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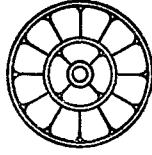
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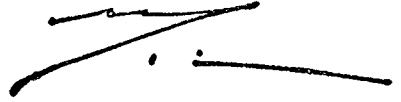


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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NO MIDDLE COURSE

To place before himself a great object and then to shrink in the name of expediency from the expenditure and sacrifice called for in its pursuit is not prudence but ineptitude. If you will be prudent, be prudent from the beginning. Fix your object low and creep towards it. But if you fix your object in the skies, it will not do to crawl on the ground and because your eyes are sometimes lifted towards the ideal imagine you are progressing while you murmur to those behind, "Yes, yes, our ideal is in the skies because that is the place for ideals, but we are on the ground and the ground is our proper place of motion. Let us creep, let us creep." Such inconsistency will only dishearten the nation, unnerve its strength and confuse its intelligence. You must either bring down your ideal to the ground or find wings or aeroplane to lift you to the skies. There is no middle course.

SRI AUROBINDO

¹ *Karmayogin*, Cent. Ed. Vol. 2, p. 50.

A TALK BY THE MOTHER

TO THE ASHRAM CHILDREN ON OCTOBER 6, 1954

This talk is based upon Sri Aurobindo's *Bases of Yoga*, Chapter 1, "Calm—Peace—Equality".

"Absolute faith—faith that what is for the best will happen, but also that if one can make oneself a true instrument, the fruit will be that which one's will guided by the Divine Light sees as the thing to be done—kartavyam karma."

—FAITH that always what is for the best happens. We may for the moment not consider it as the best because we are ignorant and also blind, because we do not see the consequences of things and what will happen later. But we must keep the faith that if it is like that, if we rely on the Divine, if we give Him the full charge of ourselves, if we let Him decide everything for us, well, we must know that it is always what is best for us which happens. This is an absolute fact. To the extent to which you surrender, the best happens to you. This may not be in conformity with what you would like, your preference or desire, because these things are blind: it is the best from the spiritual point of view, the best for your progress, your development, your spiritual growth, your *true* life. It is always that. And you must keep this faith, because faith is the expression of a trust in the Divine and the full self-giving you make to the Divine. And when you make it, it is something absolutely marvellous. That's a fact, these are not just words, you understand, it is a fact. When you look back, all kinds of things which you did not understand when they happened to you, you realise as *just* the thing which was necessary in order to compel you to make the needed progress. *Always*, without exception. It is our blindness which prevents us from seeing it.

Is blaming oneself a good method of progressing?

Blaming oneself? No, not necessarily. It may be useful, it is indeed useful from time to time in order to get out of the illusion of one's own perfection. But one wastes much energy in self-criticism. It is much better to use this same energy in making progress, a concrete progress, something more useful. For example, if you have thoughts which are unpleasant, ugly, vulgar and disturbing, and you say, "Ah, ah, how intolerable I am, I still have such thoughts, what a nuisance it is!" It would be much better to use this very energy simply to do this (*gesture*) and drive away the thoughts.

And this is only the first step. The second is to try to have other thoughts, to take interest in something else: either read or reflect, but in any case try to fill your mind with something more interesting, to use your energy in constructing rather than in destroying.

It is of course necessary from time to time to recognise one's faults; it is altogether indispensable. But to dwell too much upon them is not necessary. What is necessary is to use all one's energy in order to build up the qualities one wants to have and do what one wants to do. This is much more important.

"At present your experiences are on the mental plane...."

This is in reply to someone, I don't know to whom. Someone who wrote a letter and to whom Sri Aurobindo has replied: "At present your experiences are on the mental plane." I don't know what letter it was nor this person.

But what does "only on the mental plane" mean?

What does it mean? Well, these are experiences concerning thought, mental activity, the understanding of things, the observation of things, thought, deduction, reasoning, the contact with teaching, knowledge, the result of this knowledge on your understanding—all these things which are purely mental. And in fact one should always begin with that.

If one has vital experiences—for example, visions—certain vital experiences without having a sufficient mental preparation, this may result in destroying one's balance and, in any case, one understands nothing of what is happening and it is practically useless, if not harmful. On the other hand, if to begin with, one has developed his understanding, has studied, has understood and knows the reasons for things, and the goal of yoga, for instance, and if one has studied the methods of attaining it—indeed, the whole mental approach to the subject—then, when an experience comes one has a chance of being able to understand what it is; otherwise one understands nothing. A sufficient mental preparation is needed—if not a complete one at least a sufficient one—to be able to understand a little the experiences which come.

On what do experiences depend, Mother?

Ah, it depends on many things.... Some people have experiences quite spontaneously and it is understood that this depends on their former lives or the way in which they were formed, the forces which presided over the construction of their present physical being, and the influence they came under even before their birth. These people have experiences spontaneously. There are not many of these, but there are some. There are others for whom it is the result of a very sustained effort. They aspire to have experiences and impose a discipline upon themselves or adopt a discipline so as to be able to have them. Sometimes it takes very long to obtain something. It depends altogether upon the way one is built. I knew people who were ignorant, yes, and who had quite remarkable experiences of clairvoyance, of inner

perception. They understood nothing of what was happening to them or of what they saw. But they had the gift.

But then this has no effect on their outer life, has it?

No.

Then what's the use of having experiences?

It is not a question of "use". Not everything in the world is utilitarian. It's like that because it's like that. Yes, you can say "what's the use?" to someone who is exclusively preoccupied with having experiences, who has no inner intellectual and spiritual preparation, and who through some sort of fantasy would like to have experiences. You could say to him, "Yes, what's the use? It is not this that will lead you to the spiritual life. It can help you if you have taken up the path. And if you have taken up the path in all sincerity, well, they will come to the extent that they are useful. But to seek experience for experience's sake is altogether useless." And you can tell people, "What's the good? It is a fantasy, a fantasy on another plane; it is another kind of desire, but it is a desire."

However, in the normal course, to the degree that you progress inwardly, every step that you take towards the true consciousness is accompanied by a certain number of experiences corresponding to it which allow you to understand the situation you are in: this of course is normal. It ought to be like that.

But these usually are not such sensational experiences as to be made much of. People often have all of a sudden an illumination of consciousness, an inner indication, an unusual perception. But when they are not turned exclusively towards the desire to have experiences, they don't attach much importance to it. Sometimes they don't even attach enough importance. The indication came, showed them something, but they were not even aware of it. Yet it is not these things which give you the impression that you are living in a wonderful world. These things are quite normal. Suddenly an opening in the mind, a light that comes, one understands something which he did not before. You take that for a very natural phenomenon. But it is a spiritual experience—or the clear seeing of a situation, the understanding of what is happening in oneself, of the state one is in, the indication of the exact progress one ought to make, of the thing that's to be corrected. This too is an experience and an experience that comes from within; it is an indication given to you by the psychic. People take this also as quite a natural fact. They do not attach any importance to it.

Usually people mean by "experience" either altogether extravagant phenomena, levitation and things like that, or else sensational visions: being able to see the future or seeing at a distance or maybe ordinary things like being able to tell where a lost object can be found or all kinds of little tricks like that. This is what people call "experiences".

Well, usually people who have these faculties are not well educated, but for some reason they are born with a gift, as some are born musicians, others painters, and others scientists. These are born clairvoyants, and so it may be, when they are in need they use this faculty to earn their living, and they spoil it completely. If they happen to be in comfortable circumstances and do not need to earn their living, then they become famous among their friends. In any case, this is always an opportunity for a certain kind of commercialism. There are very few who can have these gifts without using them either to make a name for themselves or to earn money. But these gifts are not of a very high level. One can have them without having a very spiritual life. They do not depend at all on an inner spiritual height. One should not mistake them for signs of progress.

Besides, one thing is certain: those who do not have these faculties and want to acquire them, for instance the capacity of foresight, foreseeing what is going to come, which is analogous to prophecy, the capacity to know events before they happen—as I said, there are people who have this spontaneously because of some peculiarity from birth—and if one wants to acquire them himself, that is to say, enter into contact with regions where these things can be seen—and not by chance or accidentally or without having any control over the thing, but on the contrary to see them at will—then this indeed means a *formidable* work. And that is why some people attach a very great value to these things. But they have some value only when they are under one's control, done at will and the result of an inner discipline. In this case, yes, because this proves that you have entered into contact with a certain region where it is difficult to enter consciously, at will, and permanently. It is very difficult, it requires much development. And then, for you to be sure of what you have seen... because I haven't told you that with these people who make a profession of their clairvoyance, it becomes... I said "commercialism", but it is worse than that, you know, it is a fraud! When they do not see anything, they invent. When they make a profession of it, and people come to ask them something about the future, and they can see nothing at all, they are obliged to invent something, otherwise they would lose their reputation and their clientele. So this becomes a deception, you see, a falsehood, fraud or falsification.

But when one wants to have pure, correct information, to be in contact with the truth of things, and see in advance—not according to one's petty mental construction, but how things are decreed, in the place where they are decreed and the time when they are decreed—then that requires a *very great* mental purity, a *very great* vital equilibrium, an absence of desire, of preference. One must never want anything to be of one kind or another, for this falsifies your vision immediately.

All who have visions usually deform them, *all*, almost *without exception*. I don't think there is one in a million who doesn't deform his vision, because the minute it touches the brain it touches the domain of preferences, desires, attachments, and this indeed is enough to give a colouring, a special look to what you have seen. Even if you have seen correctly, you translate it wrongly in your consciousness. This

truly asks for a great perfection. But you can have perfection without the gift of vision. And the perfection can be as great without the gift as with it. If it interests you specially, you can make an effort to obtain it. But only if it interests you specially. If you lay great store by knowing certain things, you can undertake a discipline; you may undertake a discipline also in order to change the functioning of your senses. I think I have already explained to you how one can hear at a distance, see at a distance, even physically; but this means considerable effort, which perhaps is not always in proportion to the result, because these are side issues, not the central, the most important thing. These are side issues which may be interesting, but in itself this is not the spiritual life; one may have a spiritual life without this. Now, the two together can give you perhaps a greater capacity. But for this too you must tell yourself, "If I ought to have it—if I take the true attitude of surrender to the Divine and of complete consecration—if I ought to have it I shall have it. As, if I ought to have the gift of speech, I shall have it." And in fact, if one is truly surrendered, in the true way and totally, at every minute one is what he ought to be and does what he ought to do and knows what he ought to know. This... but naturally, for this one should have overcome the petty limitations of the ego, and this does not happen overnight. But it can happen.

Another question?

Sweet Mother, what is the "vital desire-soul"?

My child, the vital soul is what animates the body, the life which animates the body. You see, in ordinary language it is said, "You die when your soul leaves your body" or "Your soul leaves your body when you die", in one way or the other; but it is not the soul, it is not only this soul—what we call soul, I mean the psychic being—it is the vital being. When the vital being leaves the body for whatever reason, the body dies or death cuts off the vital being from the body.... So it is in the sense of animating, that is, giving life.

Is this the "vital desire-soul", Sweet Mother?

Yes, the vital soul is full of desires. The vital being is full of desires. It is built of desires.

Sweet Mother, here it is written: "A spiritual atmosphere is more important than outer conditions; if one can get that and also create one's own spiritual air to breathe in and live in it, that is the true condition of progress." How can one get that and also create one's true spiritual atmosphere?

Get what? This—it is by... precisely by inner discipline; you can create your atmosphere by controlling your thoughts, turning them exclusively towards the

sadhana, controlling your actions, turning them exclusively towards the sadhana, abolishing all desires and all useless, external, ordinary activities, living a more intense inner life, and separating yourself from ordinary things, ordinary thoughts, ordinary reactions, ordinary actions; then you create a kind of atmosphere around you.

For example, instead of reading any odd thing and chatting and doing anything whatever, if you read only what helps you to follow the path, if you act only in conformity with what can lead you to the divine realisation, if you abolish in yourself all desires and impulses turned towards external things, if you calm your mental being, appease your vital being, if you shut yourself against suggestions coming from outside and become immune to the action of people surrounding you, you create *such* a spiritual atmosphere that nothing can touch it, and it *no longer* depends *at all* on circumstances or on whom you live with or on the conditions you live in, because you are enclosed in your own spiritual atmosphere. And that is how one obtains it: by turning one's attention *solely* to the spiritual life, by reading only what can help in the spiritual life, by doing only what leads you to the spiritual life, and so on. Then you create your own atmosphere. But naturally, if you open all the doors, listen to what people tell you, follow the advice of this one and the inspirations of that one, and are full of desires for outside things, you cannot create a spiritual atmosphere for yourself. You will have an ordinary atmosphere like everybody else.

Sweet Mother, here it is written: "Do not be troubled by your surroundings and their opposition. These conditions are often imposed at first as a kind of ordeal." Imposed by the Divine?

He has not put it that way, has he? You must take it in the way it helps you most. This is a very difficult question.

Oh, I have already explained to you very often that when you live in an ordinary consciousness, and to the extent you remain on a certain plane which is a combination of the most material mind, vital, physical, that is, the ordinary plane of life, you are subject to the determinism of this plane and it is this subjection to the determinism of this plane which puts you exactly in these conditions, for you have deep within you something which aspires for another life but doesn't yet know how to live that other life, and which pushes from inside in order to get the conditions necessary for this other life. These are inner conditions, they are not outer conditions. But this takes its support on outside obstacles in order to strengthen itself in its will to progress; and so, if you look at it from within, you can even say that it is you yourself who create the difficulties to help you to go forward.

Now, if you enter another plane and tell yourself (but this is a thing subject to many explanations and discussions), if you say that there is nothing in the universe that is not the work of the Divine, which is essentially true, though not true here, then you say, "Good. It is the Divine who organises everything; consequently

it is He who has organised the difficulties also." But this is indeed a very childish way of putting things—oversimple. Only, as I said at the beginning, "If it helps you to think in this way, think in this way." You see, thought is so approximate a thing, it is so far from the truth... it is only a kind of vague, incomplete, confused reflection, full of falsehood, even at its best. So, in truth, it is the moment to be practical and tell yourself, "Well, I shall adopt this thought if it helps me to progress." But if you think that it is the absolute truth, you are sure to go wrong, for there is not a single thought which is the absolute truth.

Ah, yes, we are going to put into the books of the lending library of the University one of Sri Aurobindo's short reflections, which is wonderful—I had it printed today—in which he says that any teaching, however great it may be, however pure, noble, true it may be, is only one aspect of the Truth and not the Truth itself (I am commenting, the text¹ is not exactly this), it is not the entire Truth. Well, that is it. Whatever your thought may be, even if it is very high, very pure, very noble, very true, it is only a very tiny microscopic aspect of the Truth, and consequently it is not entirely true. So in that field one must be practical, as I said, adopt the thought for the time being, the one which will help you to make progress when you have it. Sometimes it comes as an illumination and this helps you to progress. So long as it helps you to make progress, keep it; when it begins to crumble, not to act any longer, well, drop it, and try to get another which will lead you a little farther.

Many miseries and misfortunes in the world would disappear if people knew the relativity of knowledge, the relativity of faith, the relativity of the teachings and also the relativity of circumstances... to what extent a thing is so relatively important! For the moment it may be capital, it may lead you to life or to death—I am not speaking of physical life and death, I am speaking of the life and death of the spirit—but this is for the moment; and when you have made a certain progress, when you have grown a few years older from the spiritual point of view, and you look back on this thing, this circumstance or idea which perhaps has decided your life, it will seem so relative, so insignificant to you... and you will need something much higher to make new progress.

If one could always remember this, well, one would avoid much sectarianism, much intolerance, and annul all quarrels immediately, because a quarrel means just this, that one thinks in one way and the other in another, and that one has taken one attitude and the other another, and that instead of trying to bring them together and find out how they could be harmonised, one puts them over against each other as one fights with one's fists. It is nothing else.

But if you become aware of the complete relativity of your point of view, your thought, your conviction of what is good, to what an extent it is relative in the march of the universe, then you will be less violent in your reactions and more tolerant. Here we are.

(Questions and Answers 1954, pp. 349-59)

¹ "But thought nor word can seize eternal truth."—Sri Aurobindo

TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of September 1985)

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

October 13, 1940

SRI AUROBINDO: Any news about Congress decision or is Gandhi going to ponder for two years till the war is over and the satyayuga comes in? *(Laughter)*

P: Azad has said that there is no going back on the Bombay decision.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is all right, but what are they going to do?

P: It seems Gandhi has prepared a scheme which he is going to submit to the Working Committee. It may be something like what he has advised in Hyderabad, which you may have seen—only four persons selected to go to jail and, if they are released, they will go again.

SRI AUROBINDO: But how will that redress their grievances? And will they call a meeting?

P: They will have to.

SRI AUROBINDO: Then it will be no longer individual. Or they can go to Sir Akbar and sit in his bedroom and refuse to move till their demands are acceded to. *(Laughter)*

P: If they call a meeting, the police may try to break it.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, and then some sort of violence is inevitable. That is about the State. What about Congress? If it is something like their Salt Campaign one can understand.

P: The same procedure, I suppose. Individual satyagrahis and calling a meeting. The meeting may be banned by Government, then some riot.

SRI AUROBINDO: In that case a riot is inevitable. Gandhi is balancing on a pinpoint.

Evening

P: Hitler's intention seems to be to launch an attack in the East.

SRI AUROBINDO: Not only that. He wants to control the oilfields in Asia Minor on which the British depend.... Turkey says Germany will have two million bayonets to face to get to Anatolia. Somebody says that though Turkey has no mecha-

nised army, it is not very necessary because the country is not suited for mechanised units. So Germany won't be very effective. I am not so sure of that. It may be difficult—that's all. Such things were said by France; Belgium too.

P: In Bankim's "Bande Mataram" there are two versions of the line *ké balé mā tum abalé*. I don't remember the other version. Nolini wants to know which version you want to keep.

SRI AUROBINDO: But I have translated the original version only.

N: The other version is *abalā kèno mā èto balé*.

SRI AUROBINDO: *èto balé*! Oh, that is for grammar: *abalā* being feminine, one can't say *abalé*; all the same *abalā kèno mā... balé* is not good. It is better to be ungrammatical than to miss the point. Bankim surely knew about the grammatical error.

October 14, 1940

P: Gandhi speaks of a premonition of a fast.

SRI AUROBINDO: Good Lord!

P: In reply to Malaviya who had asked him not to fast whatever else he might do, Gandhi said that if he was inspired by God, he might or must.

SRI AUROBINDO: The British Government ought to set up somebody to fast against him—(laughter), not to give up his fast till Gandhi stops.

N: Linlithgow is returning, it seems.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes.

P: They talk of Samuel Hoare as the successor to Linlithgow. In the *Indian Express* there is a cartoon showing Hoare as a rabbit being stewed in his own juice. (Laughter)

SRI AUROBINDO: He is needed in Spain. Lothian would have been best. But he is also much needed in America.

October 15, 1940

N: Have you read Gandhi's article? He says there is nothing much to choose between British rule and Nazism.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, I have read it. Let him be under the Nazis and then he will realise the difference.

P: Amarnath Jha has given a speech in South India. He says that this is not the time for non-violence. One can make a righteous war. Non-violence very often is a cloak for cowardice.

SRI AUROBINDO: Cowardice? One can't say that. Non-violent resistance can't be cowardice. You can say that non-violence may lead to cowardice on the plea of non-resistance.

P: Yes, people simply out of fear of resistance will take up an attitude of non-violence. That was why once a prominent leader of Congress said in a speech, "I prefer non-violence but if you can't accept it, at least don't sit quiet in times of trouble

or danger. Do something." To this Gandhi took objection.

SRI AUROBINDO: Why? He said that himself many times.

S: Yes, only now he has taken an absolute stand.

SRI AUROBINDO: My only objection is that he wants to use non-violence as a ramrod; it is not practicable under present circumstances. Individual satyagraha may be possible because some individuals have reached that stage of evolution but as a wholesale mass movement it is not practicable. He muddles the whole thing by bringing it into politics. As a prophet of non-violence, he can practise it as a movement of ethical affirmation, a demand of the soul.

S: Yes, if he had led some such sort of movement with people who could strictly follow him, there would have been nothing to say. From that viewpoint, his retirement from politics after the Poona affair was the right move.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, it was the right thing.

S: But people drag him in, foist on him the leadership of the country.

N: But hasn't Gandhi himself the idea of saving India politically too? Then why should we blame others or can we say that it has been foisted on him?

SRI AUROBINDO: Oh, not only saving India but the whole world. The leadership was foisted on him as people were feeling helpless without his guidance.

S: That is why I blame these people more. Why don't they take the leadership?

P: I think C. R. could have done something with the Viceroy if it had been left to him.

S: Why doesn't he do it then? He got his opportunity after the Poona affair.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, but he is not the leader and he couldn't go to see the Viceroy as the leader.

S: He can stand against Gandhiji and lead the movement.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes. But Gandhi's hold is too strong for him. Moreover, when these people are face to face with difficulties they feel themselves weak. Unlike the revolutionaries they have not got the strength to start any movement and lead it. C.R. could have made some compromise with the Viceroy except for the fact that the Viceroy isn't a man for compromise. He is, as Gandhi says, unbending, meets you with fixed decisions. Otherwise Amery's first speech went much farther, it was quite clear in what was said. Only because of the Viceroy and the officials it came to nothing.

N: Now Irwin could be sent as Viceroy.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, he has the instinct for peace. Lothian or some other Labour member would have been best. Lothian has a liberal mind.

S: It is the officials mostly that stand in the way.

N: That is why some suggested that Amery should pay a personal visit.

SRI AUROBINDO: That won't be of any use. Amery is not the man. Of course one has to take account of Indian officials for any advancement unless one is so strong as to do something over the heads of these people.

P: It seems there is disagreement in the Working Committee about the pro-

cedure. Some don't agree with Gandhi in his wanting to inform the government of their move beforehand. But Gandhi wants to keep them informed.

SRI AUROBINDO: He wants to assert the right of free speech. And according to his ideal of satyagraha he is quite right. His followers take it up as a political move.

S: Yes, that is the trouble. Their standpoints and outlooks are quite different. Somehow I understand Gandhiji in these principles for which he stands. The only thing, as we said, is that he should have kept himself apart from politics.

P: Another trouble with Gandhi is that he says that no man is perfect unless the society around him is perfect.

SRI AUROBINDO: In that case, like Amitabha Buddha refusing to go to Nirvana till all have attained it, he will have to wait till eternity for perfection! (*Laughter*)

S: He thinks his life is bound up with the national life; so he can't sever himself from the nation.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, his life is bound up but the national life is not bound up with him—that is the trouble. Hence wholesale non-violence is not possible. He should have gone to Denmark when they wanted to adopt non-violence, though their non-violence was for a different reason because they saw that a small army is of no use against greater powers.

S: Gandhiji's non-violence is of course of a different type. You will offer resistance non-violently and the enemy may pass over your dead body!

SRI AUROBINDO: Somebody in England gave the same suggestion. Hitler will regret that nobody accepted it...

P: Japan declares she will help the Axis in case of reverses.

SRI AUROBINDO: By telegrams?... This Japan-China war seems to be interminable; each claims a big success and yet it comes to nothing. The same with the other war.

P: Yes, only air raids!

(Nandalal's picture of Durga in the Pooja number of the Hindustan Standard was shown to Sri Aurobindo.)

SRI AUROBINDO: It seems to be post-Ajanta decorative style. Lion stylised, peacock in front of lion, Kartik humorous.

Evening

P: Gandhara art is supposed to be a mixture of Greek and Indian art. More of Greek influence than Indian.

SRI AUROBINDO: What Gandhara representations I have seen seem to me to be spoiled by Central-Asian influence and then bungled by Indian. It is more Central-Asian than Greek—which is imitation of Greece without its mastery, as is the case with all imitation.

(To be continued)

NIRODBARAN

THE STORY OF A SOUL

BY HUTA

(Continued from the issue of September 1985)

The Mother's Message

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



Volume Two: 1958

5

I WAS sunk more and more into the dark sea of unconsciousness. My mind could not think straight—my body became so weak that I could not do any work. Often I was in my bed sighing and weeping.

My maid-servant was baffled. How could I explain anything to her? But she was kind enough to look after my apartment and concerned about my food which now I hardly took.

Staring in the mirror, I saw lank hair, huge shadowed eyes and a body so thin as to appear to be fading away. I was slowly dying, deep down within me.

I thought that if the Mother expressed her incessant love for me in cards and in person, why, but why didn't she pull me out of the horrible sea? My whole being was choked. Any moment, I felt my soul would leave my body.

The Mother in her *Collected Works* has pronounced:

“Usually in the human being the psychic is strong enough to be able to resist, and the most frequent case is that of constant conflict between the two parts, until the psychic being, if it is strong enough and knows how to lean on a greater strength than its own, is capable of rejecting this influence and freeing itself. It is only in an extreme case of a total possession that the psychic being goes away.”

The Mother had written on a nice card:

“The duty of the mind, the life and the body is to become and to live what the Soul knows and is.”

It was not easy to perceive the philosophy of the soul, mind and life. Nevertheless, I could not banish from my consciousness the spiritual truths the Mother had inscribed and spoken to me. My mind kept wandering off, always sliding back to the same subject, the same question: “How to realise my soul and unite consciously with the Supreme Lord?”

I relapsed into a mood of sheer despair. My state of mind was chaotic.

I could not think clearly. I had been through so many nerve-racking experiences that they seemed to have had a permanently bad effect upon my health. I stopped going to the Mother.

A card came from her:

“Bad will is a passing smoke that cannot alter the splendour of the Divine Grace.”

I was sick at heart and loathed everything in the world.

The Mother sent me yet another card dated 25-2-58:

“The Eternal is seen when the mind is at rest. When the sea of the mind is troubled by the winds of desire, it cannot reflect the Eternal and all divine vision is impossible.”
(Ramakrishna)

I knew that a battle was taking place in my whole being. Naturally there was no peace—only strife and struggle. But it could not be true—this could not be happening to me, I thought. I wanted to pray to the Divine and yet no words came to my lips. I was totally a captive of the hostile forces. A strange numbness prevented my begging for mercy from the Mother. The loneliness of a dark world caved in about me. The empty, desolate sensation invariably occurred despite my trying to check the rising terror which was leading me towards catastrophe and misfortune.

I received a letter from the Mother saying:

“My dear little child,

All these days, I left you to your own ways, so that you might try to pull yourself out, by yourself, of your difficulties. But evidently you could not succeed, in spite of your refusal to receive from me the help I was always giving you—will you try once more to find shelter in me? I will happily receive you in my arms once more, and will see you at six this evening in the playground.

With unchanging love.”

I went to the Mother. Her blue-grey eyes met my dark ones for a long moment as if everything had stood still. Then she spread her arms in which my soul found sanctuary.

I held her hand, stammered out the words I had intended to speak, but could not do so. The tears dripped down my cheeks. She bent forward from her couch and pressed her lips against my forehead for a second or two. Then she asked me to put my head on the couch. I obeyed. She caressed my hair and went into a deep meditation. I was so opaque.

That night I felt as if I had been sojourning in a never-ending darkness which seemed to suffocate me to death. I became like a ghost. A terrible weakness spread over me. I closed my eyes in aching misery. “Oh, God,” I prayed silently, “don’t do this to me.”

The following morning the Mother sent me a card displaying a deep pink rose, along with these lines:

“To my dear little child Huta,

For your heart to remain happy keep it always filled with gratefulness.

Gratefulness is the surest way to the Divine.

With the love and compassion that pour constantly from the Divine Grace.”

Even if I disliked to go to the Mother, I was compelled by a hidden Force. Moreover, in my heart of hearts I loved her exceedingly. Somewhere within me I felt that life was not for cowards. Life appeared to me a gamble—one had to put one’s all at stake in a hazardous game of lose or win.

As always the Mother received me with full sympathy and affection. We had

a long meditation. There was a void and turmoil—I could not receive anything given by the Mother from the highest truth. I knew life was not going to be a wonder-world, but at least I could do my best to be a good child of the Mother.

Late at night I went to bed full of hope. But it was short-lived.

The next morning the torrent of dejection and a subtle fear overwhelmed me. I was unwell.

A card came from the Mother showing Ox-eye Daisies accompanied by these words:

“To my dear little child Huta,

The Light is always there ready to answer to a sincere aspiration.”

I was unconscious about my aspiration—whether it was sincere or insincere. I was terribly muddled in my conceptions.

In the evening I went to the Mother without any feeling. I did not want to attend the translation class. I excused myself to her and left for my apartment. I had nothing to do except sit in my armchair and brood over countless subjects. My defects and faults were illimitable. I knew all too well that my own foolish pride rose up frequently in revolt against the Truth and always emotions got in the way of seeing clearly and thinking straight. The huge block of EGO was there.

Now it was the last day of February 1958. I received an attractive card from the Mother together with these words:

“With all love and sweet compassion.”

*

The new month began. The inevitable card and white roses came from the Mother. She had inscribed on the card these words of wisdom:

“Open your heart to the Grace so that it may accomplish its miracles in you.”

Where was the Grace? How to open myself to it? The Mother was asking impossible things. Two contradictories fought in me. My true self aspired for nothing except the Divine. I failed to find my soul. My outer being was encompassed by the web of EGO and the physical consciousness. The psychological struggle was ceaseless.

I was quite aware that I was not alone in this dire and dreadful strife, there were many others.

The whole atmosphere was oppressive, strangling. People who had not exclusively dedicated themselves to the Spiritual Life did not have any notion of the hardships, setbacks and struggles. They thought that the Ashramites were in sheer

ecstasy all the time. Often their remarks and judgements were obnoxious.

Life was such a mass of tangles and contrasts—so filled with difficulties which at first sight one would have said could easily be overcome and yet when one tried to surmount them assumed giant proportions.

The Mother commenced the new month as always by giving blessings to the disciples. We all went to the Prosperity Room to seek her blessings and help. She bestowed them on us through flowers and smiles.

As usual on Saturdays there was a film. I could not sit for long. I went home and did nothing except lie in my bed thinking endlessly.

The next morning the Mother sent me a charming card depicting different coloured Tulips and these words followed:

“To my dear little child Huta,

Do not live so much in the outward sensations, withdraw in the depths of the heart—the peace of eternity is there and will help you.”

Yes, I was longing to get that Peace. But alas! My eyes filled with tears of agony. I questioned myself: “But how, when I have lost feeling, faith, love and aspiration—when my heart has become like a desert?” The tears gushed out. I avoided going to the Mother for our daily meditation or for the distribution.

The succeeding morning I received from her a bouquet of white roses and a card illustrating *Gazania*—“Seeking for clarity—like to say clearly what has to be said.” On the card these words were written beautifully in red ink:

“To my dear little child Huta,

Be master of thy soul, O seeker of the eternal truths, if thou wouldst attain the goal.”

(The Book of Golden Precepts)

She added:

“With the Grace’s eternal love and compassion.”

I glanced at the card and carelessly flung it aside. I felt as if those words were empty, useless. It was far from easy to get out of the abyss. I was stepped in it—stifled by doubt, disbelief, depression and despondency. My whole being was utterly shut.

I thought that it was pointless to go to the Mother and waste her time unnecessarily. I did not go to her. It was painful to sit in her translation class when I was going through indefinable suffering and gloom. Besides, I was not good at French. I was always stung by an inferiority complex when I saw people in the class so much engrossed in taking down the French translation.

The Mother sent me a card next morning, showing red and yellow *Zinias*: “Physical endurance (red)—knowing neither fatigue nor exhaustion”. Mental

endurance (yellow)—“The difficulties of problems to be solved will never discourage it.” She had written on the card:

“At the end of the tunnel there is the light.
The Grace is there permanent and eternal.”

I regarded the card with a deep sigh of grief and wondered: “There is no light—there will be no light. I have been dragged into an immeasurable tunnel of darkness. There is not a single ray of hope for my coming out of this dreadful phase.”

I believed only in things I saw happening around me. They alone seemed true. The rest was mirage and fantasy. It was difficult to be myself again. I became more and more materialistic.

The colossal EGO of mine hindered me from going to the Mother, while my soul shed silent tears. There was a fierce war between two beings—outer and inner.

The Mother unfailingly sent a card. Now it figured three lovely sparrows, which brought these words:

“The Grace is infinite and its love and compassion are boundless.”

I found the words vain, without any reality.

*

Three tedious days slipped by. I stopped all my activities. I remained at home. The Mother went on sending cards, white roses and Prasad.

I received from her a Japanese card picturing two monkeys sitting close to each other. She had inscribed on the card:

“With unfailing love and the unchanging compassion of the Divine’s Grace.”

I spoke to myself: “No, there is NO Grace—if there is, is it not powerful enough to pull me out of the severest obscurity I have ever gone through in my life? Oh! NO, I don’t believe in mere words. I want the concrete proof—actual fact.”

I found myself absolutely broken. Now I hardly spoke to people lest they should misunderstand or misjudge me. I couldn’t even speak to my nephews who were here and leaving shortly for East Africa. I felt that they were perplexed by my attitude. I was extremely sorry, I failed to give any explanation to them.

I remember to have chided my nephews when they had plucked mangoes with their friends at an unearthly hour. They had made so much noise that I had got irritated and could not rest. At that period I was so miserable, so unhappy, so uncontrollably annoyed. Even the slightest things made me flare up. I could have certainly paused and tried to persuade them or make them understand my situation

in a polite manner. Now naturally they misconstrued me.

I also recall another incident: when I started destroying some of my old note-books in which I had written my visions, dreams, stories, poems, prayers and other interesting things, one of my nephews asked me not to do so, saying I would repent afterwards. I didn't listen and told him that the writings were immaterial. At present I really wonder what I wrote in those note-books.

*

It was as if time had stopped for me, while the rest of the world went on its way. Thoughts churned tumultuously in my head. I was surrounded by horrible forces both visible and invisible. I felt I would go mad or die.

In answer to my letter the Mother wrote to me on 12th March:

“If you are not satisfied with what you are, take advantage of the Divine's help and *change*. If you have no courage to change, submit to your destiny and be quiet.

But to go on complaining about the condition in which you are and do nothing to change it, is sheer waste of time and energy.

The cure from all difficulties can come only when the egoistic concentration upon one's desires and conveniences ceases.

With the Divine's supreme compassion.”

It was true I was unable to get out of my little self. This very aspect stood like a rock against which I banged my head in vain. After reading the letter, I was trembling with humiliation and there was an ache in my chest that seemed to rip me apart. Tears were sliding down to my pillow. “Oh, God,” I thought, “what to do? How can I show my face to the Mother?” I was ashamed of my Ego's pride.

Indeed I wished to have a higher education, so that I might be equal with others and face the complicated world. As a matter of fact, I wanted to be something. I was young and my outer being was very ambitious. This sort of desire grabbed me. At the same time my inner being pined for the Divine. Hence the contradiction in my whole being, the paradoxical clashes in my consciousness—who could define or straighten that tangle?

I did not go to the Mother. Once again my hurt anger crystallised. I took a story-book and looked at it, and found that I was holding it upside down. Then I threw it away from me and burst into tears. I didn't know how long I wept. Finally I got up from my bed and wrote a letter to the Mother stating in a few words that my heart was too tight to feel anything.

She answered the next morning:

“I am quite conscious of the knot and it is to loosen it that I am working—it

is closely associated with the ego, and it resists. But it has to go and it will go—if you can collaborate with a quiet confidence it will go quicker—come to see me regularly in the evening even for a short time—it helps.

With Love.”

I went to the Mother. She was sad, very sad, to see my state of consciousness. She tried to soothe me—to make me peaceful. I was restful in her physical presence. I drew a deep breath of relief. But it was momentary. As soon as I came out of her room, I was once more trapped in the whirlpool of World Force. Things were going from bad to worse, and I had no way of knowing how to stop them.

The following morning a card showing an avenue of trees came from the Mother together with these touching words:

“The trees rise towards the sky, beautiful symbol of Nature’s aspiration towards the Light.

With the Grace’s love and compassion.”

The Mother has a beautiful description of trees in *Words of the Mother* III, August 1966 ed., Sect. 5, pp. 10-11:

“Have you ever watched a forest with all its countless trees and plants—struggling to catch the light—twisting and trying in a hundred ways to be in the sun? That is precisely the feeling of aspiration in the physical—the urge, the movement, the push towards the Light. Plants have more of it in their physical being than man. Their whole life is a worship of light. Light is of course the material symbol of the Divine, and the sun represents, under material conditions, the supreme Consciousness. The plants feel it quite distinctly in their own simple, blind way. Their aspiration is intense, if you know how to become aware of it.”

I could not set my heart on anything, leave aside on aspiration.

Since the Mother had asked me to go to her in the evening, I went without any enthusiasm.

*

It is fascinating to read the Mother’s talks. In 1958 I knew nothing about her teaching. But now I find how strangely everything tallies. During the period of my crisis I did not care much to read, contemplate and assimilate the divine truths. My situation was exactly what the Mother has stated about the knot of ego in her *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 390:

“Knot? Oh! it is an image, you see. But it is something that clings to you and

holds you as tightly as a well-made rope knot. And so it is always said that in order to progress truly the first thing to do is to cut the knot of the ego. It is very expressive and makes a good image, doesn't it?—one is tied up, one is shut up in oneself, bound as in a prison by knots which tie up all the parts of the being together; it is this which produces a cohesion. But at the same time it is a limitation, a limiting. You cannot receive all the forces you would like to, because you are enclosed in this shell made of a heap of knots in the rope that's tying you."

She further explains how to cut the knot of the ego:

"How to cut it? Take a sword and strike it, when one becomes conscious of it. For usually one is not; we think it quite normal, what happens to us; and in fact it is very normal but we think it quite good also. So to begin with one must have a great clear-sightedness to become aware that one is enclosed in all these knots which hold one in bondage. And then, when one is aware that there's something altogether tightly closed in there—so tightly that one has tried in vain to move it—then one imagines his will to be a very sharp sword-blade, and with all one's force one strikes a blow on this knot (imaginary, of course, one doesn't take up a sword in fact), and this produces a result. Of course you can do this work from the psychological point of view, discovering all the elements constituting this knot, the whole set of resistances, habits, preferences, of all that holds you narrowly closed in. So when you grow aware of this, you can concentrate and call the divine Force and the Grace and strike a good blow on this formation, these things so closely held, like that, that nothing can separate them. And at that moment you must resolve that you will no longer listen to these things, that you will listen only to the divine Consciousness and will do no other work except the divine work without worrying about personal results, free from all attachment, free from all preference, free from all wish for success, power, satisfaction, vanity, all this. All this must disappear and you must see only the divine Will incarnated in your will and making you act. Then, in this way, you are cured."

(To be continued)

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TO MR. NISSIM EZEKIEL FORTY-TWO YEARS AGO

TWO LETTERS

(Since the time these letters were written, Mr. Nissim Ezekiel who was then a little-known young man has won a name for himself as a Modernist, but seems to have lost something of the open aesthetic mind he had in the days when his Modernism was still in the making and seemed free from an utterly exclusive theoretical attitude towards the human situation in at least its artistic activity if not also in its choice of life-style.)

Hamilton Villa, Nepean Sea Road, Bombay, 9-4-43

Dear Mr. Ezekiel,

Your letter made me very glad. To get unsolicited appreciation is always a delightful thing—in tune with a poet's mind which knows the delight of unsolicited spontaneous inspiration. Bolts of beauty out of the blue are the experiences which matter most to him—and your letter about *The Secret Splendour* came like a sudden flash, all the more unexpected and welcome because my poetry is such as is not likely to go home to many hearts.

A wishy-washy sort of mysticism is not without popular appeal, for it answers to the vague notion or feeling most people have about God. At a gathering once, everybody was asked what they meant by God. A man got up and said the word God always conjured up to his mind a grey oblong blur. Well, so long as one poetises a grey oblong blur, one meets with some response. But if one's experience is intense and intimate and one talks in concrete living terms—terms of mystical vision and direct spiritual contact—people are bewildered, the symbolism seems to them fantastic, the emotion fills them with severe "agoraphobia", an oppressive dread of wide, open, unhuman spaces of consciousness.

It is a peculiar paradox that as soon as one speaks of the Divine as something close and concrete in spite of its vastness, one is charged with dealing in unreality and incomprehensible images. I do admit that several poems of mine present occult lights and shadows, shapes and designs—"White Horse" and "Agni" and perhaps "Gnosis" and "Innermost" are the extreme examples: these cannot lay bare their symbolic significance in a clear "mental" way and they call for an abnormal state of hushed intense receptivity of the inner being. But all my work is not the sheer occult. Much of it carries an interpretative aura round whatever central revelatory glow it may have. Still, the impression created on the majority of readers is of the unreal and the incomprehensible, just because the Divine who is supposed to keep at a decent distance comes close and takes gripping shape and frightens the little complacent appetites of life by a concrete touch of some superhuman infinite. In the midst of such reactions, what a joy to find someone who not only feels the pure

poetic fire but also stands fascinated by the mystical vision and emotion at play in it!

What, however, pleases me very much is that you do not start with appreciating the mystical vision and emotion and then praise the poetry. You begin at the right end. You approach the vision and the emotion through the poetic body they wear. This is how literary criticism, to be of any value, should always go. And I am of the opinion also that if people had the genuine aesthetic sense, all authentic poetry would come alive to them and it wouldn't matter whether the theme was mystical or non-mystical. Even the sheer occult would not strike them as quite a stranger. Of course a mystical bent in the reader helps to take him to the last depth of a poem that is "God-intoxicated", but a keen aesthetic sense is enough to give a luminous suggestive thrill, a moving manifold meaning. So, I have at times doubted the poetic quality of my work. "Surely," I have argued to myself, "it can't be the mere mystical theme which is a stumbling-block. Since true poetry makes everything spring to life, I must be deficient in the afflatus if so many come away dissatisfied from my poems." A letter like yours brings me, for all its brevity, a confidence in my own powers and makes me think that it is some defect of aesthetic sympathy in my readers that is responsible for the blank and befuddled faces with which they generally look up from the pages of my book.

If there were more people like you I would be emboldened to risk money, publishing the whole lot of my work: *The Secret Splendour* is just a few things picked out to make a feeler.

With kind regards,
Yours sincerely,
K. D. Sethna

Hamilton Villa, Nepean Sea Road, Bombay, 3-5-43

Dear Mr. Ezekiel,

I can understand your puzzlement. You are not quite to blame for the interpretation I put upon your letter. The only blame that can be laid at your door is that you were too brief and did not give your response to my book in detail. But you did give the right response after all—the aesthetic one, which is the most important in dealing with any art. Having given it, you did not feel it necessary or perhaps even relevant to say whether you agreed with the subject-matter of my poems. I too placed my main stress on the aesthetic approach and said that I was glad it was not predilection for any special subject-matter that ruled your estimate. I concluded, however, from the absence of any criticism of my subject-matter that you did not find it alien to your temperament. This conclusion may be illegitimate, but my experience of readers who either fight shy or fall foul of my book because of its mystical theme tripped me into thinking your appreciation was facilitated by actual sympathy with that theme.

I am glad you have made matters perfectly clear. But I am afraid that, while

I know now how you stand *vis-à-vis* my mysticism, I do not quite see why you should stand as you do. You have expressed certain opinions that leave me unsatisfied. Take, for instance, your explanation about the lack of response to my poetry on the part of many readers. Your explanation is a sort of excuse for their irresponsiveness, but it ignores completely the question as to how poetry is to be approached. Besides, it spoils the standard of criticism implied in your first letter—the aesthetic standard which has led even you who totally disagree with my mysticism to voice your appreciation. You mention a few poems now as your favourites out of my book, but surely it is not on the strength of this handful that you complemented me so generously. That generosity, based on a wide aesthetic appreciation, accords ill with your theory of what the poetic art should be. You take too utilitarian a view. I agree that no art should be entirely divorced from life, but the use of it should not be merely to help one to “breast” any one particular kind of misery. If poetry helps a person rotting away in a slum or working his way towards a scientific vision of the universe or else hungering for the “clean sweetness of lust”, but does not give any nourishment to a man sitting in a palace of pleasure or stirred by inexplicable longings for the Eternal and the Infinite or groping through labyrinths of dream towards the ecstasy of Krishna’s flute-call—if poetry is meant for just this, that or the other kind of man but has no value for all the moods of the human heart, then its essence remains ungrasped and unutilised. The correct way of making use of poetry is to get from it an aesthetic enjoyment, an influence of perfect beauty that gives one’s consciousness an intensity, a subtlety, a sublimity, no matter what the content and the style. All sorts of content, all varieties of style can be poetically used and made fruitful for that growth of consciousness. To demand from poetry anything else except that keen growth through the enjoyment of flawless form and absolute expression is to miss its essence and impoverish its flowering.

Your plea that “poetry must be in the forefront of the modern struggle for an understanding of our most difficult age” is not wrong, if you don’t narrow down the meaning of the word “modern”. By that word I suppose you mean “scientific”, but poetry cannot be a handmaid of Science and nothing else. I welcome scientific poets with open arms, but so long as they embody the scientific attitude in a poetic form and expression. If there is no intensity of sight, speech and rhythm, there is no poetry at all. No amount of scientific attitude can give it the breath of living beauty without which it is no longer an art. Let us face slums and brothels by all means, but let us get poetry out of them and not mere poverty and prostitution. Let us feel them like a whip of flame across our minds and not turn them into grist for the mill of an economic theory. Let us also not fix our eyes on slums and brothels only. Life has many other manifestations. Let us face too the “dark night of the soul” in search of the Divine and the excesses of the “star-struck debauchees of light”. (Excuse this quoting by me from my own “Ne Plus Ultra”.) There are men who live in our difficult age and are at the same time mystically inclined. Many of those who are not thus inclined embrace an idealistic philosophy and do not believe in

Dialectical Materialism or the Marxist view of man's development. "The terrific achievements of modern English and American poets", which you speak of is, I am afraid, pretty poor when compared to the work of Bridges, Masefield, Siegfried Sassoon, Gordon Bottomley, Lascelles Abercrombie, AE and Yeats—none of them pledged whole-heartedly to Science.

Yeats is acknowledged universally as the greatest poet of our age in English. What does his poetry consist of? In his youth, a good amount of the most exquisite love-lyricism woven into patterns of Irish myth and mystic symbol; in his old age, on the one hand the vigorous utterance of a zestful, inquisitive, flesh-accepting death-confronting realism touched by what seems a scientific attitude, and on the other hand the suggestively sinewy formulation of an occult and esoteric vision that regards all things here as a faint representation of some secret Spirit within us, of archetypes and archimages that are beyond the physical universe. Yeats was a many-sided genius and in his poems he focused all those sides, with an underlying mystical sense which was rather ivory-towerish in his young days but life-gripping in the days of his maturity. If the greatest poet of our age can help us decide what poetry is and should do, then certainly it is not a handmaid of Science or of "men among men" with a social-reformist and Marxist penchant. I have nothing against such men among men, provided they give us genuine poetry and don't shut their eyes to the possibility of genuine poetry being produced by other kinds of men who grip life but from a different angle.

You seem to be obsessed with the scientific and social-reformist angle. You believe that thus we can best interpret "our chaos-mad world". But isn't a scientific and social-reformist pointing out of "paths of progress" and suggesting of "solutions for modern and ancient problems" just a new phase of a very old and utterly played-out game? Bernard Shaw makes a telling exposure of the myth of progress in his *Handbook for Revolutionaries* at the end of *Man and Superman*. No doubt, there are changes in the outer being of man from age to age, but it is ridiculous to say that a modern man is more evolved in his inner being, in his mind and heart, than the Athenian of the time of Pericles or an Italian of the Renaissance. Is a modern scientist more evolved in consciousness than Aristotle or Leonardo da Vinci? Is Stalin on a higher plane of conscious development than Draco or Lycurgus or our own Indian Asoka whom H. G. Wells, himself a scientific mind, calls the most enlightened ruler the world has ever seen? Monarchy, oligarchy, aristocracy, plutocracy, democracy, Bolshevism are merely the outer moulds of life: it is true that each age needs to change the moulds inherited from the past, but to hold one age of civilisation as definitely superior in basic culture to another age just because the former is "modern" and to regard the new-fangled world-vision of it as the peak of truth just because it happens to be our own—this is a very short-sighted and external way of judging things. As Byron puts it, all so-called progress seems to be a swinging from tweedledum to tweedledee: man remains essentially the same half-beast and half-angel that he was when the Rig-Veda was composed.

The one conclusion forced on an impartial scrutiniser of history is that it is vain to hope for a solution of life's problem so long as man keeps on his present plane of consciousness. It is surely a very wide plane but everywhere in it there is a fundamental defect, a limitation in the very quality and 'stuff' of it: this defect and limitation assumes a large number of guises, it is clothed in dress after startling dress of outer life—but its burning imperfection eats through all these wrappings, reduces them to dust and ashes and glares forth its own unchanging futility. Is it any wonder that those who see this very keenly are visited by an extreme world-weariness? Man's fruitless effort to solve his problems by a mere movement on the self-same plane becomes a haunting spectre to every sensitive student of consciousness—and out of the realisation of that futility comes the escapism of a certain type of art and a certain type of mystical aspiration. We may regard such an escapism as weak and defeatist, but what it does bring into view is that there is no real hope in any horizontal progress. Not in this direction or that on the same plane, not in a horizontal procedure, but in a getting beyond our present plane, in a vertical procedure, lies the sole hope of finding the key to our riddles. If not the final key, at least a truly new lease of life can be discovered by nothing else save a vertical *élan*.

I don't run down the importance of horizontal activity: to leap vertically and forget to move horizontally ends in escapism. Escapism may be a refreshing novelty, a worth-while thing if indulged in on special occasions, even an admirable grand alternative to our "chaos-mad world" if it takes so magnificent a form as Nirvana; it cannot, however, be the logical goal of our earth-endeavour. Nirvana may be a far finer mode of experience than the petty grooves of our common pleasures and pains: it is not the acme or the plenitude of the spiritual experience into which man can break out from those grooves. Not merely an ascent into the Eternal and the Infinite is the last word of spirituality: there can be a descent as well of the divine consciousness into the world. But this much seems certain: we must progress vertically, find a new plane higher than the mere mental, transcend the splendours and the miseries of our mental triumphs before we proceed from that higher level as far horizontally as possible in order to embrace the whole of life and reshape it with hands guided by a vision far above the basically flawed mind. True mysticism asks us nothing more than to effect this transcendence and this reshaping. The Rig-Veda, our earliest mystical cry, has this theme running through it—and, though later a superb escapism came to the forefront, our latest cry is again for a double divinisation, a transformation of both the outer and the inner, the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo.

Sri Aurobindo is no obscurantist. In his Ashram at Pondicherry there is a flowering of every aspect of our being—art, philosophy, science, industry, all are encouraged, developed, illumined, fulfilled. But the basis of everything is the growth of a new consciousness higher than the mind. And just because he wants an actual growth, a clear verifiable experience, a living realisation, there is nothing wishy-washy or abstract about his Yoga. In fact, no Yoga is abstract or wishy-washy. Nor is there

an utterly isolating ivory tower in genuine mysticism. Was Buddha, moving like a luminous lion from one end of north India to the other, a dilettante dreamer remote from the world? "Is Nirvana even for me, the poor barber?" asked one of his followers. "Yes," came the reply, "even for you, the poor barber." And, remember, the barber did not cease to be a barber: as Chesterton would have put it, he ceased merely to be barbarous. Work and service were not banished from the Buddha's programme: they were a part of it, but as aids to a spiritual growth. And, remember, Buddha is generally taken to be the most monastery-minded of our country's spiritual figures. The more characteristic turn of its cultural genius is to be seen in its accounts of those it endows with Avatarhood—a phenomenon in which the Divine is viewed as become incarnate in the human, Rama, the Avatar, waged a terrible war and destroyed that Hitler of the traditional ancient world, Ravana, and ruled as a king over many lands. Krishna, the Avatar, charioted Arjuna over a blood-soaked battlefield and founded a new age. Are such indefatigable workers for the soul's tranquillity, these warriors of the Spirit's peace, insipid and impotent dabblers in mist? I fail to mark in their lives the isolation you speak of or the taking away of an individual from society. They were not isolationists, for the simple reason that to be mystical is, as again G.K.C. would have phrased it, the exact opposite of being misty.

"The grey oblong blur" is the ordinary non-mystical man's false notion of what the true mystical experience is. The true mystic does not float in a haze. He may need a period of concentration for getting into a new plane of consciousness: the job is a tough one and at times calls for exclusive and absorbed inwardness. But all tough jobs call for a single-pointed focus of one's being. Even if one were drawn away from the world for good, the experience is not of something less concrete but of something more substantial: the Spirit is described by those who have realised it as more dense, more powerful, more actual to all our faculties than the table at which I am sitting and the typewriter on which I am banging away. It has a concreteness and substantiality which makes our flesh-contacts pallid and passionless in comparison. Where in the whole literature of love is there a description more intense than those of the mystical ecstasies of St. Teresa and Mirabai? Where in Nature-poetry is there a stronger sense of substantial being invading all our powers of perception and meeting us everywhere and infinitely than in the spiritual intensities of the Upanishads and the Bhagawad Gita? The fact that the Spirit is first found by going inward does not mean that it is not concrete and substantial: the going inward is done merely to arrive at the deepest centre of consciousness in us, a centre which is hidden at present but which when found is able to give a new vision, a new perception, a new sensation of things. An animal functions and perceives from a centre of consciousness which has little of the glorious self-sense, the splendid individual core which we mental creatures enjoy and round which all our grandiose experience of the Cosmos is held and organised. We may even say that we experience a new plane which the animal is unaware of or perhaps glimpses most faintly.

Similarly the mystic who finds a profounder Self by going inward attains a keener, a more complex and more concrete consciousness of things, and experiences a new plane which our normal human mind dimly catches in its highest artistic, philosophic and scientific visions.

Mysticism is not a denial of the senses, as you imagine. The senses are, no doubt, given a different mode of action, but that mode does not frustrate them any more than our human mentalised mode frustrates that of the animal instead of lifting it to a richer revelation. The new plane above the mind charges our whole sense-nature with an experience of the Divine: the Divine is seen, heard, breathed, tasted and touched in everything—a hidden Godhead becomes real to us wherever we turn and comes into contact with us in each cosmic phenomenon through our five senses even as through our ideative and emotional nature. This reshapes our habitual desires and activities—we have no longer the narrow selfish grab, the small jealous clutch: our greediness and grossness are lost, but we are not “sicklied o’er” with any impoverishment of the essence of sensuous rapture. A subtlety sharper and richer than our normal awareness acts through our organs of sense as well as those of feeling and thought.

You appear to fancy that to kiss a woman and copulate with her are the only concrete manifestations of love. The mystic’s union with the Divine is just as concrete and much more intense: have you never wondered why there is so urgent an erotic strain in descriptions of that union? The erotic strain is there because the experience lacks nothing of the concreteness of kissing and copulating: what it differs in from them is, first, that the love-element has not the gross greed taking so much away from the “clean sweetness of lust” *à la* Whitman and, second, that the object of rapture is luminous and divine and deathless. The devotee has the sensation of becoming one with not only an infinite light but also a dense and beautiful focus and formation of that light into a body, the body of Christ, the body of Krishna. The whole mystical experience is based on our becoming aware of subtle senses, subtle bodies, subtle substances. Spirit sees and spirit touches and spirit holds. And in its experience Matter and its concreteness are not washed off: they are realised as one form of a still greater Concreteness that is the secret primal substance of the Divine. I fear that you not only have no mystical experience, but also have paid little attention to what mystics have affirmed in all ages. I myself do not pretend to be a master-mystic. I have stood on the fringe of the Mystery as yet. But what little I have known in direct experience—an experience, I may say, equally verifiable by others as anything given in Science—has had nothing gaseous about it. Do I speak anywhere in my poems of thin abstractions? Take the pieces which are your favourites. In *Gods* the Soul in us that we have forgotten is declared to be

a Sun

Lost in gigantic self-oblivion.

In *Night in the Open* I suggest the enlarged spiritual consciousness by

A thousand tongues ablaze with ecstasy.

In *Pointers* I bring in

a Lover, Immortal Mate
To the poignant sorrow
Of human fate.

In *Grace* there is a mention of the “kiss”, “hand”, and “smile” of the Divine Mother. I am not here poetising mystical experience, I am only mysticising poetry: poetry’s intense sensuousness and passion are the best stuff in which to express the intenser sensuousness and passion of mysticism.

I hope I haven’t tired you with this long letter. I am looking forward eagerly to your book of poems. With kind thoughts,

I remain,
Yours sincerely,
K. D. SETHNA

A FLEETING MOMENT

THE conditioned mind refuses to diverge from the chosen bed.
Unresponded calls knock and knock in vain.
I cringe in dismay with unbearable pain in my heart
And sit in wait on the sandy beach seeking solace.
The sun has dipped behind the horizon curve
For a night’s rest, wishing my earth-half a crimson adieu.
Colours linger in the ledges of clouds—a rosy reminder.
The celestial beauty seeps into my enthralled soul
In droplets of music. A seething surge of mobility
Starts in a hovering hum to take
Shape in a psalm to the source
From which flows the balm for troubled souls.

DEBANSHU

RECALL

WHAT happens on total recall
Of that beautiful happening
That appears so fresh and green
As if it happened tomorrow?
The joy and the love it evokes
May be so sharp that you push the pause
As a sweet joyous pain lingers
And slowly spreads within.

Sometimes you recall at leisure
And collecting all would-have-beens
Choose and select which to build-in
To create an even better happening;
Then you wrap it in a dream
And pack and keep it safe
For your aspiration to unfold
Sometime someday someplace.

Rare is an event that meets the demands
Of tomorrow's wants and the growing needs
Of two evolving souls, rarely still
It's equally shared and lived.
When such a one is recalled
A soft light suffuses the whole being,
Exquisite scenes are viewed as through a fog
Moving in rhythm with some unknown song.

Some frames leap out of the screen
And are relived with a newer perception
Of their meaning and a sense of wonder
At the increasing beauty and joy and truth
That they seek to manifest.
Two hearts and minds mingle and coalesce
As the souls become more intimately related
Even though the physical selves be a distance apart.

A subtle fragrance fills all spaces
As waves of time retreat
Into a deep stillness.

To recall and relive even in bits
 Such an experience of trust and unity,
 Of increasing self-giving and equality
 Creates greater widenesses and heights
 For the souls to ascend and build from above
 A future that is unforeseeable from below,
 A tomorrow of increasing unity and identity
 To be shared and lived together.
 While on another plane
 Strife and toil in turmoil of time
 Go on.

On the surface divisions continue,
 In depth all is one wide consciousness
 Ever growing in peace and joy and oneness.

DINKAR PALANDE

PEACE OF SOUL

As under tangled overlapping twines,
 Some quiet unobtrusive stream flows,
 Its murmurs hushed, its face invisible,
 Thus runs the silent river of Peace.
 A wandering ray of Consciousness
 Suddenly penetrates the dense foliage of thoughts:
 Then a blinding flash reveals
 Its tremendous presence, pregnant with force.
 Alas, the undergrowth of life
 Closes again over the felicitous course,
 And we remain ever lost
 In the dense jungle of devious mind.
 Forgotten flows the nectarous Peace of Soul.

SHYAM KUMARI

FURTHER STUDIES IN INTEGRAL PSYCHOLOGY

(Continued from the issue of September 1985)

CONTEMPORARY PSYCHOLOGISTS AND PERSONALITY

Prefatory Note

CONTEMPORARY psychology is predominantly Experimental Psychology which is emulating the Natural Science model and wants to be quantitative and mathematical. It is showing fine results and utilities. It has been said of Intelligence Tests that they are useful in the hands of one who can do without them.

This approach tends to take man as a fixed quantity and then study its relation to the environment. But personality is essentially a dynamic fact and all the business of education and culture is how to promote higher qualities. For that the unexpressed possibilities of nature are more important than the expressed ones.

What personality essentially is then becomes more important than the study of its reactions. And there is a lot in Contemporary Psychology on this issue too. Here we have a representative assortment of views on the subject. They do show the direction in which this investigation is moving. There is a view of personality as a fact of 'Self-actualisation' supported by many psychologists. There is also a recognition and appreciation of the search and the realisation of 'Who am I?' Jung's perceptions regarding the deeper and fuller nature of personality are the most interesting and most influential too. They show a close sympathy to the Indian yogic and mystic perceptions. What is really interesting is that the qualities of 'wholeness', of 'harmony' within as with the external world are appreciated as the essential qualities of personality. Even Freud had a feeling for the mystic practices and what they could possibly achieve.

The Western trends regarding the nature of personality are thus much in sympathy with the repeatedly verified Indian perceptions.

Kuppuswamy has very well summarised the present-day position of scientific psychology on the subject. Says he regarding Jung:

"The highest bliss on earth shall be the joys of personality."

Again personality is:

"a well-rounded psychic whole that is capable of resistance and abounding in energy".

And yet a fuller statement:

"Personality is an act of high courage flung in the face of life, the absolute affirmation of all that constitutes the individual, the most successful adaptation to the universal conditions of existence coupled with the greatest possible freedom for self-determination."

And Dr. Kuppuswamy concludes:

“The influence of Jung has brought about a new trend in the theories of personality in modern Psychology.”

He also says:

“According to Maslow, Allport and Rogers, the highest need of man is ‘self-actualization’, utilizing his talents and potentialities to the full. Such individuals ‘fulfill’ themselves and do the best they are capable of doing.”

Rogers, in particular, is represented as saying:

“Man must be free to enhance himself and social conditions should facilitate self-actualization and self-enhancement”.

These trends are extremely interesting and yet the overall pressure of life and culture the world over is mechanical.

A full and careful study of the excerpts from recent contemporary psychologists will certainly be enlightening.

INDRA SEN

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Selected Original Statements

1. *Sigmund Freud*: “It can easily be imagined, too, that certain practices of mystics may succeed in upsetting the normal relation between the different regions of the mind, so that, for example, the perceptual system becomes able to grasp relations in the deeper layers of the ego and in the id which would otherwise be inaccessible to it. Whether such a procedure can put one in possession of the ultimate truths, from which all good will flow, may be safely doubted. All the same, we must admit that the therapeutic efforts of psycho-analysis have chosen much the same method of approach. For their object is to strengthen the ego, to make it more independent of the super-ego, to widen its field of vision and so to extend its organisation that it can take over new portions of the id. Where id was, there shall ego be.” (*New Lectures*, 1933, p. 106)

2. *C. G. Jung*: Founder of the School of Analytical Psychology: (A) “All the usual little remedies and medicaments of psychology fall somewhat short (to explain personality) just as they do with the man of genius or the creative human being. Derivation from ancestral heredity or from the milieu does not quite succeed; inventing fictions about childhood, which is so popular today, end—to put it mildly—in the inappropriate, the explanation from necessity—he had no money, was ill, and so forth—remains caught in mere externalities.” (*The Integration of Personality*, 1940, p. 299)

B) “If we survey the situation as a whole, we come to the inevitable conclusion—at least in my opinion—that a psychic element is present that expresses itself through the tetrad. This conclusion demands neither daring speculation nor extravagant phantasy. If I have called the centre the ‘self’, I did so after ripe reflection and a

careful assessment of the data of experience as well as of history." (*Ibid.*, p. 198)

C) "The centre acts like a magnet upon the disparate materials and processes of the unconscious and, like a crystal grating, catches them one by one".

(*Ibid.*, p. 197)

3. *Gardner Murphy*: "Nobody knows anything much about the nature of man. We are in a position to raise a great many questions, to raise questions perhaps so grave and so fundamental that we begin to wonder if we even have a method for approaching an ultimate solution." (*Main Currents of Modern Thought*, Vol. 9, No. 2, N.Y.)

4. *Kurt Goldstein*: "The traditional view assumes various drives which come into the foreground under certain conditions. We assume only one drive, the drive for self-actualization of the organism; but we are compelled to concede that under certain conditions the tendency to actualize one potentiality is so strong that the organism is governed by it. Superficially, therefore, our theory may not appear so much in conflict with others. However, I think there is an essential difference. From our standpoint, we can understand the latter phenomenon as an abnormal deviation from the normal behaviour under definite conditions; but the theory of separate drives can never comprehend normal behaviour without positing another agency which makes the decision in the struggle between the single drives. That means: Any theory of drives has to introduce another, a 'higher' agency. We must reject this auxiliary hypothesis as unsuitable to solve the problem. 'The tendency of the organism to actualize itself' always confronts us with the same answer. We do not need the drives." (*The Self*, Clark E. Moustakas, New York)

5. *Prescott Lecky*: "Let us think of the individual, therefore, as a unified system with two sets of problems—one the problem of maintaining inner harmony within himself, and the other the problem of maintaining harmony with the environment, especially the social environment, in the midst of which he lives. In order to understand the environment he must keep his interpretations consistent with his experience, but in order to maintain his individuality he must organize his interpretations to form a system which is internally consistent. This consistency is not objective, of course, but subjective and wholly individual.

"The personality develops as a result of actual contacts with the world, and incorporates into itself the meanings derived from external contacts. Essentially, it is the organization of experience into an integrated whole." (*Ibid.*, p. 91)

6. *Carl R. Rogers*: "I have however come to believe that, in spite of this bewildering horizontal multiplicity, there is a simple answer. As I follow the experience of many clients in the therapeutic relationship which we endeavour to create for them it seems to me that each one has the same problem. Below the level of the

problem situation about which the individual is complaining—behind the trouble with studies, or wife, or employer, or with his own uncontrollable or bizarre behaviour, or with his frightening feelings, lies one central search. It seems to me that at bottom each person is asking: *Who am I, really? How can I get in touch with this real self, underlying all my surface behaviour? How can I become myself?*" (*Ibid.*, p. 196)

7. *A. H. Maslow*: "The lack of meditateness and inwardness, of real conscience and real values, is a standard American personality defect; a shallowness, a superficial living on the surface of life, a living by other people's opinions rather than by one's own native, inner voice. These are the other-directed men who live, or rather are directed by publicity campaigns, by testimonials, by majority vote, by public opinion, by what other people think. They do not really know what they want, what they feel, what they, themselves, think right and wrong. Mind you, when everything goes well these are the adjusted people. They feel fine. They never go to the psychotherapist for help, thinking until it is too late that they need none. And yet they are sick, deep down sick, for they have lost their individuality, their uniqueness. They have become robots." (*Ibid.*, p. 239)

8. *G. Bose*: An eminent Indian Psychologist Head of the Department of Psychology, Calcutta University, wrote in his 'Progress of Psychology during the Last Twenty-five Years', published by the Indian Science Congress in 1938, the following:

"India's ancient learned men had a genius for introspective meditation and the Indian Psychologist has that heritage. In this respect he enjoys an advantage over his colleagues in the West. If this faculty is properly cultivated problems requiring deep introspection such as those of thought processes, higher cultural inhibitions, etc., will be successfully solved. The mystic experience of saints and Yogis should form the subject-matter of psychological research and India is the best place for this study."

9. *B. Kuppaswamy*: Formerly Head of the Department of Psychology, Mysore University, writes in an article entitled "Yoga and Self-actualisation" as follows:

"The normal tendency in the West is to draw conclusions about the inner world from the outward impressions on the basis of the principle that 'nothing is in the mind which was not previously in the senses'. But Carl Jung started a new line of thinking in psychology regarding the problem of self and personality. According to him the ego is brought into being in childhood and firmly established in adolescence. Personality, as the expression of the wholeness of man, according to Jung is an adult ideal, whose conscious realization through individuation is the aim of human development in the second half of life.

"Quoting Goethe, 'The Highest bliss on earth shall be the joys of personality', Jung wrote in 1932 in his lecture entitled, 'The Development of Personality' that 'the ultimate aim and strongest desire of all making is to develop that fullness of life which is called personality' (p. 169). This is in contrast to the ordinary educational

ideal of mass-produced, standardized, normal human beings. According to Jung personality consists of 'a well-rounded psychic whole that is capable of resistance and abounding in energy' (p. 169). It is obvious that this is an 'adult ideal'. So he writes, 'The fact is that the high ideal of educating the personality is not for children' (p. 169). He looks upon the self as that part of the human personality which is 'always becoming', which wants to develop and become whole (p. 170). According to Jung, 'personality is a seed that can only develop by slow stages throughout life. There is no personality without definiteness, wholeness, and ripeness' (p. 171). Further 'personality' is an act of high courage flung in the face of life, the absolute affirmation of all that constitutes the individual, the most successful adaptation to the universal conditions of existence coupled with the greatest possible freedom for self-determination' (p. 171).

"The influence of Jung has brought about a new trend in the theories of personality in modern Psychology.

"According to Maslow, Allport and Rogers, the highest need of man is 'self-actualization', utilizing his talents and potentialities to the full. Such individuals 'fulfill' themselves and do the best they are capable of doing. They are engaged in the fields of creative work whether it is art, science and technology, or social institutions. Their aim is cognitive as well as aesthetic; to know reality—physical, biological, social and personal, and to appreciate beauty in nature and art. They are persons who are free from superstitions and prejudices which distort reality. They are characterised by the acceptance of self, others and nature. They are spontaneous in their behaviour which is marked by simplicity, lack of artificiality and any straining for effect, without sham or pretence.

"Rogers agrees with Jung, Maslow and Allport that it is through self-actualization that man differentiates himself from others and moves in the direction of self-responsibility. He asserts that the goal of the individual is to 'become' himself; this is the self-actualization process. Once a person has actualized himself at that level, he has learnt to 'enhance' himself. Man must be free to enhance himself and social conditions should facilitate self-actualization and self-enhancement."

10. *C. M. Bhatia* in his presidential address entitled "The Nature of Psychology and its contribution to Human Welfare" at the Psychology Section, Indian Science Congress, Calcutta, 1980 said:

"Unless Psychology is willing to deal with the heights to which human individuals have risen or shown themselves capable of rising, growth of Psychology would be stunted. Many more facts are at present known than modern Psychology cares to acknowledge, perhaps again in a defensive mood to accept only facts which it is able to explain within its present frame-work. Man in his heights is the subject-matter of Psychology, whether it is his mystic experiences, his creativity, his destructiveness or the concomitant Psychological functioning of his body in respect of these experiences.

“To fathom the mysteries of nature not directly encompassable by the human mind, becomes more a central problem to Psychology than to other sciences. To be able to go beyond the human mind ultimately becomes the problem of Psychology.

“Psychology is not an elementary science. It is an ultimate science if ever there could be one. The study of Psychology, whether in the universities or outside them, must be attuned to this position if the study of Psychology is to be worth-while and meaningful.”

11. *H. C. Ganguli*: Head of the Psychology Department, Delhi University in his elaborate study of ‘Meditation’ says:

“Meditation is a late entry into the research field but the interest it has aroused in investigators is most gratifying and this for several reasons. Firstly, there is substantial evidence by now that meditation leads to distinct therapeutic gains and alleviation of suffering. Secondly, there is the enticing prospect of gaining more knowledge about the nature and functioning of consciousness through interdisciplinary research and arriving at a unified model of consciousness that will be useful for an understanding of the cognitive processes. Lastly, there is a possibility, a fond hope perhaps, that meditation research may show the way to enhance the capacity and range of functioning of the human brain. This last possibility is exciting and can be, if attained, looked upon as a major scientific breakthrough (*Meditation: An Altered State of Consciousness*, Ms. p. 5).

“For the modern man meditation not only seeks to provide a non-invasive, non-pharmacological device for symptom relief, but also serves as an aid for attaining a higher level of self-actualization and psychological maturity” (*Ibid.*, p. 26).

12. Here are a few further passages of Jung representing his insights of later years too:

1. “Just as a man still is what he always was, so he already is what he will become. The conscious mind does not embrace the totality of a man for this totality consists only partly of his conscious contents, and for the other and greater part, of his unconscious, which is of indefinite extent with no assignable limits. In this totality the conscious mind is contained like a smaller circle within a larger one. Hence it is quite possible for the ego to be made into an object, that is to say, for a more compendious personality to emerge in the course of development and take the ego into its service. Since the growth of personality comes out of the unconscious, which is by definition unlimited, the extent of the personality now gradually realizing itself cannot in practice be limited either. But unlike the Freudian superego, it is still individual. It is in fact individuality in the highest sense, and therefore theoretically limited, since no individual can possibly display every quality (I have called this process of realisation the ‘individuation process’).”

(*Collected Works*, Vol. II, p. 259)

2. “Individuation appears, on the one hand, as a synthesis of a new unity which

previously consisted of scattered particles and, on the other hand, as the revelation of something which existed before the ego and is in fact its father or creator and also its totality" (*Ibid.* p. 263).

3. ... "The unconscious is not just evil by nature, it is also the source of the highest good: not only dark but also light, not only bestial, semi-human, and demonic but superhuman, spiritual, and in the classical sense of the word 'divine'..." (*Ibid.*, Vol. 16, p. 192)

4. "In talking about the unconscious we have always to talk in paradoxes... We know just as well, and can rely on the fact, that the unconscious is not only chaos but also order"... (*Ibid.*, p. VI/II)

5. "...It must be a genuine process of purification where 'all superfluties are consumed in the fire' and the basic facts emerge. Is there anything more fundamental than the realisation '*Thus is what I am*' ? It reveals a unity which nevertheless is—or was—a diversity. No longer the earlier ego with its make-believes and artificial contrivances, but another 'objective' ego, which for this reason is better called the 'Self'..." (*Ibid.*, p. 199).

6. "...the ever deeper descent into the unconscious suddenly becomes illumination from above..." (*Ibid.*, p. 281).

7. "...The individuation is psychically a border-line phenomenon which needs special conditions in order to become conscious. Perhaps it is the first step along a path of development to be trodden by the men of the future..." (*Ibid.*, Vol. 8, p. 225).

8. "Yoga teaching rejects all fantasy products and we do the same, but the East does so for entirely different reasons. In the East there is an abundance of conceptions and teachings that give full expression to the creative fantasy; in fact, protection is needed against an excess of it. We, on the other hand, regard fantasy as worthless subjective day-dreaming. Naturally the figures of the unconscious do not appear in the form of abstractions stripped of all imaginative trappings; on the contrary, they are embedded in a web of fantasies of extraordinary variety and bewildering profusion. The East can reject these fantasies because it has long since extracted their essence and condensed it in profound teachings. But we have never even experienced these fantasies, much less extracted their quintessence. We still have a large stretch of experience to catch up with, and only when we have found the sense in apparent nonsense we can separate the valuable from the worthless..."

(*Ibid.*, Vol. 13, p. 43)

(*To be continued*)

HOW FAR IS PONDICHERRY?

(3)

(Continued from the issue of September 1985)

It was morning-twilight when the train arrived at Waltair. I suddenly woke up with the terrific shouting of the coffee-wallahs, of Railway caterers, and saw that the Professor had awakened earlier and already finished his ablutions. He was meditating with a burning incense-stick in his hand. He could not sit comfortably because the gentleman on the middle berth was still asleep. I was occupying the lowest berth but fortunately my co-passenger just above me got up too. After visiting the bathroom, when I came back to my seat I saw that my friends were pleasantly enjoying hot coffee. Then the train started.

'Now let us come to the primary issue.' With these words the Professor revived the discussion and we all expectantly looked at him. With fresh enthusiasm he began: 'I wonder how an unscientific theory or doctrine, as you may say, which indicates that "nothing in this world is independent of matter", has so effectively seized the brains of many intellectuals of the world. This theory is so vehemently preached that none dares challenge it; without taking the trouble to go deep into it everyone accepts it as if there is nothing to be ruled out. In reality there is no scientific truth in its basis. It is rather something alien to both physical and spiritual science.'

Dr. (Mrs.) Anjali Sen could not keep mum but humbly protested saying: 'In Sanskrit Matter is termed *Bhuta* or element. It is said that the world is made up of five elements (*Pancha-Bhutani*) of matter—and they are: Ether, Air, Fire, Water and Earth. Then what is wrong if it is said that "nothing in this world is independent of matter"? Of course I am not at all conversant with Indian philosophy, nor have I studied the Upanishads very deeply, yet with my poor knowledge I may dare say that there is nothing in the doctrine which spiritual science cannot support. It is said in the Taittiriya Upanishad, as far as I know, that out of Ether emerges Air and out of Air comes Agni or Fire; thence Water forms and out of Water Earth arises. These are the five elements which I have referred to. And according to physical science there is nothing in this world which does not contain "atoms"—that is the fundamental constituents of Matter. So, I cannot understand how the doctrine can be unscientific.'

The Professor had been listening with rapt attention. When she concluded he laughed for sometime but not loudly, nor sarcastically either, but with appreciation of what she had tried to elucidate. Then he stated with the same pleasant tone: 'From your statement it is clear that you have raised yourself upto the sky—that is, Ether—and explained how the Earth appeared out of Ether through other intermediary elements—Air, Fire, and Water. It is all right; but now one may ask, "From

what source does ether emerge?" You didn't explain this. There is also in the Taittiriya Upanishad a story from which we come to know that Bhrigu, son of Barun, once said to his father that he wished to know Brahman. Barun told him to practise Tapasya—that is, austerity. Then through Tapasya Bhrigu came to know that *Annam is Brahman*—"Matter is Brahman". So, according to spiritual science, we can also state that nothing in this world is independent of Brahman. If the materialists accept this discovery of spiritual science that "Matter is Brahman" and *Sarvam khalu idam Brahman*—Then the spiritualists will have no objection to admit the doctrine.³

The lady said, 'Whether the materialists accept it or not, it is clear even from the spiritual viewpoint that there is no untruth in the doctrine. The world which is Brahman is also not independent of Matter, because Brahman=Matter. Then is there any reason to comment that the doctrine is not based on spiritual science?'

The Professor laughed again and said: 'Yes, I admit your logic but if we examine the issue more deeply we may realise that it is not possible for physical scientists to accept that "Brahman" and "Matter" are one and the same thing, because that "truth" has not been discovered by them as yet. Besides, if they admit that Matter is also Brahman, then the whole Darwinian theory of Evolution as also many other doctrines of materialists based on that theory will become unjustifiable and therefore obsolete.'

Just at that time the lady was eager to say something but managed to remain silent.

The Professor asked: 'Have you got anything to say?'

'You please finish first and then if necessary I may comment,' replied the lady.

'That's very good,' said the Professor and then continued: 'I'm afraid it may take much time to discuss the whole theory of Evolution; so, I'd like to let you know one thing, which I think very important and that is what happened prior to Evolution, namely, what can be termed "Involution", for what was once involved is now being evolved. If we do not know what was involved then it is impossible for us to explain rightly the How and the Why of Evolution. Truly speaking, the theory of Evolution as presented by the physical scientists of the West in the last century contained only its phenomenal aspect and that too was not fully convincing, because they did not have any idea of the theory of Involution. However, let us try to comprehend what the Seers of the Upanishads indicated. In the *Mundaka Upanishad* it was stated that "through Its knowledge—Force Brahman—The Supreme Being—willed to create and, out of Its will, Annam—that is, inconscient Matter—emerged."

'Now the question may arise—"How did the Seers come to know this?" In reply we have only one thing to say;—"By practising Yoga." With this answer we will at once be divided into two distinct groups: one will accept the answer without any objection, while the other will reject it as nonsense and therefore unacceptable. The first group is known as spiritualists or believers in spirit and the other as mate-

rialists. As for myself I may say that it is still a mystery to me how one can comment that what has been stated in the Upanishads is unacceptable without getting it verified by practising Yoga? To speak the truth, Sri Aurobindo did verify it. He was, like many of us, a non-believer, at least a sceptic. But he did not reject the statement of the Upanishads as nonsense; on the contrary he himself practised strenuous yoga and then realised the same truth as had been envisaged by the Seers long ago. In fact he had not studied the Veda before he came to Pondicherry. When he began studying it, he saw that the Vedas contained the same truth as he had already experienced through Yoga. As we all know, Sri Aurobindo was one of the finest intellectuals of the contemporary world and his erudition was beyond dispute; still he became a great Yogi, and here he is second to none. He was with us till yesterday. So, we may take him as our contemporary. It is indeed very gratifying to regard him as the representative of the entire human race who sacrificed all, prepared all and achieved all—not for himself but for the whole of humanity.

‘He realised the Truth and like the ancient Rishis presented it to the sons of Immortality but not in a symbolic way as the Vedic Rishis had done but logically so that human reason might get hold of it.’

The Professor paused for a while, looked at the faces of all his listeners and then stated: ‘Now, friends, we have got two alternatives,—we either accept what an intellectual Yogi of our times has divulged to us through his writings or verify it by practising yoga—as did the yogi himself,—and then reject or accept it. But what do we actually do? We reject it rather ruthlessly without getting it verified. Because we are materialists we need not bother about anything spiritual. We need not bother, but we must comment vehemently that the things realised by the Rishis are not only baseless but also misleading.’

The lady remained silent but in deep pain. With a sigh the Professor continued:

‘Generally we call those things real which our senses can get hold of. We do not believe in the existence of such things as cannot be grasped by reason, that is by the rational intellect. But the Upanishads contain what the Seers and the Sages of the past realised through yoga and not through intellect. So the human intellect cannot grasp them. In this age of reason our rational mind treats them as a Utopia which has no utilitarian value in human society. We believe that the visions of the sages have no real relevance to our day-to-day living. So we feel no interest in them. We do not like to spend our time on thinking over the questions: What are they? Why were all those words there to attract a few people in all ages? Is there anything valuable in those utterances? If there be none, then why do we feel interested in them? Such questions never arise in our minds because the doctrine, raising its pointing finger, has already told us, “Know the Seers and Sages as parasites of society”, and thus we know and understand what role they are playing. They are seen consuming social wealth without contributing any direct aid to social production. We are taught to treat them as social enemies. We are expected to cherish the belief that spiritualists have nothing to do with our material

life. It is an illusion, a chimera,—nay, it is a social disease—very contagious and therefore requiring immediate treatment so that people may be relieved of this.

‘In fact our contemptuous disregard of Yoga-Sadhana is far more acute than our feeling of respect for modern physical science. This is really unfortunate. Of course there is nothing to get disheartened about, because the days are changing; the physical scientists are becoming more and more aware of the properties of energy inherent in Matter which now seems to them inexplicable. Their persistent effort to get hold of the truth fully will surely enable them one day to re-discover what the spiritual scientists—the Seers and Sages of bygone days—discovered long ago. It is a certitude that that “one day” is not very far when a physical scientist may be seen shouting with joy, “Harken, Ye children of the Earth, I have just discovered the Truth.” So, let us come back to our discussion of the Upanishads.’

The Professor looked at his students and was happy to see that all were smiling. In a pleasant mood he started again. Addressing Dr. (Mrs.) Sen he said:

‘You were speaking of the Five Elements of Matter. You also explained how the earth came into existence out of ether. But you didn’t indicate how life appeared or how mind emerged. That explanation you may find in the Mundaka Upanishad, in Sutra-3 of the 1st part of the 2nd Mundaka.

‘There it is nicely depicted: “It was out of That that the Life, the Mind and the Senses have emerged, The Ether, Air, Fire and Water and the Earth—the Upholder of All.”

‘Out of “That” have all been evolved and “That” means the Supreme Being, the Brahman—that is to say, the *akṣara puruṣa*—an aspect of *puruṣottama*. Now it is clear that all is Brahman; and this is the truth of the spiritual science realised by the Seers and Sages of ancient India—long ago.’

The Professor paused for a while and then said: ‘The materialists have also added to their statement the following words in the manner of an aphorism: “Mind is a subsequent development and operation of Matter”—whereas the spiritual science unequivocally indicated that life, mind and the senses had all been evolved out of “That”.’

The lady abruptly retorted: ‘You have stated that the statement of the materialists has no support of physical science itself.’

‘Yes, I said that because the physical scientists have not yet uttered their last word about matter and closed down their laboratories. On the contrary they are still busy experimenting as to how energy functions. To-day, after the discovery of the electron, Matter has become something different from what it was in the last century. So I was stating that we would not be surprised if we saw a scientist of the morrow shouting with joy—“Oh, children of the earth! listen—it is just revealed that there is nothing like absolute Matter. Matter is nothing but a form of consciousness.” Then will it be possible for you to treat this philosophy as scientific? If not, then how shall I admit that it has the support of physical science? Of course when the philosophy was first publicised in the last century

it had the support, but now logically the support should not be there because the scientists have made unthinkable progress in their journey to unveil the truth. It is not my personal opinion, madam, I only reproduce what has been said by the psychologists. Psychology is also a science. But it was not so much developed in the last century, when the materialist philosopher defined mind as in the above aphorism. It is true that properties of mind are there latent in the physical body built of Matter. But all actions and reactions of mind are not determined by the outer physical phenomena. There are subtle governing forces which material science cannot fathom. And that is why I wonder how this incomplete philosophy could seize the brain of the intellectuals of the world so effectively that they rejected with utter indignation the teachings of so many great souls of the world. When I used to discuss the issue with my colleagues at college I could easily realise the import of the verses of the Upanishad where it has been stated that both the fields of learning have to be explored, that is to say, we must learn both the *parā* and *aparā vidyā*. As we explore the physical world to acquire the knowledge of various aspects of the field (*aparā vidyā*), so we are to explore the inner world to acquire the knowledge of the profoundest truth of existence (*parā vidyā*)—that is to say, to realise the indwelling spirit. Physical science helps us to explore the outer world, and we have been able to make a gigantic development in the outer life. Similarly, exploration of the inner world is necessary for our inner development. Here we need the help of spiritual science. It is unfortunate that we have not yet been fully aware of the fact that our inner development is a necessity in order to cope with the rapid and huge development of our outer life. The crises which have engrossed humanity today are due to this lapse on our part. If we look a little deeply at the present-day world we shall see that man's outer development has enabled him to become the possessor of nuclear power. He can utilise this enormous energy for the progress of his kind on earth instead of applying it for the total destruction of his kith and kin; but due to his neglect of his inner development he cannot develop a feeling of love for his own fellows. The Titan in him has become his guide. He has lost his capability of awakening the indwelling spirit, his own inner being, because he did not give any cognisance to *parā-vidyā*. His indwelling spirit could have guided him to the right path. It is a pity, I must say, that the educationists of the modern age still have the false and misleading notion that *parā-vidyā*—the higher spiritual knowledge—is not at all necessary for the betterment of the socio-economic condition of humankind. So they suggest that *parā-vidyā* should be put in sharp opposition to *aparā-vidyā*—that is, the knowledge of the physical world including the body, the life and the mind. But the fact is that without the light of *parā vidyā* all *aparā vidyā* is merely illusion—that is to say, non-knowledge or false knowledge, *avidyā*. Of course we admit that job-orienting education is necessary; but at the same time the learners must know that to earn one's livelihood is not the sole purpose of human life,—because man is not an animal but somewhat superior to it. So he must try to become a full-man first and thereafter to rise above

manhood, that is, become superior to man. If the learners are not made aware of this ideal, then what is happening all over the world will continue to happen.

'Hence I used to point out to my colleagues that the way through which men are passing will not end at Moscow or Peking because they cannot provide men with the thing they have been striving for. Though it is a fact that men think that the hidden treasure is with Moscow or Peking and their desire will be fulfilled when they reach there, yet it is also true that man cannot remain satisfied for long with the necessities of life that Moscow or Peking may provide. He wants something more, something else, something vast and that is the wealth of the spirit.

'I explained to my colleagues how Matter shall rend the veil and look at the Spirit's face, how the physical scientists are endeavouring to rediscover the inherent Truth of Matter and how the materialistic philosophy of the next century will be treated by men as a "PREFACE" to the philosophy of the Spirit.'

The Professor paused and saw that his students were all looking at him with gleaming eyes. With a smile he cast his gaze at me.

I promptly stated: 'Then it is clear from your explanation that Pondicherry is far—far away—from either Moscow or Peking. Union of Matter with Spirit is surely not happening tomorrow. Today it is rather impossible for us to imagine when

"The Spirit shall look out through Matter's gaze
And Matter shall reveal the Spirit's face."

It may be that we have to wait for a millennium.'

(To be continued)

SAMAR BASU

THE SONG OF THE LORD

THE GITA WITHOUT COMMENT

(Continued from the issue of September 1985)

Chapter III

1. Arjuna said:
“If you think discrimination is better than action, O Janardana, then, O Keshava, why do you give me this horrible work?”
2. With these confusing words you are bewildering my mind. Tell me that one thing by which I may surely attain to the Highest.”
3. The Lord said:
“There is in this world a two-fold path, as I said before, O Sinless One: the Yoga of Knowledge of the Samkhya and the Yoga of Action of the Yogis.
4. Man does not reach non-action by avoiding action, nor does he attain perfection only through renunciation.
5. No one, even for an instant, remains doing absolutely nothing. All helplessly act from the modes born of Prakriti.
6. He who sits restraining the organs of action by the mind while recalling the objects of sense is called an imposter.
7. But he excels, O Arjuna, who, unattached, controlling the senses by the mind, undertakes Karma Yoga through the instruments of action.
8. Act, but with control, for action is better than inaction and without action even the maintenance of the body would be impossible.
9. Action other than for Sacrifice binds this world to Karma. Therefore, O Kaunteya, perform your actions free of attachment.
10. Having created Man and Sacrifice, the Father of Creatures said: ‘By Sacrifice you shall propagate. Let Sacrifice be the milker of Desire.
11. Nourish the Gods with Sacrifice that they may nourish you. Nourishing each other, you shall all attain the Supreme Good.’
12. Nourished by Sacrifice the Gods will give what is wanted. One who enjoys what is given by the Gods without offering to them is a thief.
13. The supplicants who eat the remains of Sacrifice are freed from wrong-doing. Those evil ones who cook for themselves eat sin.
14. From food beings are born. From rain food is produced. From Sacrifice rain is produced. Sacrifice is born of action.
15. Action know as born of Brahman, Brahman as born of the Imperishable. Thus the all-pervasive Brahman is forever fixed in Sacrifice.
16. One who follows not the wheel thus set rolling in the world lives wrongly. Delighting in the senses, O Partha, he lives in vain.

17. But for the person who rejoices in the Self, satisfied in the Self, content in the Self, there is no compulsory action.
18. For him there is nothing at all to be gained by action in the world, nor by inaction, nor is he dependent on anyone for anything.
19. Therefore, always do what must be done, but without attachment. Indeed, through action without attachment, Man attains the Supreme.
20. For it is only through action that Janaka and others attained perfection. Ever regarding only the sustaining of the people, you ought to act.
21. Whatever is done by the best is done by others. The standard he sets, the world follows.
22. In all the three worlds, O Partha, there is nothing I must do, nothing to be gained not yet possessed. Even so, I act.
23. Surely if I were not ever tirelessly engaged in action, men would in all ways follow my path.
24. If I did not act, these worlds would perish. I would be the agent of confusion. Mankind would be destroyed.
25. As the unenlightened act attached to their action, so the enlightened should act unattached, wanting the sustenance of the people.
26. Those who know should not produce a division of mind in the Ignorant who are attached to action, but should motivate all action by their own action in Yoga.
27. Actions are done entirely by the modes of Prakriti. 'I am the doer', think those deluded by ego.
28. But the knower of Truth, having realised the divisions of modes and action, the modes acting within the modes, is not attached.
29. Those who are deluded by the modes of Prakriti are attached to the action of the modes. Those with a complete understanding should not unsettle those who are dull-witted and of incomplete understanding.
30. Surrendering all actions to Me, with a concentrated mind, without expectation, without possessiveness, being free from agitation, fight.
31. Those who constantly follow my thought in this, men of faith, of goodwill, are also released through action.
32. But those who are critical of this and do not apply my thought, know them to be deluded in all knowledge, ruined, unconscious.
33. Even the wise man behaves according to his nature. What will constraint accomplish?
34. Attraction and revulsion of the senses are placed in the objects. One should not submit to these, for truly they are obstructions.
35. Better to fail in one's own way than to succeed in the way of another. Death in the law of oneself is better. The law of another is perilous."
36. Arjuna said:
"But by what is a man compelled to commit evil, though unwilling, as if seized by a force?"

37. The Lord said:
 “From anger, from desire, all-consuming, entirely evil, born of force in Nature.
 Know this as the enemy in the world.
38. As a fire is covered in smoke, a mirror by dust, the foetus enveloped by the
 womb, so also is the Self enveloped by that.
39. The knowledge of the wise is enveloped by this constant enemy in the form of
 desire, O Kaunteya, insatiable like Fire.
40. The senses, the mind, the intelligence are said to be its seat. Enveloped by
 these, the embodied Self is deluded.
41. Therefore, O Best of the Bharatas, beginning with the control of the senses,
 destroy this evil, the destroyer of knowledge and of the highest knowing.
42. They say the senses are great, but greater than the senses is the mind and
 superior to the mind is the Buddhi. And that which is superior to the Buddhi
 is He.
43. Thus, comprehending what is superior to the Buddhi, restraining the self with
 the Self, slay the enemy, O Mighty-armed, in the form of desire, so hard to
 conquer.”

OM TAT SAT

Here ends the third chapter called ‘Karma Yoga’ in the dialogue of Sri Krishna and Arjuna, in Brahma-knowledge, in Yoga-discipline, in the Divine Song of the Upanishads.

Translation by DHRUVA

THE SUPRAMENTAL MANIFESTATION IN THE PHYSICAL

THREE PREMONITORY INDICATIONS OF THE EVENT OF FEBRUARY 29, 1956

I

I WAS in Mombassa (Kenya) at the beginning of 1956. I was then working in the insurance branch of an Auditor firm—Patel, Shah and Joshi. After the afternoon siesta I started for the office, catching a double-decker bus. It was a hot day: Mombassa is almost on the Equator. I dropped into my seat. Little did I realise I was on my way to a supraphysical adventure.

Interested in astrology I was carrying Raphael's Ephemeris for the year in my pocket. Now I took it out and went leafing through it. I noticed that the planet Pluto was transiting over Sri Aurobindo's Point of Birth—the Sun position. This was significant. Then I found Jupiter also hovering around the Point—and for a full month. Some event equal in importance for the Ashram to that of November 24, 1926 suggested itself. But what would be the date?

It occurred to me that Sri Aurobindo's Map would indicate it. But I thought, "Let me consult my own Map too." It showed Pluto conjunct with Mars in Cancer ten degrees—the exact Jupiter trine. So the third point to complete the trine would be Pisces ten degrees. I asked myself, "What would be the date for the Sun at this point?" I looked into the Ephemeris and found the answer: February 29.

As soon as I realised this, I had a vision. I saw a darkness which grew paler and paler and then started clearing up. At that moment I saw written across the clearing pallor: 29 February 1956. It was just a flash—and at once I noticed a golden ball shooting out from my heart-region with a little sound. Before I could focus my eyes on the ball, it widened out and proceeded to spread in a golden area—the widening went on every second, a progression in waves. All the paling darkness was being devoured.

Oh, where was I? I looked around. I had covered a journey equal to the distance from the Ashram main gate to the Ashram Press, and my destination was where the Park Guest House would be situated. My experience had taken about five minutes. I reached my office and was soon immersed in insurance files. It was months later that I came to hear of the Supramental Manifestation.

2

On February 26, 1956, I went to the house of my previous landlord, Mr. C Chunilal Amin. On the ground floor was a family of Indian Christians consisting of a widowed mother and two unmarried daughters Nirmala and Urmila. The

daughters were teachers. When I met them one of them told me, "It is very good you have come. Our Principal, in making the annual time-table of classes, forgot that February this year would have 29 days and so he took no account of the 29th at all. I have asked the staff and the students whether it would be a holiday and whether the students might be taken out on a picnic wherever the teachers decided." I was asked to help the two teachers and their classes to be taken out. I told them that the students could be taken to the "shamba" (garden) of Mr. A. B. Patel (now general secretary of "World Union" at the Ashram). His "shamba" was in a sea area near Mombassa. I would obtain the permission of the owner and bring two lorries to carry the picnic group to the garden. The next day I went to Mr. Patel's son Surendra's office and got the permission. On the morning of the 29th the teachers and the students were to wait at the former's place for the lorries I would bring.

We went to the garden. The men who drove the lorries—Africans—were to come back at 5 in the afternoon to take us back to our homes. But they did not turn up. At 5.30 I told the teachers that we should not wait any longer but catch the local Mombassa bus.

Right after 5.30 p.m. (*i.e.*, Indian time 8 p.m.) I suddenly saw the whole sky filled with whitish golden clouds which seemed as if descending to the earth. I kept looking, trying to understand the scene. I felt I was having a supraphysical vision. But a prayer rose in my heart, "Whatever this may be, please guard the children who have relied on me." With this prayer I again looked up. All the time I saw the descent of the whitish golden clouds.

At about 10 minutes to 6, the students were all in a line in pairs holding hands. They along with the teachers marched to the bus-stand on the Mombassa-Nairobi road. Everyone reached home safely.

I was convinced that the phenomenon I had seen in the sky was a spiritual one, but I learnt its significance only after leaving Mombassa in the last days of April and reaching Kampala (Uganda). I recollect that the Mother has said that four persons had special experiences related to the Supramental Manifestation on earth and that one of them was in Africa.

3

Finally, I shall narrate what happened in Kampala. The Mother had already announced on April 24, 1956 the nature of the event on the last day of the preceding February, but we in Africa did not know of it.

I had to leave Mombassa because of an Immigration-Law difficulty. At Kampala I first stayed with Mr. Purushottamdas Patel, now of "Top Garden", Pondicherry. But he was to go away to India and wanted me to find another residence. Mr. Prabhudatt—of Service Store, Kampala (dead recently in the U.K.)—asked me to join him at his new palatial house.

Almost every Sunday people in Kampala would go to the capital Entebbe (made

famous since by the Israel Commando Raid to save air-passengers illegally imprisoned there by Idi Amin). It is some 20 miles away. Mr. Prabhudatt and his family, together with Mr. and Mrs. P. R. Patel and some others, including me, went in cars to Entebe. In a garden there we started playing cricket.

I was batting and Mr. Chandubhai Desai was bowling. I hit a ball hard. Chandubhai ran to retrieve it from the bushes. There he saw a flower and plucked it. We all looked at the beautiful flower. I kept it with me and brought it to Kampala. It was then put in the drawing-room of Mr. Prabhudatt.

A few days later we got a letter from Pondicherry which gave us the news of the event that had taken place on February 29 and that had been explained by the Mother some two months afterwards. It was on receipt of this letter that we realised the prophetic bearing of that flower. Its significance was "The Supramental Manifestation in the Physical".

INDUBHAI PATEL

INDIAN WORDS IN ENGLISH

WE hear a lot about Hindi and English as rivals, but do not often think what they owe to each other. Yet, when any two languages are in contact over a long time, there is always a constant process of mutual borrowing.

Thumb through an English dictionary and you will be surprised how many words are derived from Hindi and other Indian languages. Most have been so acclimatised all over the English-speaking world that nobody thinks of their origin. *Bungalow, shampoo, cot, loot, veranda*—who thinks of these as Indian words? Yet they are all derived from Hindi or other Indian languages.

In fact, the Oxford English Dictionary lists more than 900 main words of Indian origin.

Many have found their way to English by devious routes, especially those originating in Sanskrit. *Candy* and *sugar*, for instance, both come from Sanskrit through Persian, Arabic and French; *opal*, and probably *pepper*, from Sanskrit through Latin and Greek; and *mango* through Malay and Portuguese from Tamil.

The early British settlers, a tiny minority in a huge alien environment, perforce adopted many of the customs of the country, and therewith the words. They wore *banian* clothes, smoked the *hookah*, drank *toddy*, chewed *betel*, ate *pilau, cabobs*, and *curry*, employed *pundits*. Other early borrowings reflected the trade they were engaged in. *Chintz, tussore, calico* (from the town Calicut) and others were in use by the early seventeenth century.

Indeed the British seem, from the beginning, to have formed the habit of wholesale borrowing from Indian languages. For, in 1617, the Court of Directors of the East India Company reproved their Surat factors for using too many Indian words. And later, when they began to make fortunes and come back to England as *nabobs* they were much ridiculed for their oriental ways and language.

But it was in the heyday of Anglo-India, in the nineteenth century, that borrowings became so profuse as to constitute almost a separate language, peculiar to the British in India. Indian words were used not only for specifically Indian things or ideas but for all sorts of concepts for which there were already perfectly good English words. Newcomers from England were quite lost, and at least one Governor-General complained that he could not understand the reports of his own officials.

This language was recorded in all its ramifications in Yule and Burnell's celebrated dictionary, "Hobson-Jobson: a Glossary of the Anglo-Indian Tongue", which has recently been republished and makes fascinating browsing. (The title was supposed to represent a typical adaptation of Indian words to the English tongue, Hobson-Jobson deriving from the call 'Hassan, Hussain', used by Muslims at the Moharram festival.)

It is interesting that the two greatest writers on the India of the British Raj made good use of this jargon. Kipling sprinkled his early poems with Indian words and phrases which had to be explained in footnotes when published in England;

E. M. Forster used many 'Hobson-Jobsons' in his masterpiece *A Passage to India* to enhance the Anglo-Indian atmosphere.

Much of this vocabulary has died with the passing of British India—the terms for numerous categories of servants, for instance, like *molly* (mali) and *bobachee* (bawarchi). Some have become standard English. *Thug*, *pyjamas*, *pardah*, *bangle*, *chukker* (in polo) were all adopted in this later period.

Some of the slangier side of this jargon too is very expressive and may keep a permanent place in the language. *Chit*, *cushy*, *badmash*, *tamasha* are all admitted by the OED and surely deserve their place. And *pukka* (also in the OED) is an invaluable word. As a nineteenth-century writer put it: "A man who is a thorough master of the word 'pukka' may hold his own in any society in India. A man who is good at all points is 'pukka'. A permanent barrack is 'pukka', as opposed to a thatched hut. The arrangements for a shooting party are 'pukka' when the pale ale does not run short, and the bore of the station is prevented from coming by an attack of dysentery."

Other borrowings of the nineteenth century came from a very different source. A wave of interest in Eastern religions, in the early part of the century, introduced such terms as *nirvana*, *yoga*, *karma* and *avatar*.

In the present century, political developments brought a number of new words—*swaraj*, *swadeshi*, *hartal*, *satyagraha* for instance—all of which have a place in the OED, though still marked 'foreign'.

The process continues. *Rishi* and *Maharishi* are not yet in the dictionary, but after the Beatles' visit to the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi they must be pretty familiar to the English-speaking world. *Gherao* and *bandh* have also been suggested as claimants to Anglicisation.

But they must be left to find their own way. The influence of one language on another is a subtle and, above all, a natural process. Attempts in the past, like those of Dryden and Dr. Johnson, to regulate and fix the language have never been very successful. English will no doubt continue to draw on Indian languages, and vice-versa. Perhaps those who deplore the numerous borrowings from English by Indian languages may take heart from this.

RHONA GHATE

(With acknowledgement to *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, June 29, 1969, p. 43)

STORIES FROM TAMIL LITERATURE

(Continued from the issue of September 1985)

20. Root-stock Bill of the Wood-stork

SATTIMUTRAM was a small village near Thanjavur in the Chola kingdom. There lived a poet who was abjectly poor. He had a large family, but no regular means of income. He came to know that the Pandian king in Madurai was a patron of poets and so he decided to go to Madurai to seek his fortune there. He set out on the long journey leaving his wife and children at home.

He travelled for many days and reached Madurai in a miserable state. It was very late in the evening when he arrived there and he knew no one in the large city. And he could not go to the king's court at that late hour. He saw a rest house in a corner street and lay down on the open veranda. He was bone-weary. Hunger gnawed at the pit of his stomach. A chill wind was blowing and he had no proper clothing to cover the upper part of his body.

In the loneliness of the strange city, far away from home, amidst hunger and biting cold he became despondent. He thought of his unfortunate wife who would be suffering great ordeals during his absence. Moreover, she would be in terrible suspense not knowing whether he had reached Madurai or not. He wished he had someone who would carry her a message from him. Suddenly he thought of a pair of wood-storks he had seen during the day at the side of a pond. They had been there for some time looking for fish and then they had taken off and headed north. He now imagined them flying over the Chola country and in the direction of his own village. His poetic imagination was kindled and a poem about his wretchedness took shape in his mind, its substance running as follows:

Wood-stork with red-legs, your bill is coral-coloured and shaped like the tapering root-stock of the palmyra tree. If you go north with your mate, I would request you to go to Sattimutram, my village. You will find there a dilapidated house. Enter the house and meet my wife. She will be lying there staring at the ceiling, listening to the click of the ghekkko, hoping for some good omen. Tell her: "I met your poor husband in the Pandian city. He was lying exposed to the wind without proper clothing—huddled up and covering his body with his arms and breathing heavily like a hissing snake."

Having composed the whole poem in his mind, the poet began to recite it loudly, trying to forget his present situation and escaping into the excitement that poetry offered. Everything was silent there at that midnight hour and his voice rang out loudly.

The Pandian king going on his nightly round in disguise happened to hear the

poem. When the comparison of the stork's bill to the root-stock of the palmyra tree fell on his ears, he was swept off his feet. What a strange coincidence, he thought. For it was that very morning he had noticed storks and had been intrigued by the singular beauty of their long, tapering bills. He had asked the court poets for an apt comparison. There were so many comparisons, but nothing could excel this. The king was delighted and he wanted to know who the poet was and to shower him with riches. But he was in disguise and did not want to reveal himself. Moreover, he did not want to embarrass the poet by seeing him in the wretched condition in which he was. So he withdrew from the place and went about his usual duty. When he returned after a few hours, the lean figure on the open veranda was fast asleep. The king took his own royal shawl from his shoulders and spread it on the sleeping poet to protect him from the cold and also to help the soldiers to recognize the poet later.

The poet woke up early in the morning and found himself covered with a rich shawl. While he sat there trying to guess who might have been his benefactor, the king's soldiers came, identified the poet by the shawl and greeted him most kindly. They told him that the king wanted to see him, dressed him in the fine clothes they had brought with them and with all respect took him to the king.

The king stepped down from his throne and received the unknown poet with open arms. As everyone was surprised, the king explained. He narrated the incident of the previous night, repeating the simile. Everyone agreed that it was a fine, evocative simile, and was all praise for the poet. The king enquired about the poet and his family and showered rich gifts upon him. He wished to enjoy the company of the poet for some more days and so he sent all the gifts and gold to the poet's wife and children through some messengers, with of course a joyous message from the poet.

21. Death Has no Pain

The Pandian king Poothapandian died at a very young age. His young queen Perungopendu was beside herself with grief. She had loved her husband dearly and felt that she could not live without him. She decided to immolate herself in the flames of the funeral pyre of her dead husband. In those days it was a common practice among devoted wives to end their lives like that. This practice was perhaps the beginning of what was later known as 'Sati' in Northern India. But Sati assumed very cruel proportions there in that the widows were compelled to die even if they didn't want to, and the unwilling women were bound hand and foot and thrown into the fire. Earlier, in the Tamil country it had been a purely voluntary affair undertaken by devoted and faithful wives. The ideal of loyalty was so fierce among women that they either chose to die along with their husbands or remain life-long widows committing themselves to the sacred memory of their spouses. And they subjected themselves to all sorts of denials and austerities. Widow-remarriage was unknown in those days.

So the grief-stricken Pandian queen made known to the elders and senior officials of the palace her decision and asked them to make arrangements for her immolation. The elders were in a fix. They were not only sad that the young queen was going to die, but confronted with the problem of finding a ruler for the country. But they could not advise her against immolation because according to custom only a life of austere widowhood was in store for her. However, after discussing the problem among themselves, they at last made bold to approach the queen and request her not to put an end to her life. But great was the indignation of Perungopendu at this strange request. She felt that it was an insult to her to be asked to live after her beloved husband's death. She was not afraid of death. Moreover, what was the nature of the life in store for her? Was she expected to live a life of wretchedness and misery as a widow? A widow was not even allowed to sleep on a soft bed. She must lie down on the hard floor without even a mat on it. She must not take any rich food—only cold rice and a tasteless green boiled without salt or condiments. It was indeed a life of humiliation. So she flew at the elders and rebuked them: "As elders, you ought to have known better. But you have all plotted against my happiness, you cruel men, asking me to live enduring all the indignities of widowhood. Why should I do that? Death has no sting for me. After the death of my dear husband, his funeral pyre with the leaping tongues of flame is the same to me as the cool waters of a pond of fresh blooming lilies."

The elders could not answer. They stood bowing their heads. Then in accordance with her wishes, room was made for her in the king's funeral pyre and with a proud gait and a courageous heart Perungopendu stepped into it. The flames engulfed her along with her husband's body.

M. L. THANGAPPA

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

The Secret of the Mahabharata by P. Bhattacharya. Published by Parimal Prakashan, Aurangabad-431 001. Pp: viii+162. Price: Rs. 110.

THE "Great War of the Descendants of Bharata" popularly known to the world of literature as the *Mahabharata* consists of 100,000 slokas and is by far the longest poem that has ever existed—about eight times the combined length of the equally well-known epics *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The main action of this Sanskrit epic is interspersed with "moral digressions, loosely related episodes, prayers, a variety of religious, ethical, and romantic complications."

To many the *Mahabharata*, the kavya worthy of respect, remained simply a tale. Scholars have not bothered to study what the author of the epic, Vyasa, has to say about his creation. None tried to probe into the heart of the matter. At last a man named V. S. Sukthankar made an intensive study of the epic and published a scholarly work titled *On the Meaning of the Mahabharata*. He remarked in his book: "What is of importance behind the events so realistically narrated in the Great Epic of India, just as there is an inner significance behind all acts, conscious and unconscious, of man himself, and yet more generally there is an inner significance behind all the phenomena of life...all great works of Indian art and literature...are all infused with the idea of penetrating behind the phenomena to the core of things, and they represent but so many pulsating reflexes of one and the same central impulse towards seeing unity in diversity, towards achieving one gigantic all-embracing synthesis... it is only from this point of view that you will be able to understand and interpret the *Mahabharata*."

Prompted by V. S. Sukthankar's chance remark, "Many of the scenes of this drama which at first sight appear to us unintelligible or at least uncouth and grotesque acquire deep significance when they are treated symbolically and projected back on to the metaphysical or psychological plane of thought," Pradip Bhattacharya attempted to unravel the secret buried in some mystifying scenes of the epic. The result is this thesis which seeks to pinpoint some such "unintelligible or at least uncouth and grotesque" scenes, to treat them as symbolic structures, and see if thereby they reveal hidden significances.

Pradip Bhattacharya has chosen for scrutiny the six myths related in the *Adi Parva*, namely, the guru-shishya trilogy of Uttanka, Aruni and Upamanyu; the churning of the Cosmic Ocean; the fairy-tale-like story of Garuda; and the intriguing tale of Kacha.

The technique the author adopts to discover the secret meaning is indeed a Herculean task. Since the Mantras reveal their innermost secret only to an intuitive mind, Pradip Bhattacharya with little difficulty attains success. The clue to the inner meaning lay, as he himself points out, "in the multiple significances of Sanskrit word-roots. *Go*, for instance, means both 'cow' and 'light, ray' and becomes thus

a symbol of spiritual knowledge.”

Hence in his attempt to bring to light the secret message hidden in the above mentioned six myths, he delves deep into the multiple meanings existing in their roots of the Sanskrit words and emerges with the treasure—the symbolic nature of the myths.

Uttanka is asked to partake of the bull's *purisa*, which means 'dung' at one level. Is he expected to eat dung? Or what is sought to be represented in the eating of the *purisa*? Do the names of Vedic Gods like Agni, Vayu, Soma and Surya simply mean fire, air, intoxicating drink and light respectively or do they have an esoteric sense? What do the tree and wood generally signify in the Vedic symbol-structure? What is the function of the Asvins in the story of Upamanyu's spiritual quest after enlightenment? What place does the basic guru-shishya relationship have within the Vedic symbolism? Why do Dhaumya and Veda impose ordeals on their beloved pupils? Where does Sukra figure in the remaking of the Vedic Angirasa myth? Pradip Bhattacharya has answered several such questions in his book, which is the fruit of a decade of intensive study of the epic.

He opines that the snake is not merely a symbol of the bonds of Ignorance but also the jealous guardian of wealth which cannot be won from it unless the seeker has conquered sex. He makes clear the place of *daksina* in the Uttanka myth. While studying the significance of *Mandara* which is often equated with *Meru* he convincingly answers why the symbol of the mountain has been used to represent the rising planes of consciousness.

Divided into nine chapters this book discusses how behind the façade of enthralling story lay the secret message of the Veda which the initiated one could grasp through keys supplied in the very body of the tale and how these tales held forth accounts of different stages and varying types of spiritual experiences and development.

Pradip Bhattacharya's arguments are very convincing and his discoveries open up new vistas in the Hindu epic lore. Certainly the seeker after spiritual truth cannot afford to ignore this book which is a consummate scholarly piece of work written with verve and style.

P. RAJA

“IDEAL CHILD”: SOME LETTERS

United Nations Department of
International Economic and Social
Affairs Centre for Social Development
and Humanitarian Affairs

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH YEAR 1985

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH YEAR SECRETARIAT Vienna International Centre

P.O. Box. 500, A-1400 Vienna, Austria, Telephone: 2631/4178, Telegraphic Address:
UNATIONS VIENNA — Telex: 135612

Dear Mr. Keshavji,

Thank you for your letter dated 24th April 1985 enclosing a copy of the booklet
“IDEAL CHILD”.

We have read the booklet with keen interest. We will consider a reference to the
booklet in our Youth Information Bulletin, which, if done, would imply worldwide
distribution of an abstracted version.

Please find enclosed relevant IYY documents.

Sincerely Yours,
SD/-
ERNESTO OTTONE
Officer-in-Charge

Secretary of State

Recd. on 30 June 1985

Dear Mr. Keshavji,

Thank you for informing us about “IDEAL CHILD”. Given our present
mandate, we are unable to purchase any for distribution. However, we will be happy
to announce its availability in our Bulletin which reaches national audience of over
5,000 groups and individuals including schools.

Our sincerest wishes for your work.

YOURS TRULY,
SD/-
Lillian Ross,
International Youth Year,
Secretariat, Canada

VISHVA YUVAK KENDRA,
(INTERNATIONAL YOUTH CENTRE)
CIRCULAR ROAD, CHANAKYAPURI
NEW DELHI-110 021 (INDIA)
Cable YVAKENDRA Phone: 372631-5

Dear Keshavji,

13.7.84

Thank you for your letter and the booklet “Ideal Child”.

It was indeed a great pleasure and a rewarding experience to go through this important booklet. What a store house of information on sociological, moral and spiritual aspects! One really feels submerged in the thoughts of ‘Holy Mother’.

We are ever ready to co-operate with you in spreading the message for the cause of the Children....

The truth is that the book is not only meant for children but also is relevant to young men and women.

With regards.

Yours sincerely,

SD/-

Praful Kumar Sahoo
(Programme Officer)

THE LOTUS TRUST

From
LOTUS HOUSE
6, New Marine Lines, BOMBAY-400 020
Tel: 294279

17th May, 1985

Dear Sir,

This has reference to your letter No. 12/025 dated 28th April 1985 addressed to **Mr. N. A. Palkhiwala**, Chairman of the above Trust concerning your project of distributing the booklet entitled “IDEAL CHILD” to children throughout the country and the world. We note that 1.5 million copies have been printed in 20 different languages and are being distributed to children all over the world.

As desired by the Chairman I am enclosing a cheque for Rs. 400/- (Rupees Four Hundred Only) bearing No. ML/S/T 118295 dated 14.5.1985 drawn on the Central Bank of India, Marine Lines Branch, in favour of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, with the request to distribute 1000 copies of “IDEAL CHILD” in any Indian language to the children in India.

Please send us a receipt for audit purposes.

Yours faithfully,

SD/-

H. D. UNWALA
Chief Executive