

# MOTHER INDIA

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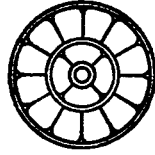
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.

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MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XXXVIII

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*"Great is Truth and it shall prevail."*

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## TWO MESSAGES

A DIVINE life in the world or an institution having that for its aim and purpose cannot be or cannot remain something outside or entirely shut away from the life of ordinary men in the world or unconcerned with the mundane existence; it has to do the work of the Divine in the world and not work outside or separate from it. The life of the ancient Rishis in their Ashrams had such a connection; they were creators, educators, guides of men and the life of the Indian people in ancient times was largely developed and directed by their shaping influence. The life and activities involved in the new endeavour are not identical but they too must be an action upon the world and a new creation in it. It must have contacts and connections with it and activities which take their place in the general life and whose initial or primary objects may not seem to differ from those of the same activities in the outside world.

SRI AUROBINDO

\*

The force was acting chiefly in the mind, the vital and, through it, in the physical.... It has come further down in its action and now it is at work not only in the material but also in the subconscious and even in the inconscient. Unless you follow this descending movement and allow the force to act in your body and the material regions of the consciousness, you will find yourself stranded on the road without being able to advance any further. And to allow this working of the force, it is a detailed surrender of all movements, habits, tastes, preferences, sense of necessities, etc. that is urgently required.

THE MOTHER

20.II.1947

## A TALK BY THE MOTHER

TO THE ASHRAM CHILDREN ON NOVEMBER 10, 1954

This talk is based up on Sri Aurobindo's  
*Bases of Yoga*, Chapter 2, "Faith—Aspiration—  
Surrender."

*What does this mean exactly: "In Yoga it is out of the inner victory that there comes the outer conquest"?*

YES. First you must attain the true consciousness, be in contact with the Divine and let Him govern your action; and then you can act upon outer circumstances, even actions, and overcome outer difficulties. You must have the inner experience first before hoping to be able to [...] something external. In fact everything is founded upon an awareness of the divine Consciousness, and unless this is done all the rest is uncertain. Nothing can be permanently established. It is only after one has become conscious; then one can follow one's path rapidly, without fear. Otherwise there are always... one always risks making mistakes, going on a false track.

*Sweet Mother, what does "psychic poise" mean?*

Psychic poise means the poise of the being which comes from the fact that the psychic, which governs the movements of the being, is the master of all the movements of the consciousness. The psychic is always well poised. So when it is active and governs the being, it inevitably brings a balance.

*Mother, last time we read: "It does not matter what defects you may have in your nature. The one thing that matters is your keeping yourself open to the Force."  
Mother, if one has defects, how can one open to the Force?*

I think everyone has defects. So if it were necessary not to have any defects in order to be open, nobody could be open. One always has defects, to begin with. One is not made of a single piece. This is the main reason. There are many different parts in the being which sometimes are quite independent of one another and take hold of the consciousness almost in turn and sometimes even in an altogether regular order. So, when part of the being has goodwill and already a kind of perception of what the divine force is, you see, this opens the being and puts it into contact with this force. But it is not always there. There are other parts which come to the front, which have defects, bad habits, and which can veil the consciousness completely. But if one keeps the memory of the part which was open, one can keep the opening

<sup>1</sup> Word missing in transcript.

all the same, though outwardly the part that is active is not particularly interested and not even able to understand. But the other part can continue to be open and receive the force.

*Can one have faith through aspiration?*

What? Faith through aspiration? I think so, because it is rare to have it spontaneously, to be born with it. Very few people have this good luck to have a spontaneous faith. But if one is very sincere in one's aspiration, one gets it. Aspiration can bring everything, provided it is sincere and constant. One always has a tiny element of faith within oneself, whether it be faith in what one's parents have said or in the books one has studied. After all, all your education is based upon a faith of this kind. Those who have educated you have told you certain things. You had no means of checking, because you were too young and had no experience. But you have faith in what they told you and you go forward on that faith. So everyone has a tiny bit of faith, and to increase it one can use one's aspiration.

*Mother, in your symbol the twelve petals signify the twelve inner planes, don't they?*

It signifies anything one wants, you see. Twelve: that's the number of Aditi, of Mahashakti. So it applies to everything; all her action has twelve aspects. There are also her twelve virtues, her twelve powers, her twelve aspects, and then her twelve planes of manifestation and many other things that are twelve; and the symbol, the number twelve is in itself a symbol. It is the symbol of manifestation, double perfection, in essence and in manifestation, in the creation.

*What are the twelve aspects, Sweet Mother?*

Ah, my child, I have described this somewhere, but I don't remember now. For it is always a choice, you see; according to what one wants to say, one can choose these twelve aspects or twelve others, or give them different names. The same aspect can be named in different ways. This does not have the fixity of a mental theory. (*Silence*)

According to the angle from which one sees the creation, one day I may describe twelve aspects to you; and then another day, because I have shifted my centre of observation, I may describe twelve others, and they will be equally true.

(*To Vishwanath*) Is it the wind that's producing this storm? It is very good for a dramatic stage-effect.... The traitor is approaching in the night... yes? We are waiting for some terrible deed....

*Sweet Mother, when does the psychic being lose its poise?*

What? ... *Never.*

*Then why is it said: "The psychic poise is necessary"?*

Yes. This means that the help of the psychic poise is necessary. It is not that the psychic being has to become balanced: it is that one must be under the influence of the psychic poise. The psychic is always balanced. But the being is not always under the influence of the psychic which brings the balance. The influence of the psychic gives the balance. (*Silence*)

*How can one know that the psychic being is in front?*

My child, when it happens, one understands. It is exactly so long as one doesn't understand that it means that it hasn't come. This is like people asking you, "How can I know whether I am in contact with the Divine?" That itself is enough to prove that they are not. For if they are they can no longer ask the question. It is something understood. For the psychic it is the same thing. When the psychic is in front one knows it, and there is no possibility of any doubt. Consequently one no longer asks the question.

*How can we make the mind and vital a "clear field"?*

Make what?... Yes, it is difficult. (*Laughter*) It is a great task. Well, it is always the same thing; first of all you must understand what is meant by being clear. And then you must aspire, and with persistence; and each time something comes to obstruct you, you must brush it aside, push it back, not accept it.

The mind and vital have a very bad habit: when one has succeeded through aspiration in having an experience, being in contact with the divine force, immediately they rush forward to make it their own property, you see, like that (*gesture*), as a cat jumps on a mouse. And then they catch it and say, "It is for me." And then the mind turns it into all kinds of speculations and affirmations and constructions and takes great pride in it, and the vital uses the power to fulfil its own desires.

So, in order to avoid this it is said that they must be clear, quiet, peaceful, and must not rush at the force which is trying to manifest and make of it a tool for their personal use. For the mind to be clear it must be silent—at least to a certain extent, and for the vital to be clear it must give up its desires, have no desires and impulses and passions. This indeed is the essential condition. Later, if one goes into details, neither of them should have any preferences, attachments, any particular way of being or particular set of ideas.

*Sweet Mother, what does "sincerity" mean, exactly?*



There are several degrees of sincerity.

The most elementary degree is not to say one thing and think another, claim one thing and want another. For example, what happens quite often: to say, "I want to make progress, and I want to get rid of my defects" and, at the same time, to cherish one's defects in the consciousness and take great care to hide them so that nobody intervenes and sends them off. This indeed is a very common phenomenon. This is already the second degree. The first degree, you see, is when someone claims, for example, to have a very great aspiration and to want the spiritual life and, at the same time, does completely... how to put it?... shamelessly, things which are most contradictory to the spiritual life. This is indeed a degree of sincerity, rather of insincerity, which is most obvious.

But there is a second degree which I have just described to you, which is like this: there is one part of the being which has an aspiration and says, even thinks, even feels that it would very much like to get rid of defects, imperfections; and then, at the same time, other parts which hide these defects and imperfections very carefully so as not to be compelled to expose them and get over them. This is very common. And finally, if you go far enough, if we push the description far enough, so long as there is a part of the being which contradicts the central aspiration for the Divine, one is not perfectly sincere. That is to say, a perfect sincerity is something extremely rare. And most commonly, very very frequently, when there are things in one's nature which one does not like, one takes the greatest care to hide them from oneself, one finds favourable explanations or simply makes a little movement, like this (*gesture*). You have noticed that when things move like this you can't see them clearly. Well, where the defect is seated, there is a kind of vibration which does this, and so your sight is not clear, you no longer see your defects. And this is automatic. Well, all these are insincerities.

And perfect sincerity comes when at the centre of the being there is the consciousness of the divine Presence, the consciousness of the divine Will, and when the entire being, like a luminous, clear, transparent whole, expresses this in all its details. This indeed is true sincerity.

When, at any moment, whatever may happen, the being has given itself to the Divine and wants only the divine Will, when, no matter what is going on in the being, at any moment whatever, always, the whole being in perfect unanimity can say to the Divine and feels for the Divine, "Let Thy Will be done", when it is spontaneous, total, integral, *then* you are sincere. But until this is established, it is a mixed sincerity, more or less mixed right up to the point where one is not at all sincere.

*Sweet Mother, here it is written: "The personal effort has to be transformed progressively into a movement of the Divine Force. If you feel conscious of the Divine Force, then call it in more and more to govern your effort, to take it up, to transform it into something not yours, but the Mother's." But if one is not conscious of the Divine Force?*

You must become conscious. Aspire, ask, aspire sincerely.

You see, generally speaking, you are here, we have a class, we have just read something, you have questions to ask; while you are here you ask questions and think of the subject. But as soon as you go out or go home, you think of a thousand other things, don't you? So, how do you expect that you will become conscious of the divine Force? We have hardly about half an hour here, that's not a very long time to become conscious of the Force.

But if it is your sole preoccupation, if truly, with all your being, you want to become conscious of the divine Force, you will be able to. You can't, simply because you think about it from time to time; when the subject comes up, you ask yourself, "Why, it is true, how can I do it?" And then, the next minute you don't think about it any more. So, how do you expect this to happen? You must be very attentive, you must be very silent, must observe yourself very clearly. And you must be very humble; that is, be willing not to play a great part in all this story. The misfortune is that usually either the vital being or the mental being or even the physical being is very anxious to play a part, very anxious. So it swells up, takes up a lot of place, covers the rest; and it covers it so well that one can't even become aware of the presence of the divine Force because the personal movement of the physical, the body, the vital, the mind, covers everything with its own importance.

Listen: if every evening before going to sleep you take off only a tiny minute, like that, and in this little minute, with all the concentration you are capable of you ask to become conscious of the divine Force, simply like that, nothing more; in the morning when waking up, before beginning your day, if you do the same thing, take a minute off, concentrate as much as you can and ask to become conscious of the divine Force, you will see, after some time, it will happen. Nothing but these small things which are nothing at all and take no time.

One day it will happen. Only, you must do it with concentration, intensity and sincerity; that is, it must not happen that while you are asking for this, another part of your being is telling itself, "After all, this has no importance." Or maybe you think of something else, what you are going to put on or the person you will meet, anything at all, a thousand desires. You must be there, fully, for *one minute*. Of course if you multiply the minute, it goes so much the quicker. But as I also said, if one is able not to contradict the next minute the aspiration one had the minute before, it is easier; if not, it pushes sincerity away.

(*Questions and Answers 1954, pp. 393-460*)

## A TALK BY NIRODBARAN TO THE SRI AUROBINDO SOCIETY CONFERENCE ON 13TH AUGUST 1985

THE year was 1872. August 15th blazed forth in the world of the Gods. Halleluiahs, hymns and chantings filled the heavenly air. The Asuras too heard them. The Child-Divinity dawned upon the earth where faint rumours had reached mortal ears. The Dawn-splendour soon became a Sun. His rays summoned the sleeping world, "Awake, arise, find out thy greatest good." A new spirit flooded the country with a large vision and everywhere songs were sung to the Mother of freedom. At that time to live, to die was very heaven. Then, all on a sudden, leaving a bright trail, he retired, withdrew into a mystic cave and the world forgot the Wonder.

Long years after, he emerged in a resplendent body on a 15th August among a few worshippers who had heard the Call and were given to a hieratic life. The day grew for them an Apocalypse. Purani speaks of it in rapturous strains: "There he sits with the Mother by his side, royal and majestic. In the very posture there is divine self-confidence, He sits there—with pink and white lotus garlands, small flower tokens offered by the disciples.... Here is the great Poet and Supreme Lover incarnate inquiring, loving and blessing in a glance! Man does wonders with his eyes and looks, but to do so much is needed a divinity."

Henceforth, August 15th becomes a sacramental day. Its light spreads abroad; seekers and pilgrims making a long trek arrive. The mystic cave has changed into a small mystic world.

Great events happen on successive birthdays as we gather from Sri Aurobindo's remark that Darshan days are days of great descents. But the world at large knows nothing about it. Only the sadhaks and followers feel a change in their inner and outer life.

Sri Aurobindo writes to a disciple in 1912: "15th August is usually a turning point or a notable day for me personally either in sadhana or life—indirectly only for others. This time it has been very important to me. My subjective sadhana may be said to have received its final seal and something like its consummation by a prolonged realisation and dwelling in Parabrahman for many hours. Since then, egoism is dead for all in me except the Annamaya Atma, the physical self..."

"My future sadhana is for life, practical knowledge and shakti... directed to my work in life. I am now getting a clearer idea of that work. I may as well impart something of that idea to you...."

An important part of the idea was: "India being the centre, to work for her restoration to her proper place in the world...."

One side of the work must have been directed to the winning of India's freedom, it being the essential prerequisite for his ultimate purpose.

In 1926 there is a talk between a disciple and the Master.

Q: Some people in Bengal have been nourishing a hurt feeling against you.

A: I am quite indifferent to it. Hurt for what?

Q: Because you are doing nothing for the country.

A: How do they know I am doing nothing?

Q: They see that.

A. Rather I see that they are doing nothing.

Q: If people fail to recognise it, then what's the use of such work?

A: I would have been happy if instead of beating their drums while doing nothing, they could have done some work quietly...

Again in 1935 I wrote: "In your scheme of things do you definitely see a free India? You have stated that for the spreading of spirituality in the world India must be free. You must be working for it."

Sri Aurobindo replied: "That is all settled. It is only a question of working out. The question is what is India going to do with her Independence. The above kind of affair? (Communal violence,) Bolshevism, Goonda raj? Things look ominous". I wrote back: "Please don't think of what India is going to do. Give her that first and then let her decide her own fate. But Independence first, at any cost."

Sri Aurobindo: "You are a most irrational creature. I have been trying to logicise and intellectualise you, but it seems in vain. Have I not told you that the independence of India is all arranged for and will evolve itself all right? Then what's the use of my bothering about that any longer? it is what she will do with her independence that is not arranged for—and so it is that about which I have to bother...."

Mark his words, please: "It is that about which I have to bother." Whoever was bothering about it in 1935? The leaders were busy bothering about how to achieve independence while for Sri Aurobindo it was a settled fact. As long ago as 1918 Sri Aurobindo told Purani "I give you the assurance that India will be free."<sup>1</sup>

We know also that the Mother saw in a vision in 1920 that India had become free.

In 1939 the Second World War intervenes. India passes through a critical phase. Sri Aurobindo takes a very active interest in the fortunes of the War. He calls it the Mother's War. He sees a great world menace, aiming to destroy humanity with its entire civilisation. Therefore he supports the Allies much to the chagrin of the Indian people. Sri Aurobindo watches with unabated interest and close attention Hitler striding victoriously across Europe, and India's resistance to the British Government's plea for co-operation.

At one of the crucial moments of India's history the famous Cripps Offer arrives. Sri Aurobindo comes forward to urge its acceptance, and appeals to the Indian leaders to accept the offer unconditionally, but they reject his appeal and the Cripps Offer most unceremoniously. As soon as the Mother heard of the rejection, she cried, "Alas, now India will suffer terribly." How true has been every word of hers!

Today some people realise the folly committed by the leaders in rejecting the God-sent offer.

<sup>1</sup> *The Life of Sri Aurobindo*, p. 294.

I wonder at times why Sri Aurobindo, knowing that the leaders would reject the Offer, still sent his emissary to them. He explained his action as *niṣkāma karma*, “disinterested work”. But I feel that there can be another meaning too. Sri Aurobindo has left a record in India’s history-reading with which posterity, wiser than we, will console itself, finding that there was at least one man who possessed an infallible perception.

All this is an old story, but one thing has come out clearly: Sri Aurobindo has always kept the theme of India in the forefront of his consciousness and has consistently worked for her freedom in his own way behind the veil. Eventually, surprise of surprises, India becomes free on the 15th August 1947, Sri Aurobindo’s own birthday, a crowning reward, as it were, coming from the Divine in recognition of his untainted service to the Motherland.

He was asked to give a message by the Trichinopoly Radio. He readily agreed, to my amazement. Sitting on his bed, and myself sitting on the floor beside him, he dictated the message, as he used to dictate *Savitri*. All of you are familiar with it. Here are the relevant portions. In an even steady cadence and a melodious voice, the words began to flow. It was so natural and spontaneous as if everything had been foreseen. He began:

“August 15, 1947, is the birthday of free India. It marks for her the end of an old era, the beginning of a new age. But we can also make it by our life and acts as a free nation an important date in a new age opening for the whole world, for the political, social, cultural and spiritual future of humanity.

“August 15, is my own birthday and it is naturally gratifying to me that it should have assumed this vast significance. I take this coincidence, not as a fortuitous accident, but as the sanction and seal of the Divine Force that guides my steps on the work with which I began life, the beginning of its full fruition...”

There followed the rest where the vast significance is unrolled and the sublime future of India unfurled.

Thus went forth the message ringing through India, through the world. I was specially thrilled to see him openly avowing that the coincidence of the date was the willed action of the Divine in recognition of his untiring service for India’s freedom. For, hitherto, Sri Aurobindo had been accustomed to keep himself behind the veil.

He further wrote to Amal Kiran (K. D. Sethna): “This birthday present is complicated by being presented in two packets as two free Indias. This is a generosity I could have done without, one free India would have been enough for me if offered as an unbroken whole.”

He also wrote, “I have never had a strong and persistent will for anything to happen in the world which did not eventually happen even after delay, defeat or disaster.” And he predicted that the “Partition will go.”

Now, my interest was awakened to know how the actual identification of the two dates took place. By what agency? I got the answer from a page of history published in *Mather India*, August 1985: “How August 15—Sri Aurobindo’s birthday

—got chosen for India's Independence Day." Here is the extract from Chapter 8 of *Freedom at Midnight* by Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre:

There was a packed gathering of Indian newsmen in the assembly hall. Suddenly ... the anonymous voice of an Indian newsman cut across the chamber....

'Sir,' the voice said, 'if all agree that there is the most urgent need for speed between today and the Transfer of Power, surely you should have a date in mind?'

'Yes, indeed,' replied Mountbatten.

'And if you have chosen a date, Sir, what then is the date?' pressed the questioner.

A number of rapid calculations were whirring through the Viceroy's mind ... He had not in fact picked a date. But he was convinced it had to be very soon.

'I had to force the pace,' he recalled later. 'I knew I had to force parliament to get the bill through before their summer recess.... We were sitting on the edge of a volcano, on a fused bomb, and we didn't know when the fuse would go off.'...

He stared at the packed assembly hall. Every face in the room was turned to his....

'Yes,' he said, 'I have selected a date for the Transfer of Power'....

It was a date linked in his memory to the most triumphant hours of his own existence, the day on which his long crusade through the jungles of Burma had ended with the unconditional surrender of the Japanese empire....

His voice constricted with sudden emotion, the victor of the jungles of Burma about to become the liberator of India announced:

'The final Transfer of Power to Indian hands will take place on 15 August 1947.'

Louis Mountbatten's spontaneous decision to announce the date of India's Independence on his own initiative was a bombshell....

We see, then, how inscrutable are the ways of Providence! To-day who remembers the date of Mountbatten's victory? It has become eternally linked with Sri Aurobindo's birthday.

The irony of it is that India has failed to recognise the significance of the 15th. Even Hitler, the Asura's instrument, did not. During the last War, he blatantly announced that on the 15th August he would broadcast to the world from Buckingham Palace. We, along with Sri Aurobindo, laughed.

We know, however, how he fared that day, he met with one of the biggest defeats in the air-battle. From then his decline began until it ended in his suicide.

We have now come to know how around the month of August so many important events are crowded together: for example, the atom-bomb explosion in Hiroshima and the peace offer of Japan.

I ask myself: "When will India accept Sri Aurobindo as, at least, one of the liberators of India?" Names of great leaders resound in the corridors of Time, but Sri Aurobindo's name is remembered only as of a past political leader. Some there are who even speak of him in disparaging terms, resort to innuendoes, even calumnies, with the object of lowering him in the eyes of the public; at best they say that he was engaged in seeking his own selfish *mukti*, spiritual liberation.

Not that they have been doing it from ignorance, for they have surely read his *Life Divine*, *Human Cycle*, *Foundations of Indian Culture* and other revelatory works. I leave out *Savitri* which, according to the current poetic canon in India, is not worth considering as poetry!

I should like to ask then: "Is there any single person who has sung about humanity's future as much as Sri Aurobindo has done? Who has loved India as deeply and intensely from his very birth almost? Who has dreamed of India as the future spiritual Guru of the world? Is there any greater exponent and interpreter of India's culture than Sri Aurobindo—for example, of the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Gita?" *The Foundations of Indian Culture* is an unparalleled exposition of Indian civilisation and its survival through the ages, whereas many great civilisations have disappeared from this earth. Let us read only this book and if we are not convinced of this truth, it will be because of our purblindness or stark prejudice. About the Vedas, Upanishads and Gita we are still taking lessons from European pandits discarding our own scholars among whom Sri Aurobindo undoubtedly ranks supreme. And what about his knowledge that encompasses in its vision the past, present, future? Can anybody else be compared with this god of the Supermind in this respect? It is not knowledge either, as we understand it. It is Truth-vision, Truth-audition. And the revelatory language in which he has embodied his vision will remain unsurpassed for centuries to come. Sri Aurobindo told us once that he would not be able to exhaust all that he knew even if he went on writing for ten years! What a tremendous assertion, if it were true, and true it must be, for in Sri Aurobindo's vast consciousness there is not a single turbid wave.

I draw my speech to a close with a reading of the last portion of Sri Aurobindo's letter I have mentioned earlier. Speaking about what his work in life would be, he writes:

"To re-explain the Sanatana Dharma to the human intellect in all its parts from a new standpoint.... Sri Krishna has shown me the true meaning of the Vedas, not only so but he has shown me a new science of philology showing the process and origin of human speech so that a new Nirukta can be formed and a new interpretation of the Veda based upon it. He has also shown me the meaning of all in the Upanishads that is not understood either by Indians or Europeans. I have therefore to re-explain the whole Vedanta and Veda in such a way that it will be seen how all religion arises out of it and is one everywhere. In this way it will be proved that India is the centre of the world and its destined saviour through the Sanatana Dharma.

“India being the centre, to work for her restoration to her place in the world....”

“A perfect humanity being intended society will have to be remodelled so as to be fit to attain that perfection.”

That remodelling and reshaping, one can affirm, is going on. For Sri Aurobindo is not only *ananta jnani* and *ananta guni*, he is also *ananta shakti*. The Mother says, “What Sri Aurobindo represents in the world’s history is not a teaching, not even a revelation; it is a decisive action direct from the Supreme.”

About all this, modern India is totally ignorant and indifferent. It knows not its true Saviour. Hence there is so much error and misguidance. The Pandavas accepted Sri Krishna and dharma-rajya was established. The sooner we accept 15th August as the day fixed by God for India’s true liberation, the better it will be for India.

Today things are dark, even dismal. But Sri Aurobindo was prepared for all this. He said in 1950: “The dark conditions do not discourage me or convince me of the vanity of my will to ‘help the world,’ for I knew they had to come; and they were there in the world-nature and had to rise up so that they might be exhausted or expelled so that a better world freed from them might be there.... Afterwards the work for the Divine will become more possible and it may well be that the dream, if it is a dream, of leading the world towards the spiritual light, may even become a reality. So I am not disposed even now, in these dark conditions, to consider my will to help the world as condemned to failure.”

Let us not imagine that because he is no longer present in his physical body, these words have lost their value. We can assure you that he is very much present and active; he has become one with our consciousness, he knows every bit of what is happening in us, in the world, and he is guiding us towards light. He told us long ago after his passing, in unmistakable terms: “I am here, I am here.”

One day all eyes will turn to this Light and Hope of Humanity.



# THE STORY OF A SOUL

BY HUTA

*(Continued from the issue of October 1985)*

The Mother's Message

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



Volume Two: 1958

6

ALTHOUGH I longed for the oblivion of sleep, my mind was tormented by feverish thoughts which like some relentless maelstrom seemed to be pulling me down to the blackest depths of anguish and despair. For more than an hour I tossed and twisted restlessly, turning the pillows a dozen times to find a cooler place for my

throbbing head. I spent a near-sleepless night and woke next morning feeling ever more exhausted.

In the morning the Mother sent a card showing a cock and these words followed:

“There is no aspiration that receives no answer from love and compassion of the Grace.”

I forgot to aspire, I forgot to love—there was a tempest in my entire being, I closed my eyes in sheer agony against tiredness, problems and conflicts. It seemed impossible to retrace my way to normality.

It was not me but a ghost of me moving about without liveliness, aim or zeal. I failed totally to co-operate with the Mother’s Force and respond to her Grace and Love.

Card after card came to solace my true being. But my sophist mind regarded nothing except what was revolving in front of it. I was too much involved in my outer self. My whole being was a jumble of an ambiguity.

The Mother had written on a card:

“In the Integral Yoga, there is no distinction between the sadhana and the outward life; it is in each and every movement of the daily life that the Truth must be found and practised.

“With the unchanging love of the Grace.”

What a paradoxical statement! I was mystified. Oh, this Yoga! With a suppressed little cry I threw myself down, burying my face in the pillow—and as I lay there, no tears coming to ease my pain, I felt exactly as though my faith lay like broken glass,—my dreams shattered into a thousand splinters, piercing my heart. How useless they were! Not all the tears in the world could wash away the pain from my heart. Suddenly they all seemed to dry up. I thought I would never shed any more as long as I lived. I put my hands over my eyes and sat very still—trying to shut off the disastrous conceptions and feelings. I had to take hold of the unravelled threads of my life and try to knit them back into some kind of cohesive pattern. But it was difficult—impossible. My mind slid down a long dark slope into nothingness. I heaved a sigh of grief. I did not know what to do—where to go. Everywhere there was darkness, blankness and dullness which frightened me to death. When I look back, these verses come to my mind from the Sonnet by Sri Aurobindo, *Often in the slow Ages’ long retreat:*

“All round me now the titan forces press;  
This world is theirs, they hold its days in fee;  
I am full of wounds and the fight merciless.  
Is it not yet thy hour of Victory?”

The Mother sent me a card illustrating exotic pink roses which brought these refreshing words of the Mother:

“No adverse forces can prevail against the constant action of the Grace.

“One day the Victory is certain.”

I asked myself: “Will ‘One day’ ever come?” I doubted very much, because I had lost trust in the Divine. The Mother kept on sending cards—I kept on reading them without interest.

\*

It was 18th March 1958. A card showing a Poppy came from the Mother together with these words:

“The Grace will win the Victory in due time by the eternal love.”

“In due time”? How? It was rather hard to believe. I was steeped even more in unconsciousness. Every instinct cried out in denial.

The summer heat made me somnolent and I was bored with the rut of life. I could not sleep, because that day I was invited by the Mother to accompany her to an island along with Nolini, Dr. Sanyal, Udar, Amiyo, Pavitra, Pranab and Elenore Montgomery.

In the afternoon the Mother went to Le Faucheur in her Humber car. We followed in other cars.

Manoranjan Ganguli, who adored the Mother was ready to do anything for her, got the ferry decorated elaborately with coloured cloths and banners. The Mother’s chair was placed there. She sat in it. We sat down on a mat in front of her. The ferry was pulled by four Tamil workers who were in the river which was shallow. We were proceeding towards the island. Meanwhile the Mother cracked a joke at my cost:

“If Huta pulls the ferry, she will drown. She is so small.”

She said this with a gesture and laughed. Her gay laughter floated through the ferry like music, which set everybody laughing. The Mother was in one of her teasing moods. But I did not take it lightly. For I felt terribly hurt—if I were not tall, was it my fault or the Creator’s fault? Once again my inferiority complex increased by leaps and bounds. Anger, humiliation and wounded pride mingled with strangling thoughts which held me mute.

We reached the island. I diverted my mind to the panorama of it. Ananta—an American—with his colleagues stood near the bank of the river to receive the Mother. It was his birthday. She greeted him enthusiastically and cordially.

The most thrilling and amusing scene was a peacock. It was also present among the people who welcomed the Mother. The bird followed her throughout her stroll in the gardens on the island. She talked to it with eagerness and affection:

“Ah! tu es très gentil. Tu es très, très bon.”<sup>1</sup>

The flattered bird responded to her by moving its head from one side to the other and then staring at the Mother with perfect immobility. It would certainly not leave her side. It monopolised her. We all know how the Mother loved animals and birds and trees and flowers—the splendour of Nature.

Afterwards she entered Ananta’s house. The bird too wanted to go in but then decided to remain with us near the house on the lawn where we all sat waiting for the Mother.

When she emerged from Ananta’s house the peacock was the first to reach her. Then we all set off on the journey back home. The bird wanted very much to come with us on the ferry—but one of the workers there held it in order to prevent it from jumping in. It screeched pathetically. The Mother looked at it and murmured something. I felt very sorry for the peacock.

And that was the unforgettable trip with the Mother.

She tried to make me happy and cheerful. But it seemed futile. My feelings were frozen.

I arrived at my place. When at last I did fall asleep shortly before dawn, my rest was invaded by strange dreams, not memorable in themselves but leaving vague recollections of uneasiness as I dragged myself unwillingly out of my bed the next morning.

I received a card from the Mother accompanied by these words:

“The Grace’s victory is sure, but a quiet endurance makes it come quicker.”

But there was a limit to endurance. I felt terribly ashamed and hesitant to approach the Mother, because my echo to her love, Grace and compassion was soundless. I knew that I was not worthy of her. I could not go to her with a gay and peaceful heart. I expressed my views to her. She replied on a pretty card:

“The Mother is always ready to welcome her child whatever fault the child may have committed.

“With deep love and compassion.”

\*

I was struggling hard to come out of the black sea of unconsciousness. But

<sup>1</sup> See the photograph on p. 721.





there seemed not a single ray of hope visible anywhere. I was stifled.

The Mother wrote:

“Never lose hope—hope is a divine virtue.”

Yet another card depicting Sweet Peas and bearing these words:

“Love—Light—Hope—Compassion.”

Oh! but they were mere words—what was the use? I wanted the concrete proof and reality. The colossal EGO never budged—it barred the way of my release.

The Mother had written on a card picturing different coloured Carnations:

“What we call ourself is only the ego—Our true self is the Divine.”

I asked myself: “What is the true self? What is the Divine?”

My nature became still more unruly and repulsive owing to constant attacks of the hostile forces. My vision and consciousness were blurred. I felt as though the future of my life were darkening before me—as if the iron bars of a prison were closing upon me and fetters were being fixed. My heart was dead within me, all feeling, all love for her extinguished in a numb sort of shock. To crown it all, I was losing my memory—I became completely blank at times. No matter how much I attempted to memorise certain things, they slipped out of my consciousness. I could not even recall what the Mother had said when I had been to her. I informed her about my precarious state. She replied:

“With the silence of mind, always comes at first what seems to be a loss of memory, but there is nothing to be anxious about. It comes back in due time and the memory is a better one, more correct and more exact.

“With eternal love and compassion.”

I did not know whether to laugh or to weep. What kind of life was I leading? It surprised me boundlessly. On one side I felt my mind restless, on the other it was silent according to the Mother. Surely it seemed to me such a cocktail of opposites—I thought I would go off my head.

Sri Aurobindo has written in the Cent. Ed., Vol. 23, p. 919 about the blankness:

“Emptiness usually comes as a clearance of the consciousness or some part of it. The consciousness or part becomes like an empty cup into which something new can be poured. The highest emptiness is the pure existence of the self in which all manifestation can take place.”

A card came from the Mother:

“Think only of the Divine.”

No, on the contrary I was thinking only of my little self—ego. My moods were changing like a chameleon. Now I wanted to paint. So I did a picture of a mother and a child. This was the first time I painted in my house on the new easel. I sent it to the Mother. She remarked:

“The inspiration of the picture is good, the face of the mother is pretty. But the whole thing seems to have been hurriedly done and not properly finished—Especially the head of the child is not as nice as it should be.”

Despite my miseries, I smiled to myself and thought: “Yes, indeed, my head is not nice. It is full of whims and woes. How can it reflect itself on a canvas with clarity and harmony?”

As always I went to the Mother in the evening. She drew the sketch of a mother and a child in order to show me how it should be done.<sup>1</sup>

It was Saturday, 29th March. The Mother came down from her apartment to the Meditation Hall to distribute a Message. For it was the Anniversary of her arrival day. The Message ran:

“When you are in need of an external change, it means that you do not progress internally. For he who progresses internally can live always under the same external conditions; these constantly reveal to him new truths.”

The Mother received me in the evening at the Playground. Her eyes, dwelling on me intently, saw my weariness. She merely nodded her head, making no verbal comment. Then slowly she closed her eyes and plunged into a deep concentration. She awoke and looked at me. I felt that the rays of her shining eyes were mocking the shadows of the adverse forces which were in every nook of my being. A slight smile played around her mouth as she watched my expression. I was sad, because I could not stir to her love. She gathered me in her arms. Then after accepting flowers from her, I made my way home.

March was ending. But my difficulties were endless.

There were conditions from the Mother which had to be practised and realised:

“Live only for the Divine.”

“Aspire only to the Divine.”

“Love only the Divine.”

*(To be continued)*

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<sup>1</sup> See the picture on p. 722.



# APROPOS OF THE MOTHER'S DEPARTURE

## A PERSONAL CORRESPONDENCE

I

November 22, 1973

TODAY I have finished my written exam and have come home to spend the night. I am going to sleep in your room and it still has your powder smell in it and I am filled with a sad nostalgia. I was so used to having you here. I don't know if you quite realise the great love I have for you and how much I wanted to do things for you but was prevented from doing so by this silly exam. I have done well in it.

The past few days I have felt the atmosphere charged with the strength of Mother's power and I am drawing on it all the time. I can almost feel her physical presence before me all the time and on the 20th at 9 p.m. I suddenly felt the great pressure in the middle of the head that I always feel at the Samadhi and the feeling at the back of my head of a great white light. I absorbed the power for about 5 minutes till it went as suddenly as it came, and left me with a deep peace within and a lightness in my heart that I have not felt since I heard the news on the morning of the 18th.

Otherwise I feel quite desolate and drained of all emotion. Nothing seems to be of any importance, and I cannot react to ordinary events in the usual manner. I feel a need to withdraw within myself and a sense of quiet waiting for whatever Mother's plan may be. For a plan there has to be, for which She made the decision to leave.

Love to all of you,  
Ferdauz

2

November 29, 1973

As I wrote in my letter to your daddy, I was very pleased to get your letter. And I was so pleased not only because a beloved nephew wrote lovingly to me but also because the innermost Ferdauz, the true Ferdauz, was written all over the page.

You have realised—inalterably—that you are a child of the Mother and you have known that only in this realisation are genuine peace, knowledge and self-fulfilment. That pressure in the middle of your head and that feeling of a great white light at the back of it are signs of the Mother's presence with you—deep in your heart where you now feel serenity and lightness.

Yes, the news we received on the morning of the 18th was in its first impact shattering. It was so because we were prone to identify with the physical form—lovely and loving and lovable—the mighty Being who had worn it. But surely this

form appeared such to our adoring eyes because that Being was so mighty—so much greater than even such a wonderful form? The disappearance of the form has now driven home to us the true nature of the Being. And, as you say, we need to go deep within ourselves and find the quiet waiting there, which will reveal to us the Mother's plan for each one. A pointer to the path for the discovery of this plan is in some words of hers which I shall reproduce in the coming *Mother India*:

Be simple,  
 Be happy,  
 Remain quiet,  
 Do your work as well as you can,  
 Keep yourself always open towards me.  
 This is all that is asked from you.

The next *Mother India* will also contain an article by me, giving my vision of what has happened and what the happening promises.

Coming now to our own personal concerns, let me assure you that I know fully well the love you have for me and your intense desire to do things for me. You have done more than enough and I thank you deeply, as I thank also the rest of the family, all of whom have looked after me during my stay in Bombay.

I am happy that you have done well in your exam. I am sure you will fare just as successfully in the orals in December.

My mind goes back again and again to that room of Hamilton Villa where I spent three and a half months and my mind and body regained their health in the midst of all of you dear ones. The powder, whose smell you speak of, is, as you know, "Himalaya Bouquet: Spring", and its box is blue. "Himalaya" stands for the calm height, enveloped by infinity, towards which I aspire. But it is a height which reaches up not to forget the world but to be able to look as widely over it as possible—to pervade it with as much understanding and affection as one can give. A "bouquet", scent, of the God-touched altitude is sought to be spread everywhere below. "Spring" symbolises the warmth and colour and laughter and efflorescence which the Himalayan aspiration wants to let loose on the lowlands where men go dry and drab, fight and suffer and die.

Indeed the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother is suggested by that powder-smell! And I would ask for no better memento of myself.

With my love to all of you,  
 Amal

## AN OUTLINE OF SRI AUROBINDO'S SPIRITUAL MESSAGE

*Years ago "A Scrutiny of Scientific Opinions" was serialised under the heads "Matter", "Matter and Life", "Matter, Life and Mind" and a final summing-up made with a pointer towards a spiritual agency secretly at work behind these terms of the changing universe in which science functions. At the very end a hint was thrown out that a proper understanding of what Sri Aurobindo had to teach would be most pertinent. A concluding chapter on him was prepared but never published. It has now been salvaged from an old file and presented below for whatever interest and value it may have.*

**MORE** and more thinkers today who probe into the implications of scientific theories and discoveries—in psychology, biology and physics—have the sense that they subtly point in general towards a non-materialistic world-view as soon as we refuse to be satisfied with facile superficialities. But not many realise that this world-view shadowed forth from what has surely been the most representative activity of the human consciousness for the last two or even three centuries finds its most enlightening basis in the philosophy and vision embodied in the "Integral Yoga" of Sri Aurobindo.

Not that the Integral Yoga depends for its validity on science: the Master of it has his status of truth-knower on independent grounds of inquiry and experience. But we may note that his enquiry and experience proceed by a discipline comparable in his own field to the objective approach, rigorous testing and search for "unified theory" admirably characterising the scientific method. And what is of special moment is that this Yoga not only has room for all that science in its modern development broadly discerns beyond the material plane: it also provides room for the stresses which science by its very nature must lay on that plane. The demand for material results, the concept of universal evolution, the feeling of the centrality of the Here and Now in the scheme of man's fulfilment—all these are eminently in tune with Sri Aurobindo's Yogic philosophy and vision.

For, the Aurobindonian Yoga has its core in a principle and power intent on bringing about a spiritual victory in the very field that is the concern of science. This principle and power Sri Aurobindo has called Supermind and distinguished as the plenary dynamic divinity which the ancient seers could not bring into comprehensive play to complement the limitless peace they had realised. The Supermind is the top of a gradation of greater being, knowledge, force and bliss which lies concealed in man: it crowns a series of planes above the mental which Sri Aurobindo classifies as Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuition, Overmind. And this plenary dynamic divinity is to be attained not by a negation of the world and its values. Spirituality and mysticism in the past have culminated, says Sri Aurobindo, in "the refusal of the ascetic". Even when embodied existence was not regarded as an evil

to be escaped from, it was never considered capable of being completely perfected or of giving us our fulfilment: perfection and fulfilment were always to be found in the Beyond. As a reaction to such an extreme, there is, in Sri Aurobindo's phrase, "the denial of the materialist"—the view that there is no ultra-material reality, no soul, no God. Sri Aurobindo holds both the extremes to be errors.

The materialist bypasses the ineradicable aspiration in man towards the infinite, the eternal, the deific—an aspiration that has returned after every age of materialism. He sets aside also the evidence of a huge mass of mystical experimentation through the centuries. And, *vis-à-vis* modern science, he fails to read its true though subtle pointers. On the other hand, the ascetic forgets that if the human being's fulfilment lies merely in a Beyond, the logic of earthly evolution which science has established past all doubt is violated. Evolution on earth means two things. First, an unfolding of ever greater powers. Second, an integration of the lesser with the greater. Spirituality is the emergence of a divine consciousness within and beyond matter. It is at the same time that which should take up into itself and transform with its sovereign light the embodied existence in which it emerges. Mysticism misses its goal in an evolutionary world if it does not do anything more than purify, elevate and finally lead to the "unitive life", the life of essential oneness with the eternal Spirit. It must make the whole of us partake of divinity in a direct way, by means of a right inherent in all our parts. There must be a divinised mind, a divinised vitality, a divinised body in the most literal sense. Human history has not merely yearned from an inmost being in us towards a Yonder of Light: it has also longed for a perfection of knowledge of outward nature, a perfection of outward-going vital energy individual and collective, a perfection of the physical form itself through which both mind and vitality exteriorise their functions.

Supermind is precisely the principle and power which carries the key to such a rounded self-consummation, for it contains the supporting ultimate truth, the divine counterpart and perfect pattern, of whatever evolves here, and it is their gradually unfolding figures that are the formations of the world. Supermind is simultaneously a manifested plenitude above and a secret plenitude below. Evolution is the result of a push by this Godhead from where it lies "involved" at the base of things and of a pressure, penetration and pull by it from a transcendence where its glories lie revealed for ever. Those glories have been evoked by the Supermind from an absolute of Existence, Consciousness-Force, Delight which is its own background-being and from which it calls forth the contents of Truth implicit there for a projection through its own faultless harmony of these contents into an evolutionary cosmos beginning with all that seems an antithesis of the Divine.

The seeming antithesis of the Divine is termed by Sri Aurobindo the Inconscient. The Inconscient is consciousness so packed in as to appear utterly absent on the surface: a division has occurred by which the frontal part of consciousness has become absorbed and immersed in a certain activity and lost contact with the inner part so that it is nothing save that activity, is oblivious of its source and, with

the consequent crypting of this source, acquires the somnambulistic aspect which characterises matter's "blind" operations. But, since the sole reality is the Divine and since the Inconscient is one mode of operation of the Divine's infinite consciousness which is capable of an infinite number of simultaneous poises, the entire plenitude of the Spirit is implicit in it. Bit by bit, amidst a huge phenomenon of apparent waste, the hidden riches break out, struggling with the heavy and distorting crust. To their aid come the planes hung like a ladder between the Supermind and the Inconscient—subtle matter, subtle vitality, subtle mind and, behind them, the ultra-mental vastnesses. Aeonically has been the labour to liberate those riches, because until man was evolved, no organism had any focus of self-awareness through which the evolute could co-operate with the Power within the Inconscient and the planes that lay their pressure upon it.

With man a new era opens. He feels, however vaguely, the Power behind him: there always persists in him a striving to establish better conditions inward and outward, to bring about a fairer order. He feels too the weight of the other cosmoses than the one in which he evolves and often there rises in him an appeal to the unseen and the unknown, often he yearns towards shimmering distances of dream; hours too are there when "the light that never was on sea or land" draws him onward and upward and he in turn essays to bring it down to the sea and the land he knows and moves on. Not much success attends the effort to bring the divine fire down; for, though the Supermind is the goad and the lure in the evolution, its secret is not clearly read. To decipher its meaning effectively, the spiritual temper must be joined to the scientific and an insight obtained into earth's evolutionary nature and destiny.

None before Sri Aurobindo can be described as the master Yogi of the all-consummating Supermind which can heal the division felt for ages between matter and Spirit. And his uniqueness lies too in showing that the healing process is the very logic of things and not a stunning incomprehensible magic. "All problems of existence," he writes in an oft-quoted yet never to be hackneyed passage, "are essentially problems of harmony. They arise from the perception of an unsolved discord and the instinct of an undiscovered agreement or unity.... The greater the apparent disorder of the materials offered or the apparent disparateness, even to irreconcilable opposition, of the elements that have to be utilised, the stronger is the spur, and it drives towards a more subtle and puissant order than can normally be the result of a less difficult endeavour. The accordance of active life with a material of form in which the condition of activity itself seems to be inertia is one problem of opposites that Nature has solved and seeks always to solve better with greater complexities: for its perfect solution would be the material immortality of a fully organised mind-supporting animal body. The accordance of conscious mind and conscious will with a form and a life in themselves not overtly self-conscious and capable at best of a mechanical or subconscious will is another problem of opposites in which she has produced astonishing results and aims always at higher marvels; for there her ultimate miracle would be an animal consciousness no longer seeking

but possessed of Truth and Light with the practical omnipotence which would result from the possession of a direct and perfected knowledge. Not only, then, is the upward impulse in man towards the accordance of yet higher opposites rational in itself, but it is the only logical completion of a rule and an effort that seems to be a fundamental method of Nature and the very sense of her universal strivings."

The Supermind's manifestation, however, depends on man's proper use of his own *differentia* from the animals. Evolution up to the human stage has been a process in which the evolving creature had very little direct hand. With man the mental evolute there has come about a state of self-awareness and therefore a power of evolving consciously. In fact, self-awareness implies that a new mode of working has arisen and that, unless an effort is made to evolve consciously, there can be no radical progression. Man cannot become a medium of evolution unless he consciously co-operates. He must constantly open himself to the Supermind and aspire after it. This indeed he does do all the time but not in the direct manner that is necessary. Some sort of an idealist and perfectionist and seeker of "a yonder to all ends" he is in every activity despite the obstacles in his own being and in the intractable world around. What is lacking is the genuine spiritual turn by which alone there can be not a wider and wider revolving on his own level with mere passing leaps above and fugitive plunges from the spirit downward in response, but a large circling up of the mental consciousness towards the Supermind, a total evolving beyond his own level. And, when the genuine spiritual turn is present, there is generally an impatience with earth and a fixing of the God-dazzled gaze too much on the hereafter, the supra-terrestrial, the extra-cosmic. The Supermind's advent must be preceded by a double change of values. Two things must be deemed of paramount worth: an ascent from the human to the Divine, a descent of the Divine into the human. The conscious co-operation which man has to practise in order to be a medium of evolution has to be keyed to this movement of ascent and descent.

In the context of conscious co-operation the motifs of soul-individuality and soul-continuity come to the fore. Who precisely is the conscious co-operator? Is it an individual soul? And what place has such a soul in the world's history? Sri Aurobindo's general answer follows logically from his first principles. For soul-individuality and soul-continuity are inevitable once we look at evolution in the light of a supreme spiritual Reality. If such a Reality is being unfolded, then without a soul-individuality there lacks a rationale to the organic individualisation marking the evolutionary process. Again, without a soul-continuity behind the grades of evolution, the soul-individualities of all organisms that are not fortunate enough to enjoy the ultimate divine fulfilment on earth—and this means millions of organisms—lack a rationale to their share in an adventure of which that fulfilment is the goal. There must be diverse souls persisting through the vicissitudes of "name and form" across the ages.

However, we must properly understand what the persisting individual soul is. Sri Aurobindo, calling it the psyche, distinguishes it both from the self of mind

and from the self of life no less than from the self of physical existence. What the psychic self is can be clearly grasped only when we see it in its place in the complete Aurobindonian scheme of our selfhood. First of all, there is the fact to be noted that the creative Spirit disposes its reality on every plane in a biune form: conscious being and nature. Thus we have a mental being facing mental nature, a vital being fronting vital nature, a physical being opposite physical nature: these beings are experienced according as consciousness in us assumes a mental or vital or physical poise. And all of them are representatives of the psychic being. Our evolutionary existence is a multiple being with its centre in the psyche. The psyche is what goes from birth to birth. Each time the body is dissolved, the psyche passes out with its mental and vital envelopes. These envelopes persist for a while on the planes beyond earth and then they too are cast off, so that the psyche is free to retire to its own plane and stay there, enjoying a deep reconstitutive rest until it issues forth to make a new mental and vital form which gets housed in a new physical body.

Its relation to mind and life and matter are twofold. It effects a projection of itself into them, which gets steeped in their tones, and this mentalised, vitalised and physicalised projection is what constitutes our ordinary experience of individuality, a sense of unity within a multiplicity of heterogeneous elements of both being and nature. On the other hand, through this multiplicity of heterogeneous elements its own growth takes place: a large range of experience is compassed by it and its individuality is enriched and rendered versatile by assimilation of the evolutionary significance of all that transpires during each birth. The aim is to develop the divine potencies lying within it. This means becoming capable of entering into a universal consciousness without losing individuality and uniting with what is beyond both universe and individual, the transcendent divinity from which it originally came. It also means becoming capable of leading the mental, vital and physical personalities towards manifesting their divine counterparts. For, the purpose of the psyche's work in the formula of an evolutionary cosmos is to create here a figure of that which stands above the evolution as the supreme truth, the divine model and archetype of individuality, but which projects the psyche as its representative into the cosmic process. This divine model is the ultimate One who is also the ultimate Many and who by that unity-in-diversity is the basis of all existence: it is that One in an aspect of Its Manyness on the plane of the perfect and harmonious Supermind. The figure of this archetype is created in the evolutionary cosmos by the movement of ascent and descent effected by the multiple being of us with the psyche as its centre.

Since the psyche is the representative of the individualised Divine of the supramental plane, it has an innate spiritual drive as well as an innate spiritual discrimination. A fire of spontaneous love for God, a light of automatic perception of the true and the beautiful and the good, the eternal and the infinite and the absolute, it is the presence and the puissance in us that has to be brought into the front in the labour of evolving the Supermind and converting man into superman. Al-

ways, in fact, the spiritual turn comes by the psychic being. But the turn is not always pure and positive. It is often through some leap in the mind towards knowledge beyond the senses, some push in the *élan vital* towards power beyond common Nature, some surge in the bodily consciousness towards stability beyond the precarious equilibrium which is exposed every moment to disease and death. Of course, mentality, vitality and physicality have to orientate themselves to the Spirit, and they must never be discouraged in their legitimate aspiration. But even this aspiration cannot be complete and intense without the psyche, the authentic soul, coming out in its own right, its own direct and immediate religiousness, its intuitive sense of both the personal and the impersonal Divine, its pure passion for the All-Holy. The conscious co-operation we have to practise is basically the psyche's, though with a sweep of it through our many-sided constitution.

How exactly the complex co-operation is to be done—the broad dynamics of the supramental Yoga as well as the detailed application of it to daily occasions—has been explained by Sri Aurobindo in numerous books. And the actual carrying out of the co-operation is taught in the Ashram he instituted in Pondicherry as the nucleus of a new organised society under the guidance of his spiritual associate whom he and his disciples called “The Mother”. But to acquire an intellectual vision of the basis and goal and implications of this Yoga we must con the pages of *The Life Divine* where a multi-winged metaphysical structure is erected. They are not specifically meant to correlate science to a spiritual *Weltanschauung*, but, as they are written by one who was wide-awake to the moods and modes of the scientific mind and in whom the time-spirit came to its intensest intellectual and spiritual focus, science will find in them the complete enlightening explication of the non-materialistic world-view which, in a total survey, its analysis of psychology, biology and physics is seen to suggest.

K. D. SETHNA



# AN APPROACH TO SRI AUROBINDO'S *SAVITRI*

## (a) 'A Legend and a Symbol'

THE great Epic, the Epic of epics, one of the four pillars of the stupendous structure of Sri Aurobindo's Supramental work may from a point of view be regarded and studied as an epitome of the unimaginable labour of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother for hewing out paths of Supramental realisation needed for divinising man and heavenising Earth. Particularly it epitomises the holocaust of the Mother in her gigantic work of breaking the rocks of the unconscious world for laying the path to physical immortality.

The day will come when poets, philosophers and neo-scientists yet to be born, the psycho-scientists, if it is permissible to use the expression, will discover immense interest in this marvel of versification which combines in it all the aspects of the Truth Absolute.

Sri Aurobindo has characterised his poem as 'a Legend and a Symbol.' It is also an Epic by being a poem recounting a great event in an elevated style. In some scholars with a literary bent of mind there happens to be a hazy idea about the purpose and subject-matter of this great piece. They feel it to be an epic inspired only by the poetic aesthetic imagination and admire it mostly for the purpose of literary enjoyment. For this reason Sri Aurobindo himself warned one of his disciples in letters in 1933, when a manuscript of a portion of the book was being discussed, in the following words—"...it is only an attempt to render into poetry a symbol of things occult and spiritual" in a narrative dealing with an incarnation of the Divine Mother which "is supposed to have taken place in far past times when the whole thing had to be opened so as to 'hew the ways of immortality'." Again his own words are—"What I am trying to do everywhere in the poem is to express exactly something seen, something felt or experienced.... *Savitri* is the record of a seeing, of an experience which is not of the common kind and is often very far from what the general human mind sees and experiences."

*Savitri* is divided into 3 parts. The 1st part contains 3 books with as many as 24 cantos. The 1st book has been entitled by the author *The Book of Beginnings*. One who has read the Mahabharata in its entirety is apt to compare the 'Book of Beginnings' with the Adi Parva (आदि पर्व) of the Mahabharata. As in the Adi Parva the subsequent elaboration of Part I at least has been put in a nutshell in this *Book of Beginnings*.

The 1st canto of Book I is of "The Symbol Dawn". Dawn has come every day since creation, but the particular Dawn of the day when Savitri conquered Death has been depicted, together with the preceding Night, in this Canto. The last line of the Canto is: "This was the day when Satyavan must die."

Why "must die" is explained by Narad in Book V.

In the 2nd Canto two issues were raised in the mind of Savitri as she woke and

lay reviewing her life. One was to yield to the Cosmic Laws, to bear with Ignorance and Death, the other was to hew the ways of Immortality by conquering Death and Ignorance. Savitri chose the latter.

As noted above, *Savitri* has been stated by Sri Aurobindo to be a Legend and a Symbol. Legend one can understand, but what is Symbol? "A Symbol is a form in one plane that represents a truth of another"—Sri Aurobindo's own definition. Several characters of this Epic are symbolic. The main purpose of writing this epic is to show us the mission of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on this earth.<sup>1</sup>

His birth held up a symbol and a sign...

A world's desire compelled her mortal birth....

A Soul made ready through a thousand years  
Is the living mould of a supreme Descent...(Book V, C 2)

### (b) The Sadhana of the Traveller

The details of Sadhana have been given in the 22 cantos from the 3rd canto of Book I to the end of Book 3. The Sadhana of the Traveller (Aswapati) was over with the boon obtained from the Supreme Divine Mother.

The Sadhana of the Traveller has been briefly described by Sri Aurobindo himself in a letter thus:

First, he is achieving his own spiritual self-fulfilment as the Individual in the Yoga of the King (Cantos 3, 4 & 5 of Book I).

Next, he makes an ascent as a Typical Representative of the race to win the possibility of discovering and possessing all the planes of consciousness and this is described in the 2nd Book (consisting of 15 Cantos).

Finally, he aspires no longer for himself but for all, for Universal Realisation and New Creation. This is described in *The Book of the Divine Mother* (Book 3, comprising 4 Cantos).

As an Individual, as he passed through all the stages in his Sadhana, "a many-miracled consciousness unrolled in him."

Sunbelts of knowledge, moonbelts of delight  
Stretched out in an ecstasy of widenesses  
Beyond our indigent corporeal range,  
There he could enter, there awhile abide.  
A voyager upon uncharted routes  
Fronting the viewless danger of the unknown,  
Adventuring across enormous realms,  
He broke into another Space and Time. (Book I, C. 5)

Thus as an Individual he achieved his own spiritual Self-fulfilment.

Then he made the ascent as a Typical Representative of the race. Alone he moved watched by the Infinity around him and the Unknowable above. He found a lone immense high-curved world-pile erect like a mountain chariot of the gods motionless under an inscrutable sky. This world-pile connects the earth with the screened eternities. In this region the universe of the unknown arises, where self-creation reveals the grandeurs of the Infinite in a deep oneness. Here,

All could be seen that shuns the mortal eye,  
 All could be known the mind has never grasped;  
 All could be done no mortal will can dare...  
 Here, all experience was a single plan,  
 The thousandfold expression of the One. (Book II, C. I)

In his ascent to this region, being in deep oneness with the Infinite, he could see all that the mortal eye cannot see and mind cannot grasp. From the Kingdom of Subtle Matter he could see the earth-nature's shining origins; the source of life; the Descent of Life on earth; human life on earth working through the double-faced contraries and contradictories in the Inconscience; this life fallen from a higher region on earth; how it acted with its attendants of little mind and little self—the ego which is a finite movement of the Infinite, an instrument personality. He could, however, see the potentiality in man appearing with the prospect of our life being transformed into a Divine Life. This he could find as if in the glimmerings of a dying torch in the darkness—in the Kingdom of the Little Life working in a grey anarchy.

The Traveller challenging the darkness with his luminous Soul then came into a fierce and dolorous realm peopled by souls who never tasted bliss. On his journey onward he arrived at the Paradise of the Life-Gods where "A giant drop of the Bliss unknowable/Overwhelmed his limbs and round his soul became A fiery ocean of felicity."

This Paradise of the Life-Gods he is to overpass and leave until the Highest is gained.

Now, the Sadhana of the Traveller in the vital and mental planes ceases and the Soul's seeing commences. In this spirit's realm the soul finds its source. Here one can feel himself as a citizen of the Mother-state and not as a colonist in the darkness (Night) where one's rights are barred, one's passport becomes void and one lives self-exiled from the heavenlier home. This unfallen plane of the spirit has a triple realm. His soul, a single conscious power, alone between tremendous presences, passed on to the source of all things human and divine.

There he beheld in their mighty Union's poise  
 The figures of the deathless Two-in-One.

A single being in two bodies clasped,  
 A diarchy of two united souls  
 Seated absorbed in deep creative joy;  
 Their trance of bliss sustained the mobile world.  
 Behind them in a morning dusk One stood  
 Who brought them forth from the unknowable...  
 She guards the austere approach to the Alone...

He outstretched to her his folded hands of prayer.  
 Then in a sovereign answer to his heart  
 A gesture came as of worlds thrown away...  
 A light appeared still and imperishable...  
 He saw the mystic outline of a face...  
 He fell down at her feet, unconscious, prone.

He now reached the highest state—the Para Brahman state.  
 On the break of his trance he knocked at the doors of the Unknowable. He  
 moved through regions of transcendent Truth above Space and Time.

He had reached the top of all that could be known...  
 He was a vast and soon became a Sun.

All these things are depicted in detail in the 15 cantos of Book 2.

Now for Book 3, the Book of the Divine Mother.

Thus the Traveller won the full victory of his ascent as a typical representative  
 of humanity and discovered and possessed all the planes of consciousness and power  
 but this too was an individual victory.

The power and knowledge he possessed did not fill his spirit's sacred thirst.  
 His spirit now faced the adventure of the Inane and pursued the Unknowable.

A stark companionless Reality, a being intimate and unnamable, answered at  
 last to his Soul's passionate search; and it faced him with its tremendous calm.

The Traveller's spirit in the utmost ascent of the journey met face to face the  
 Absolute, a Being formless, featureless and mute, One and Unique, unutterably  
 sole—"the One by whom all live, who lives by none."

Sri Aurobindo has described elsewhere the 5 stages of Brahman (in his philo-  
 sophy of the Upanishads):

1. Virat
2. Hiranya Garbha
3. Prajna or Avyakta
4. Para Brahman—the Highest
5. And Higher than the Highest—The Unknowable.

The fourth and the fifth stages can hardly be described by words and be under-  
 stood in the human consciousness but with Sri Aurobindo it is different.

The Traveller had to pass through all these stages, and finally reach the culmination of this phase as described in Book 3.

His Soul now reached the boundless silence of the Self and leaped into a glad divine abyss. It is yet too early for the Soul to rejoice. An absolute Power sleeps in absolute silence that, waking, can make this world a vessel of Spirit's Force, and can fashion in the clay (in matter) God's perfect Shape.

When the Traveller was thus standing on Being's naked edge and all the passion and seeking of his soul faced their extinction in the featureless Vast, the Presence he yearned for suddenly drew close. A Being of Wisdom, Power and Delight took to her breast Nature and world and Soul as a mother draws her child into her arms.

Now the Traveller's aspiration grew wide and immense. He was no longer satisfied with knowledge and bliss for his own self. He wanted to enjoy this with earth and humanity.

He now sought for a Power too great for mortal will and sat motionless on a pedestal of prayer, intense, one-pointed, monumental, lone. Here also he felt something of kinship with the Inconscient lurking to give resistance. He now stripped himself fully of mind's desire and offered to the Gods the vacant place so that he might bear the immaculate touch. Now a last and mightiest transformation came to him.

From the Spirit's house he could feel the prospect of New Creation in the material field where exactly the parallel or rather the opposite was of what he could feel reigning in the pure Spirit's region.

In this absolute trance-condition the Traveller's heart alone was conscious and could know that there was some deliberate Power which tolerated the world's error and grief and was waiting to come down. This conscious heart seeing no relief in merging into the unknowable Mystery sent a voiceless prayer to the Absolute Power.

Then suddenly there rose a sacred stir.  
 Amid the lifeless silence of the Void...  
 A sound came....  
 A mystic Form enveloped his earthly shape....  
 The One he worshipped was within him now:  
 ... a voice... in the heart's chamber spoke.

This voice, the Mother of Might, now tells him to desist from further aspiration of raising humanity to the God-state immediately by calling down the immeasurable descent as time was not yet ripe and to leave the all-seeing Power to hew its way. Time has not yet reached its fullness to change the cosmic dream of man and will be hostile to the untimely descent of Truth.

The Lord of Life, the Traveller Aswapati, was equal to the occasion and replied in a prayer in a high strain also. In that high-pitched prayer the following lines appear:

In anguish we labour that from us may rise  
 A larger-seeing man with nobler heart,  
 A golden vessel of the incarnate Truth,  
 The executor of the divine attempt  
 Equipped to wear the earthly body of God,  
 Communicant and prophet and lover and king.

(Is it the hint of the advent of Satyavan from Aswapati?)

The Yogin who is unified with the Divine, when he finds within him the face of the Supreme Divine Mother responding to him, whatever he wills must be fulfilled. He now raised his voice praying that the Supreme Divine Mother might incarnate the white passion of her Force and Bliss in one body to unlock the doors of Fate. Even this last effort of his soul's will met with so much resistance from the thousand forces of the Inconscience that it had hardly the strength to climb to the Supreme, but the Supreme Mother responded and offered him the boon he was yearning for. He now achieved the victory of his toil.

He raised his brow of conquest to the heavens  
 Establishing the empire of his Soul  
 On Matter.

### (c) The Descent of the Supreme Mother

We come to the 2nd part of the Book, describing the birth of Savitri in the spring of the year. (Is it on the 21st February?) Sri Aurobindo, the author, has depicted with grandeur and in the most beautiful language the six seasons of the year—Summer, Rain-tide, Autumn, Winter, Dew-time and Spring. Compare this description with Kalidasa's *Ritu Samhar*. I cannot resist the temptation of quoting a few lines here of Sri Aurobindo's description of Spring when Savitri was born.

Then Spring, an ardent lover, leaped through leaves  
 And caught the earth-bride in his eager clasp...

The life of the enchanted globe became  
 A storm of sweetness and of light and song...

The sunlight was a great god's golden smile.  
 All nature was at beauty's festival.  
 In this high signal moment of the gods  
 Answering earth's yearning and her cry for bliss  
 A greatness from our other countries came.

A spirit of its celestial source aware  
 Descended into earth's imperfect mould...

In this Part (Part 2) of *Savitri*, the Master has dealt with (1) the birth and growth of Savitri, (2) the quest for her divine collaborator to fulfil her mission, (3) Narad's intervention foretelling the future but encouraging the destined Union of betrothal and explaining also the cause of Pain and Death and Fate, (4) the Development of Divine Love in both Satyavan and Savitri during the one year of their close companionship in the forest Ashram, (5) Savitri getting in a trance-condition a Divine Command to fight and conquer Death and to find her Soul for strengthening this fight, (6) how in the search for her Soul (in a trance-condition) the Triple *Soul-Forces* (not the real soul) from her inner consciousness appeared one by one each claiming to be her Soul and how along with these Soul-forces the darker forces in action also appeared to resist her. She however solaced them all saying she would come back after finding her Soul for giving a fight to Death which the goddesses appearing as her Soul-Forces were not yet capable of doing. Then,

Misery shall pass abolished from the earth;  
 The world shall be freed from the anger of the Beast,  
 From the cruelty of the Titan and his pain.  
 There shall be peace and joy for evermore.

The cry of the Ego shall be hushed within.

One day I shall return, His hands in mine.

Then shall the divine family be born.  
 There shall be light and peace in all the worlds.

(7) Death of Satyavan in the forest in the presence of Savitri and one unknown chapter not yet written. I mean two cantos (1 & 2) of the Book of Death just preceding Satyavan's death in the forest (C.3).\*

#### **(d) The Great Encounter with the Lord of Inconscience and Death**

Here we have Savitri's encounter with Death in its own den or sphere, the long discourse of Savitri with Yama—the mighty incarnate Power of Darkness and

\* Editor's Note—This is incorrect. The Canto numbered Three was compiled by the poet from an earlier version of *Savitri* in which it had been called Canto Three. It was the third Canto of that poem, not the third Canto of any particular Book. When, rewritten at places, it was included in the present version its number remained unchanged by oversight

Ignorance and the Keeper of Cosmic Laws. In the last encounter Death Incarnate, Yama, addressed Savitri:

Who art thou hiding in a human guise?  
Thy voice carries the sound of Infinity,  
Knowledge is with thee, Truth speaks through thy words...

O human claimant to immortality,  
Reveal thy power, lay bare thy spirit's force.  
Then will I give back to thee Satyavan...

And Savitri looked on Death and answered not...

A mighty transformation came on her...

The Incarnation thrust aside its veil.

Then the Power and Presence came down and held the centre of her brow opening the third mysterious eye and the eternal Will stirred in the lotus centre of her throat and in her speech throbbed the immortal Word.

Eternity looked into the eyes of Death  
And Darkness saw God's living Reality.

Then a voice was heard from the throat of Savitri, addressed to Death:

I hail thee almighty and victorious Death,  
Thou grandiose Darkness of the Infinite...

Thou art my shadow and my instrument...

But now, O timeless Mightiness, stand aside...

Release the soul of the world called Satyavan...

That he may stand master of life and fate,  
Man's representative in the house of God.

Her mastering Word commanded every limb  
And left no room for his enormous will



He called to Night but she fell shuddering back,  
 He called to Hell but silently it retired:  
 He turned to the Inconscient for support,  
 It drew him back towards boundless vacancy  
 As if himself to swallow up himself:  
 He called to his strength, but it refused his call,  
 His body was eaten by light, his spirit devoured.  
 At last he knew defeat inevitable  
 And left crumbling the shape that he had worn...

The dire Universal Shadow disappeared  
 Vanishing into the Void from which it came...

And Satyavan and Savitri were alone.

In Book XI, there is one canto only consisting of about 1500 lines "dictated by Sri Aurobindo three months before his passing. And not a single word or punctuation mark was changed after the first draft was dictated."—This we learn from *The Liberator* of Sisir Kumar Mitra, based on Nirodbaran's evidence.

When Death—Yama—the dire universal shadow vanished in the Void and Satyavan and Savitri were left alone, the whole atmosphere around was completely changed. A marvellous sun looked down from ecstasy's skies on worlds of Deathless Bliss, Magical unfoldings of the Eternal's smile captured Satyavan's secret heart-beats of delight. God's everlasting day surrounded Savitri. Domains of sempiternal light invaded all Nature with the Absolute's Joy.

Transfigured was the formidable shape of the Lord of Death.

His darkness and his sad destroying might  
 Abolishing for ever and disclosing  
 The mystery of his high and violent deeds,  
 A secret splendour rose revealed to sight  
 Where once the vast embodied Void had stood.

Death's sombre cowl was lost from Nature's brow.

The transfiguration reveals Yama in his true divinity:

There lightened in her the godhead's lurking love.  
 All grace and glory and all divinity  
 Were here collected in a single form;  
 He bore all godheads in his grandiose limbs.

In him the fourfold Being bore its crown. And he was identified with the four aspects of the Brahman—I. Virat, 2. Hiranya Garbha, 3. Prajna and 4. Para Brahman.

Then like an anthem from the heart's lucent cave  
A voice soared up

and addressed Savitri:

"Ascend, O soul, into thy blissful home.  
Here in the playground of the eternal Child  
Or in domains the wise Immortals tread  
Roam with thy comrade splendour under skies  
Spiritual, lit by an unsetting sun."

Savitri refusing, the Voice again spoke:

"Receive him into boundless Savitri,  
Lose thyself into infinite Satyavan,  
O miracle where thou beganst there cease!"

But Savitri replied to the radiant God:

"In vain thou temptst with solitary bliss  
Two spirits saved out of a suffering world;  
My soul and his indissolubly linked  
In the one task for which our lives were born  
To raise the world to God in deathless Light,  
To bring God down to the world on earth we came,  
To change the earthly life to life divine."

The tussle continuing, Savitri implored:

"Thy embrace which rends the living knot of pain,  
Thy joy, O Lord, in which all creatures breathe,  
Thy magic flowing waters of deep love,  
Thy sweetness give to me for earth and men."

With a still blissful cry all that Savitri yearned for was granted, beginning with these words:

"Descend to life with him thy heart desires,  
O Satyavan, O luminous Savitri,"

and ending with:

“Nature shall live to manifest secret God,  
The spirit shall take up the human play,  
This earthly life become the life divine.”

And all the manifold changes that would happen on the earth after this Descent were also communicated.

### (e) The Fulfilment

The Epilogue portion is the return to earth and the joining with the father and the mother. The blind king Dyumatsena, the father of Satyavan, had in the meantime got back his eyesight and his lost kingdom with the boons from Yama.

An indication of what the transformed Earth shall be, is only hinted here in the Epilogue. The eye of divine vision shall be restored to man. His lost kingdom with the riches of spiritual realms shall be re-established. The suffering humanity shall gain heavenly delight and taste the joys of immortal bliss. But before all this transformation can arise, Savitri, prefiguring the Mother,

...must stand unhelped  
On a dangerous brink of the world's doom and hers,  
Carrying the world's future on her lonely breast,  
Carrying the human hope in a heart left sole  
To conquer or fail on a last desperate verge.  
Alone with death and close to extinction's edge,  
Her single greatness in that last dire scene,  
She must cross alone a perilous bridge in Time  
And reach an apex of world-destiny  
Where all is won or all is lost for man...  
For this the silent Force came missioned down;  
In her the conscious Will took human shape:  
She only can save herself and save the world...

RAKHALDAS BOSU

## HOW FAR IS PONDICHERRY?

*(Continued from the issue of October 1985)*

DR. Banerjee was brooding over something. After a while he stated as if unmindfully, 'Apparently it may seem that we may have to wait for a millennium; but it is not certain.'

The gentleman on the opposite bench asked, 'How is it so?'

Dr. Banerjee in the same unmindful mood commented,

'The Communists have not taken the trouble to realise what man actually is, yet indicated the way which would lead him to his goal. They believe that with the help of the State-machine, which includes its police force, they will be able to establish economic equality by eradicating all sorts of disparities and then man may be able to live in peace and harmony. They also believe that if the right to own personal property is denied then man may feel no inclination to accumulate wealth by exploiting others; and man will gradually become free from that instinct and then the ideal society will grow by itself, where there will be no exploitation, no domination, no tyranny of minority over majority.

'But I'm afraid they might not have accounted for one thing and that is to me a very important one. I mean to say the role of "Ego" in man's outer activities. This factor they have completely ignored. This is a very powerful element which works as a helper and then as a bar to man's progress. At the root of every human problem there is ego. A beggar who has nothing in his possession has his ego and that is no less powerful than that of any wealthy person. And so beggars quarrel and fight with each other. Behind all human quarrels there is ego, either individual or communal or national, playing its own role. And that is why the inherent truth of "Fraternity" still remains unrealised by man. I do not know whether there is any directive in the doctrine regarding how to dispense with this ego-element. To establish peace and harmony in an egoistic human society is a chimera. So, I'm very eager to know whether in the prescribed medicine—the panacea of all human maladies—there is any ingredient which can make man strong enough to become free from the domination of ego!'

With a smile I replied, 'Ego makes a man dynamic. Ego inspires him to do this and that and he obeys. He remains always active and earns name, fame, property and wealth. Maybe there is a stage when he may feel wearied with these acquisitions; but until that stage is reached he will continue to regard ego as his guide. Of course it is true that ego makes a man self-centred and very individualistic, for it is the corner-stone of individualism; and therefore, when for greater interest an individual is required to work in collaboration with other individuals, ego becomes a bar. Similarly the national ego works for the interest of the nation and then it is no doubt a helper; but if the nation, for global interest, is required to work in collaboration with other nations,—then the national ego is indeed a bar; it stands as a

stumbling-block in the way to solving global problems. But so long as it works as a helper it must be obeyed. If Moscow-Peking thinks that up to the end of its journey ego will continue to help, it must not be blamed, because it does not know exactly the stage after which ego becomes a bar, to hinder its progress. But, Sir, I cannot follow why you did not continue the discussion on union of Matter with Spirit? Why did you raise the issue of Ego?’

The Professor did not give any answer to my queries; instead he nodded with a smile and continued, ‘If their aim is to bring about a total change in the socio-economic life of man, they must, first of all, try to understand what potentially a man is and what his nature demands. Man is after all not a mass of soft clay that can be moulded to any form according to the desire of the State. The attempt at establishing equality by denying the right to own personal property at the point of the bayonet can never yield the desired result, because the ego-element will still be there to work in man’s being. So I’d like very much to know whether any outer machinery can be established there like social or educational institutions to guide man to do away with this ego-element?’

The Professor of Political Science—Dr. (Mrs.) Anjali Sen—had been listening to him with rapt attention. When he finished, she said in an excited tone, ‘May I ask you a question, Sir?’

‘Oh, sure!’ replied the Professor.

‘How many ego-free men are there among the total population of the world?’ she asked. ‘You have become old. You have come across men of different walks of life during this long period of, say, 60 years. Have you found any of them ego-free? If it is impossible for men to establish “Fraternity” because they are not ego-free, then I must say that “Fraternity” will have to remain unachieved until the gods come down on earth and replace humankind. Let “Fraternity” wait for that “NEW DAWN” and let us remain as fatalistic as before, and carry on until that glorious day is ushered in. I think, Sir, you have understood my point. I mean to say that so long as the present human frame remains unchanged, Ego will be there as a dominant monarch. So, Pondicherry is a distant star, if not altogether a mirage or illusion.’

Dr. Banerjee applauded, ‘Nicely said, really excellent!’ Then in a calm and heavy voice he commented, ‘Not only is fraternity impossible, madam! Neither liberty nor equality can really be achieved through the external machinery of society or by man so long as he lives only in the individual and the communal ego.’

I requested Dr. Banerjee to be a bit more explicit.

He smiled and looked at me and then continued, ‘In fact, we do not know the real import of the triple gospel of the French Revolution. Without going into details I may say that the main purpose of the gospel was to ensure spiritual regeneration of the entire human race. To rise above ego means to enter into the domain of spirit. So long as man remains bound up with ego, that is to say, so long as he has not become fit to enter into the domain of spirit, he cannot achieve the gospel. If we

make an appraisal of the socio-political progress of the nations after the Revolution we shall find that the nations could not establish liberty and equality at the same time. Even today, in the penultimate decade of this century, the nation which endeavours to pursue liberty (through democracy) as its ideal, is unable to dispense with disparity; and the nation that aims at equality (through state-machinery) is obliged to sacrifice liberty. This is because, as we pointed out earlier, the nations have not yet become quite aware of the inherent truth of "Fraternity". The union of liberty and equality can only be made effective by the all-embracing power of brotherhood and it cannot be founded on anything else. But ego cannot speak of brotherhood and hence even after two hundred years of the fall of the Bastille the ideals cannot be materialised by human efforts.

'Now let me come to the points that both of you have raised.' Saying this the Professor looked at me and Dr. (Mrs.) Anjali Sen; because both of us had commented that Pondicherry was not an easy thing to be realised by man in one lifetime. And therefore Pondicherry was a distant star, far and far away from either Moscow or Peking.

The Professor told me, 'You need not wait for a millennium. Union of Matter with Spirit may take place at any moment; but how? I'll explain that later on. But to Dr. Sen I must say that Pondicherry is not so distant as she supposes.'

The lady promptly retorted, 'Why? Do you mean to say that humanity will be able to get rid of ego overnight? Is it ever possible? Methinks without Yoga man will never be able to overpower ego. And it is a fact that barring a few souls here and there, nobody feels any interest in Yoga. That is why there is no crowd on the road that leads to Pondy, whereas on the road to Moscow-Peking there are processions of men, women—old and young.'

The Professor looked at the lady and remained silent for sometime and then in a mild but very distinct voice stated, 'Sri Aurobindo knew very well that common beings like you and I might raise such serious questions. So, of his own accord he answered them in an unambiguous language. I can't readily recollect where he dealt with this issue... perhaps in *The Human Cycle*. Please wait, to be sure let me see my Note-Book.' With these words the Professor opened his suitcase and took out a long exercise-book and began to search in it. All on a sudden he cried out joyously, 'Here it is. This portion has been excerpted from the concluding para of Chapter XX of *The Human Cycle*. Let me read it out; please listen:

'"This is a solution to which it may be objected that it puts off the consummation of a better human society to a far-off date in the future evolution of the race. For it means that no machinery invented by the reason can perfect either the individual or the collective man; an inner change is needed in human nature, a change too difficult to be ever effected except by the few. This is not certain."

'Here what is to be noted as very very important is the last sentence—"This is not certain." It means that what we assume is not certain. We assume that Pondicherry is a distant star because to reach there one is required to change one's

inner nature which cannot be effected except by the few. We may assume this but we cannot precisely say that Pondicherry is a distant star, for we do not know how Nature is working in humanity. She wants our conscious collaboration and if we do not respond to her call she may wait for a while and thereafter surely take her own course. In that event none can imagine what will happen to mankind. What seems to be far-off now will be quite nigh then.'

Dr. (Mrs.) Sen did not seem to be happy with this explanation. With a smile she said, 'I cannot follow all these mystic propositions. What I believe is that those who affirm that material well-being is their aim of life will never shrink or fall back from the path that leads to Moscow-Peking. You cannot stop their march, nor can you pull them down to your side. For man has certain basic and primary needs and he believes that he is here to fulfil first these needs by any means. If he comes to know that Moscow-Peking has the capability of providing him with the means by which he may fulfil his needs then naturally he will move towards that end. Moscow-Peking believes that all the peoples of the earth must have the minimum means needed to live on. They must have food, clothing and shelter. Society must provide them with these basic and minimum requirements. Those who stand in opposition to society's action must receive proper treatment from the people. They must be taught that they have no right to live in that society. So, if people say that Pondicherry is nothing but a fantasy—an idea, perhaps a lofty one—which has no relation with the crude reality, then you cannot blame them.'

With a smiling face the Professor looked at me and said, 'Today what seems to be a fantasy, a utopian idea, may be a reality tomorrow. Those who have not the eyes to see the morrow and not the mind to realise what is what,—they may say whatever they like but it is true that their abhorrence will never baffle the morrow. On the contrary they who make a mistake in their initial assessment will suffer eventually, and have to compensate the loss or, in other words, they will be paid back in their own coin in due course. Then and then alone they may realise that whatever they did might have helped people to live but not to progress. For man's primary needs are essentially primary; there are many other needs which he wants to fulfil and they cannot be brushed aside because they are secondary. There is no gain-saying that of all the earthly creatures man is the most dissatisfied being. But why? Where lies the root of his discontentment? Without discussing all these questions in detail I may say that one thing is very clear and convincing and that is: on the basis of man's present mode of living his future wants cannot be calculated. Now we may perhaps realise that to understand man by his actualities is an error. We must know what potentially man is.'

The Professor paused and the whole atmosphere became gloomy. It seemed that everyone was feeling uneasy. So, in order to make the situation somewhat light and bearable I told the Professor, 'I'm afraid that you might have forgotten why you cheered Dr. (Mrs.) Sen when she was speaking of gods coming down to this world to replace man.... man with his present frame would not be able to establish

equality and fraternity, etc. You appreciated her logic with applause. But why? It would be very nice if you would kindly explain why you appreciated it, or else she may take it otherwise.'

The Professor at once understood my hint as well as my intention and began to laugh like a child. Then in a very sweet tone he stated, 'I appreciated her because she laid before us, of course unknowingly, something very relevant to what Pondicherry has envisaged. She opined that gods would come down to replace men, and Pondicherry indicates that man will become god—and for that purpose it is indeed necessary that his whole frame should be changed and that is what is called physical transformation in the terminology of Pondicherry. Not only a vital and mental but also a physical transformation is necessary. I appreciated her because she indicated what she really believed. Unhesitatingly she stated that without Yoga man would never be able to get rid of ego. And here I may quote from memory what Sri Aurobindo indicated in his *Yoga and Its Objects*—though this was his very early treatise on Yoga: "The whole heart and action and mind of man must be changed but from within and not from without, not by political and social institutions, not even by creeds and philosophies, but by realisation of God in ourselves and the world and remoulding of life by that realisation."

'So you understand that the change cannot be brought about by any external machinery—social, political or otherwise—nor even by creeds and philosophies and doctrines resulting therefrom. But as a matter of fact Moscow-Peking is seen endeavouring to bring about a change in man's social existence by the machinery of the State aided by its police force. Let it follow its own philosophy, but we believe, and believe very ardently, that man must change himself first if he intends to change his society. Now let us stop here. After lunch and a short rest we may start again in the afternoon.'

I could not help saying jocularly, 'But without practising Yoga I've been able to bring about a change in the atmosphere and now it has become so pleasant.'

All laughed for a while and then consented to stop the discussion for lunch.

*(To be continued)*

SAMAR BASU



# **FURTHER STUDIES IN INTEGRAL PSYCHOLOGY**

## **THE PURSUIT OF PSYCHOLOGY**

### **A Plea for a Larger Orientation**

MOST of our universities now have full-fledged independent departments of psychology and they are fairly prosperous in the sense that they attract students and there is plenty of activity in the departments. But we might reflect a little on the overall position of the pursuit of psychology in the country and consider what contribution it makes to the cause of advancement of knowledge in the field and to human living nationally and internationally. In this connection the question arises whether our pursuit of psychology should or should not relate itself to the traditional Indian psychological knowledge as embodied in the various yogic systems and elsewhere. When the interest in yoga is otherwise increasing in many countries and they seek the same from India, then should we not consider it our responsibility to explore and interpret this body of knowledge for a wider contemporary utilisation?

To facilitate consideration of this issue a draft on 'Psychology and Yoga' is presented here below and comments are invited from all interested in the pursuit and progress of psychological studies.

### **Psychology and Yoga**

Western psychology is a vast body of knowledge regarding human mind, behaviour and personality, normal and abnormal, individual and social. There is a branch dealing with the mind and behaviour of the animal too. This is general scientific psychology, which limits itself severely to the empirical facts and seeks to be experimental. But there is also a powerful trend of psychological investigation represented by Freud and Jung which explores the unconscious and its effects on the conscious life of man. Jung explores also the fields of religion and yogic experience. There is also a para-psychology, coming into prominence, which seeks to explore phenomena like telepathy, memories of a previous birth, premonitions, apparitions' etc., etc. Telepathy has been taken up even for experimental investigation and it is becoming an important issue. Suggestology, a further recent branch, seeks to study the working of suggestion in various forms.

Western psychology is, indeed, a most active science and fresh issues and lines of investigation are ever coming up. What is, in fact, more important is the phenomenon of a general psychological way of looking upon life as such; war, peace, normal human dealings, personal, national and international.

But the most influential part in this pursuit is that of scientific psychology, which limits itself to empirical facts of mind and behaviour and seeks to be experi-

mental. Lately, it has turned more to behaviour, which is more amenable to experiment.

The substance of achievement of this body of psychological knowledge can best be represented in the words of Gardner Murphy, an eminent contemporary psychologist. He says, "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."<sup>1</sup>

In India, Yoga has been the counterpart of Western psychology, and the research in this field has been enormous. Self-knowledge or *ātmajñāna* has been the characteristic objective of Indian cultural pursuit and again and again new approaches and processes were discovered and evolved for the realisation of a perception of the spiritual truth and reality. Apart from these, various forms of yoga are well known. They are Hatha yoga, Raja yoga, Jnana yoga, Bhakti yoga, Karma yoga, Tantric yoga and certain yogic forms called Vidyas in the Upanishads and other spiritual practices less known. In the wake of these has come the contemporary creation in this field—the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo as embodied in his systematic and comprehensive writing, *The Synthesis of Yoga*.

All these yogic systems involve psychological systems of distinctive qualities with much common knowledge. These psychological systems have a standpoint of their own. They seek the essential truth of personality and a mastery of the empirical part of personality and not just an intellectual understanding and explanation of them. That means a sure and verified knowledge of personality. They do not separate the empirical from the essential and do not limit themselves in their pursuit of the knowledge of personality, but a characteristic individual approach is, of course, a limitation. But the contemporary Integral Yoga deliberately seeks the widest and the most comprehensive approach and the integral psychology which it embodies is, indeed, a most comprehensive account of personality.

The method in these Indian schools of psychology is primarily introspection, a direct observation of the states of consciousness, which is cultivated with great perseverance and dispassionateness over long years of training. Introspection is, no doubt, a difficult process, but this is the only one which gives a proper appreciation of the reality of the facts of consciousness and a direct knowledge of them. A greater reliance on objective observation in Western psychology has easily led to a failure of appreciation of the reality of mental processes and psychology has tended to become a study of behaviour. And this means a miscarriage of psychology as a science of mental life, with the result that we know a great deal *about* personality but almost nothing *of* personality.

In Western psychology, Jung on purely empirical grounds, through a study of the dreams of normal persons and a survey of religious experience, has come to affirm that there is a 'centre' behind the apparent dualisms of mental life. This 'centre' is

<sup>1</sup> Main Currents of Modern Thought, New York, Vol. 9. No. 2.

comparable to the 'Atman' of Indian psychological systems, with the difference that in yoga it must be made at the end a fact of experience and not retained merely as a matter of inference.

If we take the two bodies of knowledge, Western psychological knowledge of personality and Indian yogic knowledge of personality, do they not fall into a coherent form, yielding a surer feeling as to what personality is and what its outer form and reactions are? Indian psychology, as it were, fulfils Western psychology and Indian psychology gets a fuller and detailed knowledge of the outer form of personality. The knowledge of the essential part is indispensable. That is what lends uniqueness and wholeness to personality and is, therefore, most important for educational and therapeutic purposes.

Western psychology has been, one might say, rather unfortunate in emulating the example of other sciences. In the 19th century, while seeking recognition, it sought to become 'a psychology without a soul'. Then it sought to be like physics and again like biology and further like physiology and lastly experimental and mathematical in order to be a perfect science. The spirit of experiment is a correct approach, but to seek experimentation like that of the physical sciences is a different matter. It is interesting to note that Dilthey and Spranger in Germany reminded it that its subject-matter was not like that of the physical sciences and, therefore, it should rather be itself than something other than itself. Ebbinghaus and Kulpe sought to apply introspection to the higher mental processes, memory, thought and imagination and it yielded promising results. But the direction neither of Dilthey and Spranger nor of Ebbinghaus and Kulpe succeeded in giving an effective new turn to the science. If it had, the situation today might have been very different and Western psychology and Yoga might have found themselves closer to each other.

Since independence, India has naturally sought to feel, live and act in its own selfhood more or less. This trend has had its effect in the field of the pursuit of knowledge too. India has had a high tradition of the pursuit of knowledge and scored great achievements in many fields. Mathematics, astronomy, medicine, literature, philosophy, religion and yoga are some of the most important ones. In these, in particular, the Indian scholars have sought to recover their traditional roots and by doing so they felt well reinforced in their present pursuit of the same. But the process of discovering this selfhood continues and in psychology too a beginning has been made here and there. However, here India has much to contribute to world knowledge and the world demands it of us and appreciate it too when we are able to do so. Let us hope that our research is able to deliver to us in a modern form the psychological knowledge of the yogic systems more and more and also that the sum of world knowledge of psychology becomes more confident of human personality and its varied dimensions and domains.

INDRA SEN

### Comments of a few Leading Indian Psychologists

I fully agree that we Indian psychologists should be conversant with the yogic systems and make use of the knowledge thus gained to realise our main objective. The distinction you have made between knowing *about* personality and knowing *of* personality is a crucial one.

Before making further observation on the point raised by you I should like to tell you first what I told Prof. Durganand Sinha when he interviewed me a year ago to know my assessment of the work of the Indian Psychologists. I do not remember the exact language I used but the following is the substance of my opinion: "The contribution of the Indian psychologists has not been such as we can justly be proud of. In the beginning when the scientific study of modern psychology i.e. experimental psychology was taken up, we made a few studies which won recognition in the academic circle here and abroad. These studies were based upon introspective analysis of experience under controlled conditions. Apart from those a few studies on unconscious mind, thanks to the genius of G. Bose, were regarded as contributions to the advancement of knowledge. I do not know what else we have to our credit. Of course there are several good theoretical essays; but these are little read, less understood and have least impact on professional psychologists and laymen alike. We honestly cannot complain if our work on mental tests, personal selection, industrial relations and social surveys are regarded as second-rate. We have not the financial resources, man power, state or public support for a high measure of success in such work. No wonder that in the community of world-top-rank psychologists we are relegated to the position of second-class citizens, so to say. Working in the same field in which the Western psychologists have excelled we cannot aspire to stand shoulder to shoulder with them. But there is one field in which we, too, can excel. That is the field of introspective analysis of mental experiences."

From the above you will see that I am for developing introspective psychology. In the beginning of my career I was initiated to introspection by Dr. N. N. Sen-gupta, and then Dr. G. Bose made me go through the rigours of mental discipline to acquire ability for deep introspection. Training for introspection involving concentration and sense-control might be helpful in being trained for yogic practice. (My work as an introspectionist ended when I joined the war service. After the war I did not take it up again as I had to work in industries. That work was rewarding from the material point of view but not self-satisfying.)

I agree that knowledge of theory and practice of yoga will be of advantage to the Indian psychologists in the pursuit of study of their subject. Acceptance of this view by many of our younger psychologists becomes difficult because they have a vague notion of the meaning of the term yoga. I have been told by our bright young lecturers with Ph.D. Degrees in Western psychology that they are confused in their minds about the meaning and implication of yoga. Almost impossible physical feats, occult power, mystic influence, means of gaining salvation, mental discipline

for unification of the self with the supreme soul and such other ideas are associated with yoga. They say that yoga belongs to the realm of philosophy, not psychology. I do not claim to have understood the true connotation of yoga. For my purpose I accept the teaching of Patanjali that yoga "does not mean union but only effort" (Radhakrishnan). It is a search for the divine and eternal part of our being, but it signifies strenuous endeavour. My knowledge of yoga is poor, indeed. I read in books about various yogic practices, but I would not say that I could have a clear grasp. I believe one has to learn it the hard way through practice under proper guidance. In the ordinary sense I take it that yoga implies concentration and sense-control; it helps to increase physical and mental capabilities. It leads to our perception of the objective character of a thing merging into our realization of its essence. To me the state of deep introspection is something akin to it, though in a much smaller degree.

You are very right when you say that we know about personality and not of personality. I agree that we need psychologists trained in yoga. You have truly said that "Atmajnana has been the characteristic objective of Indian cultural pursuit." That is in our element. If we cultivate it we shall succeed. Knowing will be a revelation; sensing will be a feeling. I am glad you are taking up the problem of Psychology and Yoga. You are the right person for it. The task is difficult. I may tell you that very few of the younger members of our discipline will be initially interested.

Prof. S. K. Bose,  
Formerly, Head of the Department  
of Psychology, Calcutta University

I consider it a privilege to react to your article—"The Pursuit of Psychology—A Plea for a Larger Orientation"—enclosed with your letter of 17.8.80. We also received your subsequent letter of 22.9.80 addressed to my daughter, Mrs. Ira Das, and thank you very much for the same. It has taken a long time for me to recover. I am now almost all right.

I fully agree with the general approach of your paper, particularly that Introspection should not only be not tabooed, but that it is the only way of getting into the innermost working of our minds. Whoever have been able to portray human character deeply have delineated the inner introspective working of the mind, be they novelists, poets, psychologists or Indian Yogis. Therein one goes to the source of mental functioning. I have also never been able to understand why, when one introspects, the mental process itself changes. I also agree with you that "Objectivity" in observation has been made a mess of in Western Psychology. Western Physics has come to recognise the contradictions in the concept of "objective observation", but strangely enough not Western Psychology. I further quite agree with you that this has led "to a failure of appreciation of mental processes" and meant the miscarriage of psychology as a Science.

This much is conceded. But the difficulty of "Indian Psychology" or "Indian Yogic Knowledge of Psychology" has been, as I see it (because I am no authority on Yoga) that Yogic Knowledge has not been connected with "Material Knowledge". This has been my general criticism of "spirituality" also. Spirituality is being talked about without the "bases of Spirituality", which are, to my mind, 'material' thus giving the impression that 'Spirituality' stands up, almost hanging away from the physical reality of our everyday life. I hope I am clear. I see no dualism in the mental and the material nor the spiritual and the mental. It is the problem of connecting "Yogic Knowledge" with the physical realities of life, that to my mind needs to be worked out or, if already worked out, to be re-affirmed. This will enable the Yogic Knowledge to make its contribution to the totality of human experience. A whole structure has to be worked out. Maybe it is already there in the Yogic system, for the Indian mind is very logical. But not being a student of Yoga, I am not specifically aware of it. If it is there, it has to be refurbished.

Needless to say that I shall be most interested in your Project and very willing to actively participate in it, should you decide upon it.

Dr. C. M. Bhatia  
Recently President, Section of  
Psychology, Indian Science Congress

There is no doubt that psychological studies and research in India should be linked up with the rich heritage in the psychological field of the ancient Indian thinkers.

However, the difficulty is that we do not have any treatises dealing with the psychological aspect of ancient Indian thought. Nor is there a comprehensive textbook which could furnish a map of the problems and conclusions of the ancient thought.

Psychological studies have to be based on empirical work today. Neither faith nor fascination can promote objective studies.

It is true that there is considerable material of psychological interest in *Yoga*. It is certainly necessary to initiate a number of researches on the assumptions and the techniques and the results of Yoga. Recent studies of ASC—Alternate States of Consciousness—have opened out a new field. To my knowledge attempts have not been made in Indian Universities to study Yoga from this standpoint.

I must frankly admit that it will not be wise to get involved in telepathy, memories of previous birth, premonitions, etc. The various attempts over the last three or more decades in the field of so-called *Parapsychology* have not borne fruit, in my opinion. Faith rather than intellectual interest has been the motive force in these studies in India and abroad.

Certainly the influence and limitation on suggestibility need serious pursuit, particularly in the light of millions who follow Godmen.

I firmly believe that psychological studies should be empirical and experimental.

Any abandonment of these techniques and outlook will only lead to its devaluation.

While acknowledging that it is necessary to have empirical and experimental studies on religious behaviour and religious experience, particularly with respect to the relation between personality structure and the four yogas, I wish to emphasise that the clinical approach should be utilised and verifiable facts ascertained, so that repetitions could be attempted to confirm.

With respect to the observation "Western Psychology has been rather unfortunate in emulating the example of other sciences", the following warning by Sri Aurobindo, on the fate of the science of comparative philology is quite relevant....

"....Conjectural science means pseudo-science, since fixed, sound and verifiable bases and methods, independent of conjecture are the primary condition of science" (*The Secret of the Veda*, 1971, p. 552).

While agreeing that ancient Indian thought has much to contribute to the growth of knowledge in Psychology, it must be clearly and firmly borne in mind that the immediate need is to present the discoveries of ancient Indian sages and thinkers in a form which enables assimilation in the modern context.

I fervently hope that this task will be undertaken as early as possible.

Dr. B. Kuppaswamy

Formerly Head of the Department of Psychology, Mysore University, has published many studies on Indian Psychology and is bringing out a systematic book entitled "*Elements of Ancient Indian Psychology*"

### Concluding Remarks

The foregoing responses of three important psychologists are extremely interesting. They show a clear recognition and appreciation of the tradition of psychological knowledge in India and yet do not know how to recover that tradition in the present situation and bring it into an adjustment with the Western approach which is now the established fact with us. This feeling of difficulty is a happy thing and if we sincerely face it, solutions will begin to emerge.

Dr. G. Bose in Calcutta and Dr. Gopaldaswami in Mysore have fine original minds as psychologists and their contributions are always an inspiration to us. Dr. H. C. Ganguli's pursuit of 'Meditation' as a psychological study is also a fine attempt.

Introspection is finding repeated recognition at our hands and, once we wholeheartedly recognise its essential value for psychology, our main line of research and contribution will become clear to us. The Indian psychologist seems to be discovering his soul, his true identity and individuality, though yet faced with hesitations, inhibitions and ambiguities.

Dr. Kuppaswamy's insistence on verifiability is very relevant, but in respect of introspective data new criteria of verifiability will have to be evolved.

Indian psychologists pleading ignorance of the psychological facts involved in the yogic and the religious experience is too poor a defence, because none outside India will accept it.

INDRA SEN

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## THE STONE

A GOD-child passed a heap of stones  
 And kicked up one for fun again and again.  
 Sometimes the stone soared in high air,  
 At other moments it crashed back on the harsh road.  
 Thus were rounded some of the jagged lines.

The child was fascinated with his new toy!  
 He would not let it rest. When it fell  
 In some natural drain or roadside rut,  
 Repeatedly he picked and tossed it up.  
 Sometimes people passed the mountainous heap  
 Of which the stone had been a part.  
 Its comrades cried, "What bad luck!  
 Our brother's life is a series of kicks and thuds."

Their mocking commiseration made the stone  
 Bemoan its fate, though secretly it was glad.  
 Breath-taking were those ascending curves,  
 Engrossing the enigmatic falls.  
 It mattered not how much these galled.

So the child's pleasure grew ever greater.  
 The stone started glowing with an inner urge  
 And soared higher with an upward flame,  
 Till one day the child stooped to pick up  
 This humble companion of his aeonic game  
 To find a diamond effulgent with golden rays.  
 Lovingly he placed it in his crown  
 And walked content on his eternal ways.

SHYAM KUMARI



## WHAT THE MOTHER'S FORCE CAN DO

### A LESSON FROM A "TRIVIALITY"

SHORTLY after my arrival at the Ashram in 1927 I found that the food was very simple. I thought that salt and a little pepper were the only things used with the vegetables and rice. I tried my best to eat well but did not succeed, so I decided to speak to the Mother about it. And one day when I had finished manicuring her nails I said to her: "Mother dear, will you permit me to send for some pickles from my father, and eat them with my food? I find the Ashram food tasteless, and cannot eat it properly." "Pickles?" said the Mother, and added, "Wait a minute." She got up from the sofa and went to the adjoining room and returned with a small jar and said: "Take this, somebody has sent it for Sri Aurobindo, but he does not wish to take it. You may find it useful."

I took the jar, thanked her, made my pranam and went home. I placed it on my table and told myself that I would open it later and eat the pickle. But the desire to eat it completely left me, and however much I tried I could not bring myself to open the jar. So after a few days I took it back to the Mother and told her: "Mother dear, I am sorry, but I felt no inclination to eat this pickle, nor any other, so I am returning it to you."

The Mother smiled in her charming way, embraced and kissed me, and took the jar back, and gave me her hand for manicuring.

Thus was a strong desire removed from my consciousness and I felt very free and happy. Even today I cannot bring myself to eat any pickle nor even any spicy food.

LALITA

## HOW I COLLECTED THE FOLKTALES OF PONDICHERRY

*(Mother India has already published a selection of folktales of Pondicherry, collected for the first time and retold by P. Raja. The collection is to be shortly published by STERLING PUBLISHERS PVT. LTD., New Delhi, under the FOLKTALES OF INDIA series.*

*At the request of our readers, P. Raja, our regular contributor, shares the experiences he had while collecting the folktales in the various villages of Pondicherry.)*

MORE than a thousand days ago, I went with my wife and two sons to my native village, Olandai-Keerapalayam. It is 7 kms west of the heart of the town, Pondicherry, where I reside in a rented flat. The purpose of my visit was to attend to the preparations for my cousin's wedding and I had to stay there for a week.

At night the spacious open terrace of the village home accommodated the wedding guests. It was quite breezy. In whichever direction one turned one's eyes one could see nothing but coconut and palmyra topes. Poets who glorify nature in flowery language would run short of words in describing the joy of such a terrace, moonlit and full of the play of light and shadow.

Lying down on a mat made of plaited coconut-leaves spread on the terrace my four-year old son attracted my attention and complained in a sad tone: "Mummy didn't allow us to play here during the morning and the afternoon; but now so many are lying here... look..."

"Oh, who wants to play under the hot sun? Had you played here, this terrace would have burnt your wee feet," I tried to console him.

The child was not satisfied with my reply. He shot a puzzling question: "The sun and the moon are both in the sky. But why is the sun hot and the moon not?"

I was baffled. While I was racking my brains over how to explain the astronomical wonders to the child, an old voice from a nearby mat came to my help.

"Come here, boy. I'll tell you."

While I heaved a sigh of relief, my son rolled himself over to the mat on which sat an old man. He was the eldest living member amidst my relatives.

"I am going to tell you a tale now," he said emphasizing the word 'tale'. Believe it or not, it worked a miracle. It was like the tom-tom of a rope-dancer. It lured almost all the children nearer to the old man. Shouts of joy disturbed the calm night. The cry did startle a few children who were asleep. They woke up, blinked, rubbed their eyes and finally joined the group of listeners.

The old man began narrating how the sun and the moon were co-uterine brothers and why their mother cursed the sun and blessed the moon. ('The Blessing and the Curse', *Mother India*, April 1982, pp. 286-287) When the old man finished

the tale, the children and especially my son who had a great doubt beamed with satisfaction.

"*Thatha, thatha!* One more," the children clamoured. The old man began another. It was about why the eagle kills not only the poisonous snakes but also the tender chickens. ('Keep Your Work', *Mother India*, March 1984, pp. 208-209)

The next night *thatha* narrated a long tale. It was about a foolish king who was made to believe that his queen had given birth to wooden babes. ('Wooden Babes of the Worthless King', *Mother India*, March 1983, pp. 179-184) This time I was one with the children who sat around the old story-teller.

Like water gushing forth from a spring, the tales came out of his mouth without a stop. When I applauded his memory, he gave a toothless smile and said, "I don't remember much now... my mother was a good story-teller. But I have forgotten many of the tales she told me."

Doubting the authenticity of the tales, I asked him, "Did your mother learn these tales from books?"

The old man replied with a sly smile: "No... she was an illiterate... I too sign with my thumb."

Something in me advised: "The folktales are worth preserving. They should not die with these octogenarians. By collecting and giving them a fixity of form, not only the tales but also the folk customs, manners and beliefs which they reveal will be saved from oblivion."

Since I have learnt a deep respect for one of Goethe's couplets:

"Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it.  
Boldness has genius, power and magic in it,"

my hunt for more folktales began. It was a pleasant adventure full of vivid encounters worth recording here.

Where should I begin? That was the first question after the decision. Somewhere I should, for until one is committed there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back. What better place could there be other than home?

A couple of stories came from my mother, who with great difficulty recollected for me what her mother, my granny, had told her when she had been young. My mother is a great believer in 'fate'. The first story she recounted was 'What's Written Can't be Erased' (*Mother India*, July 1984, pp. 470-472). After that she cursed her memory and promised to tell me more if her fading memory permitted.

Months later when she heard the neighbour abusing her daughter as *Moodevi* (Goddess of Adversity), she suddenly remembered another funny tale, which I recorded on my pocket cassette recorder. It was published under the title 'Moodevi is Nobler than Seedeivi' (*Mother India*, June 1983, pp. 361-362).

Meanwhile my cousin K. Palani Raja, who had come to know of my venture, extended his support and co-operated with me. A good companion. His great gift

of mixing with people of all generations was of immense help to me.

One evening my companion told me to get ready to meet another old man who lived alone in the rice-field. He was in charge of the pump-house that supplied water to several acres of land. He was also the undaunted watchman of the place.

"Vehicles will not be of any use today. We are proceeding on an unbeaten track and we have to cover the distance only on foot," my companion said. He then flipped open his sling bag for me to peer into.

A bundle of cheroots, a bunch of betel leaves and a few areca nuts occupied the bag. There was also an electric torch.

"What are they all for?" I asked.

"Well! The electric torch is to show us the path to the old man's hut. The rest in the bag will make the old man come to our path," he said.

More than half an hour of tedious journey in the dark with only the torch-light to guide us brought us to the hut of the old man. No sooner did we reach the place than we were challenged by three curs. They seemed to be the old man's companions and aide-de-camps. But we didn't have any tough time with them. The old man came out of the hut. His presence made the curs call a quick halt to their barkings.

We sat in his hut illuminated by an electric bulb. My companion brought out the cheroots and gave one to the old man.

"Cheroot!" exclaimed the old man and turned away his nose. He returned it saying, "I don't smoke."

"Well! We have betel leaves and areca nuts for you," my companion said and tried to pull them out of his bag.

"No! No!" interrupted the old man, "I don't chew betel leaves and nuts."

We were greatly surprised by his answer, for old men either smoked or munched betel leaves and nuts. His refusal to accept our presents made us doubt very much if we would be benefitted by our visit. How to inspire him? Would just a genuine request do?

"Now tell me the purpose of your visit," the old man asked abruptly.

"Well! We are collecting tales—tales the folks tell. And we are here to request you to tell us a few tales that you know." I said.

"Oh! You want stories... I'll tell them," said the old man. His words instilled hope into us. "But before I begin telling you stories, I must have my supper. That will clear my throat," he said winking at me.

I didn't understand the meaning of his wink. "Take your supper. We'll wait here," I said.

"You need not wait here. You can accompany me," So saying he began to walk. No. I should substitute the word 'run' in the place of 'walk'. While we too ran after him, the three curs stood like sentinels in different places.

My companion flashed the electric torch and the old man said to switch off the light.

"It is not for you... we are unfamiliar with the path. Further, (what about the snakes here?" asked my companion with a throbbing heart.

"Snakes! They are afraid of us just as we are afraid of them. That's life, boys. Learn that first," the old man sermonized.

Soon we came to the bank of a lake. There stood a hut. A couple of hurricane lamps tried to drive away the darkness from its interior. There was an acrid smell and we had to pinch our nostrils. The smell seemed to be a pleasant one to the old man.

Young and old men sat in groups, filling up all generation gaps. Everyone of them was seen holding a small leaf on his left palm. It contained either a fried fish or *bajjis* or a few mutton pieces, all of them heavily garbed in chilly-powder. Every one of them invariably had a mug filled with a liquid that resembled milk. Yes. You have guessed it right. It was a toddy shop.

"Get me a mug of toddy and a fried fish," he ordered me.

I bought them for him.

He gulped down his dinner and burst into a bawdy song. My cassette-recorder was on. When he finished the song, I gave him the third mug. But he refused saying, "Joy and sorrow should never cross their limits, boys."

Then we began our downward journey towards the old man's hut. On the way he burst into another song. But it was decent and so here it is:

"I have no sceptre to wield  
and no throne to sit on,  
No slave to attend on me  
and no harem to attend to.  
I have no kingdom to rule  
and have no treasury to use.  
Yet I have a kingdom—  
a kingdom built of love and joy.  
In my heart dwells a woman.  
One woman—my queen.  
I never age to look bald or wrinkled  
since I know no grief.  
Only a bowl of porridge I eat  
but I eat it with content.  
I spend no sleepless nights  
for my mind is never restless.  
Am I not a king?  
Oh, am I not a king?"

"Certainly, you are a king," we complimented, to which he said: "This is the song a wood-cutter usually sings when he is at work. Do you like it?"

I played back his song on the recorder. The old man was extremely happy to

listen to his voice, perhaps for the first time in his life. He expressed his joy by bursting into more such songs, some vulgar too. After half a dozen songs, which I have faithfully recorded, the old man before bidding good night told us to come the next day to hear stories. And before he started on his rounds, he gave us homework. Yes. He told us a riddle and wanted us to come back with the solution. And we made our way back home, all the time racking our brains over the following riddle:

It is now many months  
 Since she left her parents,  
 With erudites she makes a living,  
 Silently she suffers  
 the immortal wounds  
 the erudites make on her.  
 Never does she protest, instead  
 enjoys their cuts and stabs  
 for she knows  
 'Suffering brings forth immortality.'  
 Who is she?

(*Mother India*, Jan. 1982, pp. 72-73)

On the evening of the next day, we were with the old man.

"Did you solve my riddle?" That was the old man's first question.

"Yes," we replied in a chorus. "The answer is a palm-leaf manuscript," I said smiling.

"Good!" complimented the old man. "But tell me who solved it for you?" His question baffled us. We remained silent blinking at each other.

The old man drank the mug of toddy which we had carried with us. "Ha...ha... ha..." he laughed and said, "Only an elderly person must have solved the riddle for you. Modern education, I am sure, boys, gives no scope to think... Anyhow congratulate on my behalf whoever has solved my riddle... Now listen. I'll tell you stories."

Thanks are owed to my mother for solving the old man's riddle. We listened to his stories.

He told us many amusing stories, most of them bawdy. The old man must have been another Casanova in his youth. God only knows. The two printable stories he told were 'The Chettiyar's Son' (*Mother India*, Oct. 1983, pp. 617-618) and 'We shall Cook Our Own Food' (*Mother India*, Aug. 1983, pp. 490-491). Regarding his other stories and songs, I think, the editors of *Playboy* and *Penthouse* magazines might think twice before accepting them for publication.

My interest that began with the collection of folktales branched to riddles, songs and *bon mots*.

After I had exhausted meeting the old people in our village, my search for more

such people in the neighbouring villages began.

My next target was Ariankuppam, 2 kms south of my native village where my father's old aunt lives. In our younger days we used to call her *kurangu aaya* (monkey grandma) for she was noted for her monkey tricks. Even at the ripe age of 87, she can very easily make a weeping child laugh by her tricks. And when she sings a lullaby, even a babe in the cradle weeping for milk will rub its stomach and will go to sleep. One of my cassettes contains some of the finest lullabies sung by her. She was very good at riddles and songs, but regarding folktales she confessed her ignorance. But she didn't leave it at that.

Some days later she took me to one of her childhood companions, whose house was at a stone's throw from hers. She looked older than my *kurangu aaya* and was blind and hard of hearing. *Kurangu aaya* pouted her lips and said, "No use... The shouts and hoots let out to rouse the mythical Kumbakarna from his deep sleep will have no effect on her."

I pressed a bunch of betel leaves and a packet of areca nut powder into the hands of the blind old woman. She felt them and said: "After a long time I have enough in my hands today."

She began to chew the leaves with a pinch of chunam and sang thus:

"Never did I share his food.  
Nor did he buy me a garb.  
Yet to ease him at death  
I quenched his gaze.  
O, good women all!  
Be you faithful unto death  
To your Lord who gives you mirth."

After a pause, she added: "There is a lovely tale behind the song. If I have a mug of toddy I will be better inspired to narrate it."

I was a bit shocked for the narrator was after all a woman, and women do not usually go in for toddy. But that was no time to think of etiquette. I brought out a bottle of toddy kept ready from my bag and allowed her to have it. She gulped it down and began narrating the story of the washerwoman's son and the queen, which I titled 'The Last Wish' (*Mother India*, April 1984, pp. 274-276). She also told another funny story which explicates Darwin's theory of 'survival of the fittest'. That story 'Show Me the Man, I Will Show You the Rule' (*Mother India*, May 1983, pp. 302-303) can also be viewed in the light of an allegory. Many witty stories like 'His Wit Was His Guard' (*Mother India*, April 1983, pp. 246-248) were also from her wet mouth.

More lullabies, many more posers in the form of riddles and a good number of stories from Ariankuppam have been imprisoned in the cassettes.

A friend of mine working at the Filaria Control Unit advised me to go to Vai-

thikuppam and Kuruchikuppam, fishing hamlets on the shore. "You will be able to collect more tales and legends," he said. "Go after 9 o'clock in the night. The fishermen would be out on the sea. The old men and fisherwomen would spend their time in singing songs and amusing themselves with stories."

"Lovely. I will go there tonight," said I jubilantly.

"But the presence of a stranger might stop all their merry-making," he warned. "Anyhow try your luck."

That evening I was in Vaithikuppam with all my equipment. A tea shop stood at the entrance of the hamlet. I sat on a bench placed outside the hut that served as a tea shop. Since I remembered the warning given by my friend, I was deep-rooted in the thought to work out a way to record the stories that fisherfolk tell at night.

"Have tea, Sir," said a voice. I shook off the thought. I saw a young fellow holding a glass of steaming tea. Before I could say, "I didn't ask for tea," he asked me: "Do you remember me, Sir?"

I searched my memory. But my mind struggled in vain to identify the young fellow. But I didn't want to disappoint him. I smiled and nodded my head.

"I was your student in the pre-university class, Sir," he said in all humility. "You taught us advanced English. I still have the notes you gave us on the characters in *Julius Caesar*... Have tea, Sir."

The glass of tea changed hands. "What are you doing now?" I asked.

"Running this tea-shop," he replied pointing to the hut.

"Didn't you continue your studies?"

"That's fate, Sir," he said clicking his tongue. "My father died in the sea while fishing. So I couldn't continue my studies... My mother didn't allow me to go on the sea fishing. And so I am running this tea-shop... My mother helps me and I am educating my three brothers, all younger than me."

"Good! I'm glad to note that you are shouldering responsibilities," I said patting him on his shoulder.

"Tea is getting cold, Sir," he said. "And what brought you here, Sir? Can I be of any help to you?"

I explained to him what had brought me there, and hesitatingly asked him if he could help me in recording the stories.

"That's simple, Sir," he said. "I too join their company and enjoy the stories and songs. Once I too narrated the story of Julius Caesar for them. With me by your side, they will not take you for a stranger."

I heaved a sigh of satisfaction. "The moment one definitely commits oneself, all sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred, a whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in their favour all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and material assistance, which no man could have dreamt would have come his way." I remember to have read this somewhere.

It was 8.30 at night. Accompanied by my former student, I was on the



shore. I was for the first time witnessing a pleasant and pathetic sight. Pleasant, indeed, to see the naked fishermen—naked except for the little strip of cloth running between their legs and secured by a rope waist-band—push their catamarans against the aggressive waves and struggle to gain entry into the vast kingdom of Neptune. And to see their wives, children and aged parents stand on the shore with their anxiety-filled faces is really a pathetic sight.

They watched the rice-winners go challenging nature. With tear-filled eyes they continued to look at the heroes of the sea till they disappeared from their sight. Then they raised their hands towards heaven to invoke the sleeping gods to show mercy on the fishermen.

Minutes later they all gathered to sing songs and entertain themselves with stories to forget their worries. One started playing music on a pot. It was followed by a song that sang of valorous deeds of the fishermen on the perilous seas. Since I had been already introduced to them they didn't cut short the entertainment.

An old man burst into an admirable song of how a kind-hearted fish had saved a drowning fisherman. The song was followed by a tale which I have retold under the title 'The Restless Waves' (*New Times Observer*, May 23, 1983, pp. 4-6). At about 10 o'clock they all disappeared into their huts, abandoning me and my companion.

The next night I went to join the entertainers. I played back what I had recorded on the previous day. Enticed by the cassette recorder and with an eager desire to listen to their own voices from the machine, they came out with legends and tales. 'The Sentry' (*New Times Observer*, June 7, 1982 p. 5), 'The Reward of Cowardice' (*Mother India*, Oct. 1981, pp. 603-604) and 'The Eatable Corpse' (*New Times Observer*, March 23, 1983) all belong to this area.

There are also many legends around Monsieur Dupleix, the famous Governor-General of French-owned Pondicherry. Since they talk of his affair with the fisherwomen and sometimes assassinate his character, I believe they are not worth preserving, for man is after all man with his multi-coloured weaknesses and merits. Why defile Dupleix's character?

Whenever time permits and wherever old tale-tellers entertain the tiny tots, I am there recording the tales. They should not go with yesterday's rubbish. In this venture, I have succeeded in collecting so far 70 folktales, though some are very salacious, more than 600 riddles and nearly 100 folksongs.

But that is not the end. It is only a grand beginning.

P. RAJA

## “BLESSED BE THE ART THAT CAN IMMORTALISE”

WE believe that the Mother is still with us although She has left her physical frame. I for one feel Her every hour of the day. I who was nurtured and pampered in a household that had twenty-five servants now do a lot of work. There is the big house to look after, a sick mother, a growing boy with all his demands and needs, cooking for lunch and for dinner. After a day's work I sit and stare at the deep blue sky and think “Who has done all this work? How did I manage it all?” Then under the bluish tubelight I do pranam and say, “Merci, Mère.” Her face visibly moves into a smile. My lady comes to life—like the Khan's nymph on the fountain in the dance-drama *The Fountain of Bakshisarai*. It is a photo, yes, but warm and real like the God-mother in Hans Anderson's “Match-girl”. Yet we all miss Her, miss Her tremendously. Her physical contact was like a sun-kissed experience and this however was like the glow of a setting sun. I have put the Mother's photos all over my rooms. And when that could not be done I turned Her into a pin-up girl and pasted prints from old calenders on the walls. When the engineer came to whitewash my rooms he said, “What have you done, you have spoilt the walls!” “Does that mean that when you have done your work and gone I won't be able to paste the Mother's pictures on the walls?” He sprang up and said, “Oh no. Paste as many pictures as you like!” (“Blessed be the art that can immortalise,” wrote the poet Cowper.)

When we first came to Pondicherry and wanted to buy some good and recent photographs of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother we found there were none at the stall. This stall, set up on a veranda in the Ashram buildings during Darshan-time, was non-existent in ordinary times. Some books and photos and sacramentos were displayed: that is all. And the big Ashram Library was not the imposing building we have now but a few rooms adjacent to the reception hall. There were however three photos of the Mother wearing European clothes. One, we learnt, was very much liked by Sri Aurobindo who is reported to have said, “It is full of the Spirit.” So we bought this one. And an enlargement of another photo where it seemed she wore Japanese clothes. Of Sri Aurobindo there were two: one in a sitting posture and writing—another standing, in a dhoti and chaddar. None were adequate, none were good enough, none revealed the great being behind the apparent face. By the Mother's orders, I presume, the bust of the standing photo was taken and enlarged. It was miraculously transformed. For here some of the greatness came through. Later when we had it framed and every evening lighted a lamp near it and offered flowers and *dhoop* we could love it and even pray. It came alive and we could feel his presence. We did pranam and felt his unseen hand on our heads.

The year we came to live permanently in the Ashram coincided with the coming of Cartier Bresson, the renowned photographer from Paris. We all speculated: “Will the Mother allow him to photograph Sri Aurobindo?” He was lucky. The Mother gave him permission. We were overjoyed, for we all wanted recent

photographs of Sri Aurobindo. No doubt, we saw him at Darshan time and took back in our memory, as best we could, his image but that faded quickly. We wanted new photos in our rooms. Bresson took a side-view and a front-view of Sri Aurobindo. He got an infinite Grace and got too a slight rebuke when he was bold enough to suggest a slight alteration in the position of his hands. He could not see that they had been put like that as a symbol of the Lord come down to take the ailing and weeping world into his embrace.

“He who has looked on me shall grieve no more,” they seemed to say. And “Over blind fate and the antagonist power/Moveless there stands a high unchanging Will /To its omnipotence leave thy work’s result./All things shall change in God’s transfiguring hour.”

Bresson took innumerable photos of the Mother in all Her activities and naturally lots of people, whoever were at that time near the Mother, came through. When Bresson was about to leave, the Mother put a restriction on his activities by saying that whenever and wherever he was going to publish these photos he must take the Mother’s permission. In spite of that, we were all appalled to find some photos of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother in America’s *Life Magazine*. Obedience to the divine Guru is the first necessity in Yoga. But he was not a disciple. Then Nature and even Truth, if I may say so, do at times play tricks with us. Very few knew about Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. A few scholars may have read *The Life Divine*, his *magnum opus*. *Life Magazine* had in those days a good circulation and a whole lot of people awakened to a new fact: “Hello, who are these people promising a good and healthy and new life?” For all are today looking for a new life, a new set of norms, a new orientation. What if Bresson being disobedient accomplished something for the Divine’s work? We stopped hullaballoing.

In the Ashram the Mother commissioned our photographers to compile and arrange Bresson’s photos and make albums. These were priced at a thousand rupees each and were swooped up like hot cakes. In two of the Mother’s photos Sanat could be seen and in another I came along. Naturally we were extremely happy to see our photos in the album but what gave us even more joy was that in both the pictures the Mother was smiling Her sweetest, a plummet of Her care for us. After the Bresson incident the Ashram photographers were allowed to take any number of photos they liked of the Mother and even other people and of the functions and the various departments. They took our photographs too and all came out fine. One in which Sanat was smartly dressed in black sherwani and white churidar came out the finest and when we showed it to the Mother she said, “I did not get this!”. We did not know then that She collected photos too and that a copy went to Her of every photo taken in the Ashram. For any postal stamp issued in the British Empire one sample had to be sent to the King’s collection in the Buckingham Palace; a copy of each book published anywhere in the empire found its way to the British Museum. We were delighted to give the Mother our copy. What infinite grace that our photos could be in Her collection!

Today we have a whole lot of the Mother's pictures taken mostly by Pranab, I suppose. I do not know when the photos of the Mother in Japan, with Tagore and other eminent company, were found. Then there are photos when She was a child, with her brother and even when She was a mere baby. When I did my M.A. and did it particularly well considering the fact I was a non-collegiate student, for, as one professor once remarked, the examiner as soon as he sees the word non-collegiate automatically strikes off twenty marks in each paper. Sanat as a reward ordered a cap and a gown for me and had a photograph of me wearing them taken by a photographer in Madras. Naturally we wanted to give the Mother a copy. So on my birthday I took a copy to Her. I said nothing, just held the picture in front of Her. She at first surveyed it screwing Her eyes trying to find out what it was all about. Then She glowed and taking my face in Her hands said emphatically, "You are smart." It was reward enough for all the trouble Sanat and I had taken for my M.A. examination.

The Mother was a good painter. This bit of news we all had heard. But not until the Ashram brought out a diary with some of the portraits that the Mother had sketched in the olden days that we came to know how remarkable She was even in portraiture. In these sketches the actual resemblance and the spirit behind the sitter were remarkably emphasised. A feat well-nigh impossible, I think, by one who had left off painting some half a century ago. Nolinida and Pranab and Vasudha and Amritada were there and they all looked as they were yet astonishingly brilliant and transparent as if they had been holding their souls in their faces. They were all beautiful in a way no ordinary person could see. These were their souls' pictures that only the Mother saw.

CHAUNDONA S. BANERJI

## THESE MOUNTAINS

THESE mountains are the rhythms of a great soul;  
They have met in the secret of silence their sky,  
They have grown into the summer's flame of joy.  
Their brow is the boundless measure of thought,  
Their heart is the impalpable throb of love,  
Their ecstasy is founded on the rock of faith;  
They breathe in the seasons of the Eternal.  
Like a tree with boughs of topaz, leaves of jade,  
In the hollow of existence were they planted;  
Fruits of aureate smiles they bear in Time,  
Songs of burns are born in their massive trance.  
Or like a river of superconscient haste  
Flooding the greenery and the orchards of life,  
Reaching the sea of Dream as far as the Day,  
Beyond the blue of drifting clouds, under the rain,  
They are a firm mystery flowing into the morn.

R. Y. DESHPANDE

## ARRIVED

SOMETHING sometimes I feel—  
A call from beyond mind's petrifying spell,  
An unknown nebula giving birth  
To stars unmarked in limitless space,  
Other suns blazing and purging my mind  
To end its puny existence,  
For a life rejuvenated full of dynamic exhortations  
And explorations. Throwing cautions,  
Precautions, to the four winds  
I stand face to face with my torpor-free self  
Holding the master key to the store of gracious fulfilment.  
A massive effervescence of notes builds up  
The only melody to sing my heart-filled  
Invocation to the One I love most.

DEBANSHU

## SEEKING

THE moon shines in my sky,  
The stars twinkle...  
I yearn for the sun the whole night...  
Yet arrives not the dawn!

A mystery veils the face of nature,  
Fog assails the sea,  
A white carpet covers the green grass,  
Baffled light struggles in vain!

O, won't the golden feet touch the ground  
And birds sing in gardens?  
Will not the Lord, the Charioteer,  
Come down to kindle the earthly mind?

Then who will rein the unruly life  
With the rope of golden rays  
And show us the path to the destined goal  
At the cross-roads of the coming age?

CHUNILAL CHOWDHURY