MOTHER INDIA

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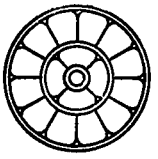
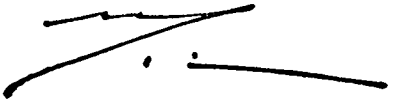


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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THE DIVINE FORCE AND ITS INSTRUMENTS

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

"Each time that something of the Divine Truth and the Divine Force comes down to manifest upon earth, some change is effected in the earth's atmosphere. In the descent, those who are receptive are awakened to some inspiration from it, some touch, some beginning of sight. If they were capable of holding and expressing rightly what they receive, they would say, 'A great force has come down; I am in contact with it and what I understand of it I will tell you.' But most of them are not capable of that, because they have small minds. They get illumined, possessed, as it were, and cry, 'I have the Divine Truth, I possess it whole and entire....'

One Divine Consciousness is here working through all these beings, preparing its way through all these manifestations. At this day it is here at work upon earth more powerfully than it has ever been before. There are some who receive its touch in some way, or to some degree, but what they receive they distort, they make their own thing out of it. Others feel the touch but cannot bear the force and go mad under the pressure. But some have the capacity to receive and the strength to bear, and it is they who will become the vessels of the full knowledge, the chosen instruments and agents."

Questions and Answers 1929 (9 June)

How does the divine Force choose the instrument in which it wants to manifest itself?

THROUGH affinity. For the quality, the nature of the consciousness is visible in the divine domain. It has a special vibration, a special light and this can be perceived. And so, when there is an affinity (some times merely an affinity, sometimes an identity, depending on the being's degree of perfection), the Force goes there. Those who are still in the course of formation but whose psychic being is sufficiently developed are seen, their vibrations are seen, the being that is there is seen and accordingly the degree of manifestation is determined, the exact line of manifestation, the importance and conditions of the manifestation. All that is included in the inner vision.

But it may happen that the instrument does not understand, for the man in whom the Force is manifested sometimes loses his head and is unable to contain the Force.

That may happen, everything is possible. But generally... I told you this the other day, when I spoke of the rebirth of psychic beings, I told you that from their domain they see a certain vibration, a certain light and they know that it is there that they must go. But when they drop down, most of the time they drop into unconsciousness and

lose their faculties, at least for the moment. In the end they will come to themselves. But it takes time to recover, it comes as one progresses, through successive illuminations.

Between the vital being and the mental, which progresses faster generally?

That depends on people. It is the vital in those who have a stronger vital and the mental in those who have a stronger mental being. You mean in the same person? That depends absolutely on which one is more active and more strong. In what way? In each person the combination is different, so one cannot make a general rule and say how it must be. One can say that in certain types of cases, it is like this, and in certain others it is like that.

But to tell the truth, I do not believe that much progress can be made if the two do not agree, if one pulls one way and the other another. It will always be difficult. And generally it is better if the mind is converted first, for it is the mind that must have the power to organise the other parts of the being.

(*Mother stops and suddenly looks at the disciples.*) Someone here has just sent a mental formation that... has taken, if you like, the shape of a blue paper on which something was written. It dropped down whirling, and dropped upon one of you. So I would like to know if anyone has all of a sudden received some sensational answer... Nobody?... I could not spot who it was among you, for it fell twirling.... So much the worse. But it dropped upon one of you. It was some blue paper, it took the form of a blue paper and there was a very interesting answer upon it. Nobody received anything? Didn't some idea all of a sudden enter your head? Didn't it?

(*Nobody answers*)

If the vital is not converted and if the mind is convinced?

Well, you pass your life in disputing with yourself! One draws you to one side and the other tries to be your good mentor but you don't listen to it. So you feel as though pulled from all sides. You know what you ought to do and you do not do it. You know what ought not to be done and you do it. And because you do stupid things, you feel sorry. So there are two things, you are unhappy for two reasons: first of all, because of the stupid things you have done, and then due to the regret they bring. It is a somewhat painful situation....

Can't the vital be converted?

Convert the vital? Surely one can. It is a difficult task, but it can be done. If it could not be done, then there would be no hope. But generally the mind is not sufficient. For, I have known very many people who could see very clearly, understand

very well, were mentally thoroughly convinced, could even describe to you and tell you extraordinary things, could easily give excellent lessons to others, but their vital was up to all sorts of tricks and would not listen at all to all that. It said, "It is all the same to me, say what you may; as for myself, I go my own way!

It is only when contact with the psychic has been established that this can convert anything at all—even the worst criminal—in a moment. These are those "illuminations" which seize you and turn you inside out completely. After that, all goes well. There may be slight difficulties of adjustment, but still things go well.

But the mind is a big preacher, that is its nature: it gives speeches, sermons, as it is done in the churches. So the vital usually gets impatient and answers the mind, not very politely: "You are a nuisance! What you say is very good for you, but for me it won't do." Or, at the best, when the mind is gifted with specially remarkable capacities and the vital is of a little higher kind, it may say (sometimes this happens): "Oh! how beautiful it is, what you tell me, but you see, I, I am unable to do it; it is very beautiful, but it is beyond my capacity."

But this vital is a curious creature. It is a being of passion, enthusiasm and naturally of desire; for example, it is quite capable of getting enthusiastic over something beautiful, of admiring, sensing anything greater and nobler than itself. And if really anything very beautiful occurs in the being, if there is a movement having an exceptional value, well, it may get enthusiastic and it is capable of giving itself with complete devotion—with a generosity that is not found, for example, in the mental domain nor in the physical. It has that fullness in action that comes precisely from its capacity to get enthused and throw itself wholly without reserve into what it does. Heroes are always people who have a strong vital, and when the vital is enthused over something, it is no longer a reasonable being but a warrior; it is wholly in its action and can perform exceptional things because it does not calculate, does not reason, does not say, "One must take precautions, one must not do this, must not do that." It is not prudent, it flares up, as people say, it gives itself totally. Therefore, it can do magnificent things, if it is guided in the right way.

A converted vital is an all-powerful instrument. And sometimes it gets converted by something exceptionally beautiful, morally or materially. When it witnesses, for example, a scene of total self-abnegation, of uncalculating self-giving—one of those things so exceedingly rare but splendidly beautiful—it can be carried away by it, it can be seized by an ambition to do the same thing. It begins by an ambition, it ends with a consecration.

There is only one thing the vital abhors; it is a dull life, monotonous, grey, tasteless, spiritless. Faced with that, it goes to sleep, falls into inertia. It likes extremely violent things, it is true; it can be extremely wicked, extremely cruel, extremely generous, extremely good and extremely heroic. It always goes to extremes and can be on one side or the other, yes, as the current flows.

And this vital, if you place it in a bad environment, it will imitate the bad environment and do bad things with violence and to an extreme degree. If you

place it in the presence of something wonderfully beautiful, generous, great, noble, divine, it can be carried away with that also, forget everything else and give itself wholly. It will give itself more completely than any other part of the being, for it does not calculate. It follows its passion and enthusiasm. When it has desires, its desires are violent, arbitrary, and it does not at all take into account the good or bad of others; it doesn't care the least bit. But when it gives itself to something beautiful, it does not calculate either, it will give itself entirely without knowing whether it will do good or harm to it. It is a very precious instrument.

It is like a horse of pure breed: if it lets itself be directed, then it will win all the races, everywhere it will come first. If it is untamed, it will trample people and cause havoc and break its own legs or back! It is like that. The one thing to know is to which side it will turn. It loves exceptional things—exceptionally bad or exceptionally good, it loves the exceptional. It does not like ordinary life. It becomes dull, it becomes half inert. And if it is shut up in a corner and told: "Keep quiet there", it will remain there and become more and more like something crumbling away, and finally just like a mummy: there is no life in it, it is dried up. And one will no longer have the strength to do what one wants to do. One will have fine ideas, excellent intentions, but won't have the energy to execute them.

So do not wail if you have a powerful vital, but you must have strong reins and hold them quite firmly. Then things go well.

Does depression come from the vital?

Oh, yes. All your troubles, depression, discouragement, disgust, fury, all, all come from the vital. It is that which turns love into hate, it is that which induces the spirit of vengeance, rancour, bad will, the urge to destroy and to harm. It is that which discourages you when things are difficult and not to its liking, and it has an extraordinary capacity for going on strike! When it is not satisfied, it hides in a corner and does not budge. And then you have no more energy, no more strength, you have no courage left. Your will is like...like a withering plant. All resentment, disgust, fury, all despair, grief, anger—all that comes from this gentleman. For it is energy in action.

Therefore, it depends on which side it turns. And I tell you, it has a very strong habit of going on strike. That is its most powerful weapon: "Ah! you are not doing what I want, well, I am not going to move. I shall sham dead." And it does that for the least reason. It has a very bad character; it is very touchy and it is very spiteful —yes, it is very ill-natured. For I believe it is very conscious of its power and it feels clearly that if it gives itself wholly there is nothing that will resist the momentum of its force. And like all people who have a weight in the balance, the vital also bargains: "I shall give you my energy, but you must do what I want. If you do not give me what I ask for, well, I withdraw my energy." And you will be flat as a pancake. And it is true, it happens like that.

It is difficult to regulate it. Yet naturally, when you have succeeded in taming it, you have something powerful in hand for realisation. It is that which can carry by storm the biggest obstacles. It is that which is capable of turning an idiot into an intelligent person—it alone can do so; for if one yearns passionately for progress, if the vital takes it into its head that one must progress, even the greatest idiot can become intelligent! I have seen this, I am not speaking from hearsay; I have seen it. I have seen people who were dull, stupid, incapable of understanding, who understood nothing—you could go on explaining something to them for months, it would not enter, as though one were speaking to a block of wood—and then all of a sudden their vital was caught in a passion; they wanted simply to please someone or get something, and for that one had to understand, one had to know, it was necessary. Well, they set everything moving, they shook up the sleeping mind, they poured energy into all the corners where there was none; and they understood, they became intelligent. I know someone who knew nothing practically, understood nothing, and who, when the mind started moving and the passion for progress took possession of him, began to write wonderful things. I have them with me. And when the movement withdrew, when the vital went on strike (for sometimes it went on strike, and withdrew), the person became once again absolutely dull.

Naturally it is very difficult to establish a constant contact between the most external physical consciousness and the psychic consciousness, and oh! the physical consciousness has plenty of good will; it is very regular, it tries a great deal, but it is slow and heavy, it takes long, it is difficult to move it. It does not get tired, but it makes no effort; it goes its way, quietly. It can take centuries to put the external consciousness in contact with the psychic. But for some reason or other the vital takes a hand in it. A passion seizes it. It wants this contact (for some reason or other, which is not always a spiritual reason), but it wants this contact. It wants it with all its energy, all its strength, all its passion, all its fervour: in three months the thing is done.

So then, take great care of it. Treat it with great consideration but never submit to it. For it will drag you into all kinds of troublesome and untoward experiments and if you succeed in convincing it in some way or other, then you will advance with giant strides on the path.

(From *Questions and Answers 1953, pp. 252-259*)

TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(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. Becherlal, Purani, Champaklal, Dr. Satyendra and Mulshanker. 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.)

(Continued from the issue of August 15, 1984)

August 20, 1940

P: The Chinese Professor Tan Sen observed the 15th in Shantiniketan, it seems.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes...

(Krishnalal has drawn a horse this month. S remarked that the horse has checked the German onslaught—In the Indian tradition the vāhana or vehicle of Kalki, the last Avatar is said to be the horse.)

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, Krishnalal is very apposite and has some power of intuition. Just when the Germans began the attack, he painted an eagle, as if swooping down on its prey, and then there was the monkey-picture representing the refugees. The picture of the goat represented the English waiting for the attack and now the horse. He has a remarkable gift in animals.

S: Here the horse has taken the classical pose.

N: Dr. Amiya Sankar in his planchette sittings was told by Vivekananda's spirit that he wouldn't have his realisation in this life, he would die about 22 years later, and one year afterwards he would be born again with Vivekananda. Sri Aurobindo would still be alive and in that life Amiya Sankar would have his realisation. Is that true? he asks. *(There was a burst of laughter as I conveyed the information.)*

SRI AUROBINDO: Has he any justification for belief in these things?

N: He says he got two things right—one about the possibility of a sea-voyage. The spirit said "Yes" and it was correct.

SRI AUROBINDO: Anyone could say that. Our Baroda instances are more striking than that.

S: How does he know it was Vivekananda's spirit?

SRI AUROBINDO: Quite so. Vivekananda's spirit must have other things to do by now.

N: He said also that Amiya Sankar had been Sri Chaitanya's playmate. *(Laughter)*

SRI AUROBINDO: Was it found true? *(Laughter)*

S: Why should great souls come to such sittings?

SRI AUROBINDO: That is what people object to, that they come and talk all sorts of rubbish. These things, as far as they are not communications from the subconscient mind, are communications of lower forces, even vital-physical ones. I remember one instance. In Calcutta I went to attend a sitting. There the spirit violently objected to my presence and said that my presence was painful to him. In another instance, the spirit was asked to prove his presence by eating a *sandesh* which was there. Somebody took hold of the *sandesh* and asked the spirit to get it from him by force. His hand got so much twisted that he cried out in pain. Evidently something was there apart from the communication of his subconscient mind....

P: Moore has reviewed the second volume of *The Life Divine*.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, but he hasn't understood it. He wants me to go back to politics for the establishment of the new world order, while I have said that it is not through politics that it will come.

N: He seems to have said that England will form the nucleus of the new order.

SRI AUROBINDO: If France had accepted England's offer of joint citizenship, it might have been so.

Evening

P: The Italians have occupied British Somaliland. In the popular mind it may cause some loss of prestige on the part of the British. People will say: "Even the Italians couldn't be defeated?"

SRI AUROBINDO: But the British didn't want to defend that territory. They decided at the very start not to defend it. They say it is of no strategic importance. I expected them to withdraw, in fact I foresaw it. No, in war minor points must be sacrificed for greater ones. Egypt and Palestine are more important. I wonder if they have sufficient force there.

P: Egypt wants to defend herself now. Such neutrality as of Egypt is worse than belligerency.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, I have the impression that the British haven't enough force there. In Syria they have only 200,000 or so. Of course, it is the French defection that has exposed their flanks.

P: Yes, they relied on the French troops.

SRI AUROBINDO: Gibraltar and the Suez are points of vital importance. England by itself can be defended, perhaps, but if these are lost then it will be dangerous for England.

P: If Spain doesn't come in then Gibraltar can be defended.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is the whole point.

N: Now that England has regained her prestige, Spain may hesitate to join Germany. In Alexandria also the French have joined De Gaulle, it seems.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes. (*Looking at P*) Have you seen De Gaulle's photo? He seems a strong man and young.

August 21, 1940

P: Churchill in his speech appears to have said that France will be compelled to declare war against England.

SRI AUROBINDO: Has he said that? Or what has he actually said? For if he has said that, there must be some truth in it. He won't say it if he didn't know something. It is of tremendous importance for us.

N: It won't come quite as a surprise. One by one the Vichy government is taking steps leading to that.

S: The world seems to be getting chaotic. But if such a possibility happens, the British Government will grab Pondy at once....

N: The British Government has thanked the Nizam for his contribution. But the Nizam must be smarting and cursing within for the loss of his money.

SRI AUROBINDO (*laughing*): They specially thanked Sir Akbar for it.

N: The rumour about the naval bases being ceded to America seems to be coming true, though it was turned down at first as baseless rumour.

P: And the American navy will patrol the Canadian waters, they say.

SRI AUROBINDO (*laughing*): It is practically an alliance.

N: Some sections say that this is a move towards joining the War. How slowly and carefully Roosevelt is moving!

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, he will be freer after November. Of course, the Congress will still be there, but the Congress also will be freer. Even if he is not elected as President, he may bind the next President to some course of action; for the next President comes in January, I believe.

N: England can hold out till November, I hope.

S: Oh yes. In winter the operations have to be slow.

P: Hitler is trying to find out any weak spot by these small air attacks. But if Spain and France join Hitler—

SRI AUROBINDO: Then it will be formidable.

P: Hitler is trying to drag in France.

SRI AUROBINDO: In that case, it will end in a revolution in France. The French are already reluctant to fight Germany. They will be still more so against Britain.

Evening

(*P asked Sri Aurobindo if he had finished Coomaraswamy's book on art and what he thought about it.*)

SRI AUROBINDO: His book is one-sided. No doubt, art is cosmic, universal; it is not concerned with personality. But the artist expresses his inspiration and in that there must be the stamp of his individuality, as you find in the case of great artists and poets. Take for instance the Greek poets or the French dramatists. They follow the same tradition, national custom, etc., but each has his own individual stamp. An artist is not expressing his personality, but it is stamped in his own work.

P: Coomaraswamy says Leonardo da Vinci followed tradition, there is no stamp of personality in his art.

SRI AUROBINDO: Not correct. What Coomaraswamy says about the inner and the outer vision is correct and interesting. The East has followed the inner vision in art, while the West the outer; but by outer is not meant simply the surface but the deeper things of the world.

August 22, 1940
Evening

(*There was a talk again about the Baron-Schomberg-affair; it was said that it was Schomberg who had made all the mischief.*)

P: Ali has heard from somebody that you have remarked about his progress after Darshan.

SRI AUROBINDO: When did I say that?

P: That was what I was wondering about. I told him that you might have said you had been pleased with him or something like that. Alys said, "Sri Aurobindo doesn't say anything about me! Every time it is Ali and Ali. He doesn't find me good, perhaps!" (*Laughter*) I consoled her.

SRI AUROBINDO: You could have said that it goes without saying in her case.

(*To be continued*)

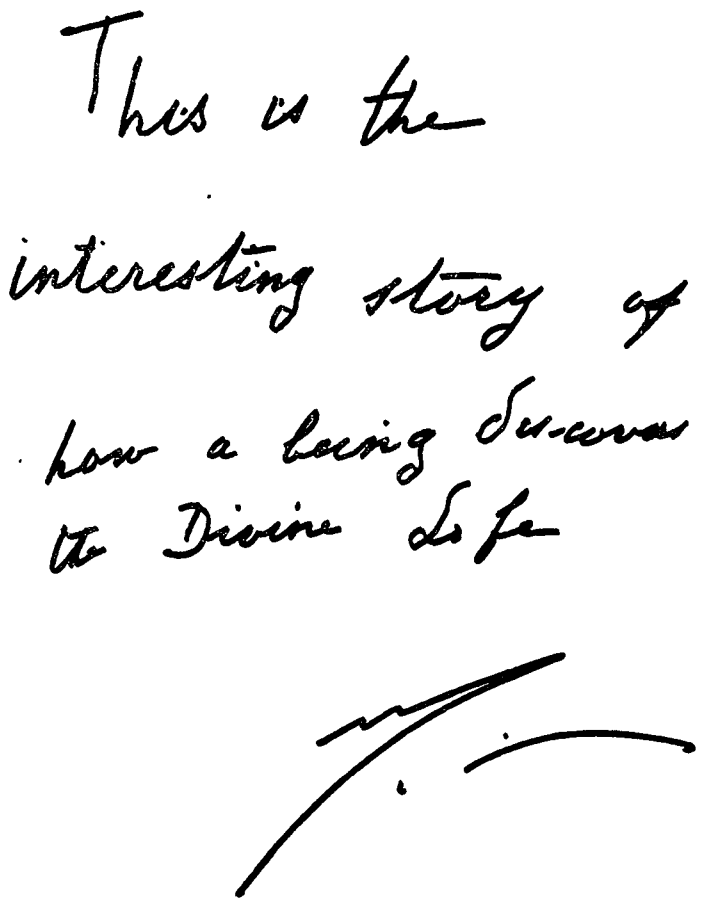
NIRODBARAN

THE STORY OF A SOUL

BY HUTA

(Continued from the issue of August 1984)

The Mother's Message



(38)

ON 20th July 1957 the Mother sent me a frosty pink glass vase together with some Amaryllis flower—"Conversion of the emotional being—It blossoms in a harmonious receptivity."

These flowers I was doing a second time; I finished the painting and showed it to the Mother that very morning. She remarked:

"Ah! good success! you must always paint an object over and over again till you get mastery over it. You must know also that in Yoga too the same method applies."

She smiled. After giving me flowers she kissed my cheek and bade me *au revoir*.

We met once again in her room at the Playground. Then while handing her a clipping which illustrated a chimpanzee painting, I said:

"Mother, look at this. You know an ass also painted with his tail and became famous in a jiffy.

"If even monkeys and donkeys paint, what is very special in my doing it?"

She viewed the picture minutely with a magnifying glass and then gave a delightful laugh, patted my hands and said:

"Well, well, you see animals can be trained. I once saw with my father an elephant in a circus, sitting on a very small stool and drinking something from a bottle with his trunk."

Once again her laughter rang out.

I thought to myself: "Human beings are not less wild than the wildest animals —perhaps even worse. They too can be trained and transformed by the Supreme Force."

The Mother's father Monsieur Maurice Alfassa was exceedingly fond of the circus. His love for animals and birds was immense.

The Mother too loved animals—her dogs Goro and Puchi in Japan, her cat Kiki and a crow as well as a lizard in the Ashram. The most amusing of all was a donkey named Monsieur Baudet.

Mrs Mona Pinto (Udar's wife) told me:

"A baby donkey was bought by Udar for Rs. 13/-. The donkey was crying piteously—poor little thing. He was given the name M. Baudet by the Mother. He became friendly with my dog whose name was Spotted Beauty. This name also was was given by the Mother. We called her Beauty for short.

"The dog climbed the stairs; M. Baudet imitated her. But unfortunately he could not climb down. So he had to be brought down.

"When we shifted to another house, there was no place to keep him. So he was given to Richard Pearson who looked after him. But I remembered that he took part in the Donkeys' Race which was held every year on 14th July, the day on which the Bastille was taken by the common people during the French Revolution. Invariably M. Baudet came first and won prizes.

"On Christmas day he was not left out. He was adorned with a pointed

red-green hat with two holes for his ears to stick out. Krishnalal painted him in his full regalia."

Ambu who is an expert in Yogic Asanas gave me this information:

"M. Baudet was so pampered that he became too lazy to do any work. But the Mother decided to give him some work. So he was made to draw a small cart in which vegetables and other things were transported from place to place. Sometimes he got into a mischievous mood and banged the cart against a wall or a pillar and the cart overturned and he just squatted down and even started eating what had been scattered from the cart. When he grew old the Mother set him free to do whatever he liked."

My memory flies back to the most amusing scenes of game. One of my brothers —Vasantbhai—used to stay in Jinja (Uganda) where there are the famous Victoria Falls. Churchill had the idea in 1908 of harnessing these Falls from which the Nile gets its impetus. In 1954 the dam was built. Today the Power House of Jinja stands majestically in action.

In August 1954 I went with my brother, his wife and their friends in a big van to the Murchison Falls which are 200 miles away. But we had to stay overnight in a small town in the Lango District before we reached our destination. Our host told us that if we would start early in the morning at 5 o'clock we would be able to see a lot of game in the National Park on our way to the Falls.

We saw zebras, giraffes, antelopes and a few other animals. On the way everyone was talking of nothing but animals.

At last we reached the place. The Falls roared in thunderous cataracts. We had our lunch on a boulder under a huge tree. I wanted to be alone with Nature. I chose a solitary spot near the Falls. On a big rock I stretched myself with my hands behind my head. I could hear the streamlets gurgling by before toppling over and becoming a cataract. A gentle breeze dispelled the heat of the day. The cool atmosphere made my lashes drop down over my eyes and I dozed off. Then suddenly I became aware of somebody—it proved to be my sister-in-law. She told me in an alarmed voice: "Don't you realise that if you fell into deep sleep a crocodile might come and swallow you up?" I replied: "Ah! so much the better!". At that time I was passing through a period of turmoil. I had gone to Africa after my marriage in Bombay and the future was vague.

From the Murchison Falls we went to the river Nile which is the continuation of the original Nile coming from the Victoria Falls.

Here we could see only innumerable submerged hippopotamuses with their two tiny ears sticking out above the water. The crocodiles lay half-submerged in the shallow water—horrible creatures which kept to themselves unless disturbed in any way.

Then we boarded a small boat. Our warden cautioned us not to put our hands in the water. We enjoyed gliding slowly on the river. After half an hour or so, we glimpsed on the bank a herd of elephants which were taking their bath. It was thrilling to see how a mummy elephant bathed her baby by spraying water from her trunk. Some elephants trumpeted. I found myself totally in a different world.

Our boat was moving very slowly. A crocodile was basking in the sun on a patch of turf-grass. Meanwhile, a hippopotamus kicked the crocodile. The poor fellow fell into the water and Mr. Hippo started grazing as if nothing had happened. Very amusing scene indeed!

The boat cut small wavelets in the river and was not sailing very close to the bank. Now we saw chattering monkeys jump from branch to branch. Parrots screamed again and again and whirred in the foliage above. We were asked to observe perfect silence lest we should perturb the game. Oh! but somebody on the boat gave a cry. I turned my face and saw to my horror near the boat a huge crocodile open its mouth and then snap its tooth-filled jaws. I shuddered. My brother and others took quite a number of photographs of the creatures.

While coming back we saw some animals. A giraffe was quite close to our vehicle which looked a dwarf in front of the tall animal. Now the dusk was invading the sky and birds were making their strange evening calls in the jungle. After a long journey we returned exhausted to the town where we had stayed the previous night.

Early in the morning we were on our way to Jinja.

In one of the rivers in Kampala near Jinja there was a crocodile which a native had as his pet. He had only to shout putting his palms close together near his mouth: "Rutembé, Rutembé, ho-ha-ho-ha, Rutembé", and the crocodile came out of the river. He then gave it big pieces of dry meat, caressed the creature and beckoned to the spectators to come near. Even some Europeans sat on it and got themselves photographed. One enterprising lady put her baby-boy in its open jaws and got a snap taken of the child and the crocodile.

One more incident. Near our estate—Miwani—there is a big town—Kisumu —on the bank of the Nile. Between our estate and this town runs the equator. Another of my brothers—Maganbhai—had his house in Kisumu. At night after dinner we always used to go for a drive on the bank. Once a huge crocodile was sleeping in the way of our car. We could not go further. My brother threw a dazzling spotlight on the creature. Its eyes got blurred and it stayed stock-still. We watched it intently. Meanwhile, somebody's horn blared behind our car. The crocodile got alarmed and finally dived expertly into the river.

The world of animals is fascinating. They have also their dignity. Here is a joke interestingly illustrating it.

A cartoon shows a gorilla on one side of Henry Baugh, the Director of the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. On the other side stands Charles Darwin with a big beard and looking more gorilla-like than the ape himself. The gorilla is weeping and telling the Director: "That man is saying he is one of my descendants."

The Director tells Darwin: "Mr. Darwin, how could you insult him so?"

On the serious side, the animal-world recalls to my mind some verses from *Savitri:*

> "The Force in her drew earth's subhuman broods;
> And to her spirit's large and free delight
> She joined the ardent-hued magnificent lives
> Of animal and bird and flower and tree.
> They answered to her with the simple heart."

*

Well, I had to paint like a monkey! The Mother sent me an orange-coloured Japanese vase which was to be painted on a white background.

Since I had done so many vases by then I could paint this one easily. The Mother was pleased with the result.

On 27th July she called me along with two artists—Jayantilal and Krishnalal. She herself chose 15 paintings of mine to exhibit on the 15th of August. She explained to the artists how the paintings should be arranged—especially four of them: Buddha, Kwannon, a white Dahlia and a white Chrysanthemum. She said they must be kept separately on one side and underneath them should be written:

> "These are meant for concentration."

In spite of various new things happening, the old heaviness still persisted in my heart. But now it was less acute and became bearable.

Sri Aurobindo has written in the Cent. Ed. Vol. 17, p. 89:

> "Pain is the touch of our Mother teaching us how to bear and grow in rapture. She has three stages of her schooling, endurance first, next equality of soul, last ecstasy."

In the evening the Mother and I met again. It was Thursday. She was to take the French Translation Class. Before the class I went into her room as always for her blessings.

She was not at all in a hurry for the class. I felt as if she sat in eternity. She held my hands in hers and went into a deep trance. When she awoke, she took a pencil and a piece of paper and drew two sketches. Then she told me with a smile:

> "Child, I saw two visions just now. The first one was of Sri Aurobindo's symbol in your heart. Gradually it became more and more luminous. Afterwards you merge in it—that is to say, you were no more visible. But the symbol was there radiant and prominent.

"The second vision was like this: From the lotus of the symbol, two flowers, the Japanese Honeysuckle, formed the shape of a V—that means Victory. For, indeed, the Divine's Victory is certain."

The meaning given to the Japanese Honeysuckle by the Mother is:

"Constant remembrance of the Divine—spontaneous and joyful, it is the ideal condition."

Then she relapsed into meditation. On waking she drew another sketch. Sri Aurobindo's symbol with four steps. Underneath it she wrote:

"Keep that sacred in your heart and the Victory will be won."

She tapped with her index finger this third drawing and said:

"Child, what is written here is true. You must *always* keep that Truth in your heart."

She patted my cheeks with her hands, kissed my forehead and gave me flowers. Heaven alone knew what people who were outside thought of the delay.

In the class I felt as if my heart was charged with intense vibrations of peace and calm. I felt drowsy under this unknown spell. Suddenly my eyes met her brilliant gaze, and we smiled to each other.

Night advanced and there was a complete hush except that occasionally frogs croaked or crickets chirped. I sat in my chair pondering over the sketches the Mother had given me. Yes, I had to remind myself perpetually of my soul's aspiration and that I should keep always the Lord's symbol in my heart. No matter what happened I must never lose the psychic touch.

Much later—in 1961—I painted the first vision. It got printed in Bombay by a Sindhi gentleman, Mr. Mehra, who owned a press. It was done by offset process. He sent more than a thousand cards to the Mother. The following lines from *Savitri*, chosen by Jayantilal, were put below the painting:

"This golden figure. . .
Hid in its breast the key of all his aims,
A spell to bring the Immortal's bliss on earth."

Later on, the Mother used the reproductions as greeting cards.

*

A lovely card and white roses came from the Mother. I went to her private stores to clean the rooms. I had not stopped that work.

Before going to the Mother in the evening, I took with me three different-coloured specimens of the flower Zephyr: white, yellow and rose-mauve. The meaning she has given to these flowers is: "Prayer—self-giving is the true prayer."

I offered them to the Mother. She accepted them gracefully and looked at me lovingly and with an enchanting smile said:

> "Child, what are your three prayers? Write them down. I also will write down what your three prayers will be."

She gave me a bit of paper and a pencil.

I was confused at first. Then I wrote down what I felt. I do not really recollect now what exactly I inscribed. But it was somewhat similar to the Mother's own jotting. She saw my scribble, gave a smile of amusement and then handed me her piece of paper on which was written:

> "Vital prayer: Steadiness and perseverance.
> Mental prayer: Purity.
> Integral prayer: The Divine Consciousness."

She granted all my prayers. Now I have a glimpse of their fulfilment.

Sri Aurobindo has a wonderful passage on prayer in the Cent. Ed., Vol. 21, p. 543:

> "Prayer helps to prepare this relation for us at first on the lower plane even while it is there consistent with much that is mere egoism and self-delusion; but afterwards we can draw towards the spiritual truth which is behind it. It is not then the giving of the thing asked for that matters, but the relation itself, the contact of man's life with God, the conscious interchange. In spiritual matters and in the seeking of spiritual gains, this conscious relation is a great power; it is a much greater power than our own entirely self-reliant struggle and effort and it brings a fuller spiritual growth and experience. Necessarily, in the end prayer either ceases in the greater thing for which it prepared us,—in fact the form we call prayer is not itself essential so long as the faith, the will, the aspiration are there,—or remains only for the joy of the relation. Also its objects, the *artha* or interest it seeks to realise, become higher and higher until we reach the highest motiveless devotion, which is that of divine love pure and simple without any other demand or longing."

The Mother has written beautifully in her *Prayers and Meditations:*

"Let the pure perfume of sanctification burn always, rising higher and higher, and straighter and straighter, like the ceaseless prayer of the integral being, desiring to unite with Thee so as to manifest Thee."

*

No matter how much I prayed and aspired, the Divine was not within my reach. I could not express even to myself the sensitivity of my nature which was very much alive to any sign of kindness or of coldness. Besides, the longing for the union with the Divine had been the pulse of my innermost being.

I was encompassed by the psychological struggle which was endless.

I had a sudden desire to be alone, in a world empty of human beings and with only the loveliness of Nature as a comrade. But Oh! nothing seemed possible. I thought that only death would release me from this world.

I told the Mother about my feeling. She remained in silence for a few seconds which gave the impression of an eternity of time. Then at last she spoke gravely:

"When people want to put an end to their lives, they do not act rightly. Because, when they die, their life and consciousness do not stop. Of course, the body dies. But the material vital and the lower mind and emotions, sensations, desires—all lower things remain as they are. The body is truly the protection against all bad things because the psychic is there within it. In death people become more conscious of subtle and lower things. For example, when people have nightmares, they see and feel all these horrible things. When the nightmares are dreadful and people cannot bear to see any more, at once they awake and re-enter the physical body and nothing happens to them. While, if they give up their bodies, they can never get any protection. And they suffer terribly, because in the worlds of the material vital and lower mind, there are endless indefinable sufferings and miseries and people cannot escape from these worlds and their movements. There they cannot get any protection.

"People are extremely afraid of death and still they think of giving up their lives. But it is not wise. They are under the impression that after death they will escape from difficulties and find peace, but it is not true. In fact, when death comes, people should always remain in the consciousness of their souls; if in such an atmosphere they leave their bodies, then naturally their souls take wonderful rest in the Supreme Peace.

"No doubt, by prayer, meditation, concentration, Devotion, aspiration, worship, love for the Divine and faith in the Divine, people become aware of their souls and after death they remain in that consciousness and their souls escape from all horrors.

"When the psychic being decides to take birth, it is only to get various experiences and become perfect and finally take rest in the Divine Peace. But this

Peace comes only when people surrender to the Divine. The suggestions of the adverse forces keep coming constantly because the devil wants food—that is why he likes to do mischief and then he swallows peoples' vital beings—not only this but in that world of horrors there are even worse things—nasty, dirty, ugly and violent; while here in this world people have difficulties and miseries and their bodies suffer but it is far better than going through the horrors of the ugly worlds.

"People can be quite happy when they have their physical bodies but there is one condition: they must surrender themselves to the Divine and let Him do everything according to His own Will.

"When people revolt, react and think with their ignorant mind and vital to put an end to their lives, it is the most unwise and silly thing they can do. They are revolting against Nature and the Supreme Law.

"Everyone has a will but it does not mean they should use it in a wrong way; on the contrary, they should use it in the right way and whatever comes from the Divine they should accept joyously.

"They must not think of death, but if it comes, they must not fear it either. If they are conscious of their souls and remain in the soul's consciousness, they do not feel anything when death comes. But when they are restless, violent, and not conscious of their souls, they always become miserable after death.

"The body is perfect protection against ugly things. But if people try to commit suicide, they cannot get any protection and there is no end to their miseries—and no chance to get out of them. For example, if people peel off the skin of their bodies, how would they feel? Exactly, in the same way, they would feel when they are out of their bodies.

"People must not go against the Divine's Will and Work."

Her words were whirling round and round in my mind, repeating themselves over and over again. I still could not believe that after death one is tortured so ruthlessly. My thoughts and emotions were chaotic. Fear and suspense crept into my whole being.

Two days went by. Now it was the last day of the month of July 1957. A card came from the Mother. It displayed exquisite roses. She had written on it:

"To my dear little child Huta,

With all my love and sweetness.

This image of the aspiration of her soul—'All human passions turned into love for the Divine.' "

(To be continued)

THE INSPIRATION OF *PARADISE LOST*

(*Continued from the issue of July 1984*)

3

The Inner and Outer Process of Milton's Composition

THE usual picture of Milton composing *Paradise Lost* is constructed from the testimony of a number of contemporary biographers.[1] Milton frequently composed lying in bed in the morning. It is supposed that this was his practice during winter. At other times we have to think of him as getting up early and, since he was already blind, impatiently waiting for his amanuensis to come and take dictation. At times he would have as many as thirty lines ready and, if the amanuensis arrived late, he would complain, saying "he wanted to be milked". When he was dictating, "he sat backward obliquely in an easy-chair, with his leg flung over the elbow of it". The dictation of poetry was during part of the morning, for he had divided the day into several portions for his various works. Only one piece of evidence appears to be ambiguous on this point: it says that the poem got composed in a parcel of ten, twenty or thirty verses at a time, which were written down by whatever hand was next available. And there is a curious fact of general import to be added: during each of the five years from 1658 to 1663 when *Paradise Lost* was composed, the poetic vein flowed happily from the Autumnal Equinox—about the close of September—to a little after the Vernal Equinox of March 21, but during the remaining months, however much the old poet courted his fancy, he could not produce anything to his satisfaction.

This interesting picture is helpful both subjectively and objectively, but fault can be found with it on three scores. It tells us nothing about the inner process of Milton's composition. It omits one important detail about the time when the process went on. It does not clarify a certain point with regard to composition and dictation. What is not clarified is whether during the dictation Milton added to the lines already composed. We are left to imagine that he might have done so. But really we have no ground to think of any addition as a rule. If we attend to Miltons's own evidence in his poem itself, as distinguished from that of his biographers in their books, we should believe most of his composition, if not all, to have been done before the arrival of his amanuensis in the early morning. His evidence also tells us that his poetry came to him not only in the early morning: it came even more at another and earlier time. And for this we have confirmation in some of the biographers themselves. Finally, we learn from him that the process of composing *Paradise Lost* was the exact opposite of what we should guess from the characteristics of his packed and polished, learned and Latinised style.

In the invocation to Urania, the Heavenly Spirit, at the beginning of Book VII,

[1] *A Milton Handbook* by J. H. Hanford, (1946), pp. 50-65.

after referring to the solitude no less than the adversity into which his life has fallen, he adds about himself that he cannot really be lonely while Urania pays him her visit.

> ...nightly, or when Morn
> Purples the East.[1]

This establishes two times for his composition—night and daybreak—and indicates nothing beyond them on either side. Neither before nightfall nor after sunrise did Milton compose *Paradise Lost*. If parcels of ten, twenty or thirty lines were found written by several hands, it must have been by different amanuenses on different mornings. Or else, if some other part of the day served for dictation, the poet may for his own reasons have postponed dictating his verses composed at night or early morning. His personal statement leaves no room for the supposition that he composed anything during the rest of the day, and the rest includes even the time of dictation when his amanuensis first arrived. The period beyond a part of the morning is all the more ruled out since his epic was not the only thing he was busy at from 1658 to 1663. The various works to which the several portions of the day were allotted comprised many undertakings of a very different nature, and for them a lot of daily reading and research was needed besides the literature he might have thought necessary as an aid to his poem. He was constructing a Body of Doctrine from the Scriptures, compiling a History of England, collecting materials for a Thesaurus or Dictionary of the Latin tongue. Every day he pursued his tasks with the use of several assistants whom he kept near him. Each afternoon he also made it almost a fixed practice to hear music, vocal or instrumental. And in the evening he got choice poetry read out, as an anonymous biographer relates, "by way of refreshment after the day's toil and to store his fancy against the morning".

The mention of morning here also as the time of his poetic composition is in line with most of the biographical matter. But, while it has authentic relevance, the night-time which the poet pairs with it in the lines we have cited seems the more productive; for, in the three other passages in *Paradise Lost* about his composition, he points only to night-time. One of the three is in the Third Book of the epic, the remaining two in the Ninth. These two we may quote at once. In speaking of the need to change his "Notes" now to "Tragic" because he has to deal directly with Man's sin and Fall and Heaven's anger, he maintains that his "argument" can be even more "Heroic" than the old epic subjects,

> If answerable style I can obtain
> Of my Celestial Patroness, who deigns
> Her nightly visitation unimplored,
> And dictates to me slumbering, or inspires
> Easy my unpremeditated Verse...[2]

[1] Bk. VII, 28-30. [2] 20-4.

Again, he affirms that there is no reason why he should not succeed and that certain circumstances of time and place may defeat him only

> ...if all be mine,
> Not hers who brings it nightly to my ear.[1]

It would appear that since the Third Book and the Ninth refer exclusively to hours of night, the morning hour mentioned in Book VII applied in some measure to the period when the middle parts of the poem were composed, whereas the initial and final parts to which the other two Books belong—that is, two-thirds of the poem—were done exclusively before Morn purpled the East.

What, however, is of the utmost importance is not the mere fact of night-time composition. The quotations from Book IX bring out the way Milton composed *Paradise Lost* at night, and the phrase already culled from Book VII is within a context that points to the same way, although now including dawn in the period of inspiration: what Milton in his apostrophe to Urania actually says about himself is:

> Yet not alone, while thou
> Visit'st my slumbers nightly, or when Morn
> Purples the East.

If words have any meaning, our passages state, to begin with, that Milton received his poetry during his night's sleep. Now what would such reception imply? It would imply that he was perfectly passive in the process of composition: indeed Milton the man was as good as non-existent in the role of poet and only some power beyond him made him the hearer of its voice. But, if that was so during the night's slumber, may we not suppose that, when he was not asleep in the night and yet composing and when he composed wakefully in the early morning, the same phenomenon occurred?

The first quotation from Book IX not only makes the Celestial Patroness come "unimplored" in both the sleeping and the waking conditions at night. It also uses equivalent phrases for either condition. The Celestial Patroness "dictates" to Milton slumbering and "inspires easy" the non-slumbering Milton with verse which is "unpremeditated". Milton gets his song as a sheer gift: he is nothing except its hearer or transcriber.

The second quotation does not at all distinguish the two conditions and, fusing them by means of the one word "nightly", suggests that in either condition all the poetry is brought to Milton's ear by the Celestial Patroness instead of being fashioned in any respect by the poet himself.

The full phrase from Book VII gives us the words "nightly" and "when Morn purples the East" as both qualifying "visit'st" adverbially. Therefore, the same act

[1] 46-7.

of Urania—her visit—which presented Milton with poetry at night in a condition where personal initiative was impossible is spoken of as applying to him at dawn. Urania's visit at dawn should be taken to have repeated in the waking state what it had done in the sleeping—namely, to have employed Milton as a medium.

Grammatically, it would even seem that the verb "visit" is used transitively in relation to "when Morn purples the East" no less than to "nightly", so that "slumbers" which is the object of this verb goes with both the adverbial expressions: the sense would be that the slumbers which were visited by Urania took place not only at night but also at daybreak.

The usual construing is intransitive where daybreak is concerned: "when Morn purples the East" does not get joined up with "slumbers". But the transitive possibility of "visit'st" in both instances should serve to strengthen the "mere-medium" state we have deduced for Milton at dawn as well as at night. And, when we remember that Milton was blind and stayed in "ever-during dark,"[1] with eyes "that roll in vain... and find no dawn",[2] we may see very little essential distinction between his Urania-visited sleep and his wakefulness visited by the same Celestial Patroness.

Keeping in mind their similarity and mutual shading-off, we get the right view of the passage in Book III which we have not yet quoted. There he tells how each night he would absorb himself in meditation on Hellenic and Hebrew poetry, visiting in imagination the old founts of inspiration, and

> Then feed on thoughts, that voluntary move
> Harmonious numbers; as the wakeful Bird
> Sings darkling, and in shadiest covert hid
> Tunes her nocturnal note.[3]

Although here he seeks out the Muse and it is not the other way round, the result is the same: the "harmonious numbers" come of their own accord to the blindly brooding poet in the dark hours, just as to the "wakeful" nightingale comes its song.

Out of the two states in which Milton received inspiration, the sleeping one—for all the closeness of the waking to it—is certainly the more remarkable. Milton's slumber must have been the most extraordinary phenomenon in any poet's life. Coleridge's *Kubla Khan* was composed during a dream. But it is a wonder of brief spell and Coleridge never met with a repetition of the experience, though we may be right in viewing *The Ancient Mariner* and *Christabel* as resulting from a sort of prolongation or projection of the dream-state into the waking consciousness. If Milton is to be believed, he had a *Kubla-Khan* experience night after night from the Autumnal to the Vernal Equinox during several years. Might we not suggest that not only was his ear active but also his eye? *Kubla Khan*, we may remind ourselves, was seen as

[1] Bk. III, 45.
[2] *Ibid.*, 23-4.
[3] *Ibid.*, 37-40.

well as heard. And Milton, at the end of his famous invocation to "Holy Light" at the beginning of Book III, speaks of the compensation open to him from that Light for his blindness to physical Nature:

> So much the rather thou, Celestial Light,
> Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
> Irradiate; there plant eyes; all mist from thence
> Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
> Of things invisible to mortal sight.[1]

Might not the final statement be more than figurative? No doubt, Milton was not properly a mystic and in fact his mind was on the whole more powerful than subtle, too self-dependent in its judgment to let itself go in spiritual self-transcendence, it was strongly religious and not intuitively ecstatic; but his blindness, charged with a high degree of poetic aspiration, could very well have induced a kind of abnormal absorption so that his sleep might have grown a dream-vision accompanied by a direct audition of the rhythmically revealing word.

Yes, we may well suppose Milton's eye no less than his ear active in the course of his poetic sleep. But, while we stress the remarkable nature of this sleep as a recurring event over years, we must regard it as only different in degree and not in kind from the poetic wakefulness of the blind Milton. Even in the early stages of the epic, when the ever-during dark of the wakeful state frames his composition, we should speak of a dream-vision—a self-generating series of pictures, a sort of inward "movie" —just as we speak of a direct audition, the "harmonious numbers" flowing unforced. During sleep the poet would be cut off from the spur to memory's sight by the goings-on of the day-to-day world around: his dream-vision would be rapt, whereas the poetic wakefulness would be partly open to the suggestions of those goings-on. But owing to the abnormal absorption, what the eye would experience in the latter state would still be a dream-vision.

And what sign would confirm for us that a dream-vision was a constant feature of Milton's poetic process? In *Kubla Khan* we feel a certain vivid play of changing fantasy, apparently wanting in coherence yet conveying an impression of unity on some deeper level. Have we not the same sign in good portions of *Paradise Lost*— at least in the first two Books which are the best? Milton is a more tightly knit though less metaphysical mind than Coleridge, a mind more classically steady and less romantically tremulous in its general movement than his. So whatever quality it may have of dream-vision would not be quite the same. Only the essence of this quality would be recognised equally in both the poets. And we are struck by the complaint of several critics that there are various types of inconsistency in Milton's descriptions of Hell. "It is odd, for example," writes Kenneth Muir,[2] "that the

[1] 51-5.
[2] *John Milton* (1955), pp. 146-47.

devils are doomed to dwell 'In admantine chains and penal fire,' and that Satan himself is chained on the burning lake, while a few lines later they are all able to fly to dry land, and before long they are engaged in all kinds of activities.... Waldock is right to point out that in other hells 'the damned have come to the end of their road'; but in Milton's, though it is a place of punishment, the damned are full of plans for the future. Milton (says Waldock) was trying 'to accomplish two incompatible things', namely, to depict a hell which was a place of perpetual torment, and one which was a base for military operation... It may be, as Mr. Eliot suggests, that we should 'not attempt to see very clearly any scene that Milton depicts'; the world to which he has introduced us does not require this kind of consistency. 'It should be accepted as a shifting phantasmagory.' Leavis and Waldock both feel that Milton's Hell is not 'consistently realized'; but to some readers the very inconsistencies give a nightmare quality which could not have been achieved in any other way."

Not that the nightmare quality runs riot. There is a method in the midst of the aberrancy. Milton gives us to understand about the devils that, as Muir puts it, "all-ruling Heaven has allowed them freedom so that they may heap further damnation on themselves..."[1] Again, "as Hell had only just been founded and devils are different from human souls, we must not expect the same laws to operate."[2] Also, "Milton makes clear that the tortures are intermittent, and there is no reason why we should not assume that they are not partly symbolic. The angels have been driven out from bliss, and that has always been the worst part of damnation."[3] It is indeed possible to touch unity on a deeper level; and precisely this possibility wedded to the nightmare quality completes the *Kubla-Khan* affinity of Milton's work in many places.

Where the quality is not nightmarish, it is often still suffused with a strange species of vivid vagueness. Eliot[4] considers Milton lacking in sufficient visual power and he attributes in some measure the increase of the defect to his blindness. But the absence of fully realised visions may occasionally be due to the state of dream in which his poetry, according to his account, was frequently heard by him. Take his Eden. It has a certain indefiniteness, its flora and fauna do not display the details which would assimilate it to earth's landscapes. As Eliot[5] has noted, the impression of Eden which we retain is that of *light*—"a daylight and a starlight, a light of dawn and of dusk". In Eliot's view, it is "the light which, remembered by a man in his blindness, has a supernatural glory unexperienced by men of normal vision". The "supernatural glory" could have been a product of the dream-state as well as of the heightened inward sensibilities of a blind man. The dream-state of a mind like Milton's could also be responsible for the imagery Eliot[6] finds most memorable in him: "Milton is at his best in imagery suggestive of vast size, limitless space, abysmal depth, and light and darkness."

[1] *Ibid*, p. 146. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.*, pp 146-47
[4] *Selected Prose* (Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1953), pp. 143-44
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 144. [6] *Ibid.*

I think the *Kubla-Khan* affinity is too widely present in essence to be missed. And while we are about it we may recall that one of the many sources, from which Coleridge's dreaming imagination drew with the help of his profusely stored memory the materials of *Kubla Khan*, is *Paradise Lost* itself. Not only does the Xanadu of Kubla Khan, with its pleasaunce girdled by walls and towers, echo from Milton

> the destined walls
> of Cambalu, seat of Cathaian Can,[1]

Cambalu which was actually a city built by Kubla Khan himself. Also Coleridge's sacred river which takes birth when, from a chasm slanting

> Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover...
> A mighty fountain momently was forced,

and which, before reaching "caverns measureless to man" and sinking to "a sunless sea", runs "meandering with a mazy motion" through "fertile ground"—

> gardens bright with sinuous rills,
> Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree,

and

> ...forests ancient as the hills,
> Enfolding sunny sports of greenery—

even this river, in its strange setting, comes with Miltonic memories. Milton has "a river large" which belonged to his Eden's "fertile ground"[2] (Coleridge's very phrase) and which

> through the shaggy hill
> Passed underneath ingulfed; for God had thrown
> That mountain, as his garden-mould, high raised
> Upon the rapid current, which, through veins
> Of porous earth with kindly thirst up-drawn,
> Rose a fresh fountain, and with many a rill
> Watered the garden; thence united fell
> Down the steep glade, and met the nether flood,
> Which from his darksome passage now appears,
> And now, divided into four main streams,
> Runs diverse, wandering many a famous realm....[3]

[1] Bk. XI, 386-87. [2] Bk. IV, 216. [3] *Ibid*, 224-34.

Rolling on orient pearl and sands of gold,
With mazy error under pendent shades....[1]
Groves whose rich trees wept odorous gum and balm;
Others whose fruit, burnished with golden rind,
Hung amiable—Hesperian fables true,
If true here only—and of delicious taste.
Betwixt them lawns, or level downs, and flocks
Grazing the tender herb, were interposed....[2]
Another side, umbrageous grots and caves
Of cool recess...[3]

Coleridge's poem closes with a passage at whose beginning is

...an Abyssinian maid,
Singing of Mount Abora,

and at whose end a mention of "Paradise". Milton, in the same context as the lines from him quoted above, deals with various places where the heavenly garden is not located and he concludes:

Nor, where Abassin kings their issue guard,
Mount Amora (though this by some supposed
True Paradise)...[4]

Finally, from Coleridge's "milk of Paradise" we hark back to the "milky stream"[5] from which Milton's Adam and Eve in Eden got "nectarous draughts", while Coleridge's immediately preceding "honey-dew" echoes the "mellifluous dews"[6] brushed off the boughs in Heaven by Milton's Angels for their repast.

Thus the *Kubla-Khan* affinity is there in more than one sense. And it is interesting to mark that Milton distinguishes two kinds of sleep with different kinds of dream or vision in them. One is the reverse of the waking state in which for the most part Reason joins or disjoins for its own affirmations and denials the "imaginations, aery shapes" formed by "Fancy" out of sense-impressions. This Reason, as Adam says,

"retires
Into her private cell when Nature rests.
Oft, in her absence, mimic Fancy wakes
To imitate her, but, misjoining shapes,
Wild work produces oft, and most in dreams,
Ill matching words and deeds long past or late."[7]

[1] *Ibid.*, 238-39. [2] *Ibid.*, 248-53. [3] *Ibid.*, 257-58.
[4] *Ibid.*, 280-82. [5] Bk. V, 306. [6] *Ibid.*, 429. [7] Bk. V, 108-13.

This is ordinary sleep and its dream-creation. The other, an extraordinary slumber, working with a power of perception exceeding the normal, is shown us in the account Adam gives of the sleep which he twice had on the first day of his life. The first occasion was when he started wondering who the good and powerful Maker of his being was. He strays about, inquiring but getting no answer; then

> "On a green shady bank, profuse with flowers,
> Pensive I sat me down. There gentle sleep
> First found me, and with soft oppression seized
> My drowsèd sense, untroubled, though I thought
> I then was passing to my former state
> Insensible and forthwith to dissolve:
> When suddenly stood at my head a dream,
> Whose inward apparition gently moved
> My fancy to believe I yet had being,
> And lived. One came, methought, of shape divine,
> And said, 'Thy mansion wants thee, Adam, rise...' "[1]

In his dream Adam is taken by the "shape divine" to the Garden of Bliss prepared for him:

> "Whereat I waked, and found
> Before mine eyes all real, as the dream
> Had lively shadowed."[2]

Here "fancy" is no mimic creator of confusions in the sleep-state, and what comes as a dream is a revelation, a divinely given vision of things found to be true on waking, though the truth is of earth itself and not of any beyond. Similar is the second sleep of Adam after his contact and colloquy with God's presence in the Garden to which he had been led. During this sleep God performed the operation of making Eve out of one of his ribs:

> "Mine eyes he closed, but open left the cell
> Of fancy, my internal sight, by which
> Abstract as in a trance, methought I saw
> Though sleeping, where I lay, and saw the Shape
> Still glorious before whom awake I stood...."[3]

"Fancy" in this passage has a more explicit depth of meaning than in the previous one. It does not "wake" to do "wild work", as in ordinary sleep, while the rational

[1] Bk. VIII, 286-96.
[2] *Ibid.*, 309-11.
[3] *Ibid.*, 460-64.

man is unconscious: now it is an "internal sight" and the rational man is "awake" inwardly and witnesses the work of a superhuman agency. Of course, on this occasion too, as on the other, there is no vision of any beyond: Adam witnesses what is being done to his physical body by the glorious Shape. But the sleep that is like a trance can have many functions, and Milton's description of it can be a clue to the experience he was himself undergoing night after night.

The clue-character of the passages is suggested further by another reference to an extraordinary sleep. This time it is Eve's. When the Archangel Michael takes Adam to a hill and shows him a wakeful vision of some things to come and then relates the rest, Eve is sleeping far away, but when they return to her bower she is found awake and she says:

> "Whence thou return'st and whither went'st I know;
> For God is also in sleep, and dreams advise,
> Which he hath sent propitious, some great good
> Presaging, since, with sorrow and heart's distress
> Wearied, I fell asleep".[1]

Here too is a sleep-knowledge of physical events by internal sight. And it is the internal sight and its sleep-knowledge that are the central facts: whether what is seen is physical or not is a secondary question. May we not take Milton's recurrent resort to these facts as a sign of personal experience, his nightly seeing of things not of the earth though very much coloured by physicalities no less than by his own personal attitudes, and hearing the poetic word which conjured them up?

Ordinarily we should find it difficult to recognise his seeing things not of the earth, so strong is the stamp of the man's mental conception upon his dream-sight. *Kubla Khan* is an unmixed glimpse of the beyond-earth. All the reminiscences from Coleridge's reading, with which it is full, have only triggered off a peep into the occult —or, rather, the occult has itself caught hold of those reminiscences and organised them in its own light. That is why Sri Aurobindo[2] has pronounced about *Kubla Khan:* "it is a genuine supraphysical experience caught and rendered in a rare hour of exaltation with an absolute accuracy of vision and authenticity of rhythm." About *Paradise Lost* Sri Aurobindo[3] has said that in it Milton expresses "in fit greatness of speech and form the conception of Heaven and Hell and man and the universe which his imagination had constructed out of his intellectual beliefs and reviewed in the vision of his soul". This means that his intellectual beliefs considerably determined the working of his imagination: the latter, though vitalising the former, was mechanised by it in turn. Milton had already with a firm hand built up in his mind a

[1] Bk. XII, 610-14

[2] *Life—Literature—Yoga: Some Letters of Sri Aurobindo* (Revised and Enlarged Edition, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1967), p. 161.

[3] *The Future Poetry* (Pondicherry, 1953), p. 116.

general religious picture before it got translated into poetry: the poetry, therefore, could exert its transfiguring influence on what was resolutely preconceived and not use ideas and beliefs to fashion a glorious surprise all through. But we must not overlook the reviewing which Sri Aurobindo mentions of everything in the vision of Milton's soul. It is there that we have the secret of the stupendous success attained by him in certain parts of his poem, especially the opening ones about which Sri Aurobindo[1] has written: "There is nowhere any more magnificently successful opening than the conception and execution of his Satan and Hell, the living spirit of egoistic revolt fallen to its natural element of darkness and pain, yet preserving still the greatness of the divine principle from which he was born." A fiery fusion has here taken place of Milton's soul and poetic power: the soul's vision has wholly permeated the imagination and reduced the grip of the intellectual creed to the minimum. Elsewhere too in *Paradise Lost* than its initial Books the permeation occurs, but it is intermittent and often allows a somewhat unsatisfying picturisation. Rightly does Sri Aurobindo[2] declare: "Milton's heaven is indeed unconvincing and can be described as grotesque and so too is his gunpowder battle up there, and his God and angels are weak and unconvincing figures, even Adam and Eve, our first parents, do not effectively fill their part except in his outward description of them...."

However, nothing of these defects contradicts the possibility of mediumistic creation by Milton of his poetry: the grotesque, the weak, the ineffective in him only show how much his mind carried a superficial habit of imagination and the common colour of physicalities into the mediumistic state. If Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner* and *Christabel* can be said to project part of the dream-consciousness into the waking world, Milton's inferior moments in *Paradise Lost* may be said to act the other way around. Even his superior moments are not free of this reverse process, but the process is not dominant, it is finely harmonised with the Miltonic version of the *Kubla-Khan* quality. If we do not mark that quality, it is because we have let his deliberate-looking and literary-structured style shape our judgment and because we have not stopped to attend to his unequivocal statements about the experiences he was undergoing night after night. "The vision of his soul", which Sri Aurobindo has included in the analysis of Milton's expression, was just the factor to bring about that experience, for right from the beginning of his life his soul was dedicated to the Muse with a profound prayer that he might be perfected some day for the achievement of a master-work. No other poet was born with so intense a sense of mission to do for England what Homer and Virgil had done for Greece and Italy, no other poet worked throughout his life with so deeply felt a direction towards a God-given poetic fulfilment. Well might his life be crowned with that extraordinary creative sleep.

And well might the creativity of that sleep find during his waking hours its counterpart in the ease with which, as he tells us, he composed his verses under Urania's inspiration. He calls his verse "unpremeditated". We must not think this contra-

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 117.
[2] *Life—Literature—Yoga*, p. 60.

dictory to our assertion that he had already with a firm hand constructed a mental picture in general of his religious story. Preconceived picturisation does not debar unpremeditated verse. The latter implies no more than a happy fluency of composition in which vivid word-arrangements get suddenly born. The fluency can gather together ready-made conception and endow them with new life both imaginative and verbal, even sweeping away some of them in spite of the intellect's watchful presence. And, in Milton's case, we may expect the intensest and most original vitality because his fluency rose from a state essentially akin to the extraordinary creative slumber he experienced again and again.

The fact of this slumber has hardly been noted by Milton-authorities and yet it is fundamental to the psychology of his inspiration. To my knowledge nobody has dwelt sufficiently on even the general aspect of this psychology. All that has been said amounts to nothing further than what David Masson affirms: "There can be little doubt that Milton believed himself to be, in some real sense, an inspired man." Apart from Blake,[1] only Robert Graves has referred to the general aspect with a direct pointer, but he too does so just *en passant*.[2] He comes to it in trying to clinch his contention that Milton was really "a minor poet with a remarkable ear for music, before diabolic ambition impelled him to renounce the true Muse and bloat himself up, like Virgil (another minor poet with the same musical gift) into a towering, rugged major poet." To take away from Milton the credit for what Graves is compelled to admit when he says: "the majesty of certain passages is superhuman"—to show Milton to be a minor poet on whom majesty was somehow imposed from outside himself, Graves obviously remembers the poet's own hints and writes: "There is strong evidence that he consciously composed only a part of *Paradise Lost*: the rest was communicated to him by what he regarded as a superhuman agency."

One is not sure what Graves means by "consciously". To recover what was communicated to him in sleep, Milton must have been inwardly conscious even when to all appearances insensible to outward touches. And since his poetry is said to have been communicated to him nightly during his waking time as well, when he had the feeling of participating in its production—

> ...or inspires
> Easy my unpremeditated verse—

the point about being conscious should not in the literal sense arise at all. Graves most probably means Milton's individual labour as contrasted to the Muse's gift. That he could not merely mean waking creation is evident from his own statement

[1] Apropos of his own designs: "Tho' I call them Mine, I know that they are not Mine, being of the same opinion with Milton when he says that the Muse visits his slumbers & awakes & governs his soul when Morn purples the East .." (Letter, 16 August 1799, p. 1038 of G. Keynes, *The Complete Writings of William Blake*, London, 1957).

[2] *The Crowning Privilege* (Pelican, Harmondsworth, 1959), pp. 338-9.

about a poet's work: "The act of composition occurs in a sort of trance, distinguishable from dream only because the critical faculties are not dormant, but on the contrary more acute than normally.... Few self-styled poets have experienced the trance; but all who have, know that to work out a line by an exercise of reason, rather than by a deep-seated belief in miracle, is highly unprofessional conduct. If a trance has been interrupted, it is just too bad. The poem should be left unfinished, in the hope that suddenly, out of the blue, days or months later, it may start stirring again at the back of the mind, when the remaining problems will solve themselves without difficulty."[1]

Graves has the heart of the matter here, but he overlooks the experience of many poets that they often set themselves doggedly to draw the Muse by writing on their own, and succeed swiftly or slowly in getting inspired; they need not always wait for her to visit them. Milton in the period of his *Paradise Lost* was obviously not one of these. Whether asleep or awake, he composed in a conscious trance. He was the ideal poet as pictured by Graves and even out-idealled him by fusing trance and dream during certain watches of the night.

However, Milton's dream-vision and dream-audition—though facts psychologically curious in the extreme, and fundamental too since after them the easy and unpremeditated verse in the waking state becomes at once credible—stand on a par from the literary viewpoint with his experience of poetry in the waking state. For here too we have the identical total effortlessness. And it is this total effortlessness that is the essential literary oddity to be accepted or rejected by us in connection with *Paradise Lost*.

Should we not take Milton at his word? He was basically a truthful man. Sometimes he was very dangerously truthful, once even risking his neck by uttering what he deemed to be the truth. And details he has left of his private and public career in many of his prose works, especially at considerable length in his *Second Defence of the English People*, have all been accepted. Hanford, one of the Milton-authorities, attests apropos of *Second Defence*: "The general credibility of this and other utterances about himself cannot be questioned."[2] The fact of overwhelming night-inspiration during the waking condition had been remarked by Johnson who, on the authority of Richardson's *Life*, relates that Milton "would sometimes lie awake whole nights... and on a sudden his poetical faculty would rush upon him with an impetus, and his daughter was immediately called to secure what came". Perhaps the most impressive confirmation is from one who lived with him and knew him most intimately in his last period. Newton in his *Life* says that the poet's widow, "being asked... who the Muse was, replied it was God's grace, and the Holy Spirit that visited him nightly". Here both the sleeping condition and the waking—under possession of Urania—seem to be implied. Weighing everything we may fully credit the poetic assertions we have quoted from Milton.

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 99.
[2] *A Milton Handbook*, p. 3.

But just realise how startling they are. If any great poem strikes us as having been most studiously created, it is *Paradise Lost*—a masterpiece of Art in the literal sense. No poem in the world bears so clearly the signs of skill in composition, an extreme utilisation of the value of every syllable and sound. The Miltonic blank verse, boldly enjambed, varied in its pauses, at once majestic and terse by the Latinised turns of its English, is something unique in sovereign craftsmanship. And then there is the immense fund of diverse learning with which it is crowded. We should expect the poet to have spent hours and hours composing and recomposing, brooding over one mode of saying and another, deliberately building up sentences and paragraphs, with a suspended syntax full of subordinate clauses and their dependent elements. We should also expect him to rummage patiently his stores of memory, or halt again and again, calling for volume after volume to be opened and consulted. But the fact is exactly the reverse.

Milton created *Paradise Lost* with consummate facility. Not that poetry came to him in abundance at a time, but whenever it did come, the artist and the scholar in him were one with poet, and his many-sided chisel-strokes were delivered without a moment's hesitation, indeed with perfect automatism. Elaborate grammatical structure and intricate rhythmical order, ceaseless articulate passion but with a perfect polish, multifarious learning deployed in balanced organisation—all issued from him as Pallas Athene is said to have been born, leaping splendid-limbed and golden-armoured, sudden yet complete, from the head of Zeus, a complex grandeur of form and function manifested in the simplest manner, without strain, without even visible process. If we are minded to make Milton himself suggest this manner we may take the lines in which the Portress of Hell-gate describes to Satan her birth from him in Heaven:

> All on a sudden miserable pain
> Surprised thee, dim thine eyes, and dizzy swum
> In darkness, while thy head flames thick and fast
> Threw forth, till on the left side opening wide,
> Likest to thee in shape and countenance bright,
> Then shining heavenly fair, a goddess armed,
> Out of thy head I sprung. Amazement seized
> All the host of Heaven; back they recoiled afraid..."[1]

One of the phrases here we shall have to ignore. "Sudden miserable pain" does not seem to fit the Miltonic process of creation. If it were the young Milton, the student at Cambridge and at his father's place at Morton, the phrase might be accepted as a description of the frequent headache to which he was subject. The old Milton suffered only from gout, which is not known to affect the head, not even to give a swelled head which Milton perhaps had. All the rest of the description is rather apt. The eyes dim and dizzy in darkness are what we may expect in the first seizure of the poetic

[1] Bk. II, 752-59.

fury, even apart from their partial relevance to Milton's blind state and his night-inspiration. We may also regard as appropriate the statement that the new birth resembled very much its source, for there is, as we shall note later, a very personal element in all that Milton wrote. "Shining heavenly fair" and at the same time somewhat terrifying the beholder—this too is pretty accurate for Milton's work. As for the "left side opening wide", surely Milton hinted in connection with Satan something wrong and wry, something sinister, but for himself we may understand merely a physiological truth about the activation of speech: the speech-centre in the brain is on the left side and so Milton would be using that side for the composition of his poetry.

Anyway, the immediacy, the simplicity, with which poetry like his got composed in a flawless fullness, constitutes a psychological and aesthetic paradox—perhaps the most surprising fact in literary history.

In the report about the restriction of his creative period to autumn and winter and the drying up of his powers during spring and summer, we have a suggestive index to the nature of his later poetry. This poetry appears to be something over which in general he had no control: on the whole it came and went as it listed. But the report does not quite prepare us for its absolute "given-ness' in all particulars. If it was first-rate, this was thanks entirely to the Muse; if it fell below the mark, that too was not in the least his work. Ordinarily we should be inclined to speak of Milton artistically labouring over the second half of *Paradise Lost* and scrupulously keeping up the sublimity of style even when the inner life-breath was comparatively feeble. We would conceive of keen art mating with inspiration in the first half and acting almost alone in part of the second. But, though the two halves are unequal on the whole, it would be a mistake to think that when his work was not supreme in quality he padded out everything with the help of a sharp artistic conscience playing upon his mastery of the language. Milton wrote portions of *Paradise Lost* in an inferior strain because Urania did not visit him in full force, but it was still Urania who wrote through him. And as we have already said, even when he wrote at his best there was no chopping and changing in the manner that the packed and polished, as well as learned and Latinised, posture of his verse might suggest to us.

When we think of a supreme artist in verse on a colossal scale, we at once name Virgil and Milton together. Yet they are worlds apart in their methods. Virgil is indeed a magician of meaningful phrases in Latin, phrases of exquisite sense and sound, but he got his effects after long exertion. He made the rough draft of seven or nine lines every morning and spent the whole day revising and refining them. Surely this kind of labour has also the breath of the Muse behind it: only, it implies the arduous clearing of the passage in the brain through which that breath flows. With Milton there was no arduous clearing. At his best, the breath blew with such force that the brain opened up a passage and the wonderful words rushed out. At his second-best, the words were not wonderful, they were just adequate, but the blowing was still forceful and the brain-opening immediate, though the more superficial and not the

deepest layers must have served as the channel. I do not aver that he never changed anything later: he must have revised at times, perhaps even entirely redone some portions. What we are talking of is the general situation. This situation differs from what can be affirmed about the early Milton who used to correct his work fairly often. We have no proof of a similar treatment of *Paradise Lost*. And we cannot say that the proof is lacking merely because the original manuscript, as distinguished from the one submitted to the Licencer, has failed to survive. Edward Phillips, who used to go over the manuscript under the poet's directions, reports his correcting nothing else save "the orthography and pointing"—that is, the spelling and punctuation. Hence we may hold that the bulk of *Paradise Lost* stood from the first as it stands now and was created in nightly gusts of massive spontaneity blowing from beyond the poet's individuality through his highly individual mind. Most of its 10,565 lines, though thoroughly Miltonic, were, in respect of personal initiative, not at all composed by Milton.

(To be continued)

K. D. SETHNA

WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH THIS VIOLENCE AROUND AND AMIDST US?

By permission of the Hindu *and courtesy of the author we are producing from the columns of that Madras daily of June 12, 1984, p. 17 the following timely article which, according to a knowledgeable reader, is almost like a chapter in the Udyoga Parva of the Mahabharata, so much so that if Vyasa could have known about it he would have liked to own it as his own.*

ISN'T violence becoming increasingly, and more and more menacingly, a sinister 'way of life' with global humanity? Adolf Hitler's *sutra* in *Mein Kampf*—"the very first essential for success is a perpetually constant and regular employment of violence"!—is fast becoming the panacea for success of any kind whatsoever. And not even Gandhiji's India—the subcontinent that Attenborough's film, *Gandhi*, has familiarised to millions the world over—can be excepted from the current careering madness of violence in our military, technological and industrial fields, in our political, economic and social spheres, in our individual, family and collective life, and in our action, speech and thought. Like nuclear fall-out, violence of any sort anywhere at any time generates reverberations everywhere, and cumulation builds an unnatural climate that more and more perverts the human psyche and turns it into a self-destroying and world-annihilating fissional fire. When India—the theatre of Mahavira's and the Buddha's advent, of the Mahatma's martyrdom and of Ramakrishna's, Ramana's and Sri Aurobindo's ministry—can traffic so readily with violence, where, O where shall we look for Grace?

Indeed, in his own lifetime, Gandhiji said more than once, raked by extreme agony, that the very atmosphere was charged with 'leonine violence'. The 'partition' horrors: were they not enough, and for a thousand years! What would Gandhiji's reactions be, were he alive today, to the rake's jet-speed progress of contemporary violence? The mass media tells us all, or almost all, and whether scanning the headlines or viewing the TV newsreels, Man—guilty Man—must needs cry like Macbeth:

> I have supp'd full with horrors.
> Direness familiar to my slaughterous thoughts
> Cannot once start me...

Good Deal of Violence

I read of revived activity in the Chambal ravines, as many as 300 dacoits in business, with one murder, three robberies and five kidnappings per day to their 'credit'. I read of a suicide every three days, with an attempted one every day; I read of a mother casting her two children into a well, and then taking a leap into extinction

herself. Every day there is news of 'murder most foul' in the Punjab, aye, in the name of the great Guru Nanak's religion too! Not green, but grim, are the memories of the violence in Assam, and the wounds haven't begun healing yet. And our democratic elections, of course, seem invariably to precipitate a good deal of violence of all kinds.

Talk of urban life—ah Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, alas Guwahati, Amritsar, New Delhi, and cities beyond, like Belfast, Chicago, London, Beirut, Bangkok—and part of the truth is that kidnappers, smugglers, saboteurs, drug pushers, fixers, extortionists and hired killers are on the prowl almost all the time. The law of gang war, mafia operations, mutual political mud-slinging—an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, abusage for abusage!—can only end in all humanity becoming blind, toothless and mindless.

Look at the new generation that is being brought up by the mass media, instead of by the parents, teachers and elders as of old. I read in the *New Statesman* some years ago (August 27, 1978): the average American child, by the time he is 14, will have seen 11,000 murders, on the screen of course; and 264 magazines are devoted to paedophiliac sex alone, 300,000 child models being used for the purpose. In the U.K., 4 violent episodes appear per hour on the screen; and in the peak hour, there are 76 sexual scenes on the TV. This was six years ago, and now: worse and worse! Affluence and leisure, as the anthropologist Margaret Mead warned many years ago, do not "automatically develop the soul. And this is a real dilemma of Americans". Machines and the media are no substitute for parents, teachers and elders.

Abysmal Poverty and Criminal Riches

In India and other Third World countries, the 'soul' suffers undernourishment, arrested development or mutilation, both on account of the evils of mindless affluence at the dizzy top and because of the searing deprivation that holds the unprivileged majority in thrall. But, strangely enough, even in the U.S., abysmal poverty and criminal riches seem to enact an eerie co-existence, and T.N. Murari reported last year (*The Hindu*, September 4, 1983) that girls in New York who sell narcotics make $100 or 150 per hour, whereas in a regular job they may need a whole week to earn the same as wages. With unemployment at 10% for whites but 38% for blacks, what might not happen? More money seems to pass quickly from hand to hand in the streets of Harlem than in a day's trading on the New York Exchange—with the predictable distortions in civil life and human values. Alas for this Pluto-ruled 'underworld' of the modern city:

> Like the invisible deadly microbes
> the sly pedlars circulate...
> And dispense dangerous marijuana,
> heroin, cannabis resin!

Crime against Women

So much for the 'criminal' underworld. But is the civil—the political—the 'normal' world much better? There is, first, the near-universal phenomenon of violence against women, a problem recently presented in all its ugliness and urgency by Elizabeth Wilson in her *What is to be done about Violence against Women* (1983). The rape of women, the molestations, indignities, cruelties, the crimes against women, the Eve-teasings, the sale of women, the despicable commercialism of the marriages, the dowry-deaths and bride-burnings, all seem to cry for remedy in vain.

> Once wept a daughter of Mithila,
> A million million hearts were aflame
>
> Now daily a thousand of Mother Earth's daughters wail.
> And it's mere film sport or TV viewers' bonus time!

In our much vaunted electronic paradise, women are apt to be perceived, says Hiranmay Karlekar, "as consumer objects", and they become thereby "victims of the consumer psychology". The façade of our civilisation, dominated by the male, has a lot to answer for, and even as the human ego is at the root of all violence and war and destruction, the ego of the male of the species is at the root of all the degradation and desecration of women.

From sex violence to the other extreme of 'political' violence. On August 21, 1983, the Filipino Opposition leader Benigno Aquino, was killed on his arrival in Manila; on January 10, 1984, the Beirut American University President was shot dead. The Sharpville (South Africa) atrocities in June 1976; the two-day rampage and massacre of unarmed Palestinian men, women and children in Sabra and Shatila in Lebanon in September 1982; the killing of four South Korean ministers and 15 top officials in Rangoon in October 1983; and touching us nearer, the periodic killing of innocent bus passengers in the Punjab; the abduction in the U.K. and the murder of the Indian diplomat, Ravindra Mhatre, in February last; the July 1983 holocaust in Colombo, the Malapara (West Bengal) murders in the same month, when the roughs of one political party liquidated those of another; the macabre operation of seven naxalites being done to death in Gopalpur by a rival faction on December 23, 1983; the communal riots in Malegaon in July 1983, and in Bhiwandi less than a year later... where is the beginning, where is the end?

Violence in Educational Institutions

Turn now to the 'higher' educational and cultural scene. Random sampling will do. On May 29, 1983, thirteen young men came at midnight and set fire to the university godown in Darbhanga to sabotage the intermediate examination; two weeks

earlier, the 'prestigious' J. N. University, New Delhi, had witnessed scenes of 'unprecedented' violence; in the even more prestigious BHU, bombs were thrown on August 31, 1983 inside the Vice-Chancellor's Lodge, and students set fire to the Indology and Fine Arts Departments. And so this Mahavidyalaya in our Holy City became a Kurukshetra enacting "rowdyism and violence", and had to be closed for the nonce. On January 2, 1984, five students of an Engineering College in Bangalore were arrested on charges of criminal intimidation and attempt to murder freshmen in the name of ragging! It's the harsh and fiery language of the barricades—demands! ultimatums! gheraos! fight to a finish!—that you hear in the campuses today, and no wonder 'sweetness and light' must needs go into hiding.

And how about that elected place of privilege and power, the legislative arena? Here are a few headline-flashes taken quite at random: 'chaotic zero hour'; 'Pandemonium on Future of Medical College'; 'Uproar over murder of CPI(M) man'; 'Bedlam over "attack" on MLA'; 'Sit-in protest by Opposition MLC's; 'Following dharna and uproar 52 MLAs suspended'; 'Speaker's microphone snatched'; 'Uproarious scene in Council—members tried to grab the mikes of Labour and Health ministers'; 'MP charged with indecent gesticulation; much cry, little wool'! One would think that a sheerly 'academic' body like a University Senate at least must be incapable of such aberrations. But no: I have read about a paper weight being hurled at the presiding Vice-Chancellor by a senator who was doubtless an 'educated' man and an honourable one as well. What an example for the lesser fry among our hapless citizenry!

There is of course the kind of violence that seems to erupt obscurely, and before you know where you are, it rages with destructive virulence and claims many innocent lives. Speaking of 'Violence in Our Society', Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao said about 15 years ago:

> "... in almost every case of large-scale violence, there is a good deal of pre-meditated plotting and more often than not, the invisible hand is much more devastating than the visible one. Further, the real motivation of the invisible hand has nothing to do with the immediate issue which usually triggers off the violence".

Mr. Rao also made the point that, ordinarily, the automatic reaction of the 'common man' is to keep aloof if possible and play safe. As for the factors contributing to social violence Mr. Rao referred to alienation in an industrial society, the loss of individuality leading to a feeling of non-participation, and the resultant insecurity. He mentioned too the widespread notion that without agitation no grievance, however legitimate, was likely to receive attention. Since in most cases "violence is the cumulative result of fear, suspicion and instinct for self-preservation", the simple remedy would be: "Remove fear, and you remove violence also". But exactly how, —that's the question.

Dynamics of Peace

In global as in local terms, every atomic test explosion, every piece of 'Defence' research with the aim of perfecting yet further the already super-precision death-dealing instruments, every aggressive stance, every spurt of arrogance that one is talking from a position of strength, every sale or transfer of the weapons of war, instruments of torture, and gadgetries of ingenious surveillance is an act of violence against humanity. In our fight against violence in its myriad forms visible and invisible, physical and psychological, the only too stale and cowardly and familiar notion that one can somehow opt out of the current dismal predicament, play safe and hope for the best, isn't tenable at all. 'Peace' (as against 'violence') has to be more than a slogan, hope or idea, and has to acquire the dynamism of a moral and spiritual action. It is in this sense that we are entitled to speak of the 'dynamics of peace'. For 'peace' is no static or tamasic condition of defensive or resentful coma, but must acquire the puissance of "the immobility of an immortal spirit". Gandhiji always asked for the "nonviolence of the brave"; so too 'peace' asks for a positive ethic and a robust philosophy of action.

In our attempt to understand the world today, we should not only be aware of the changes that are taking place making the five continents merge into the single Global Village, but also the *change of pace* in our manner of living. There is being witnessed an exponential rapidity in the movement from scientific discovery to 'utilitarian' technology. Photography needed 100 years, the telephone 50 years, the radio 35 years, the transistor 5 years, and laser rays only 10 months. And now-a-days Government pressures technology, and technology pressures science... in the service of God, Man, or the Devil? Are we hastening towards the *end* of History or a New Beginning?

The legal view that the 'other chap' is a fellow-citizen and deserves to be respected doesn't seem to suffice. The moral view (or 'the inner mumble', as E.N. Forster called it) that the other one is also a fellow human being, or the religious view that he is my own brother (because of the common fatherhood of God), doesn't seem to be enough either, since we are Cains more often than Abels. Only the spiritual view remains. As Sri Aurobindo declared:

> "The changes we see in the world today are intellectual, moral, physical in their ideal and intention; the spiritual revolution waits for its hour. Until it comes, the sense of the others cannot be understood, and till then all interpretation of present happening and forecast of man's future are vain things. For its nature, power, event are that which will determine the next cycle of our humanity."

The 'other' person is not just a fellow-citizen, neighbour or brother; he is myself. There is no 'other' in this intricate, intimate, interdependent, interpenetrating

'bootstrap' reality that is the Global Village, the cosmos.

If we cannot wisely swim together in our common spaceship Earth, we will only sink together. Developing nuclear capability to menace the 'other', one only prepares for MAD ('Mutually Assured Destruction'). Setting your neighbour's house on fire, you but invite fire to your own roof. The game of 'I and You', 'Us and They', 'We the Government and You the Opposition', 'We the Masters and You the Slaves', 'We the free world and You the shackled' has been played long, long enough, and mustn't be played any longer. As the Mother of Sri Aurobindo Ashram has told us: the time has come to tell the Ego: "Your days are over! Go, Go!" This is beyond law, custom, everyday ethics, even religion or religionism: this is accepting the quintessential reality of our terrestrial and cosmic life. Pull down the Ego and bring the Ego's ceiling to the floor, the Great Ground of the unitive spiritual or Divine consciousness.

All this means that, if we desire sincerely and with a sense of urgency to escape the perils of the current escalating and proliferating violence, from the domestic and local to the national and global, from bride-burnings and bus-burnings to 'limited' and 'final' nuclear wars, then the ego ceilings, the ego curtains, the ego demarcations, have to be minimised and made to vanish. Our children have to be made aware of the actualities of our global society, of the contours of the Global Village, of the way human values like wealth, health, power, privilege, safety, respect, sport, entertainment, enjoyment are created and diffused internationally, causing so many tensions and exertations, so many deprivations and gratifications.

The Earth Image

A massacre in Lebanon or Sri Lanka or South Africa, an act of cold-blooded violence in Assam, the Punjab or Bombay, is instantaneous news, and may provoke retaliatory action. Hence the need to stress again and again the 'dear and dogged' basic humanity of the earth's inhabitants transcending earlier differentiations in terms of race, nation, religion, colour or political adhesion. The Earth Image, its simplicity and unity and rounded totality, which the space-travellers (including Rakesh Sharma) have visioned, should be injected into the consciousness of pupils from the earliest stages of schooling. Mother Earth should be seen by our children, not as a spread of multi-coloured continents and nations weighted with their historic antagonisms, but as one all-sufficing reality, Our Home, though not without its interconnected mansions. And only in one's true and hallowed Home may one find the blessings of Peace.

And our dear Earth is also an evolutionary Earth, and earth-life is a unique becoming, not a static structure nor a 'tale told by an idiot'. Our planetary citizenship can be an experiment in composite growth (fusing art and science, inner and outer life), an evolutionary movement towards a unitive goal. Our times have seen two great breakthroughs in science, in atomic physics and molecular biology respecti-

vely. Following the probing of the nucleus and the cracking of the genetic code, why not now the crucial breakthrough in 'Mind', an explosion of consciousness making possible in the near future the quantum leap from the current divisive to a new integral way of living?

K. R. SRINIVASA IYENGAR

BY YOUR SIDE

ONLY when I step aside can I learn and "see",
While I live and stay by your side
and watch without watching
Your poise, your growth, and the way
You shed the clothes of mind and heart and body
One by one, unobtrusively, almost nonchalantly.

It is only when I would learn to see
Through your diminishing needs,
Through your aches and pains,
Your receding self immersed in peace,
Their Divine Figures behind your closed eyes,
That I would deserve this wondrous spell
Of time that I am allowed to be
By your side.

Even without looking in depths it will suffice
If I hear you listen and speak and watch your face
While you attend to all and sundry,
Friends, visitors and curious gentry;
It is a joy to see neither anger nor rancour
but only serene love
When you speak of the evil and haughty
Or those who are good but weak and naughty.
There always is a smile on your face
But never a restless laughter, a smile
Expressing fun or annoyance alike
As you encounter other human beings.

When pain assails there is a soft moan
But never a loud groan,
There is only a concern for others
For those around and for myself
But for yourself only a quiet resignation
And trust and love for Her who is ever by your side
Within and without and even in those who attend.

I have heard you talk of your faults,
Of little deeds that revisit as you review the past
But never any complaints or grudges except to ask

"Why did I not meet Her earlier?"
O, how mighty you have grown
Since travelling alone
While I stepped aside
And watched!

DINKAR PALANDE

SEEKING

ASSAILED by influx of forces from within and around
I prostrate myself on the earth confused and dejected....
Yet my prayer rises towards heaven for help and guidance
to discern between the true and the false.

Help comes at last in the form of a gold symbol-mark
on the crimson brow of Dawn....
It infuses in me the spirit of service
and surrender to the Lord....

But I hesitate to take the needed plunge
and pay the penalty of delay:
the Symbol Sun disappears even without my knowing it;
and darkness devours the sky and the earth....

I seek Him in vain in mountains and seas—
till I find that the black vast brightens
and silvery fingers deck it with translucent designs!
Then a beautiful Face, fair like a white Lotus, peers from the beyond!

"O Goddess of eternal Love, source of all sweetness,
clasping Thy feet I shall dive into an ocean of Bliss...."
I close my eyes in contemplation and ecstasy,
But alas, as I open them I find the Face no more!

Instead, a giant Sannyasin has covered the sky
with curling matted hair, signalling a deluge
with the sound of Damaru and flashes from a mighty trident!
O, is He Nataraja preparing for the Destructive Dance?

My heart exults and almost offers itself to Rudradeva—
But waits and observes to be fully sure...
while the wheel of Time thunders rolling on....
The storm starts, runs its course and abates.

Only black broken clouds rush madly at random.
Suddenly my seeking eyes stick to a speck of light in the East!
Oh, this must be the morning star declaring the death of night!
Immediately a mild voice murmurs at the deepest core of my heart:

"Long before and far beyond the scope
and sphere of your seeking,
I am already seated here, hidden within you,
for you to discover!"

CHUNILAL CHAUDHURY

INTEGRAL PSYCHOLOGY INHERENT IN INTEGRAL YOGA

IN THE WORDS OF SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of August 15, 1984)

Integral Psychology and other Psychological Systems

A PREFATORY NOTE BY THE COMPILER

'*Mana*' (Manas), '*Buddhi*', '*Cḥitta*', '*Ahaṅkāra*' are the normal basic functions of the outer personality according to the traditional Indian Psychology. Manas represents perceptual activity, Buddhi intellectual, Chitta the general quality of consciousness and Ahankara the egoistic quality of the ordinary outer personality.

This is one *Tattva-vibhāga* or classification of primary facts.

The Upanishads affirmed five constituent '*Koṣas*' or Sheaths of the personality, '*Annamaya*', the '*Prāṇamaya*', the '*Manomaya*', the '*Vijñānamaya*' and the '*Ānanda-maya*', that is, the physical or material sheath, the vital or biological, the mental (the perceptual and intellectual in its analytic-discursive form) the superior mental or gnostic (its synthetic-intuitive form) and the *zone* or *plane* of bliss and delight. These Koshas cover the integral personality. The outer personality is represented here by the first three Koshas, the planes of physical, vital and mental life.

Sri Aurobindo's Integral Psychology affirms yet other parts and planes of Integral personality. They are the Body, the Life, the Mind, the Psychic Being and the Supermind. Alternatively, it also talks of the outer personality (which consists of Body, Life and Mind), the subliminal personality (which consists of Body, Life and Mind in their general form, while the outer personality represents them in their individual particular form), then the inmost personality or the Psychic Being (which is the true evolving spiritual principle in man) and, lastly, the supramental personality (which covers the *ranges* of consciousness above the Mind). In yet another form, Integral Personality is said to consist of the conscious, the subliminal, the subconscious and the superconscious.

It must, however, be remembered that the Integral Personality, as a whole, is a dynamic fact and its so-called parts are interpenetrating and they give rise to many intermediate qualities like the colours of the rainbow, the main prominant ones and the indefinite intermediate ones. Further, in each part there are internal distinctions. In the physical, e.g., the bones are more physical and less vital, whereas nerves are less physical and more vital. In the field of the vital again, sex, as the basic animal propensity, is the lower vital, whereas ambition as a characteristically human urge would be the higher vital.

The integral human personality is a highly complex fact, a microcosm, a true

miniature picture of the Macrocosm, the universe. We have to be prepared to recognise and appreciate all the distinctions of parts if we are to understand it well enough. Man is truly the key to the understanding of all that he has created, his sciences, his arts and crafts, his civilisations and cultures. But we must understand him in his wholeness, integrally, then alone can we appreciate and evaluate his varied creations and do so duly, rightly.

Now let us apply this standard to Psycho-analysis. Freud's field of work and investigation was the neurotic patient, one suffering from a mental disorder. Through long investigation and experience of such cases, he came to the conclusion that a repression of a sex-desire was almost always involved. From that he generalised that all human life and its varied activities are workings of sex. He extended the meaning of sex so as to include the thumb-sucking of the child and much other behaviour as infantile sexuality. He also stressed the avoidance of repression and suppression, as that leads to mental upsetting.

Sex, repression and subconsciousness then become the key-terms of Psycho-analysis. Now to what part of the Integral Personality do these really belong? Is it not to the vital or the life-principle in us? And there too the lower vital, the basic animal part is involved. In a social milieu where the values of this part are popular and dominant, no doubt this part will tend to prevail over the rest of the personality. But surely it is not the whole of the personality and when mind and reason are strongly cultivated, the picture would change and Freud admitted this as a possibility. And, in yoga, when the inmost psychic personality is cultivated, an effective liberation from sex becomes a vivid experience.

What we need to discover and recognise is the precise sphere and the conditions under which Psycho-analysis has a validity. That is what our excerpts broadly indicate to us.

Behaviourism is another school in contemporary psychology which stresses the body part of the Integral Personality more or less exclusively. Sometimes it is said that all is behaviour and that consciousness does not exist. Thinking, it is said, is sub-vocal speaking.

Gestaltism is yet another school with a capital idea of wholeness. But the precise sphere of validity is really the issue.

The Integral Personality, if duly appreciated with a large and free openness of mind, can offer a reconciliation of the foregoing and other conflicting schools of contemporary psychology and create possibilities of a fuller understanding of man.

INDRA SEN

THE EXCERPTS

The Old Indian System

We have, first, a body supported by the physical life-force, the physical *prāṇa* which courses through the whole nervous system and gives its stamp to our corporeal

action, so that all is of the character of the action of a living and not an inert mechanical body. Prana and physicality together make the gross body, *sthūla śarīra*. This is only the outer instrument, the nervous force of life acting in the form of body with its gross physical organs. Then there is the inner instrument, *antaḥkaraṇa*, the conscious mentality. This inner instrument is divided by the old system into four powers: *chitta* or basic mental consciousness; *manas*, the sense mind; *buddhi*, the intelligence; *ahaṅkāra*, the ego-idea. The classification may serve as a starting-point, though for a greater practicality we have to make certain farther distinctions. This mentality is pervaded by the life-force, which becomes here an instrument for psychic consciousness of life and psychic action on life.[1] Every fibre of the sense mind and basic consciousness is shot through with the action of this psychic prana, it is a nervous or vital and physical mentality. Even the buddhi and ego are overpowered by it, although they have the capacity of raising the mind beyond subjection to this vital, nervous and physical psychology. This combination creates in us the sensational desire-soul which is the chief obstacle to a higher human as well as to the still greater divine perfection. Finally, above our present conscious mentality is a secret supermind which is the proper means and native seat of that perfection.[2]

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The Chitta and the psychic part are not in the least the same. Chitta is a term in a quite different category in which are co-ordinated and put into their place the main functionings of our external consciousness, and to know it we need not go behind our surface or external nature.

'Category' means here another class of psychological factors, *tattava vibhāga*. The psychic belongs to one class—supermind, mind, life, psychic, physical—and covers both the inner and the outer nature. Chitta belongs to quite another class or category—buddhi, manas, chitta, prana, etc.—which is the classification made by ordinary Indian psychology; it covers only the psychology of the external being. In this category it is the main functions of our external consciousness only that are co-ordinated and put in their place by the Indian thinkers; chitta is one of these main functions of the external consciousness and, therefore, to know it we need not go behind the external nature.[3]

Psycho-Analysis of Freud and the Way of Indulgence

The psycho-analysis of Freud is the last thing that one should associate with yoga. It takes up a certain part, the darkest, the most perilous, the unhealthiest part

[1] Compiler's Note: The term "psychic" here belongs to an older usage of Sri Aurobindo's, of which the meaning becomes clear two lines later and which is to be distinguished from the connotation of the "Psychic Being".

[2] SABCL, Vol. 21, p. 620. [3] *Ibid.*, Vol. 22, p. 289.

of the nature, the lower vital subconscious layer, isolates some of its most morbid phenomena and attributes to it and them an action out of all proportion to its true role in the nature. Modern psychology is an infant science, at once rash, fumbling and crude. As in all infant sciences, the universal habit of the human mind—to take a partial or local truth, generalise it unduly and try to explain a whole field of Nature in its narrow terms—runs riot here. Moreover, the exaggeration of the importance of suppressed sexual complexes is a dangerous falsehood and it can have a nasty influence and tend to make the mind and vital more and not less fundamentally impure than before.

It is true that the subliminal in man is the largest part of his nature and has in it the secret of the unseen dynamisms which explain his surface activities. But the lower vital subconscious which is all that this psycho-analysis of Freud seems to know —and even of that it knows only a few ill-lit corners,—is no more than a restricted and very inferior portion of the subliminal whole. The subliminal self stands behind and supports the whole superficial man; it has in it a larger and more efficient mind behind the surface mind, a larger and more powerful vital behind the surface vital, a subtler and freer physical consciousness behind the surface bodily existence. And above them it opens to higher superconscient as well as below them to lower subconscient ranges. If one wishes to purify and transform the nature, it is the power of these higher ranges to which one must open and raise to them and change by them both the subliminal and the surface being. Even this should be done with care, not prematurely or rashly, following a higher guidance, keeping always the right attitude; for otherwise the force that is drawn down may be too strong for an obscure and weak frame of nature. But to begin by opening up the lower subconscious, risking to raise up all that is foul or obscure in it, is to go out of one's way to invite trouble. First, one should make the higher mind and vital strong and firm and full of light and peace from above; afterwards one can open up or even dive into the subconscious with more safety and some chance of a rapid and successful change.[1]

*

The system of getting rid of things by *anubhava* can also be a dangerous one; for in this way one can easily become more entangled instead of arriving at freedom. This method has behind it two well-known psychological motives. One, the motive of purposeful exhaustion, is valid only in some cases, especially when some natural tendency has too strong a hold or too strong a drive in it to be got rid of by *vichāra* or by the process of rejection and the substitution of the true movement in its place; when that happens in excess, the sadhak has sometimes even to go back to the ordinary action of the ordinary life, get the true experience of it with a new mind and will behind and then return to the spiritual life with the obstacle eliminated or else ready for elimination. But this method of purposive indulgence is always dangerous, though

[1] *Ibid.*, Vol. 24, pp. 1606-7.

sometimes inevitable. It succeeds only when there is a very strong will in the being towards realisation; for then indulgence brings a strong dissatisfaction and reaction, *vairāgya*, and the will towards perfection can be carried down into the recalcitrant part of the nature.

The other motive for *anubhava* is of a more general applicability; for in order to reject anything from the being one has first to become conscious of it, to have the clear inner experience of its action and to discover its actual place in the workings of the nature. One can then work upon it to eliminate it, if it is an entirely wrong movement, or to transform it if it is only the degradation of a higher and true movement. It is this or something like it that is attempted crudely and improperly with a rudimentary and insufficient knowledge in the system of psycho-analysis. The process of raising up the lower movements into the full light of consciousness in order to know and deal with them is inevitable; for there can be no complete change without it. But it can truly succeed only when a higher light and force are sufficiently at work to overcome, sooner or later, the force of the tendency that is held up for change. Many, under the pretext of *anubhava*, not only raise up the adverse movement, but support it with their consent instead of rejecting it, find justifications for continuing or repeating it and so go on playing with it, indulging its return, eternising it; afterwards when they want to get rid of it, it has got such a hold that they find themselves helpless in its clutch and only a terrible struggle or an intervention of divine grace can liberate them. Some do this out of a vital twist or perversity, others out of sheer ignorance; but in yoga as in life, ignorance is not accepted by Nature as a justifying excuse. This danger is there in all improper dealings with the ignorant parts of the nature; but none is more ignorant, more perilous, more unreasoning and obstinate in recurrence than the lower vital subconscious and its movements. To raise it up prematurely or improperly for *anubhava* is to risk suffusing the conscious parts also with its dark and dirty stuff and thus poisoning the whole vital and even the mental nature. Always therefore one should begin by a positive, not a negative experience, by bringing down something of the divine nature, calm, light, equanimity, purity, divine strength into the parts of the conscious being that have to be changed; only when that has been sufficiently done and there is a firm positive basis, is it safe to raise up the concealed subconscious adverse elements in order to destroy and eliminate them by the strength of the divine calm, light, force and knowledge. Even so, there will be enough of the lower stuff rising up of itself to give you as much of the *anubhava* as you will need for getting rid of the obstacles; but then they can be dealt with much less danger and under a higher internal guidance.[1]

Psycho-analysis and Spiritual Experience

I find it difficult to take these psycho-analysts at all seriously when they try to scrutinise spiritual experience by the flicker of their torch-lights,—yet perhaps one

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 1607-8.

ought to, for half-knowledge is a powerful thing and can be a great obstacle to the coming in front of the true Truth. This new psychology looks to me very much like children learning some summary and not very adequate alphabet, exulting in putting their a-b-c-d of the subconscient and the mysterious underground super-ego together and imagining that their first book of obscure beginnings (c-a-t- cat, t-r-e-e tree) is the very heart of the real knowledge. They look from down up and explain the higher lights by the lower obscurities; but the foundation of these things is above and not below, *upari budhna esṣām*. The superconscient, not the subconscient, is the true foundation of things. The significance of the lotus is not to be found by analysing the secrets of the mud from which it grows here; its secret is to be found in the heavenly archetype of the lotus that blooms for ever in the Light above. The self-chosen field of these psychologists is besides poor, dark and limited; you must know the whole before you can know the part and the highest before you can truly understand the lowest. That is the promise of the greater psychology awaiting its hour before which these poor gropings will disappear and come to nothing.[1]

(To be continued)

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 1608-9.

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

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

(Continued from the issue of July 1984)

To Shankara manifestation of the Many destroys the unity of Brahman. It cannot be creation, nor can it be evolution. Why should Brahman indulge in manifestation at all? It destroys for Shankara the unity of Brahman. So he made the manifestation Mayic and closed the door calling this Mayic manifesation indefinable, *anirvachanīya*. But Sri Aurobindo has to explain this manifestation, since he says, "The world is... not a figment of conception in the universal mind, but a conscious birth of that which is beyond mind into forms of itself."[1]

Sri Aurobindo thus recognises the two fundamental facts of consciousness, the passive Brahman and the active Brahman, and discovers their true and fruitful relation in the Integral Brahman. The Integral Brahman is the height of his spiritual experience and his philosophy is based on that experience. His aim is the descent of the Spirit into matter and the fulfilment of India's mission.

Sri Aurobindo has to explain manifestation and also its purpose. To Shankara, since the manifestation is *anirvachanīya*, he cannot find a reason nor can there be any *raison d'être* for it. The answer lies in the fact that all possibilities are inherent in the Infinite Being and that the delight of existence—in its mutable becoming, not in its immutable being—lies precisely in the variable realisation of its possibilities. And the possibility worked out in the universe of which we are a part begins from "the concealment of Sachchidananda in that which seems to be its own opposite and its self-finding even amid the terms of that opposite."[2] "For the Absolute cannot be bound to manifest a cosmos of relations but neither can it be bound not to manifest any cosmos."[3] So Brahman should be capable of manifestation, non-manifestation and other manifestation. It is the delight of manifestation like the poet's joy or the child's joy, that causes it. Hence it is called *Līlā*, Divine *Līlā*, not *anirvachanīya*, indefinable, and it may be indefinable in the sense that the delight is the very nature of Brahman. It is the joy of self-finding that this manifestation serves. Only an omnipotent power can do such a thing. Here is the perfect freedom of the Absolute. It can emerge from its own opposite, which it has manifested. Brahma Sutra, II-I-33, says: *lokavat tu līlā kaivalyam*—"This creative activity (of Brahman) is mere pastime, as seen in the world." If the creative activity is a mere play, as

[1] *The Life Divine*, Vol. I, p. 140.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 132.
[3] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 420.

affirmed by the Brahma Sutras, there is no need to seek a motive for it.

The argument sometimes advanced that the universe cannot be a manifestation, because the Absolute is manifest to Itself and has no need of manifestation is perfectly true. But it can equally be said that "the reality has no need to create a mayic universe"[1] To this it is generally retorted that the Absolute has not created or manifested, but mental Maya has done the trick. This goes against the Upanishadic teaching that the universe is a direct issue from That; for That desired to be Many. Besides, was there no universe before mind appeared on the earth? It is better to have a real universe instead of a mayic one, if there should be manifestation at all.

The emergence of Ignorance is not necessary for all kinds of manifestation: manifestation can take place without ignorance. Then it would confine itself to the higher planes of divine eixstence, and be typal. But the manifestation in which we live is different. It is evolutionary and hence Ignorance is necessary for finitisation and this obverse manifestation. Where the Divine "has to put on the temporal, the psychological, the egoistic Ignorance in order to protect himself against the light of the infinite and largeness of the universal so as to develop behind this defence his temporal individuality in the Cosmos."[2]

This individuality is being developed behind these defences for a twofold purpose by the Supreme spirit. First, "it is to find himself in the apparent opposites of his being and nature. The Sachchidananda descends into the material nescience and puts on its phenomenal Ignorance as a superficial mask in which he hides himself from his own conscious energy, leaving it self-forgetful and absorbed in its works and forms."[3] The greater the resistance put up by the material and inconscient nature, the greater the joy the Spirit attains in the course of self-discovery. "Not to return as speedily as may be to heaven where perfect light and joy are eternal or to the supracosmic bliss is the object of this cosmic cycle, nor merely to repeat a purposeless round in a long unsatisfactory groove of ignorance seeking for knowledge and never finding it perfectly,—in that case Ignorance would either be an inexplicable blunder of the All-conscient or a painful and purposeless Necessity equally inexplicable,—but to realise the Ananda of the Self in other conditions than the supracosmic, in cosmic being and to find its heaven of joy and light even in the oppositions offered by the terms of an embodied material existence, by struggle therefore towards the joy of self-discovery, would seem to be the true object of the birth of the soul in the human body and of the labour of the human race in the series of cycles."[4] I am reminded here of a line from Shakespeare where this idea is expressed: "Hope to joy is little less in joy than hope enjoyed." Hide-and-seek is the greatest joy.

The purpose of the Divine's manifestation: "In the individual he discloses too his transcendence as the Eternal in whom all the universal unity is founded. This

[1] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 207.
[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 360-01.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 361.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 362.

unity of self-manifestation, this prodigious Lila of the manifold Identity, this magic of Maya or protean miracle of the conscious truth of being of the Infinite is the luminous revelation which emerges by a slow evolution from the original inconscience."[1]

So the purpose of this manifestation is to manifest in the individual the universal being and the transcendence of the Absolute. "[The soul's] chain is a self-imposed convention. Its limitation in the ego is a transitional device that it uses to repeat its transcendence and universality in the scheme of the individual Brahman."[2] This is the other purpose for this creation under the mask of ignorance so that the individual may be developed.

The phrase "individual Brahman" may give a shock to most, not to the Nirvishesha Adwaitin alone. Yet this is what is intended. It is the gnostic being who is the individual Brahman, and evolution continues in light even after.

"There is too an Indian view which regards the world as a garden of the divine Lila, as a play of the divine Being with the conditions of cosmic existence in this world of an inferior nature; the soul of man takes part in the Lila through a protracted series of births, but it is destined to reascend at last to the proper plane of the Divine Being and there enjoy an eternal proximity and communion: this gives a certain rationale to the creative process and the spiritual adventure which is either absent or not clearly indicated in other accounts of this kind of soul movement or soul cycle."[3] The "proper plane" may be Goloka, Vaikuntha or Kailasa, etc., where either *sāmīpya* (proximity), *sārūpya*, identity of form, *sālokya* (living in the same world as the Divine) or such other things are meant. But these states are not what Sri Aurobindo means by "individual Brahman". These are in a different world from the terrestrial. The gnostic being will be in the world and will also be of the world and yet exceed the world. He would be a "wave that is all the sea, a relative that proves to be the Absolute itself when we look behind form and see it in its completeness."[4] "He would not be the wave but the ocean".[5] It is for the emergence of the gnostic being that the evolution has been in travail. Shankara cannot think of a purpose, as manifestation is an imposition or super-imposition and escape is the only hope from this vale of tears, this valley of darkness and morass of evil that the world is.

So the logical and philosophical necessity, the development of the individual and the purpose of the manifestation to bring out or evolve the gnostic being are all shown by Sri Aurobindo.

A world of philosophers and founders of religion accepted ignorance, evil or sin without demur and showed ways and means to get out of it. Shankara alone tried to give some explanation of this manifestation but he too ended with escape from this manifestation as the *summum bonum* of life. Life must be used to escape from life.

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 566.
[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 49.
[3] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 463-64.
[4] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 187.
[5] *Ibid.*, II, p. 856.

His explanation of ignorance does not touch the root of the problem; he evades it and dazzles us with the magic of his logic. Sri Aurobindo alone tackles the problem at the root, brings out the logical and philosophical necessity of ignorance in this manifestation and gives meaning to manifestation by integrating evolution with it and by conceiving involution as a prior necessity, and finally makes manifestation a Divine Lila designed to manifest the gnostic being on Mother Earth. "To be perfect as He is perfect is the condition of His integral attainment."[1]

Says the Master, "The ancient seers believed in this possibility for man and held it to be his divine destiny; the modern thinker does not even conceive of it or, if he conceived, would deny or doubt."[2]

I have said in the beginning that the problem of Ignorance is one holding more than three problems on which the Mahayogi has thrown not just light but a flood of light, and now it can be confidently asserted that the light is not only a flood-light but also a search-light.

We come back after thousands of years to our Aryan past lost to the race's memory and recover it by the gigantic effort of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother who sailed uncharted seas again and again along unknown routes, weathered many unforeseen storms from a host of evil forces, climbed sheer inaccessible mountains hewing their own way and made their bodies the field of repeated experimentation and finally established the Supramental Light, the key to the riddle of this manifestation and transformation in our space and time. Humanity does not yet know how immense is the sacrifice they have made for this successful spiritual adventure.

Let us end with a quotation from the Master's epic, *Savitri*, penned in a language that is Vedic yet modern, that is a symbol where the truth brightly peeps through, and a legend that is an agenda of evolution:

> "A mutual debt binds man to the Supreme:
> His nature we must put on as He put ours;
> We are sons of God and must be even as he:
> His human portion, we must grow divine.
> Our life is a paradox with God for key."[3]

(Concluded)

P. KRISHNAMURTI

[1] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 50.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 375.
[3] *Savitri* (1976), Book I, Canto IV, p. 67.

YEATS'S TRYST WITH INDIA

YEATS used to call India 'the other Ireland'. His first spiritual encounter with India took place when he was only twenty-two. He came into contact with Mohini Chatterjee, who had gone to Dublin to preach Theosophy. Chatterjee was also a Vedantist and had absorbed the thought-patterns of Sankaracharya. He felt that Walter Pater's ideas accorded well with those of Sankara. He came to Dublin with a copy of Pater's *Marius the Epicurean* in his pocket. This fact must have endeared Chatterjee to Yeats as Yeats was, at that time, under the spell of Pater. Chatterjee's assertion that 'art for art's sake was the only sinless doctrine' must have struck a responsive chord in the psyche of W. B. Yeats.

Mohini Chatterjee's impact on Yeats was profound. In his *Autobiography*, Yeats says: "It was my first meeting with a philosophy that confirmed my vague speculations and seemed to me logical and boundless." He also recorded his impressions in an essay entitled "The Way of Wisdom" which was published in 1900. Yeats says that Mohini Chatterjee was a handsome young man with 'the typical face of a Christ' and his thoughts were 'a flight into the heart of truth.'

At that time, Yeats wanted literature to be free from the tyranny of facts and the outer world. Sankara believed that the outer world was illusory and the supreme task of man was to realise the Brahman or the Supreme Spirit which he essentially was. This emphasis on inner realization must have given clear contours to the vague thoughts of a poet who wanted, at that time, to escape to the 'lake isle of Innisfree'.

Mohini Chatterjee's ideas lost their spell for Yeats after some time but Chatterjee remained a hallowed memory. In a letter written to Chatterjee during the thirties, the poet referred to the talk given by Chatterjee in Dublin and gratefully recalled his exposure to a powerful philosophy. He recorded his impressions in a short poem written during the thirties. In this poem, Yeats says:

> I asked if I should pray,
> But the Brahmin said...
> 'Pray for nothing, say
> Every night in Bed,
>
> "I have been a king,
> I have been a slave.
> Nor is there anything,
> Fool, rascal, knave,
> That I have not been.
> And yet upon my breast
> A myriad heads have lain." '

That he might set at rest
A boy's turbulent days
Mohini Chatterjee
Spoke these, or words like these.

Sankara's path led to the cessation of all activities and Yeats realized that it was a barren path for the artist. The creative artist is in search of forms and cannot repudiate the objective world as illusory. This also led him to snap very intimate bonds with the Theosophical Society whose founder Madame Blavatsky had found in him one of her earliest enthusiastic disciples. Yeats had quickly advanced to the esoteric section of the Theosophical Society but soon came to realize that the life of action had its own attractions.

Sanskrit Plays

Mohini Chatterjee was not Yeats's only introduction to India. The translations of Sanskrit plays were avidly read by him and they had strengthened his will to struggle relentlessly against the conventions of naturalistic drama. Monier Williams's translation of Kalidas's *Shakuntala* had a particular fascination for him. *Shakuntala*'s ballet-like quality profoundly influenced his attitude towards dramatic art. Kalidas does not pay attention to the minute but mute details to convey the reality of a naturalistic environment. When Shakuntala waters the trees, she does not pour out actual water and does not use an actual vessel.

Yeats had read the translation of Nandikeshwara's dramatic theories entitled *The Mirror of Gesture*. The Sanskrit text was translated by Yeats's friend, Ananda Coomaraswamy, in collaboration with G. K. Duggirala. Nandikeshwara suggested that the watering of the trees should be enacted not naturalistically but symbolically by Shakuntala's hands forming the *Nalini Padmakosha* mudra and pretending to lift water and pour. Addressing the Indian students at Oxford in 1918, Yeats said that "he had tried to steep himself in the translations of Sanskrit plays and to assimilate in his writings whatever in them seemed valuable and congenial." It would be absurd to suggest that Yeats's non-naturalistic dramatic creations are products of the reading of Sanskrit plays but his convictions were certainly confirmed by Sanskrit dramatic conventions.

Rating with Rabindranath Tagore

Another encounter with India took place when Yeats was introduced by Rothenstein to Rabindranath Tagore. He read Tagore's translation of his Bengali lyrics from *Gitanjali* and was immediately captivated by the voice of a civilization he believed to be available only to the mediaeval Europeans. According to Yeats, people in such a civilization had intellect and emotion in perfect harmony. He wrote an introduction to the collection of Tagore's lyrics entitled *Gitanjali*. It is uncharitably suggested that Tagore owed his Nobel prize to Yeats's patronage. In fact Tagore had taken

European artistic circles by storm and Yeats was only one of his admirers. Ezra Pound was another of his active and eminent admirers. Actually Yeats was so much 'enchanted' by the lyrics of *Gitanjali* that for several weeks he kept a copy of the book in his pocket. He learnt about the traditions of Bengal from some of his Indian friends. The *bauls* of Bengal reminded him of the bare-footed bards of his own country. In fact Yeats had accepted whole-heartedly the views of nineteenth-century scholars of Celtic civilization who had detected similarities between Irish and Indian culture. Scholars like Rhys and Jubainville had indicated parallelisms between the Irish gods and their Hindu counterparts. The Celtic Gwydian, for instance, was supposed to have similarities with the Hindu god Indra. The Druids were supposed to be the Irish counterparts of Hindu brahmins. In fact Yeats believed that the "Irish people lived in India until the Battle of the Boyne." Yeats actually found in Tagore a congenial soul dominated by the set of values dear to Yeats.

Yeats's infatuation with Tagore's lyrics lasted only a few years. His poetry was shedding its ornaments and was becoming hard and brutal. It is surprising how Yeats quickly found confirmation in another aspect of Indian spiritual lore. He had all the books on *Tantra* edited by Arthus Avalon in his personal library. Tantra represents a world-view diametrically opposite to that of Sankara's *Advaita Vedanta* made available to him through Mohini Chatterjee. Tantra is not shy of the external world. It advocates absorption in the external world and feels that sex is the gateway to spirituality. A reading of the tantric books confirmed Yeats's understanding of the traditions of magic and alchemical lore. He anticipated the discoveries of another western intellectual, Carl Jung, who had also made a comparative study of alchemical and tantric symbols in his book *Psychology and Alchemy*. Jung's theory of the collective unconscious and Yeats's concept of *Aanima Mundi* have many things in common. Both have similarities to tantric concepts. Some of the later poems of Yeats celebrate sexual activities with a gusto which reminds us of tantric patterns.

In 1937 Yeats met an Indian mystic whom he came to like immensely. Purohit Swami had neither the philosophical profundity of Mohini Chatterjee nor the poetic brilliance of Rabindranath Tagore. He had, however, the earthiness and simplicity of an Indian sadhu. He was the product of a long line of mystics whose earliest master was Bhagavan Dattatreya. Dattatreya is supposed to be one of the twenty-four incarnations of Lord Vishnu and is the possessor of the ultimate in human and divine wisdom. Purohit Swami's guru, Bhagavan Sri Hamsa, was the head of an ashram in Lawasa (Maharashtra) and had sent Purohit Swami to Europe to preach the gospel of Indian mysticism. Purohit Swami was only moderately successful but could establish contact with the lovers of Indian philosophy in London, prominent among whom were Sir Francis Younghusband and J. S. Bristowe. He had with him a few poems of his own, a translation of the *Bhagavad Gita* and the ten principal Upanishads and he wanted to get them published. He came into contact with T. Sturge Moore who introduced him to Yeats. Yeats was attracted towards Purohit Swami because

of the Indian's total simplicity and lack of affectation. He persuaded Faber and Faber to publish Purohit Swami's translation of the *Bhagavad Gita*. Purohit Swami's autobiography, *An Indian Monk*, impressed Yeats who wrote an impassioned introduction. Yeats also wrote an introduction to Bhagavan Sri Hamsa's autobiography, *The Holy Mountain*. He helped Purohit Swami refine the language of the translation of the ten principal Upanishads. His letters to Purohit Swami show that he was already familiar with Dr. E. Roer's translation and Sir Arthur Keith's views on the message of the Upanishads. He wrote an elaborate introduction to the *Ten Principal Upanishads* and allowed his name to occur as one of the translators. He also introduced the western readers to Purohit Swami's translation of Patanjali's *Aphorisms of Yoga*. Yeats had already read these texts in English translation and was hardly influenced by Purohit Swami. He was, however, profoundly influenced by the deep humanity of the Indian monk. Purohit Swami accompanied the poet to Majorca, an island in the west Mediterranean where the poet had gone to escape Dublin's cold winter. Yeats's letters to various correspondents show the poet's appreciation of Purohit Swami's loving care. The Indian was a congenial soul who brought India closer to the Indian poet.

Yeats's India was different from Kipling's who had eyes only for the external and superficial aspects of Indian life. Kipling could faithfully record the colours, sights and sounds of India available to him; he could not go beneath the surface. The effort was made by E. M. Forster who was baffled by what he discerned beneath the surface of Indian reality. The terrain of Indian philosophy was a familiar ground for Yeats where he moved with ease and a sense of belonging.

DR. B. N. PRASAD

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EUROPE 1974

A TRAVELOGUE

(52)

"TELL us something about the Eastern Mountains and their people, for you have actually been there." And here in Europe I have met scores of men who said they were going to Kathmandu. For them east has become Kathmandu. Why this should be so I do not know. They stop at the Caravansarais or the Chaikhanas of the Middle East and then proceed to Nepal either by small station wagons or even walking."

But the Nepal or Kathmandu we had seen in 1950 was a different world from what you will see today. Then the old-world charm lingered everywhere like the loose lingerie of a rich woman. They have a Casino these days in Kathmandu, of course the local people are not allowed inside, I believe it's a dollar-earning gadget. They have an air-strip now and modern planes roar and belch where once reigned Nature's peace. It is a sort of sacrilege for those who have seen old Nepal. The same place where the airport is situated now we used to call Gauchar. It was our golf-links. From the emerald green of the valley rose a peak about two thousand feet high like a beneficent god. No doubt, the course was very primitive, even the holes were not properly marked; before starting the game we had to go reconnoitering, fixing the holes first. Some of the holes were across a ravine and if you have chosen the wrong club or chassis, your ball was sure to land in the chasm. Then one had to call some Nepali urchin to go in search of the ball. There were no trained caddies. Yet it was a wonderful experience trying to play golf at Gauchar. Now modernisation has killed the very spirit of the valley, I am sure.

There is now a direct road from Raxaul to Kathmandu, and this road is linked somewhere to one of our national highways so that you can even proceed to Calcutta or Delhi. Ours was a different story. Sanat was in the Diplomatic Service but he did not want to be posted very far. He had already seen Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and he wanted to stay as near as possible to India. Next we heard that Nepal was a special favourite of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru as the only Hindu independent country in the world. Sanat was overjoyed. After three days' journey we arrived one cool and delightful morning at Mokamah Ghat. The lights on the steamers were still on and the mist rose from the silently moving water, a fairy atmosphere welcomed us. We crossed the Ganges on a special steamer reserved for us; no other passengers were allowed. The captain kept us engaged by showing all there was to see in the boat. We had sailed on the waters of Bombay port several times on our way to visiting the innumerable hilly islands there are on the water and on the banks of the Western Ghats. Incidentally Elephanta Island is there and is visited by people from all over the world, both by inquisitive tourists and by researching scholars. The small crafts and their big brothers the ocean-going vessels made our way a zig-zag and extremely

interesting. The Taj, the Gateway of India built when George V visited India, all kept us enthralled. But this was different. A short train-ride and we arrived at Raxaul. I do not remember to have seen the village. But we were taken to the rest-house built by the Britishers. Pure English meals were served and the place was so quiet that one was even afraid to talk lest one should disturb the sanctum sanctorum of the woods. Night was a packed peace, something we had never experienced before. Our next hop was Amlekgunge and then to the bottom of the *Ghari*, the pass into Kathmandu valley. A sheer three thousand feet but don't think anything frightened us. Having lived years in the sophisticated and urban life in Bombay we enjoyed every moment. We did not even have to worry about luggage, for men had arrived from the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu to look after us. Fifteen pieces were tied to horseback; the heavy luggage would come up by rope-rail. The road from Amlekgunge was such that we wished there were no roads at all and that we could travel by a compass. There were huge pot-holes, and big boulders had washed down from the mountain-side making the whole journey as full of danger and as uncomfortable as possible. No-road would have allowed us to travel on Nature's grass at least. We now got into a Dandy, a box-like seat carried by four men. It was late evening when we reached the Ghari rest-house. Early next morning we walked to the pass proper, a narrow pass in which only one man could stand. And what a view met us across the valley. There were ranges and ranges of snow-capped peaks glistening gold in the early morning sun. It was an unforgettable sight.

We started early, for it would take a whole day's journey to reach Kathmandu. At mid-day we stopped at a cosy place. The men and the coolies all sat under a tree eating their roties and smoking their pipes. The Embassy men took another shed and nibbled away from their tiffin boxes. Our hot boxes and baskets were placed in a beautiful shed over a hillock. It was January and the temperature was very low, cold had pierced through our hot boxes, making the lunch cold. Europeans are very fond of cold lunch but we Indians, people of a warmer country, do not favour such nourishment. Fortunately we had bread and fruit with us, but the butter was hard as a rock and had to be cut with a knife and then put into our mouth with a fork as it could not be smeared on the bread. They say, "Butter wouldn't melt in his mouth." We understood the phrase. We took sugar to the horses, for we did admire their sense of the road and their slow but sure-footed trot.

In the evening we reached a place where the Embassy car had arrived and was waiting for us. Directly we were taken to Kathmandu and to a two-storied house with sixteen rooms, cosy and warm with curtains and carpets everywhere and a hot dinner ready.

In my childhood days I had heard of relatives and friends going out on pilgrimage to Badrinath, Amarnath and Pashupatinath. So we had reached a pilgrimage end, for the temple of Pashupatinath was just a mile away from the Embassy. A few days later we visited the temple and found it as good or as bad as any Indian temple. No one cut my head. For as a girl I had heard that Pashupatinath was in *Kata Moondo*,

where they cut your head off if you are naughty. In fact, Kathmandu means Kat wood, and Mandu temple, that is, temple of Pashupatinath. From the veranda we saw Gauri-Shankar and many a golden peak. Early morning brought another joy. It did not actually snow but a thick mist shone, all flimsy yet gilded by the faint rays of the early morning sun. There was a lovely flower-garden and a vegetable-garden at the back. After that the ravine went down some two thousand feet and a silver-line of a river meandered away God knows where. If you wanted to feel dizzy it was an ideal place. Sometimes we trekked further up and there was a point from where the Annapurna range could be seen. It is sort of a ring. Annapurna I, 24 thousand feet odd, is on the west. Then Roc Noir, then Glacier Dome and on the east Gangapurna 24 odd. Further south is Annapurna III, 24 again. On the southern point is Machpuchre, 22, the most beautiful peak we had seen so far. For you must remember that no peak looks lovely from all angles. We looked for an *Yeti* but never met anybody who had seen one. Only Chris Bonington thinks he saw one in the night of 1971 in the moonlight. From another point in Nepal Dhaulagiri, 26, could be seen, a gorgeous and dignified mountain if ever there was one. Annapurna is the tenth highest mountain in the world and was conquered by Maurice Herzog in 1850. There is also an Annapurna IV.

(To be continued)

CHAUNDONA S. BANERJI

THE SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEW

A STORY FOR CHILDREN

YEARS ago lived a deaf man in a city. Though he was not stone-deaf, one had to shout at the top of one's voice to make the poor fellow hear. Many avoided his company, for they said to one another: "My God! who can afford to shout at the deaf devil? One must drink mugs of sustaining milk both before and after making him hear!"

The deaf man's only consolation was his wife. She was a very affectionate companion and never felt tired of shouting to her husband. At times he failed to hear her. But even then he smiled and nodded as if he had understood every syllable she had uttered.

One evening she shouted: "The old man in the neighbouring house has been bed-ridden for the past two weeks. To meet one's neighbour when he is sick and speak a few words of consolation is good manners. Please go and see the sick neighbour."

"But that will be very embarrassing," replied the deaf man. "The sick man's voice will be nothing more than a squeak. And I won't be able to hear anything.... Do you want me to simply smile and nod my head to all he says?"

"Nothing to worry about. I'll help you. Now listen to me very carefully. When you meet the sick man repeat what I say now."

"Yes," responded the deaf man.

"When you meet the sick man," instructed the wife, "the first question you are to ask him is: 'How are you?'... Once you finish asking the question wait for his reply. It doesn't matter if you fail to hear anything. But closely watch his lips. If they move, that means he is answering: 'Slightly better now.' Then you must say: 'Good! It's all the Grace of God.' "

"That's a good idea," complimented the deaf man.

"Listen to me further," she continued. " 'What food are you taking?' that is the second question you are to ask.... Whatever may be his answer, you must say, 'Very good! That's good food. It's full of vitamins, you know.' "

Hope rose in the heart of the deaf man, who was keenly listening to his wife. "What next?" he asked.

"The third question would be: 'Which physician did you consult?'... Don't forget to watch his lips. When he tells you the name of the physician, you have to comment: 'Well done! He is the best one available in our city.' "

The deaf man stood amazed at the wit of his wife.

"Don't stay there any longer," she cautioned her husband, "Say the final words: 'Goodbye, See you later'... The next minute you should rush out of the house."

He thanked his wife profusely. After a couple of successful rehearsals, the deaf man left for the house of his neighbour.

The sick man was lying on a mat. On seeing the deaf man, he nodded a wel-

come. Taking his seat by the side of the sick man the deaf man opened the coversation.

"How are you, my friend?" he asked in an affectionate tone.

The sick man heaved a sigh and seconds later replied in an almost inaudible voice: "I'm dying day by day."

The deaf man who was eagerly waiting for the sick man's lips to move and then close, immediately said: "Good! It's all the Grace of God."

The sick man didn't expect such words from his neighbour. While his face reddened and he was fuming with anger, the deaf man came out with his next question: "What food are you taking?"

Pat came the answer: "I should take poison."

"Very good! That's good food. It's full of vitamins, you know," the deaf man complimented with a smile.

The sick man gnashed his teeth in uncontrollable rage. His blood pressure increased. Had he been well, he would have exercised his brute force on the visitor. When he was about to sign him to go out, he heard the third question: 'Which physician did you consult?"

Irritated beyond limit, the sick man yelled: "Lord Yama."

"Oh, Lovely! He is the best one available in our city." So saying the deaf man stood up, waved his hands to the sick man and finally said: "Goodbye... See you later."

The sick man tore his hair and cursed the visitor, who happily went home to tell his wife about the successful interview.

Before he could open his mouth, the news came that the sick man had had a stroke and died.

P. RAJA