drumfish bladders. A 'grand canonical ensemble' is, oddly enough, the proper term for a quantitative model system in thermodynamics, borrowed from music by way

¹ Lewis, Thomas: *The Lives of a Cell: notes of a biology watcher*, Toronto, Bantam, 1975, pp. 27-8.

² Morowitz, H.J.: *Energy Flow in Biology: Biological Organisation as a Problem in Thermal Physics*, N.Y., Academic Pr., 1958, 1968.

of mathematics. Borrowed back again, provided with notation, it would do for what I have in mind.

If Mr. Morowitz is right in his speculations, then the ancients were not so far wrong in naming the Sun *Pushan*—The Fosterer; and we might be tempted to wonder how all that positive, entropy-defying, creative pattern of energy-release got coded into the sun in the first place. Who wrote the score for the cosmic symphony? Or is it pure improvisation?

Carl Sagan, in his book *Cosmos*,¹ tells us that the scenario for the physical evolution of the universe—galaxies, suns, stars, planets and all the rest—is currently believed to have been determined by a ‘Big Bang’ which set everything going, “ten or twenty billion years ago.” And he ascribes the subsequent formation of the galaxies, etc. to the fact that the Big Bang which began everything was not perfectly uniform but lumpy—in fact, surprisingly lumpy:

About a billion years after the Big Bang, the distribution of matter in the universe had become a little lumpy, perhaps because the Big Bang itself had not been perfectly uniform. Matter was more densely compacted in these lumps than elsewhere. Their gravity drew to them substantial quantities of nearby gas, growing clouds of hydrogen and helium that were destined to become clusters of galaxies. A very small initial non-uniformity suffices to produce substantial condensations of matter later on. (p. 270) In the lifetime of the universe there has apparently not been enough time for an initial gravitational nonuniformity to collect the amount of mass that seems to reside in the Virgo supercluster. Thus Smoot is tempted to conclude that the Big Bang was much less uniform than his other observations suggest, that the original distribution of matter in the universe was very lumpy. (Some little lumpiness is to be expected, and indeed even needed to understand the condensation of galaxies; but a lumpiness on this scale is a surprise.) Perhaps the paradox can be resolved by imagining two or more nearly simultaneous Big Bangs.

Or perhaps, after all, the event that began the unfolding of our universe was not so much of a bang as a deep, resonant, purposeful *OM*, whose creative reverberations are still, inexorably, shaking us all into ever-increasing complexity, loveliness and harmony... what do you think?

Perhaps the heart of God forever sings,
And worlds come throbbing out with every note....

SHRADDHAVAN

¹ Sagan, Carl. *Cosmos*, Lond., Macdonald, 1983

STORIES FROM TAMIL LITERATURE

(Continued from the issue of October 1984)

3

THONDAIMAN AND HIS ARMOURY

ADİYAMAN the prince of Thagadur was a formidable soldier. He had fought against a number of powerful kings and emerged victorious in all the battles. And his commanding power was such that with a small army he was able to rout larger armies on many occasions. Even the three crowned kings of the Tamil country acknowledged his greatness and kept away from him.

Thondaiman was the young ruler of a neighbouring country. He was not much experienced in warfare, but had very great ambitions. He desired to carve out a path of military glory for himself. He knew about Adiyaman, but thought that with a large army and excellent weapons Adiyaman's small army could be overpowered. So he began to build up a large fighting force and a very big armoury.

Adiyaman came to know of these military preparations of his neighbour. He very well knew that Thondaiman with his inexperience could not last a single day against him. And he did not like unnecessary bloodshed, either. He pitied Thondaiman at heart and thought of discouraging him from his military adventurism. But he did not want to wound the pride of Thondaiman. He wanted to check him in a most unobtrusive manner. So instead of sending a diplomatic mission, he chose Avvaiyar the poet as his emissary. Avvaiyar was loved and respected by all the Tamil kings. She could visit any of them any time and give them wise counsel without being thought of as an intruder.

Avvaiyar travelled to Thondaiman's country and reached his castle. All along the way she had racked her brains over how to fulfil her delicate mission without offending or provoking Thondaiman, but she could think of no way of doing it. Thondaiman received Avvaiyar with great warmth. He entertained her well and gave a fine feast in her honour. They talked about a lot of things and Avvaiyar could not still find an opening to carry out her mission.

After some time Thondaiman took Avvaiyar on a visit to his armoury. He had built it up over many years and was very fond of displaying it. It was indeed a very fine armoury—a very impressive sight indeed with a large quantity of dazzling, glittering weapons. All of them were neatly arranged in beautiful rows. There were thousands of bows, arrows, spears, lances, javelins, swords, cutlasses, daggers, shields, clubs, coats of mail and so on. They were of excellent steel, very fine workmanship, all newly made, well oiled, highly polished and razor-sharp. Avvaiyar viewed them with much amazement and in her mind she started comparing them with the oft-used weapons of Adiyaman. All on a sudden she saw her opportunity and knew

what she would tell Thondaiman.

Pleased with himself Thondaiman turned to Avvaiyar with great pride. "What do you think of these weapons?" he asked. It was a big boast and a concealed challenge to Adiyaman.

Avvaiyar smiled. "What a wonderful collection of arms!" she began. "It is really very awe-inspiring to look at these newly made weapons oiled and polished and in fine array. I have never seen an armoury of this magnitude. Adiyaman's weapons are certainly no match for these. Having seen many a rugged battle, his weapons have become blunt, bent or broken. Clashing with enemy weapons a hundred times they have lost all their polish. Having maimed many an enemy soldier they too have become maimed. And they are not kept in neat rows like this. Coming straight from a recent victorious battlefield they lie scattered in swordsmiths' workshops waiting to be mended and sharpened for the next encounter. They can never compare favourably with your fine-looking unused weapons."

Avvaiyar said this with as much casualness as possible, but Thondaiman caught her meaning. His boastful attitude vanished and he hung his head in silence. Avvaiyar's message had gone home.

4

PARI AND THE JASMINE VINES

Pari was one of the princes in the ancient land of the Tamil people. He ruled over the Parambu country, a small territory surrounding the Parambu hill. He had his royal castle on the top of the hill. Pari was not only a valiant soldier, but a man of great generosity. In fact, most of the Tamil kings and chieftains possessed generous qualities. Giving was considered the greatest virtue in those days. It was a shame to say 'no' to anyone who asked for something. Minstrels and poets visited the courts of kings, sang beautiful songs and were rewarded richly, so that they might pursue their careers without any financial worries.

Pari is listed by the poets as one of the seven great givers of Tamil Nadu at a particular period. He had a very sensitive nature and was full of love and concern for all living beings. The great nature-poet Kapilar was his friend. Avvaiyar the famous woman poet visited him very often. The courtyard of his palace was always crowded with poets and minstrels who came for rewards. They were welcomed most heartily and were treated to rich food and delicious drinks. Even elephants and chariots were given away as presents. Pari moved amidst them and hobnobbed with them all.

His land was fertile. Trees and shrubs grew all over the hill-country. The hill itself was dense with forests where jack-fruits and mangoes abounded, edible roots grew wild; large beehives hung from trees. On the outskirts of the hill, Kanthal and Jasmine bloomed. The emerald green Jasmine vines with tiny white flowers climbing and twining on the shrubs and trees were a beautiful sight. The sweet fra-

grance of Jasmine and other wild flowers filled the air in the evening and it was a joy to walk through the shady bowers on the mountain path. Pari loved those jasmines with great tenderness. Often he walked amidst them and was carried away by their beauty and singular fragrance.

One day he was returning to his castle from a visit to the countryside. He himself was driving his royal chariot drawn by two splendid horses. The horses went up the mountain path in a trot and Pari was looking from side to side admiring the wonderful mountainscape. Suddenly his heart seemed to stop. He had seen something that disturbed him. He pulled at the reins and stopped the horses. He leapt from the chariot and hurried towards the thing that had disturbed him. It was a cluster of jasmine vines lying limp and flaccid on the ground. Someone had cut off and taken away the tree which had served as a support for the vines. Bereft of support the tender vines had dropped to the ground. A hot sun was beating down on them and they were wilting.

Pari's heart sank within him. He could not bear the sight. How could he leave the fresh green vines there to wither and be trampled upon by passing cattle? He looked around. There was no tree or shrub within the reach of the vines. But Pari's eyes caught sight of his own chariot. A tremor of joy passed through his heart. What an ideal support to the propless vines! Pari was jubilant. He walked towards the chariot, climbed on it and carefully drove it very close to the vines. He leapt down, took the vines one by one and entwined them round the four masts of the chariot and spread them severally on the top. Soon, not a vine was left on the ground. The chariot was completely covered by the climbing stalks. It would support them thereafter. The jasmine vines would live and thrive.

Pari stepped a few yards back and viewed the vines as an artist would view his handiwork. He felt greatly satisfied. With a wonderful lightness of heart he unharnessed the horses, leapt on one of them, led the other by the rein and trotted towards the castle.

M. L. THANGAPPA

PARSI BLOOD IN SHIVAJI

IN ONE of the issues of the *Bombay Gazette* of May, 1908, K. (probably R. P. Karkaria, the great Parsi historian) mentions that Shivaji drew his lineage from the Ranas of Marwar or Udaipur who were very proud of being descended from the famous Sassanian Parsi Monarch Chosroes, also known as Noshirwan Adil or Noshirwan the Just, who reigned from 531 to 579 A.D. They traced their descent through his son Nashizad, by his Christian wife, the daughter of the Roman Emperor Maurice (539-602) who had made himself the antagonist of Noshirwan. This Nashizad, having adopted his mother's Christian faith, fell out with his father, and came to India where he was well-received by the Rajput Princes, and married a daughter of one of them from whose union the Udaipur Ranas claim descent. Thus comes the connection of Shivaji with the Parsis, but at any rate it is very touching to the historical imagination before which it opens out vast vistas through which it can roam.

In this connection Orme's *Historical Fragments* published in 1782 says:

"He (Shivaji) drew his lineage from the Rajahs of Chittore who boast their descent from Porus and are esteemed the most ancient establishment of Hindu Princes and the noblest of the Rajput tribes. The descent from Porus is mentioned by Sir Thomas Roe, Bernier, Thevenot, but the *Ajijn Acbarri* which is a general description of the Empire, compiled by the order of Acbar, under the inspection of his learned general Abul Fazil, makes the Rajahs of Chittor descended of Naushirvan, the king of Persia, the same as Chosroes, who warred so long with Justinian, and after a reign of forty-eight years, died in 579. A very strange genealogy of a Hindu and Rajput Rajah; for Chosroes was of the religion of Zoroaster, or the worshippers of fire; who although confined to many abstinences, were not restrained from eating beef."

De Cunha also, the eminent Portuguese historian, in his *Origin of Bombay*, mentions that Shivaji derived his descent from the family of Bhonslas. His father was Shahji and grandfather Maloji. The Bhonslas claimed descent from the younger branch of the Royal Family of Udaipur. Maloji's father was Balaji who was descended from Bhosaji, the first of the family settled in the Deccan. Maloji's son, Shahji, married Jjibai, daughter of Jadhavrao, who also claimed descent from the Rajputs of the State of Maiwar in Rajputana whose capital was then Chitore. The Ranas of Chitore, according to Tod's *Heroes of Rajasthan*, trace their origin on one side to the Ghelot Kings of Maiwar and on the other to the Sassanian dynasty of Iran. Prince Goha who ruled at Vallabhi, the capital of his ancestors, had married a daughter of Naushirwan, the Persian King. She was the grand-daughter of Maurice, the Christian Emperor of Constantinople, and mother of Raja Bapu; while another Rana had married the eldest daughter of Yezdizad, the last King of the Royal House of Sassan, in Persia. Thus Shivaji had in his veins not only the Indian blood of the Rajputs of Maiwar but also the European of the Byzantine Emperors of Constantinople.

At the same time he had, according to the above authors, the Royal Iranian blood both of Naushirwan Adil and of Yezdizad Sheriar, the last Parsi Sassanian King.

J. R. B. JEEJEEBHOY

EUROPE 1974

A TRAVELOGUE

(Continued from the issue of October, 1984)

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ABOUT a hundred miles South-West of London, on the plains of Salisbury in Wiltshire is to be found the enigmatic British Stonehenge. Once upon a time it was called Gigantum, the Giant's Dance, which would have been a more appropriate name and less jarring, for the word Stonehenge is a place-name most unmusical with a suggestion not too pleasant either. The Stonehenge is a circular formation of gigantic stones with lintels on top joining the upright stones. It is unlike any other ancient monument in the British Isles or anywhere in the world. They say there are about six sets of stonehenges. Generally the tourist has time to see only one. There is one on the Windmill hill, another on Silbury hill, one on Overton hill, again another on Avebury hill, and one more elsewhere. Apart from these there are wooden henges.

Before visiting these places I would advise a tourist to visit the museum and gather some information from the curator or other people there. The Stonehenge is far less famous than say the Gizeh Pyramid of Egypt or the Great Wall of China, a dwarf compared to the Parthenon and a deaf and mute erection beside Chartres, yet it does stand a comparison and speak an universal language. At first sight it is not thought-provoking. Then suddenly fancy comes back with delicate wings. Who were these people who constructed these monuments, even now a mystery? For they have not left any writings anywhere, yet they wanted to survive, they desired to perpetuate themselves beyond the present. Nature destroys quickly, so by artificial means they wanted to escape the transient and to project themselves into the distant future. For this they brought enormous stones from God knows where for all around. Wiltshire is a carpet of Chlorophyll green. Not a bit of rock can be seen anywhere. Physical immortality is a dream dreamt by man from the time he became a mental being. To leave behind something of himself is a feat he always tried to accomplish. Here we see enormous blocks of stones, and we at once ask: how did these people erect in a circular fashion such giant pieces? How did they connect them with equally enormous lintels? How did they raise them up there when there were no cranes and no steam power or electricity? As some of them have collapsed, inspection was easy. A seven-ton lintel is very carefully mortised and each has a pair of holes tailored to hold bosses of the upright jamb and is dove-tailed to the neighbouring lintel.

Every stone weighs five tons and must have required a team of sixteen men per ton to bring it to the desired position. It is very likely that the stones were brought

from the quarries of Wales, a journey of two hundred and fifty miles, by rafts or dugouts and timber rollers. Or perhaps they were brought by water. There were no ropes in those days—but only strings made out of cattle hide. It must have taken ten years and a thousand men to erect the forty-five ton monsters in their positions in a circle and an army of tanners to make hide-ropes.

The most bizarre of all stone-buildings of that age, it at once provokes the question: "What purpose did it serve?" There is a certain sophistication in the plan that suggests Homeric Greek style. But we will never know whether it was all a coincidence or there was some connection between these people and the Greeks. Some scholars say they see evidence of work by Egyptian and Greek engineers. In its vicinity were found bronze and gold objects, Scandinavian amber and jet-Egyptian-blue earthenware beads. Prehistoric carvings are found, axes show certain affinity to other far-away cultures of the Bronze Age. There is not and never was any roof to these stonehenges. There never was any monument so woven with light and sky and space. Why there was no roof is because the builders wanted to catch the eye of heaven, or were they expecting some extra-terrestrial visitation? The circular shape is suggestive of sun and moon; were they then sun-and-moon worshippers? Was the Stonehenge a temple for the ancients? Scholars like Stukeley and Aubrey hold that the stonehenges were built by the priests of the Ancient Celtic religion, the Druids. And it all started somewhere about 2,800 B.C. and is a Neolithic monument. Although there were several phases, Inigo Jones thinks it all very new and the Romans built it. Dr. Charleton thinks it was the Danes who built it. But even to a casual sightseer these propositions seem very unlikely.

Though a temple, it is suggestive of its having been used as an observatory for astro-physics. It seems these people detected the moon's cycle two thousand years before the Greeks. The Stonehenge people must have been worshippers of the moon in particular. The sun to them gave only a day's recording while the moon gave them ideas of a fortnight. The moon is fickle, it has various appearances, it can even eat up the sun. They discovered the moon's secret that it works to a great cycle of sixteen or eighteen years. The Greeks too discovered this but two thousand years later. The capricious moon attracted the early men and from them have come down to us superstitions about it. "Don't see a moon through a glass" is one. "Don't point at the moon" is another. The moon's reflection in water can tell the time of a girl's marriage. Even work like sowing seeds in a field was done according to the position of the moon in order to have a lucky start. To the early men the moon was masculine and the sun feminine, contrary to modern ideas. The moon to us seems to be a lovely lady. It had for them an unpredictable temper: it could hurt.

Near the monuments is found a *Cursus* which looks like a strange athletes' stadium or else a horse-race track. The Stonehenge itself, apart from being a temple and an observatory, may have been used as a town hall, a court, and even a weekly market.

And here are some of the interesting bits of information we collected concer-

ning the Stonehenge. The stones have been assigned prophylactic properties and chunks of them were at one time broken away and ground to form the basis of popular folk medicine. From the moon-cult Harvey conjectured that human blood too has tides. The entrance of the Stonehenge faces the rising sun as does the Konarak (Orissa) temple. Ancient people—even a king like Aurelius Ambrosius in the 5th century—believed that it was built by magic and that Giants brought the stones from the hills. Aurelius sent his brother Utter Pendragon, father of King Arthur, to steal these stones. Merlin too was taken into this conspiracy.

The destruction of the Stonehenge was deliberate and not due to Nature and the elements working on it for ages. Who destroyed it and why? We still do not know, although Geoffrey of Monmouth in his book, *Historia Regum Britanniæ*, in 1139 calls Stonehenge a monument that might have endured to the world's end had it not been so mercilessly destroyed.

(To be continued)

CHAUNDONA S. BANERJI

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Sri Ramana—The Sage of Arunagiri by Aksharajna. Pages V+91. Price: Rs. 7.

Conscious Immortality—Conversations with Ramana Maharshi by Paul Brunton. 1984. Pages 204. Price: Rs. 15. Both published by Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai - 606 603, South India.

HE lost his father when he was hardly thirteen years old. His paternal uncle at Madura sheltered him. Fair, charming and always smiling he was the cynosure of neighbouring eyes. Skilled in boxing, wrestling and other manly sports, he was a leader of boys of equal age and sometimes of his seniors too.

It was by accident he came across a copy of *Periyapuranam*. A study of the lives of the saints described therein served as a turning point in his life. The book threw him into deep meditation. And he, so fond of mirth and youthful jollity, was drawn to the higher aspects of life. His heart panted after Lord Arunachala.

An event that took place in his life brought a definite change over him. It was the Great Awakening. To put it in his own words: "One day I sat up alone on the first floor of my uncle's house. I was in my usual good health. But a sudden and unmistakable fear of death seized me. I felt I was going to die, and at once set about thinking what I should do. I did not care to consult anyone, be he a doctor, elder or friend. I felt I had to solve the problem myself then and there. The shock of the fear of death made me at once introspective or introverted. I said to myself mentally, i.e., without uttering the words, 'Now death is come, what does it mean? Who is it that is dying? This body dies.' I at once dramatized the situation. I extended my limbs and held them rigid, as though *rigor mortis* (death-stiffening) had set in. I imitated a corpse to lend an air of reality to my further investigation. I held my breath and kept my mouth closed, pressing my lips tightly together, so that no sound could escape. 'Well then,' said I to myself, 'this body is dead. It will be carried off to the crematory and there burnt and reduced to ashes. But with the death of the body am 'I' dead? Is the body 'I'? This body is silent and inert. But I am still aware of the full force of my personality and even of the sound of 'I' within myself, as apart from the body. So 'I' am a spirit transcending the body. The material body dies, but the spirit transcending it cannot be touched by death. I am, therefore, the deathless 'spirit'. All this was not a feat of intellectual gymnastics, but came as a flash before me vividly as living TRUTH, something which I perceived immediately, without any argument almost. 'I' was something very real, the only real thing in that state, and all the conscious activity that was connected with my body was centred on that. The 'I' or myself was holding the focus of attention with a powerful fascination. Fear of death vanished at once and for ever. The absorption in the self has continued from that moment right up to now."

He showed little interest in his studies, the learning intended for earning a liveli-

hood. And he had a peculiar aversion to the study of English grammar.

It was on Saturday, the 29th August 1896. He was given as imposition to copy a lesson in grammar three times. But he was unable to do that soulless job. "He quietly put aside the books and sat bolt upright for his congenial meditation. His brother, who happened to be there, turned out to be an unconscious agent of Lord Arunachala. With intent to make the younger brother mend his ways, the elder one remarked sarcastically 'Why should one who behaves thus retain all this?' The rebuke was that one, who would put aside the books with such easy indifference and take to meditation, need not make a show of undergoing a course of study in a high school. The shot went home."

He realized that the words of his brother were nothing but the bare truth. "What business have I any longer?" He asked himself. He was wholly absorbed by the thought of Arunachala. He got up from the seat of meditation and with just three rupees in his pocket and in utter ignorance of the world he set out on the journey to Arunachalam or Arunagiri, otherwise known as Tiruvannamalai.

The soul-seeker was Venkataramana, later known as Bhagvan Sri Ramana Maharshi.

Aksharajna in the first 45 pages of his book gives the reader an interesting account of the leading characteristics and incidents of the life of Sri Ramana. It is indeed a feast to all those who have not read Paul Brunton's book *A Search in Secret India* that ran to many editions in the first year of its publication. The author deserves a pat on his back for skilfully retelling in 45 pages what Paul Brunton had said in just 6 pages.

The rest of the book is devoted to the Teachings of Sri Ramana. Divided into 7 chapters, these excerpts from the *Maharshi's Gospel* speak of the role of God and Guru who are really one and identical. Self-enquiry, Knowledge and Devotion, Work and Wisdom and the Three States of the Mind as well as the Mindless State are the topics discussed.

As far as the Teachings of Sri Ramana are concerned, the second book takes the cake. The book is a record of the conversations which Paul Brunton and Munagala Venkataramiah had with Ramana Maharshi.

In the twenty-two chapters of this book, the Maharshi throws open his ocean of knowledge and spiritual experience. "Meditation is one form of approach that will drive away other thoughts. The one thought of God will dominate over others. That is concentration," says the Maharshi. To him idols have "a deep significance. Their worship is a method of concentration of mind." He believes: "When we worship images and forms we are really worshipping ourselves in the images." Ask him, "Do Vishnu, Shiva, etc. exist?" He answers very diplomatically: "Individual human souls are not the only beings known. But instead of pursuing inquiry in this direction why not inquire into yourself?" Atheists too can think on this line and do something solid rather than racking their brains over posers like "Does God Exist?"

Sri Ramana, in accordance with Sri Aurobindo, opines: "One might be in the midst of the world and maintain serenity, such a one is in solitude. Another may stay

in lonely forests and be unable to control his mind; he can't be said to be in solitude. A man attached to desire cannot get solitude, wherever he may be; a detached man is always in solitude. Even one who is working with detachment is working in solitude, and his work does not affect him. When work is performed with attachment it is a shackle. Solitude is not in forests only. It can be had in the midst of worldly occupations."

"If you seek God with your whole heart," advises the Maharshi to all God-seekers, "then you may be assured that the grace of God is also seeking you."

What is the difference between meditation and self-enquiry? How can the rebellious mind be brought under control? What are the hindrances to the realisation of Reality? What happens to a man after death? How to know the self? Can the soul remain without a body? How to get peace? What is the best way of living? How long is a guru necessary? How is God to be seen? What are known as the Sun Path and the Moon Path?... These are a few of the many interesting questions that are admirably answered.

His answers are peppered with apt examples and his teachings are easily driven home. Look at the way he answers the question, "How is Mouna possible while engaged in worldly transactions?": "When women walk with waterpots on their heads, they are able to talk with their companions and all the while they are intent on the water above. Similarly when a sage engages in activities, they do not disturb him because his mind abides in Brahman." To another question, "I cannot bring my mind to meditate," he says, "An elephant when free puts its trunk here and there and looks restless. If a chain is given to it the trunk holds it without being turned this way and that, as before. Just the same the mind is restless without an aim: if an aim is fixed it is restful."

He has advice for bookworms. He tells us the way to kill the ego. He shows us the means of knowing a competent guru. He enlightens us on what is fear and how to get rid of it. Not only are God, ego and Mysticism the topics discussed but also sex and adultery which many gurus shun discussing, while some are happy to discuss it to the core.

What mars the beauty of the books is the repetition of ideas. "How is Mouna possible while engaged in worldly wisdom?" is a question that appears on page 121. It reappears in a different version on page 132: "How will transactions go on if one maintains mental silence?" The same answer is given to both the questions. Similarly the question on "preaching" appears both on pages 165 and 175. To cite one more example: the question "How to get rid of fear?" and the Maharshi's answer to it appears both on pages 183 and 192. Such repetitions could have been avoided had the editor been a little more careful.

Pardon such errors, dear readers, for this enlightening and rewarding book is pregnant with a considerable amount of new and thought-provoking exploration.