

MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

DECEMBER 1985

Price: Rs. 3.50

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

INLAND

Annual: Rs. 36.00

Life Membership: Rs. 504.00

OVERSEAS

Sea Mail:

Annual: \$13.00 or £8.00

Life Membership: \$182.00 or £112.00

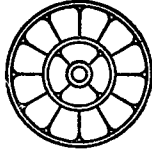
Air Mail:

Annual: \$36.00 for American & Pacific countries

£20.00 for all other countries

Life Membership: \$504.00 for American & Pacific countries

£280.00 for all other countries

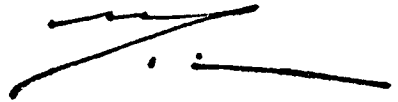


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



All Rights Reserved. No matter appearing in this journal or part thereof may be reproduced or translated without written permission from the publishers except for short extracts as quotations.

All correspondence to be addressed to:

MOTHER INDIA, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry - 605 002. India

Editor's Phone: 4782

Publishers: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust

Editor: K. D. SETHNA

Published by: P. COUNOUMA

SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM TRUST, PONDICHERRY - 605 002

Printed by: AMIYO RANJAN GANGULI

at Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, Pondicherry - 605 002

PRINTED IN INDIA

Registered with the Registrar of Newspapers under No. R. N. 8667/63

MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XXXVIII

No. 12

“Great is Truth and it shall prevail.”

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
A POEM BY SRI AUROBINDO TRANSLATION OF A BENGALI SONG OF SAHANA'S	... 775
A TALK BY THE MOTHER: TO THE ASHRAM CHILDREN ON DECEMBER 8, 1954	... 776
TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO	<i>Nirodbaran</i> ... 781
THE GAME (Poem)	<i>Shyam Kumari</i> ... 785
THE STORY OF A SOUL	<i>Huta</i> ... 786
TO SRI AUROBINDO (Poem)	<i>Dhruva</i> ... 791
GLIMPSSES OF A RARE SOUL: A SELECTION FROM A PERSONAL CORRESPONDENCE	<i>Amal Kiran</i> ... 792
HERITAGE (Poem)	<i>Debanshu</i> ... 799
HOW FAR IS PONDICHERRY?	<i>Samar Basu</i> ... 800
THE SECRET I LEARNED FROM EINSTEIN	<i>Jerome Weidman</i> ... 807
“MOTHERS” IN SRI AUROBINDO'S PLAYS AND <i>Savitri</i>	<i>B. Varalakshmi</i> ... 810
THE GRACE OF THE DIVINE MOTHER: AN EXPERIENCE	<i>C. D. Ayyar</i> ... 820
CROSSWORD	... 822
SRI AUROBINDO, MY LORD: A LETTER	<i>Lalita</i> ... 824
THE CURSE A FOLKTALE	<i>P. Raja</i> ... 825
BOOKS IN THE BALANCE SRI AUROBINDO CIRCLE, 41st NUMBER, 1985	... 827
<i>Review by Shraddhavan</i>	

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Sri Aurobindo and The Mother

	Rs.
Hymns to the Mystic Fire	... 60.00
The Future Poetry	pb Rs. 40.00 bd 50.00
Light Endless Light—Sri Aurobindo	... 3.00
Spiritual Education—Compilation	... 2.50
Devotion—Compilation	... 2.50

Other Authors

Love Treasures (Paintings on <i>The Mother</i>)—Usha Patel	... 250.00
Light of Lights—an Anthology of Spiritual Poetry	.. 25.00
Yoga of the Rishis—Dr. V M Reddy	... 50.00
Nolinda: A Loving Tribute—Dr. V.M. Reddy	... 12.00
Sri Aurobindo Circle—41st No.	... 20.00
Sri Aurobindo Mandir Annual No. 44	... 15.00
Sri Aurobindo, A Biography and a History—Dr. K.R.S Iyengar	... 150.00
Stories and plays for children—Sunanda	... 7.50

FRENCH

Lettres sur le Yoga III—Sri Aurobindo	... 80.00
Les Bases du Yoga—Sri Aurobindo	.. 15.00
Lumières sur le Yoga—Sri Aurobindo	... 10.00
Anthologie de l'amour—Compilation	.. 10.00

ITALIAN

Pensieri E Aforismi—Sri Aurobindo	... 160.00
Conversazioni 1929—The Mother	... 100.00

HINDI

Yoga ke Marg—Sri Aurobindo	... 15.00
Sapta Chatusthaya—Sri Aurobindo	... 4.00
Shiksha—The Mother	... 4.00
Ritayan—Vidyavati Kokil	... 25.00

BENGALI

Gitar Bhumika—Sri Aurobindo	... 6.00
Karakahini—Sri Aurobindo	... 6.00
Madhumayee Diptimayee Ma—Nirodbaran	.. 12.00
Mayer Katha—Pradyot Bhattacharya	... 5.00
Mayer Jantra Pradyot—Nirodbaran	... 25.00

GUJARATI

Gita Nibandho—Sri Aurobindo	... 60.00
-----------------------------	-----------

KANNADA

Matruvani—The Mother	... 16.00
----------------------	-----------

MARATHI

Yogachi Multattve—Sri Aurobindo	... 5.00
---------------------------------	----------

TELUGU

Jaganmata—Sri Aurobindo	... 2.50
Aswasthata—Compilation	... 4.00

Books Available from

SABDA, SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM, PONDICHERRY - 605 002

A POEM BY SRI AUROBINDO

TRANSLATION OF A BENGALI SONG OF SAHANA'S

SINCE thou hast called me, see that I
Go not from thee,—surrounding me stand.
In thy own love's diviner way
Make me too love thee without end.

My fathomless blackness thou hast cleft
With thy infinity of light,
Then waken in my mortal voice
Thy music of illumined sight.

Make me thy eternal journey's mate,
Tying my life around thy feet.
Let thy own hand my boat unmoor,
Sailing the world thyself to meet.

Fill full of thee my day and night,
Let all my being mingle with thine
And every tremor of my soul
Echo thy Flute of flutes divine.

Come in thy chariot, Charioteer,
And drive me whither thou wouldst go.
All within me and all my acts
Make luminous with surrender's glow.

13. 2. 1941

A TALK BY THE MOTHER

TO THE ASHRAM CHILDREN ON DECEMBER 8, 1954

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

Sweet Mother, what is the meaning of "the psychic surrender in the physical"?

WHY, we spoke about it last time, didn't we? I think so. It is the psychic surrender expressing itself in the physical consciousness; that is, the physical consciousness takes an attitude of psychic surrender. The physical consciousness receives the influence of the psychic and takes the attitude which psychic surrender gives. We said that; I am sure I said something very much the same.

(To a child) And you, you said you had something?

Here it is said: "Develop the cosmic consciousness." How can we do it?

Cosmic? Why, I have been asked this before. Someone asked me, "How can we teach the children to develop the cosmic consciousness?" And so I replied, "Develop it first in yourself."

How can you do it? You know what the cosmic consciousness is? You must first begin by knowing that. The cosmic consciousness means that, instead of feeling that one is an altogether separate, isolated being, different from all others, one feels that he is only a part of an immense whole and in relation with the whole totality, receiving the movements, and vibrations of all others and transmitting to all others its own vibrations, that the movements of consciousness, the psychological vibrations do not stop inside a small individual enclosed in himself, who is as in a shell, without any contact with the rest; the forces pass across, going from one to another, touching one here, another there, and these forces are so complex and multiple that we can no longer tell where one begins and another ends. One has exactly the impression of an immense whole moving within itself. It is something like that—the cosmic consciousness.

So, first of all, you must think of this; you must first become aware that you are a point in the universal immensity, and not isolated but altogether joined with it. And then you must study yourself, observe yourself. You will immediately have the opportunity of seeing the vibrations which come from outside and pass through you but are not generated in you, which you receive and express. So gradually, by studying, looking, observing, you become aware of that which is not limited. This is how you begin to acquire the universal or cosmic consciousness. Cosmic and universal mean the same thing.

Here it is written: "No snatching or clutching at realisation." What does that mean—"snatching and clutching at realisation", Sweet Mother?

No snatching, no...?

Clutching.

You know what "clutching" means? (*The child expressed the meaning by a gesture. Mother laughs.*)

All right, it means... Does he say one should not or one cannot?

One should not, Sweet Mother.

That means one must not try to do it, because it does not obey this kind of movement. These people try to progress through violence. They have no patience, they have no persistence; and when a desire arises in them they must realise it immediately. Now, they want to have something—let us say a change in their character or a change in the circumstances or a set of things—and then, they want it at once; and as this usually does not happen all at once, they pull it down from above. This is what he calls "clutching". They seize it, pull it towards themselves. But in this way one has neither the real thing nor the true movement; one mixes violence with one's aspiration and this always produces some confusion somewhere, and into the bargain one cannot have the true thing, one can only have an imitation of the true thing; because this is not how it comes, not by pulling it as though one were pulling it by the tail; it will not come. Clutching! One clutches the rope when one wants to climb up. That's how it is when one pulls! That's exactly the movement one should not have once one holds the rope. That's all.

Mother, on what does the central will of the being depend?

Eh? On what does it depend? That means? What exactly do you want to say? On what does its manifestation depend, or on what does it itself depend for its existence?

It itself.

The central will? It depends on the divine Will.

It is the individualised expression of the divine Will; and the divine Will is the expression of the divine Consciousness seeking to manifest itself, to realise itself.

How can one become aware of the central will?

Ah, this of course is another side of the problem. First of all one must become aware of what is highest, most true, most universal and eternal in one's consciousness.

This is learnt gradually. One learns to discern among one's ordinary, external movements and the different gradations of the movements of one's inner consciousness. And if one continues to do this with a certain persistence, one realises what it is that puts this highest part of one's being into motion, which represents the ideal of the being. There is no other way. Sometimes this awakens through reading something, sometimes through a conversation, sometimes through a more or less dramatic, that is, unexpected event, which gives you a shock, shakes you up, brings you out of your usual little rut. Sometimes when you are in a very great danger, suddenly you feel as though you are above yourself and beyond your small habitual weakness, having within you something higher which can hold out against circumstances.

Such occasions make you enter, first, into contact with that. Afterwards by a methodical discipline you can make the contact continuous; but usually this takes time. But first you get it like that, suddenly, for one reason or another.

(Long silence)

This may come with a very strong emotion, with a very great sorrow, a very great enthusiasm. When one is called to perform a fairly exceptional action, in circumstances which are a little exceptional, all of a sudden, one feels something as though breaking or opening within him, and one feels as though he were dominating himself, as though he had climbed up a higher rung and from there was looking at his own existence with the habitual senses. Once one has experienced this, one does not forget; even if only once it has happened, one does not forget it. And one can by concentration reproduce the state at will, later. This is the first step to cultivate it.

Afterwards one can very easily call up this state each time a decision is to be taken, and then one takes it in full awareness of the implications and foreseeing everything that's going to happen. I don't think there's one individual in the world who hasn't experienced it—in any case one cultured individual—at least once in his life, something that breaks and opens... and one understands. This seems to astonish you very much!... *(To a child)* You have never felt this, you? Yes?

I don't know.

You are not sure! *(Long silence)*

When one has had it one feels that one has begun to live, that before this one did not know what life was. Suddenly one has entered fully into life. This is not forgotten.

(To a child) So?

Sweet Mother, to what plane does intuition belong?

It is one of those planes, one of those regions we were speaking about last time, which are intermediary between the higher mind and the Overmind.

How does it manifest, Sweet Mother?—intuition.

Um! How does it manifest? It is something which takes place without any reasoning, any analysis, any deduction. Suddenly one knows a thing, without having reasoned, without having analysed, without deducing, without having reflected, without having made use of one's brain, without having put together the elements of the problem and tried to resolve them—it is not like that. All of a sudden it comes like a light in the consciousness; it can be in the head, it can be lower down, elsewhere; it is a light in the consciousness which brings a precise knowledge on a particular point and it is not at all a result of analyses and deductions. In fact, it is the first manifestation of the knowledge by identity. Knowledge by identity—you understand clearly what that means?

If one succeeds in identifying himself with something, well, one becomes this thing for a time, and becoming this thing one knows all that is in it, without needing either to guess or to construct. (*Long silence*) That's all.

Of course, there is also a form of foresight, but this does not have altogether the same nature. Foresight usually comes from the faculty of knowing by identity. If one can project his consciousness into something—a circumstance or an event or a person—if one can project his consciousness, well, one receives, afterwards, the precise indication of the thing with which the consciousness was mingled. And this leads gradually to a total and absolute knowledge. In fact it is the only way of knowing, and if one pushes this far enough and succeeds in identifying himself with the Divine, one has the divine knowledge, and this is not impossible. It is something possible because the universe is made like that, for that. Only, it has gone off the right track; for what reasons, one doesn't know. Ah, what strange things we see!... To be sure that one knows, and then, at the same time to wonder how it happens.

You have never tried to enter another person's consciousness to know exactly what is going on there? Not projecting your consciousness into someone else, because then you find yourself inside him and this is not interesting—but entering into relation with his consciousness which is within him, for example when, for one reason or another, you don't see things eye to eye; one sees them in one way, the other in another. If people are reasonable they do not quarrel. But if they are not reasonable, they begin quarrelling. Then instead of quarrelling, the best thing to do is to enter into the other's consciousness and ask yourself why he says things like that, what is it that pushes him to do this or say that? What is the inner reason, what is his vision of things which makes him take this attitude? It is extremely interesting. If you do this, immediately you stop being angry. First thing: you can no longer be angry. So this is already a great gain. But also, if the other continues being angry, it has no effect on you.

And then, later, one can try to identify oneself more perfectly and prevent the movements of division and deformation and stop quarrels. Very useful.

(*To a child*) I have already recommended this procedure to you several times, I think. I remember. Did you try? You, there, I am talking to you! You have tried? No? Ah, you are obstinate. No? (*The child does not say anything*) It won't come out... Good, let's not talk about it any more.

So, that's all, my children? Anything else? No more questions? Nothing over there, no?

Mother, is the central being the psychic being?

For the immense majority of people the psychic being is the central being. But the central being can be identified with another consciousness and another state which is more central and is not purely human. And this is—I can't say that it is extremely rare, but still it is not frequent.

That's all?

It is nine o'clock. That's all?

Good. Finished.

(*Questions and Answers, 1954, pp. 419-425*)

TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of November 1985)

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

October 16, 1940

(P started the talk about one Mr. Chevalier, a friend of Dr. Ramchandra, who had arrived here. He seems to have said that Dr. R was much changed. S and C corroborated the observation. But P said that he had heard also some things against Dr. R—for instance: this gardening and gardening all the time!

Then there was a talk about both Suren and Dr. R being much relieved because Suren had moved to a new house.)

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, Suren has been wanting it for a long time, and R had also said that it would be difficult to check his violence if Suren was not removed.

S: But I see much change in him now. Of course many things turn up here from our old nature. For instance, I find in myself things that I didn't suspect existed in me. That is perhaps due to some special working in the Inconscient at present.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes; many people have said that to me. It is what the psychoanalysts put much weight upon. They call it suppression and its later effect.

S: But everything is not suppression.

N: You said before that the work was going on in the subconscious.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is the same; it is the rising up of the subconscious from the Inconscient.

N: Has everybody such dark elements in the Inconscient?

SRI AUROBINDO: There is a possibility though they may not be manifested in a formed state.

S: When the subconscious rises up, it seems there is no end to it. It keeps recurring. One doesn't know how to get rid of the cycle. It is something terrible.

SRI AUROBINDO: Mind and the vital are easy to change. It is these three, the physical, the subconscious and the Inconscient that are most difficult.

Evening

(*Gandhi has elaborated his Campaign of Satyagraha and elected Mr. Vinoba Bhave as the candidate to start it.*)

P: I read that Gandhi thought of making Vinoba Prime Minister in place of Kher. •

SRI AUROBINDO: No, not Kher but Dr. Khare in C.P.

P: Good Lord! I would like to see how Vinoba would carry on even for a week.

SRI AUROBINDO: He would have advised fasting for a week for purification.

(*P then gave a description of Vinoba; Gandhi has elaborated his science of fasting, saying that it is a dangerous weapon, nobody should handle it without being a master of its technique. Then he says his Rajkot fasting was wrong.*)

SRI AUROBINDO: I thought it was inspired by God!

P: Yes, but in its application he committed mistakes; *e.g.*, he shouldn't have asked the Viceroy to intervene if he considered the Prince as his son, etc. It seems he has selected Nehru as second candidate after Bhave.

SRI AUROBINDO: Nehru is not scientific—an anticlimax!

N: No news of Tagore!

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, he is getting better. Something strange about him: when you think he is getting better, he suddenly begins to die and when you think he is dying he gets better. (*Laughter*)

P: You have read about a Polish ship escaping from Dakar almost miraculously from a ring of submarines, warships, etc.?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes. That's the true Pole—you can't subjugate the race. By the way, have you marked the "damages and casualties" in Bombay from the cyclone?

P: Yes.

SRI AUROBINDO: They are all speaking in terms of the War as if there had been some air raid. (*Laughter*)

October 17, 1940

P: Gandhi gave a long introduction about Vinoba—says he is the most fitted and ideal non-violent worker, one who has understood and practised his non-violence in the true spirit. Vinoba declares that non-violence will bring a revolution in the country.

SRI AUROBINDO: Why speeches then?

P: It will be a preparation for a successful non-cooperation. He also says the Charkha will bring contentment to people and to the peasants by making them self-supporting.

SRI AUROBINDO: Then how can there be a revolution? Discontent brings in a revolution.

P: He has read also Arabic in order to understand and make common ties and sympathies with the Muslims. He has written a book making the Charkha the central subject, taking spinning, cotton, etc. as various items, and written history, geography, science on it.

SRI AUROBINDO: Why the Charkha then? One can write as well on nails! That is the intelligence which looks at things in one aspect only—one-eyed intelligence can't take a complete view of a subject....

P: Declaring War-aims, Churchill has said that they are not fighting for the *status quo* and not for the old order of things. More than that it is not possible to say.

S: He says now that the only War-aim is to win the war.

SRI AUROBINDO: Quite so. If he starts declaring the War-aims, a quarrel will start at once and those who are supporting Britain will object. For War-aims don't depend on Britain alone but on Europe too. By the co-operation and consent of all these nations they have to be developed. Different people will prefer different orders. For instance, the Socialists in England will want Socialism, while no one in Europe will agree to it, not even anyone in America.

N: There is Satish Das Gupta in Bengal, another lieutenant of Gandhi.

P: His is more of a personal attachment to Gandhi.

SRI AUROBINDO: Not because of Gandhi's ideas?

P: Ideas are secondary; he is a lieutenant because of the attachment. The main thing is his personal attachment apart from any ideas.

SRI AUROBINDO: Religious devotion?

P: Yes.

S: There are many people like that who are attached to Gandhiji because of his personal charm, his personality, not because of any idea or principle he stands for. Patel, for instance.

SRI AUROBINDO: Has none gone for his ideas?

S: I don't think so. It is as things are here. There are not many people here who have come for your philosophy.

SRI AUROBINDO: Why "not many"? Very few.

S: That was my tactfulness.

SRI AUROBINDO: Nirod didn't come for my philosophy!

N: No!

S: Amrita, e.g., says that whatever you say he will do. If politics, then politics.

SRI AUROBINDO: There is only one man who has come for my philosophy—Veerabhadra! (*Laughter*)

P: Yes, he has his own idea about it and says it is just like Shankara.

SRI AUROBINDO: Dilip used to shudder at the idea of the Supermind. Even the psychic used to appal him.

N: Though what he is aspiring for is this psychic attitude of bhakti.

SRI AUROBINDO: He thinks the psychic has no love and emotion. What he was afraid of was that his vital movements would be taken away.

N: Mahendra Sircar also came for your philosophy.

P: Adwaitanand, too. Of course such people are very few.

S: Very few people have any clear idea about it.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes. I am not speaking of those who come for Yoga. What about Veerabhadra? Where is he now?

P: In the town. I suppose the Vaisya Sabha is putting him up.

SRI AUROBINDO: He ought not to have any difficulty as he is a Brahmin.

P: Yes, a Brahmin in South India is honoured everywhere.

SRI AUROBINDO: And he has many disciples here. If he had the *gerua* (the saffron robe) he would have still more advantage.

N: But in Bengal he would have a hard time.

S: Why?

N: In Bengal Sannyasis are not held in much esteem.

SRI AUROBINDO: Bengal has Deshpande's idea, I suppose. I remember when Deshpande returned from England some Sannyasis came to him. He drove them away asking why able-bodied people should go about from door to door.

S: But in any other part of India a Sannyasi has no difficulty. Purnananda speaks very lovingly of a warm reception in Gujarat.

N: He says Bengali Sannyasis are not treated well in North India by North-Indian Sannyasis. "The Bengalis don't treat us well, why should we treat them well?" they argue. There is *himsa* (jealousy) among Sadhus too!

C: Jain Sadhus beat each other!

SRI AUROBINDO: That is not unusual, quite ancient. There are funny stories in old Buddhist books about Sannyasis. In some book the Sannyasis are described as drinking and shouting in the streets. Bharati told me that in old Jain books he had found Brahmins killing each other in South India and eating cow meat! Nobody will believe it now.

P: No!

SRI AUROBINDO: Eating meat by Brahmins goes as far back as the Ramayana. There is the story of Batapi, a Rakshasa, who along with his brother wanted to kill Brahmins. He turned himself into a sheep which was killed and eaten by a Brahmin. Then his brother came and chanted some mantra by which the sheep inside tore open the Brahmin's stomach and came out. The same trick he tried to play with Agastya. But as soon as his brother chanted a mantra Agastya chanted some other mantra and thus prevented the sheep from tearing his stomach. (*Laughter*)

Then there is the story in Bhavabhuti where Vashishtha ate a whole sheep in front of his disciples. The disciples exclaimed, "That fellow is eating the whole sheep!"

S: They must have wondered at his digestive capacity.

SRI AUROBINDO: No, it was not said in praise!

N: The digestive power must have deteriorated a lot among us since then!

SRI AUROBINDO: Quite so!

N: Buddha couldn't digest even some pieces of pork.

P: He was 80! But it was not a sheep that Vashishtha ate; a cow, I think.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, yes, a calf, I remember now. I was surprised to find a Brahmin eating a cow!

N: Weren't Brahmins eating cows at one time?

SRI AUROBINDO: Oh yes, sacrificial cows.

N: It was the post-Buddhistic influence that stopped meat-eating.

SRI AUROBINDO: No, it was Jainism. In Bengal where Buddhism was once very dominant they used to eat meat. It is remarkable how Jainism spread that influence throughout the whole of India. It was because of Jainism that Gujarat is vegetarian. But some carry this abstinence from meat as far back as the Veda. There is a sloka which says that meat can't be eaten and they make it "must not" be eaten.

(At the end P showed a famous sculpture of Durga from Bihar. Sri Aurobindo said that it was very lively, even the posture of Durga showed that. Then jocularly he said that one must have a divine quality to balance oneself on a lion like that.)

(To be continued)

NIRODBARAN

THE GAME

A CHILD fell down and burst in tears,
 But after a while stood up to play again.
 At times he lost, at others won,
 Yet his joyful spirit constantly soared.
 Victory is but a word and so is defeat,
 Both are equal in the eyes of God,
 Provided one does not cheat.

SHYAM KUMARI

THE STORY OF A SOUL

BY HUTA

(Continued from the issue of November 24, 1985)

The Mother's Message

This is the
interesting story of
how a being descended
to Divine Life



Volume Two: 1958

7

Now it was 1st April 1958. For six successive days the Mother sent me these commands, each beginning with the words: "To my dear little child Huta:

“Work only for the Divine.”
“Serve only the Divine.”
“Be attached only to the Divine.”
“Want only the Divine.”
“Seek only the Divine.”
“Only adore the Divine.”

These orders were too tall and tough for me to practise in daily life with all sincerity.

My condition was as if I were in a vast and turbulent sea. I tried hard to come out of it, but mountainous wave after wave of dark forces overswept me and made me sink more and more into the unfathomable depths of unconsciousness.

The Mother inscribed on a card which she sent me:

“So long as the mentality is inconstant and inconsequent, it is worthless, though one have a good teacher, and company of holy men.”
“With the Grace’s love and compassion always.”

I questioned myself: “When I have forgotten the Divine, when I have lost every hope, interest and zeal in life, why does the Mother keep on writing to me?”

But, no, she didn’t give up. Most lovely cards, fragrant white roses and some prasada came unfailingly.

I received from her a card showing orange-coloured roses accompanied by these words:

“The Divine alone is real—all the rest is illusion. And yet the Divine is everywhere, in the ignorant man as well as in the sage.”

What logic is here? This statement of the Mother baffled me enormously. I found the Divine Himself the greatest riddle—sometimes he said this, sometimes that. He, I thought, was crazy, unpredictable, ambiguous, full of tricks, fancies, a dramatist and a diplomat.

I did not go to the Mother—I had lost faith in her.

One moment my heart was leaping with hope and enthusiasm that the Mother cared for me and loved me and the next moment sinking to the deepest depths of depression for the imagined argument that she didn’t love me. She loved other people who were versatile.

I suspected the intention of the dire forces with terror in my heart that even if everyone else got out of this challenging spiritual world alive I would not. My fertile imagination was feeding on fear and jealousy.

The Mother wrote to me:

“Your ego, at the slightest thing that displeases it, is in the habit of opening the door of your being to an evil spirit of arrogant and impudent disbelief which passes its time in throwing mud and filth on all that is sacred and beautiful; especially on the aspiration of your soul and the help from the Divine’s Grace.

“If this is allowed to continue it will surely end in a catastrophe and a ruin. Strong steps must be taken to put an end to this; and for that the collaboration of your soul is needed. Your soul must wake up and join in the fight against the ego by resolutely closing the door to this evil spirit.”

But how? I was torn between two contradictory beings. Every nerve in my body quivered, the blood ebbed away from my head to leave me weak and faint. I felt as if I were drowning more and more into unconsciousness and was about to lose my true self and for a second I believed that I had lost it—finished and done with.

Meanwhile, I received a card on the same morning saying:

“Huta,

Come this morning at 10.30—I have something to tell you.”

I went to the Mother. It was Wednesday, April the 9th. Unfortunately I could not recall afterwards her speech—my memory failed. But I remembered that I froze to immobility as her blue-grey eyes penetrated my whole being, scanning every dark nook and corner. I was too confused to interpret. She was terribly incensed, and burnt in front of me some letters I had written to her under the shadow of the virulent forces. My blood ran cold. I trembled, my palms were moist. I did not know what awful fate befell me; for a brief heart-stopping moment I was lifeless.

The Mother remained in a trance for quite a long time and did something occult in my whole being in order to redeem me from the adverse influence which I could not understand. I tried to control my breathing, to drag together the remnants of my shattered poise—to say something—to dispel the tension—but without any result.

I was aghast, stunned. Despair began to ferment within me, I bit my lip hard to prevent panic. For that instant I felt as if I was sliding into a thick and solid darkness where my whole being seemed countless aeons apart from my true self. I thought everything was in endless disorder. My senses reeled, my very soul seemed to be leaving my body.

The Mother pressed my hands and brought me back from a great distance. With a superhuman effort I regained control over myself. Then I returned to the sanctuary of my room in Huta House. There were no tears in my eyes. The last shred of pride was taken away from me by the supreme Force.

I ate nothing. I only gulped down a glassful of water. My maid was bewildered. She could not understand my state. I signed her to leave me alone.

I was busy attempting to disentangle my thoughts. At the same time I could

not remember anything. I fought against my own depression and my persistent sense of loss.

I took a nap. Then suddenly I got up with a start. It was already 5.30 p.m. I got dressed, combed my hair and was ready to go to the Mother. Then I changed my mind and remained at home. How could I go to her without feeling?

I had no more fight left, no more anger, no more spirit of survival. My entire life, built over the last three years of struggle, of determination and finally of a scanty success, had suddenly been wrenched away from me. I had cried my eyes and my heart out for months and now I was exhausted by the onslaught of so much sorrow. My eyes had no more tears, my body had no more strength. I was worn out by years of doing battle and ending up nowhere. I was drained of the last drop of hope. Everything I held sacred, true and valuable—every bit of fulfilment—all gone—all gone.

The next morning a card came from the Mother, picturing a few motor-boats on a rough sea. She had written a quotation:

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

Nothing, absolutely nothing entered my head—not a single ray of truth pierced the iron block of EGO. There was an overwhelming disappointment, a sense of disillusionment and bitterness. I loathed everything, nothing could make me happy or cheerful. Nobody could understand my plight. But the Mother never lost hope. She was exceedingly patient with me—she supported me and encouraged me by sending scores of picturesque cards—each held its own charm and beauty. The Mother’s words and the quotations added sublimity and sweetness. Unfortunately, nothing affected my impervious mind and desert heart.

My nights became a ceaseless fight for sleep against the churning in my consciousness.

The Mother sent me a card illustrating the famous Buddha—standing with glory—clad in a *Sanghati* which covers both shoulders, a girdle is indicated round the waist, supporting the under-garment seen at the ankles. The left hand holds the hem of the upper garment; the missing right hand is firmly raised in *Abhaya Mudra*. Sandstone; height 7'2¹/₂", fifth century A.D. (Gupta). From the Jamalpur Mound, Mathura, now in the Museum at Mathura.

The Mother had written on the card:

“To my dear little child Huta,
‘The power of the human intelligence is without bounds; it increases by concentration. That is the secret.’” (Vivekananda)

I thought: "The Mother is the Divine. She can do anything—concentration, meditation, contemplation. But how can I do all these things? I do not know the ABC. of this mysterious spirituality."

Once more I fell back to my affliction. All my instinct was to slip down into the darkness that would mean forgetfulness—anywhere to escape from the agony of the terrible events in my life which wrapped me tightly. I avoided showing my face to the Mother. But she had written on a card with her love:

"The forces of the mind resemble scattered rays; concentrate them and they illumine everything." (Vivekananda)

Another card:

"The Divine is supreme Peace. Be with the Divine and you will be in peace."

But where was the Divine? I could not believe a single word. How was peace possible when my whole being was topsy-turvy? I doubted even the existence of the Divine in this world or in any other worlds. The Divine seemed a fantasy.

On 16th April there was a card on which the Mother had written:

"To my dear little child Huta,

"Be sincere, it is the first indispensable step on the way to the Divine's peace."

With a great effort I forced myself back to consciousness—compelled my brain to pull itself from the rambling thoughts. I wrote to the Mother in a few sentences that my consciousness was veiled, my mind was not lucid. I was sorry I could not grasp a single word she wrote to me. My heart felt strangled. She answered:

"My dear little child whom I love in spite of all, keep your mind quiet, stop having false impressions and false judgements and let the peace and the light enter in you—which they cannot do if your being is in a constant turmoil.

"Then you will feel that the Love is there and that it is worth bearing all the rest.

Love eternal."

If I were open, placid, plastic and receptive, I would be enjoying light and peace. But there was always a big BUT and that pessimistic notion held me captive. The inferiority complex was deep-rooted. Hence the turmoil.

The Mother sent me a card on which she had written:

“To my dear little child Huta,

‘So we should acquire the power of concentration by fixing the mind on forms and when we have obtained in this a full success, we can easily fix it on the formless.’
(Ramakrishna)

She added:

“With love.”

(To be continued)

Copyright © Huta D. Hindocha

TO SRI AUROBINDO

WHEN the lustre of a flower's bloom has greyed
 In convoluted selfishness of inner strife,
 When the brook-still perfection of a fugal
 Stress is covered by my faithlessness and pain,
 When harmony falters at the sight of love—
 Crumbling, disjoining an innocence within,
 When the twistedness of motivation maddens
 The perception of a kind and simple act,
 Then a happy tone from an oakened place is
 Gently surfaced by your patience and your love.

But when the lustre of a sudden flower's bloom
 Has dazzled all my sight like oceaned sunrise
 In the spraying glisten of a full-mooned day,
 And the precisioned placement of a joined jewel—
 Pressure forces—and I see it—purity
 Out: to be polished by the lapidary
 Acts of kind and simple people on the way,
 When the happiness wrapped full in silk within
 Has surfaced spontaneous on a bliss-wing,
 Then, through You, the final Oneness shuddering.

DHRUVA

GLIMPSES OF A RARE SOUL

A SELECTION FROM A PERSONAL CORRESPONDENCE

On the morning of September 21, Shashi Dinkar Palande passed away at Kumbakonam after a long bed-ridden history of spreading cancer. Along with her doctor husband who has been a frequent contributor of poems to Mother India, she was a dear and admired friend of Amal Kiran's for many years. He wrote only once to her of late but she figured in all that he wrote to her husband, and she used to make Dinkar read out to her the frequent correspondence. The qualities which Sri Aurobindo attributed to what he termed "the psychic being", the true inmost soul, were evident in her in an extraordinary form. "Sweetness, light, strength", with an intense spontaneous turning at all times towards the Divine, marked her out. In remembrance of her rarity it has been thought fit to publish a few personal letters. They are not exclusively about her, but at the same time that they touch on other themes they intimately bring her in and give glimpses of her habitual nature as well as of her unfaltering devotion to her gurus: Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

To Shashi for Her Last Birthday

19.10.1984

I AM told that when I was born the gas-lamp in the next room suddenly blazed up and my father had to hurry there to control the flame. The English lady-doctor—Mrs. Bradley—who was attending on my mother remarked: "Your boy will be a famous man." What I could realise in the course of my boyhood and manhood was simply that the lamp had prophesied a fiery career. I had an extremely hot temper in my early years as well as a stubborn character (inheritances from my grandfather), an adventurous vitality doubled with a searching mind (derived from my father), a nature passionate for beauty and for sensuous delight (whose source seems to be my own being) and an intense though blind urge towards some unknown beyond (a gift from God's grace inexplicable in terms of my ancestors or myself).

I don't know whether any unusual phenomenon accompanied your birth. Perhaps there was no need for it to mark you out. You were a wonderful being who needed only to be seen and known for one to realise your extraordinariness. The deep soul's signs must have been written all over you. In terms of the lamp I may say that yours was a steady glow, at once rich and soft, not requiring to flare up towards the Unknown, because within its own depth it held the sense of the Beyond. The only thing which might be considered a lack was a certain feeling it had of loneliness; but actually it was a cry for a companion light, which was soon answered by a romantic and poetic practitioner of the fine art of making broken things whole, an art which had not only an outward but also an inward aspect. I am happy that

the luminous companionship still goes on and I am sure that it can never be interrupted, for it reaches beyond name and form.

I am happy too that I have come in touch with it and found my own soul more bright because of it. In celebration of what made this possible—namely, your birth—I send you for the 23rd which harks back to that event a reminder of my love and whatever little power of benediction I may have caught from the Divine Truth that is Sri Aurobindo and the Supreme Bliss that is the Mother.

To Dinkar

27.3.1985

I have just had a visit from your son. Ashish gave me to understand that your prognosis about Shashi is pretty grave. This I could gather also from your own note which he had brought, although you pointed out a few signs of comparative stabilisation. To me, what is stable, not only now but as a recurrent strain, a continuous leading motif, the very rhythm of Shashi's existence, is her cheerfulness.

It is through this cheerfulness that there has entered into her whatever gift of soul-flowering the Divine has intended by the slow-break-up of the frail human clay. Shashi has asked why certain cases of cancer end soon while others are a prolonged agony. Often the length of time is what the Divine needs to take the soul as far as possible in one life by a short cut. Lives of suffering are summed up within a few years to press out the God-secret from our obscured complexity of a hundred diverging voices. Of course, much depends on the way one takes this short cut of lingering pain in a single life. If one thinks in terms only of a span of undeserved torture or rather useless blind circumstance at play and keeps protesting *à la* Housman's desperate "lad" against

Whatever brute or blackguard made the world

instead of visioning with Dilip Kumar Roy that

A sentinel Love broods o'er the universe:
It is His Will that overarches all,

then hardly a drop of the otto of the Eternal Rose is likely to come out of the crush of misfortune. On the other hand, if one is in a state of insight and communes with one's own depth, each wound opens upon a life-transfiguring mystery. Shashi has known the grace of such a state—and all of us are thankful to have witnessed it and learnt from it.

13. 5. 1985

Shashi is lucky to see the Mother and Sri Aurobindo whenever they are necessary

to resolve some doubt. I don't see them at all, though their presence is very strong and envelops me all the time and provides guidance again and again. My sense of them is what I once expressed to the Mother. I said: "People speak of having Sri Aurobindo within their hearts. I feel he is too big to be kept in my small heart. I generally feel that I am inside him, within his heart. Am I mistaken in this kind of feeling?" The Mother replied: "Both ways of feeling are right. But perhaps yours is truer to reality." I may add that when I feel myself within Sri Aurobindo, my heart coincides with his and in that way I feel him in my heart, but otherwise it is he who holds me in his mighty and merciful magnitude.

20. 4. 1985

Krishna with his flute and with his consciousness-colour—

The shining blue of the immortal light—

whom Shashi sees standing beside her represents the element of bliss woven into her very substance. You report that Krishna is not smiling or saying anything to her. But surely Ananda does not need to declare itself by a smile nor does Plenitude have to speak in order to deliver its message of the One who is the All. The sign that this message is a living reality is the flute Krishna carries in Shashi's vision. However, what is symbolised is an inner music. The call is to draw oneself into one's dreamiest depth where silence is not the absence of sound but the presence of the Ineffable.

29. 7. 1985

You say that the "demanding and difficult times" you have been passing through will be talked about when we meet. Even apart from this theme, when are you going to manifest in Pondi? Any idea of a visit for the August occasion? Of course all depends on Shashi. From the report you give, it doesn't seem likely that you can leave her even for a day. The words with which you close your report on her—"Increasing calm and smiles"—are a wonderful summary of her wonderful life, a resumé of her being's unique progression through a terrible disease—a most luminous parallelism to the advance of the dreadful ravager.

No, I have not penned any counterpart for November 17, 1973—the day of the Mother's departure—to my sonnet for December 5, 1950, when Sri Aurobindo left his body: "Heaven's Light and Mortal Doom." But the former event shouldn't be an enigma if that of December 5 is not. It should be seen, in spite of all its apparent shadow, as still having the Mother's victory in it: an enig-MA. Both the Master and the Mother left us at different times and in different circumstances and in different ways for the same golden future—a paradoxical change of plan to make paradise possible for man—perhaps even earlier than otherwise.

13. 8. 1985

The news about your mother is more exalting than sad, for her passing is linked with that beautiful wish of hers that she should go before the unbearable could happen: the going of Shashi. You had a mother with a deep heart. Lucky fellow to have both a wonderful wife and a marvellous mother! I may add, in the same spontaneously alliterative truth-echoing vein, that luck has come your way also in your having a description-defying daughter—at once equanimous and dynamic, sympathetic yet non-compromising.

Surely you can't doubt that your mother is OK. Somebody so close inwardly to Shashi is inevitably connected with our Divine Mother who must have taken charge of her—and the relationship with you whose soul is always in the Ashram must have put the famous Aurobindonian stamp on her forehead. Your own head, ever straining after god-head, is most likely to have served as a transmitter.

I am sorry this letter does not look much like a consolatory one, but whatever wit has risen in an unforced manner is really a wit-ness to an inner movement communicating to you a smiling communion with my own depths in which all that concerns my beloved friends is interwoven with my devotion to the Divine.

The fluctuant conditions of your self which you enumerate show a transition-period towards greater inwardness, a sort of dying to the old Dinkar and getting reborn by a virginal conception due to the "Bride of Fire" apostrophised by Sri Aurobindo. I am also passing through a strange series of states whose goal is caught in the cry with which this poem of Sri Aurobindo ends:

Voice of Infinity, sound in my heart!
 Call of the One!
 Stamp there thy radiance, never to part,
 O living sun!

You want to know how the laurel came to signify victory. But it is not only victory in war or in any competitive activity of the body that this leaf symbolises. As Dante puts it, it is

For Caesar or for poet triumphing...

The well-known term "poet-laureate" indicates its literary relevance. The sense of the reference you quote from Sri Aurobindo—the advice to prefer the laurel to the cross—reaches a climax in the Mother's declaration that the world can be saved not by the crucified body but by the glorified body. Byron, the romantic, however, says:

The ivy and myrtle of sweet two-and-twenty
 Are worth all your laurels be they ever so plenty.

I am glad Shashi has had some relief of late, after three days of increasing weakness and more frequent episodes of discomfort and itching and fever.

29. 8. 1985

Sorry as usual to have delayed as always. What excuse shall I find? There is a character in Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* who, on failing to keep an appointment or to attend a meeting, used to send a telegram:

“Impossible to come. Lie follows.”

In my case the trouble is to find the exact truth. There are so many to choose from. All kinds of things have kept me busy.

I am happy that in spite of tiredness you are in an inwardly-lit mood most of the time. But you have been able to nurse Shashi in this mood not merely because you are a fine spiritual fellow: it is the finer spiritual girl to be nursed who has kindled the flame so intensely. With any other invalid the flame would have been half damped, no matter how much you might have loved the person. Of course, the Supreme Mother's sustenance is there, but we can't always get it in full measure. A companion who is as much soul as body can go a long way to keep one a true child of the Divine.

Your poem has felicitously caught the presence of “the witness self” but it is not the “dumb and mute and unbiased” watcher from some distance in the mind, whom you expect the witness self to be. The one in your poem is the psychic in-dweller, at once child and seer, commoner and king, joker and hero—and, through all, the nectar-drinker, the possessor of what Chesterton calls

The joy that is known to giants,
The joy without a cause.

Your phrase,

It is you sitting on the window-sill

reminds me of a beautiful picture of the Mother doing exactly this. And indeed she reflects, among other wondrous things, the psychic in-dweller of each of us. Or rather she sits there on the window-sill and makes us aware of the deep room within us where

As in a mystic and dynamic dance
A priestess of immaculate ecstasies,
Inspired and ruled from Truth's revealing vault,
Moves in some prophet cavern of the gods....

Yes, the psychic witness self seems simultaneously to be sitting still and stepping forth in rhythm to what you term "infinite variations being composed by a divinised Bach".

Now for your final questions. You ask: "Don't you mean 'dying OF the old Dinkar' and... conception '*due* to the' or is it 'by the'? If you mean 'due', please enlarge—explain more, won't you?"

If I say "dying OF the old Dinkar", then who is going to be reborn? There must be someone persisting through the change and capable of being both the old Dinkar and the new. He has to die to the old form he has taken on and get into a new one whose birth will be caused by or be due to the "Bride of the Fire" and the process of being reborn spiritually will be "a virginal conception".

19. 9. 85

I have been waiting for Nini to drop in with news, but there has been no sign of her. Apropos of my telling you that I get angry once a year, you have written: "I seem to sink in a whirlpool, get nearly taken over by the Man of Sorrows once in a few years. The ones I remember—about 5 years ago in Rotterdam, last February in Delhi and now yesterday..." The Man of Sorrows is not Nirodbaran's monopoly. He is a welcome guest in many minds—welcome because there is a subtle perverse pleasure in harbouring and even entertaining him. This pleasure is connected with one's ego. It is one's own sorrows that obsess one, poignancies particular to oneself with grudges against persons and circumstances and even high heaven that has somehow chosen one for special sufferings, mostly undeserved in one's own opinion! The non-egoistic sorrows are those that are concerned with the sad lot of human kind, a Gautama's pain over man's inevitable sickness and debility and ageing and helpless falling under the stroke of death, the anguish of a Jesus for the agelong sinfulness of God's errant children or, on a lower scale, the deep-rooted melancholy of a Virgil haunted by "the tears of things" or even the laceration of the heart felt by a Swift due to his "savage indignation" at the follies and frailties of the race.

It should be easy for us to throw this Man of Sorrows off our backs. We have only to think that Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have been in our world, a supernal glory has come to stay forever by their lives and

We who have looked on their face can grieve no more.

How shall we think of loss when we know that what we appear to lose will be treasured in their light? I know very well the trend of your thoughts and I often see such thoughts playing about my head and seeking entrance, but I always push them off—in the direction of the Mother as part of my constantly attempted "Remember and Offer". As soon as this Motherward push takes place, the heart grows conscious of a deeper intensity of itself and sets flowing a warm spontaneous

current of surrender to a luminous unknown and the sense comes that some response is gathering strength in that divine invisibility and waiting to seize and fill me and make me an image of our gurus who have physically gone behind a veil.

*

A day has passed. Now it is the 20th. Yesterday I was coming to the subject of Shashi, but couldn't say anything and stopped. Late in the evening I received a phone call from your son-in-law. He told me that you had phoned to him about Shashi's serious condition and had asked him to let me know. He also gave me your love. We spoke of the long time she had taken to reach the moment of departure. He wondered why. I said: "It was necessary for her soul and it was also to accustom Dinkar to her going." John agreed. I sent my love to you and requested him to phone if he heard from you again.

I waited for John's call, but no further news. Then at about 10.30 p.m. I went to bed. All the time I was inwardly offering Shashi to the Mother. I remembered too how you, together with my own family and a few friends, had stood by me after my Sehra's sudden death. And I thought: "Will Dinkar be bringing Shashi's body to Pondicherry for cremation?"

The night passed quietly—but this morning at about 5.20 or so, as I realised on waking up at about 5.30, I found myself going to a Darshan of the Mother. I reached the room where she was seated. When I approached her she gave me a smile and stretched out her hands to clasp mine. We looked into each other's eyes. It was indeed a glorious moment. And along the stream of my consciousness going towards her from the heart-centre I offered Shashi to her. Then I withdrew. But there was a second seeing of the Mother soon after. Now she was sitting in Sri Aurobindo's room—and Sehra was with me. We both entered but felt a little guilty to intrude on her. She didn't seem to mind seeing us. But we came out. Then I woke up, still suffused with the splendour of the Mother's presence and still offering Shashi. Usually I glance at the headlines of the first page of the *Hindu* which is thrown into my bedroom through the window. But now I had no mind to do so. I went straight to the bathroom and then sat at my typewriter to continue my letter. I started typing at about 6.15. My being is still full of the Mother, Shashi and you. What news will I be getting from John? I will stop here until it comes. In the meantime I shall post this letter.

Diary Note

The anticipated news came on the 21st at about 10 a.m. and also the information that Dinkar was bringing Shashi's body to Pondicherry from Kumbakonam in order to have it cremated at the Ashram's burning-ground. Two Belgian nuns of the hospital where he has long been the chief orthopaedic surgeon accompanied him and even attended the cremation ceremony.

Dinkar related to me that on the 20th he had been sitting by his wife from 2 a.m. to 5 a.m. She was conscious but he had the strong feeling that her soul had already left and only the body was still alive. It was at 5.20 or so the same morning that I had had my dream-vision. Evidently what I was present at was the passing of Shashi's soul to the Mother. The beatific Darshan and what I did at it symbolised the Mother's reception of her beloved child.

AMAL KIRAN

HERITAGE

THE horizon is just as far today
 As on the dawn of creation.
 Aspiration as urgent and bubbling
 As the first erupting volcano.
 Crusted lava condemned to stonehood—
 But the gushing force remains embedded.
 My being drawn from the first stirring of life
 Vibrates longing, craving and pining
 For the unknown Super-perception
 Beyond the head and heart combined.
 Groping and floundering I am; it hurts,
 Still I continue in unremitting persistence.
 This yearning for the ever broadening reach
 Pushes and goads my sham complacent peace.
 Tottering I stand with just a foothold
 On the edge of the expansive Eden of expression
 That lights up with the first daybreak of poetry.

DEBANSHU

HOW FAR IS PONDICHERRY?

(Continued from the issue of November 24, 1985)

THE train left Vijayawada and was crossing the Krishna when we woke up, and had coffee. The Professor was reading a book. After a while, seeing his students eager to listen to him, he closed the book immediately, for the discussion had to be completed before we reached Madras. We were all ready to receive the final answer to the question—'How far is Pondicherry?' Though the question had been put to me by the Professor, the course of the discussion had moved in such a way and reached such a stage that we really forgot who had put the question and who was answering. As for myself, I had had double gain: because, firstly, I was relieved of the responsibility of giving an answer to so serious a question and, secondly, I got the chance of learning so many things from the Professor which I could hardly store in my brain.

The Professor cast a deep look at his students and was pleased to see that all were sincerely waiting to hear him. Then with a smile he said to me, 'A few words more seem to be necessary to complete our discussion, and then I suppose we'll have the right answer to the question.'

He looked at the lady and said, 'In this context the main point which we are to take into account is that Moscow-Peking is nothing more than the idea of a few intellectual thinkers of the last century. They formulated the idea by their analytical survey of the gradual development of human society as reflected on the surface by the outer activities of man, with the belief that one day people would be able to effectuate the idea and build up a new healthy and happy society by wiping out all social maladies. Whereas Pondicherry declares—

"I know the goal, I know the secret route:
I have studied the map of the invisible worlds"—

and on the basis of this declaration there is Yogic wisdom and not rational intellect.

'There are so many potent secrets of life and deep truths of existence which the human intellect cannot fathom. With the help of his mind man can get hold of the truth of the surface which is only 1/10th of the whole truth of our existence. Moscow-Peking has placed before humanity this 1/10th part, considering it to be the whole. And here it has made a great blunder, of course unknowingly. Many intellectuals have been attracted because the doctrine has in it very apparently a logical and alluring appeal to which they readily respond and the mass-mind follows them.

'Dr. Anjali Sen, you indicated that man's primary needs are food, shelter and safety; Moscow-Peking has assured that those needs can be fulfilled if man follows the doctrine faithfully. But it does not bother about what may be his subsequent

needs. So a day will surely come when man cannot remain content with these minimum trivial things which satisfy his basic needs only. It is true that man in the primitive age started life to fulfil through struggle certain physical demands like an animal but it is also true that he cannot remain chained to that animal nature for ever. With the gradual development of his mental faculties or, in other words, as his own nature begins to develop within, he feels that he needs many other things for his survival. Accordingly in the future he may also feel that he needs something else, something more, because he is a growing consciousness—progressing from animality to divinity through humanity. A few thinkers are becoming more and more aware of this trend of the human mind with deep concern.

‘When Santiniketan indicates that man aspires to attain the glory of God by demolishing the barriers of his own mortal limitations, Pondicherry asserts with more precision that to attain divinity is the ultimate aim of human life; and that man has been marching towards that splendid destiny through birth after birth.

‘But Moscow-Peking supposes that man will remain man for ever. He cannot think of the beyond. So its business is to see him satisfied in his littleness. But in reality man is not meant for a changeless littleness. He has indeed his physical, vital and mental demands not only for his survival but also for his integral development so that he may be able to manifest the in-dwelling spirit and that is his ultimate demand.

‘If this be man’s destiny, then how long can he remain content with living like a tiny part—a nut or a screw—of the huge State-machine? So, eventually, what may happen to the idea of State-socialism has also been indicated by Pondicherry.’

Then the Professor looked at me and began to trace some quotations in his note-book but not silently. ‘Man is a mental being,’ he continued. ‘If the key of his mind’s apartment is always kept in the custody of the State, how will he utilize his free time? It may be that the majority cannot realise the enormity of this measure but a few who are mentally sound can. So the majority may remain satisfied at least temporarily with what they get by mortgaging the freedom of their mind. But a day will come when they will also realise that they need something more than the mere necessities of life—and then their discontentment will surely persuade them to revolt.... Yes, here is the passage. It is also an important excerpt from Chapter XX of *The Human Cycle*. Let me read it out:

Man needs freedom of thought and life and action in order that he may grow, otherwise he will remain fixed where he was, a stunted and static being. If his individual mind and reason are ill-developed, he may consent to grow, as does the infrarational mind, in the group-soul, in the herd, in the mass.... As he develops individual reason and will, he needs, and society must give him room for, an increasing play of individual freedom and variation, at least so far as that does not develop itself to the avoidable harm of others and of society as a whole... but if the free play of the intelligent will in life is inhibited by the excessive regulation of the life, then an intolerable contradiction and falsity will be created.

Men may bear it for a time in consideration of the great and visible new benefits of order, economic development, means of efficiency and the scientific satisfaction of the reason which the collective arrangement of society will bring; but when its benefits become a matter of course and its defects become more and more realised and prominent, dissatisfaction and revolt are sure to set in in the clearest and most vigorous minds of the society.... This intellectual and vital dissatisfaction may very well take under such circumstances the form of anarchistic thought.... The State can only combat it by an education adapted to its fixed forms of life, an education that will seek to drill the citizen in a fixed set of ideas, aptitudes, propensities... and by the suppression of freedom of speech and thinking so as to train and compel all to be of one mind, one sentiment, one opinion, one feeling; but this remedy will be in a rational society self-contradictory, ineffective, or if effective, then worse than the evil it seeks to combat....

This is the central defect through which a socialistic State is bound to be convicted of insufficiency and condemned to pass away before the growth of a new ideal.

'I underlined the concluding portion because I intended that whenever I would use this quotation I should remember that the treatise was written in the 'Arya'—from August 15, 1916 to July 15, 1918,—that is to say, before and during the period of the October revolution of 1917 led by V. I. Lenin.

'It is not that Moscow-Peking is unaware of this difficult situation. It has already prescribed the proper medicine—proper according to its belief—to prevent people from the disease of anarchism. And you all know what the medicine is, and how it is being applied—the episodes of cultural-revolution and brain-washing and detention in concentration camps, etc. are not unknown to you though they are being conducted very secretly—behind the iron curtain. But anyway they could not be kept secret; they were divulged. But I think it is better not to indulge in discussing those episodes in detail.'

The Professor stopped. The environment once again became very uneasy. Nobody had anything to say. All kept quiet. Guessing the sentiment of the listeners the Professor started again maintaining the sequence of thought:

'I hope you all admit that the present civilisation in which we live is out and out commercial or industrial and that our cultural life has become "ism-based". Our living has become so complex that we, in utter bewilderment, see that we have imprisoned ourselves in the labyrinth of an "ism-based" culture and an economics-based civilisation so deeply that we can neither get rid of it nor find a way out. Yet there is a way and only one way out. To those who are fortunate enough to discover the exit at the very beginning of their lives, Pondicherry is not a very far-off consumption. But to those who, because of their own shortcomings, cannot take a firm decision but oscillate between this and that and remain busy calculating their

petty gains or losses and therefore get more and more entangled in the labyrinth, Pondicherry may be a distant star, if not an illusion. Of course, one day they will also be able to find that lone way to get rid of the cycle of birth, growth, decay and death. Before that they must have the experience of living by the senses; they must enjoy the happiness that can be derived from earthly resources. And that is why full exploration of the material world is necessary or else they cannot realise whether this will do or whether they need something greater, vaster and more permanent and not small, petty and ephemeral, of which the Gita says “यत्कदा चापर लाभ मन्यतेनाधिक तत्” (“which when achieved other things seem to be not more than that”: until then they will have to wheel round and round in the whirlpool of the labyrinth.

‘This is how Nature has been nurturing man, the mental being with acute physical and vital desires.

‘We all are living in this little world around our little selves and paltry things. And therefore we have become so sceptical as to raise questions—whether man can ever reach Pondicherry. Sri Aurobindo knew where we stood and so he had to indicate with a strong assertion, “... if this is not the solution then there is no solution, if this is not the way, then there is no way for humankind.” This he added just after the sentence—“This is not certain”—which we discussed earlier.’

From among the listeners I said, ‘I should like to know how long we shall have to wait.’

Dr. Banerjee at once replied, ‘Sri Aurobindo has already given the answer in *The Hour of God*, where he indicated very clearly, “If the earth calls and the Supreme answers, the hour can be even now for that immense and glorious transformation.” Mark the words “*can be*”; he didn’t say “*may be*”.’

Dr. (Mrs) Anjali Sen said, ‘Admitted. But the conditional clause “IF” is there. So we are not fully assured of the result. We are not sure whether the earth will ever “call” and whether the Supreme will at all answer. As for myself, I don’t believe that such an event will ever take place.’

The Professor, looking at the distant horizon through the window, began to recite in a low melodious voice:

‘ “A few shall see what none yet understands:
God shall grow up while the wise men talk and sleep;
For man shall not know the coming till its hour
And belief shall be not till the work is done.” ’

Then he cast his look at me and smiled and said,

‘I have already stated that Nature who will cause this unusual event to take place needs our conscious collaboration. If we do not voluntarily come forward to co-operate with Her, but remain sunk over head and ears in our petty affairs, then She will be obliged to create crushing circumstances. The crises which mankind is

at present undergoing may be Her creation. Perhaps worse than the worst situation is ahead, when humanity will have no other alternative than to send an S.O.S. message, not to any human global organisation, for it will then have no faith in it, but to any unknown super-cosmic Power whose existence humanity will then begin to believe in and also to realise the necessity of Its intervention.

‘In that worse than the worst situation we all shall forget who is the bourgeoisie and who is the proletariat, who is the white and who is the black or the brown, who is the ruler and who is the ruled. The terror of stock-piling of deadly nuclear weapons has been pushing mankind to that dark abyss and it seems that “DOOMS-DAY” is not very far. Today or tomorrow we all—irrespective of class, creed or colour—shall pray for our survival and our collective prayer will take the form of earth’s call to the Supreme. And in response to that call of the distressed earth the Divine’s Grace will start descending and as a result a New World will be born out of the old as an abode of the New Race—new in every respect, in thinking, feeling and judging in behaving and day-to-day living.’

Suddenly the Professor became somewhat indifferent, looked outside, remained silent for sometime. After a while he continued, ‘I hope that all of you have understood me. Madras is still far. So I shall like to say a few more words. If you don’t mind I may start.’

The gentleman on the opposite side said, ‘Please go on. We are fortunate that we have had your company. We learnt so many things for which we are indeed grateful to you.’

The Professor looked at him and smiled. Then pointing at me he stated, ‘He is the person whom I asked the question. It is not that I did not know the answer; but I wished to know whether my observations were right or wrong. Now I’m satisfied. I had the support or approval of this gentleman for what I declared and explained. It is true that a few points needed elucidation but I couldn’t give it because at times I felt very tired, I had to speak very loudly to cover the terrific metallic sound of the rail-wheels. Still I believe that all the points were made clear to you. Now comes the conclusion: Pondicherry is there not for any party whether political or religious, not even for any particular nation but for the entire human race. It does not preach any religion nor does it initiate individuals and shelter them in its fold. Pondicherry is a living truth—whether we realise it or not. But to those who cannot understand it fully and choose other means for the fulfilment of certain immediate demands, physical, vital and mental, Pondicherry is indeed very very far, maybe even beyond their reach. The train is running very fast. We may arrive at Madras before time. But still I have a few important points to indicate.’ Saying this, the Professor brought down the waterpot and quenched his thirst. And after a few minutes he started again: ‘In course of my discussion I stated that “Integrality” is the fundamental basis of Pondicherry and the cardinal principle of its teachings. If anyone among you feels interested and intends to comprehend Sri Aurobindo, I suggest that their study should also be integral. To be more explicit I may say that

one should not select *The Life Divine* for one's study and discard *The Human Cycle*; or select *The Ideal of Human Unity* and reject *The Synthesis of Yoga*. I do not know whether you are aware of this fact that from the first issue of the *Arya* (August 15, 1914) Sri Aurobindo's essays of *The Life Divine*, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, and *The Secret of the Veda* were being simultaneously published. Thereafter from September 15, 1915 and August 15, 1916, his treatises, *The Ideal of Human Unity* and *The Psychology of Social Development* (later titled *The Human Cycle*) began to appear in the *Arya* respectively. Once he confided to one of his disciples that "out of an absolute silence of mind" he had written the six volumes of the *Arya*. Hence it may not be an error if we suppose that he did not select the treatises at random by his rational intellect and sent them to the press for publication. Here also his mind remained silent. We may also suppose that there might be some definite purpose in presenting the articles in such an arrangement.

'In *The Life Divine* he explained why a 'Divine Life' on earth was inevitable and constituted the ultimate aim of our mundane existence as also how it would be made possible. Whereas in the *Ideal of Human Unity* he analysed how the world would gradually become ready to realise the truth of "Oneness" and how the world-body would be prepared to manifest the "world-soul" or the "all-soul". And in *The Human Cycle* he elucidated the evolutionary process of social development and how human society would ultimately be spiritualised. Now we have to examine why all these explanations and elucidations were necessary!'

Now Dr. Banerjee opened a particular page in his notebook and then continued,

'Here in the 52nd para of the last chapter of *The Life Divine* Sri Aurobindo stated:

"It is evident that in a life governed by a gnostic consciousness war with its spirit of antagonism and enmity, its brutality, destruction and ignorant violence, political strife with its perpetual conflict, frequent oppression, dishonesties, turpitudes, selfish interests, its ignorance, inaptitude and muddle could have no ground for existence."

'So, for the manifestation of the divine life here on earth, it is necessary to bring about a total change in our mundane existence. How this difficult task was being carried out by Nature was explained and analysed in the above two books. But Nature cannot proceed further without the conscious collaboration of individuals. Hence individuals are also to prepare themselves and that is possible only by "Yoga". So we have to understand what Integral or Purna Yoga is and why it is necessary. And that is why I'm obliged to suggest that our study must also be integral, because his major works are very closely and deeply interrelated.'

'But the common people do not feel any interest in Yoga. In fact they have some sort of apathy to it,' said the gentleman on the opposite side.

Dr. Banerjee laughed and retorted, 'I know that; but can't help. There is no other alternative. Today we are guided by our mind, that is to say, our rational intellect. But our mind has its limited capability; it cannot lead us beyond a limit;

yet what we aspire for—bliss, knowledge and light—all are there on the other side of our mental arena. So to achieve them it is necessary that we must rise above or move beyond rational intellect; but that we cannot do by our own effort. We need aid from above. Human effort aided by divine grace can alone do that miracle. And here Yoga is a necessity. In the words of Sri Aurobindo, as we have them in the *The Hour of God*, “Without Yoga man cannot take the next step in human evolution. So, Yoga must be revealed to mankind.” Those who like to avoid Yoga will not be able to make further progress in the evolution. They will be thrown away by Nature as unnecessary garbage. And in the course of time they will be gradually extinguished like the huge reptiles of the early ages. Their fossils may be the subject of study by the NEW RACE of the NEW WORLD.’

The Professor stopped and after a while the 141 UP slowly entered the Madras Central Railway Station. Slowly we were trying to grasp the last words of the Professor.

Enchanted I got down and soon all were there on the platform. A few well-to-do Tamil gentlemen came to receive Dr. Banerjee. And after shaking hands with them, he introduced me to them saying, ‘He is a devotee of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo and going to Pondicherry’. And then, addressing me, he said, ‘They have all come from the University.’

I asked, ‘Where will you go now?’

‘To the University’, Dr. Banerjee replied. ‘I will stay there for a week or so, to complete the work for which I have come and after that I’ll go back.’

I asked, ‘Are you not coming to Pondicherry?’

The Professor calmly said, ‘No, not now. I haven’t yet received the call. I’m waiting for it. When I receive it I shall at once be there.’

Then he expressed his good wishes for my journey and slowly left with his learned friends.

I, like a statue, remained there looking at him until he was lost in the crowd and then I witnessed that my other companions had also left. Alone I stood there, I do not know how long. But was I really alone?

(Concluded)

SAMAR BASU

THE SECRET I LEARNED FROM EINSTEIN

WHEN I was a very young man, just beginning to make my way, I was invited to dine at the home of a distinguished New York philanthropist. After dinner our hostess led us to an enormous drawing room. Other guests were pouring in, and my eyes beheld two unnerving sights: Servants were arranging small gilt chairs in long, neat rows, and up front, leaning against the wall, were musical instruments. Apparently, I was in for an evening of chamber music.

I use the phrase "in for" because music meant nothing to me. I am almost tone-deaf. Only with great effort can I carry the simplest tune, and serious music was to me no more than an arrangement of noises. So I did what I always did when trapped: I sat down and when the music started, I fixed my face in what I hoped was an expression of intelligent appreciation, closed my ears from the inside and submerged myself in my own completely irrelevant thoughts.

After a while, becoming aware that the people around me were applauding, I concluded it was safe to unplug my ears. At once I heard a gentle but surprisingly penetrating voice on my right. "You are fond of Bach?" the voice said.

I knew as much about Bach as I know about nuclear fission. But I did know one of the most famous faces in the world, with the renowned shock of untidy hair and the ever-present pipe between the teeth. I was sitting next to Albert Einstein.

"Well," I said uncomfortably, and hesitated. I had been asked a casual question. All I had to do was to be equally casual in my reply. But I could see from the look in my neighbour's extraordinary eyes that their owner was not merely going through the perfunctory duties of elementary politeness. Regardless of what value I placed on my part in the verbal exchange, to this man his part in it mattered very much. Above all, I could feel that this was a man to whom you did not tell a lie, however small.

"I don't know anything about Bach," I said awkwardly. "I have never heard any of his music."

A look of perplexed astonishment washed across Einstein's mobile face. "You have never heard Bach?" He made it sound as though I had said I'd never taken a bath.

"It isn't that I don't want to like Bach," I replied hastily. "It's just that I'm tone-deaf, or almost tone-deaf, and I've never really heard anybody's music." A look of concern came into the old man's face. "Please," he said abruptly. "You will come with me?"

He stood up and took my arm. I stood up. As he led me across that crowded room I kept my embarrassed glance fixed on the carpet. A rising murmur of puzzled speculation followed us out into the hall. Einstein paid no attention to it. Resolutely he led me upstairs. He obviously knew the house well. On the floor above he opened the door into a booklined study, drew me in and shut the door.

"Now," he said with a small, troubled smile, "you will tell me, please, how

long you have felt this way about music?"

"All my life," I said, feeling awful. "I wish you would go back downstairs and listen, Dr. Einstein. The fact that I don't enjoy it doesn't matter." He shook his head and scowled, as though I had introduced an irrelevance. "Tell me, please," he said, "Is there any kind of music that you do like?"

"Well," I answered, "I like songs that have words, and the kind of music where I can follow the tune."

He smiled and nodded, obviously pleased. "You can give me an example, perhaps?"

"Well," I ventured, "almost anything by Bing Crosby." He nodded again, briskly, "Good!" He went to a corner of the room, opened a phonograph and started pulling out records. I watched him uneasily. "Ah!" he said at last.

He put a record on and in a moment the study was filled with the relaxed, lilting strains of Bing Crosby's "When the Blue of the Night Meets the Gold of the Day." Einstein beamed at me and kept time with the stem of his pipe. After three or four phrases he stopped the phonograph. "Now tell me, please, what you have just heard."

The simplest answer seemed to be to sing the lines. I did just that, trying desperately to stay on tune and keep my voice from cracking. The expression on Einstein's face was like the sunrise. "You see!" he cried with delight when I finished. "You do have an ear!"

I mumbled something about this being one of my favourite songs, something I had heard hundreds of times, so that it didn't really prove anything. "Nonsense!" said Einstein. "It proves everything! Do you remember your first arithmetic lesson in school? Suppose, at your very first contact with numbers, your teacher had ordered you to work out a problem in long division or fractions. Could you have done so?" "No, of course not."

"Precisely!" Einstein made a triumphant wave with his pipestem. "It would have been impossible and you would have reacted in panic. You would have closed your mind to long division and fractions. As a result, because of that one small mistake by your teacher, it is possible your whole life you would be denied the beauty of long division and fractions." The pipestem went up and out in another wave. "But on your first day no teacher would be so foolish. He would start you with elementary things—then, when you had acquired skill with the simplest problems, he would lead you up to long division and to fractions.

"So it is with music." Einstein picked up the Bing Crosby record. "This simple, charming little song is like simple addition or subtraction. You have mastered it. Now we go on to something more complicated." He found another record and set it going. The golden voice of John McCormack singing "The Trumpeter" filled the room. After a few lines Einstein stopped the record.

"So!" he said. "You will sing that back to me, please?" I did—with a good deal of self-consciousness but with, for me, a surprising degree of accuracy. Einstein

stared at me with a look on his face that I had seen only once before in my life: on the face of my father as he listened to me deliver the valedictory address at my high school graduation.

"Excellent!" Einstein remarked when I finished. "Wonderful! Now this!" This proved to be Caruso in what was to me a completely unrecognizable fragment from *Cavalleria Rusticana*. Nevertheless, I managed to reproduce an approximation of the sounds the famous tenor had made. Einstein beamed his approval. Caruso was followed by at least a dozen others. I could not shake off my feeling of awe over the way this great man, into whose company I had been thrown by chance, was completely preoccupied by what we were doing, as though I were his sole concern.

We came at last to recordings of music without words, which I was instructed to reproduce by humming. When I reached for a high note, Einstein's mouth opened and his head went back as if to help me attain what seemed unattainable. Evidently I came close enough, for he suddenly turned off the phonograph. "Now, young man," he said, putting his arm through mine. "We are ready for Bach!"

As we returned to our seats in the drawing room, the players were tuning up for a new selection. Einstein smiled and gave me a reassuring pat on the knee. "Just allow yourself to listen," he whispered. "That is all."

It wasn't really all, of course. Without the effort he had just poured out for a total stranger I would never have heard, as I did that night for the first time in my life, Bach's "Sheep may Safely Graze". I have heard it many times since. I don't think I shall ever tire of it. Because I never listen to it alone. I am sitting beside a small, round man with a shock of untidy white hair, a dead pipe clamped between his teeth, and eyes that contain in their extraordinary warmth all the wonder of the world.

When the concert was finished I added my genuine applause to that of the others. Suddenly our hostess confronted us. "I'm so sorry, Dr. Einstein," she said with an icy glare at me, "that you missed so much of the performance."

Einstein and I came hastily to our feet. "I am sorry, too," he said. "My young friend here and I, however, were engaged in the greatest activity of which man is capable."

She looked puzzled. "Really? And what is that?"

Einstein smiled and put his arm across my shoulders. And he uttered ten words that—for at least one person who is in his endless debt—are his epitaph: "Opening up yet another fragment of the frontier of beauty."

JEROME WEIDMAN

(With acknowledgment to the author and publisher of *How to Live with Life*)

“MOTHERS” IN SRI AUROBINDO’S PLAYS AND *SAVITRI*

‘MOTHERHOOD’ is associated with the gentle feelings of love and sacrifice in which always the happiness of the child has priority over personal safety and pleasure. This instinct to love and sacrifice is not unique to any one race but is universal. It is a natural attribute of any ‘mother’ and its absence is rare. But what makes the Oriental tradition exceptional is that, whereas the woman as a ‘wife’ dominates the scene in the West, it is the ‘mother’ who gets the seat of honour in the East. The Indian concept sees in ‘motherhood’ the fulfilment of womanliness and reveres a mother as a symbol of the creative energy, sacrifice and love which go into the manifestation of this universe.

Sri Aurobindo’s works express his reverence for the ‘Mother’-principle and his conviction that the Divine Creatrix or the Divine Mother shapes and guides the whole cosmos through all its stages from its conception, as does a mother a child. In his characters such as Andromeda and Savitri, one sees the promise of Sri Aurobindo’s concept of perfect motherhood. But, just as matter needs vigorous changes before it attains the state of pure spirit, humans need drastic inner changes before the ‘ideal human’ who is no longer human comes to be. A great metamorphosis alone can turn the concept into a reality. Sri Aurobindo’s works, while aiming at the ideal, record the various stages in human motherhood and reveal the gap to be bridged before the Life Divine fructifies.

Conceptually the ideal mother is worth more than a thousand common gurus, and under any circumstances a ‘mother’ can never be wicked or seek a selfish goal: she represents pure love that knows neither barter nor diminishment. But in real life all the women who beget children do not rise up to this mark of ideal motherhood. (Motherhood is the greatest creative art and, just as all persons cannot be perfect artists, all women cannot be good mothers.) Nature has bestowed on a mother the noblest work—to shape and train her children from their first breath. But the human offspring being a live mould is vulnerable to influences from other sources as well as his own inner reactions to the mother’s upbringing so that mostly the creation (child) varies from the creator’s desire and acquires qualities, either noble or ignoble, inconceivable to its parent. This paper seeks to examine the various ‘human mothers’ in Sri Aurobindo’s plays and in *Savitri* and see if they are guides or gurus to the ideal human characters the writer lays out for future humanity.

In Sri Aurobindo’s plays, except in *Rodogune*, fate and love work hand in hand to help the protagonists achieve a peaceful and harmonious completion to their affairs. In all the plays the heroines are beautiful, virtuous and loving but the mothers of the main characters do not show the same stamp. They show divergence and variety, projecting the different aspects of common motherhood which are neither rare nor idealised, as the nature of the heroines generally tends to be.

The ‘mothers’ in Sri Aurobindo’s plays are not stereotypes and cover a wide range in woman’s psyche as a mother, from the dominant, emotional types through the passive, intellectual, submissive, the active, over-indulgent blindly-loving to the contained, self-restrained and impartially loving types. The portrayal of their influence and relationships with their children on one side and their husbands on the other gives a greater touch of reality to the plays.

The characters of Casseopea from *Perseus the Delverer*, Ameena and Khatoon from *The Viziers of Bassora*, may be brought under one label as they show the different degrees to which a mother is indulgent and loving towards her children. In *Perseus the Delverer* the figure of Casseopea dominates that of her husband-king Cepheus. But the couple’s love for their children is the unifying factor and as the play records the troubles and trials of their children against Poseidon, the Queen and King have the common goal of saving them from death at all costs. They have no differences of opinion as the parents of Vasavadutta, Nuruddin and Fareed have, to different degrees, in this matter of child-upbringing.

When her son’s life is in danger, Casseopea’s intelligence is not blunted or numbed with fear. The crisis only sharpens her intellect and it is she who suggests that Polydaon should get all the treasury and, if necessary, that Phineus should defend her son Iolaus. She requests the King,

Give him honours, state, precedence
All he can ask. O Husband, let me keep
My child’s head on my bosom safe.¹

She flies into a rage and threatens dire consequences if the line of Syria were to be ended. She tries to bargain with the Gods, if they could be appeased with the death of somebody else in her son’s place. Regarding the protection of her children she is as fierce as a lioness and never pauses to ponder, before defending them, whether they could have committed outrageous offences against the state’s welfare. She is typically maternal and willing to die to ensure her children’s safety. But Casseopea is neither a guide nor an adviser to her children on their path of evolution and progress. Her children are much above the levels to which her love and intelligence can grow. For her, they are always innocent and timid juveniles needing her care and protection. She lacks the universal love which her daughter Andromeda is capable of. Yet she is pardonable, for she means to save her children and not serve her personal ends. She is not a possessive and obsessed figure who wishes her children’s love to be centred on herself alone, but has a healthy attitude to see them love and be loved. She is tender towards all who care for her children and considers Perseus doubly blessed and fully fortunate in having a mother to care for him. She is a woman blessed with children who are extremely lovable and heroic and a husband who respects her suggestions. Her philosophy of life is immature as is that of a common human who guesses blindly and knows little of the higher truth but acts

guided by the inherent love towards her family.

Ameena from *The Viziers of Bassora* is another woman who loves her child over-indulgently, much to the inconvenience of her husband's name and principles. Here also, as in *Perseus the Deliverer*, if the child grows to be a gentle soul, it is neither by his individual effort nor by the positive hand of fate nor yet because of her motherly guidance. As she is of a loving nature and affectionate not only to her son but to Duniya and all the others, she is a suitable partner to the noble vizier with his gentle nature. As Nuruddin says of his home:

It is the happiest home in Bassora
Where the two kindest parents in the world
Excuse their vagabond son.²

The couple's common concern for their son's welfare is undoubted and Ameena's nobility is seen in her acceptance of the tricks of fate in true earnestness. But as a mother she is too soft and pampering to guide or advise him rightly. As Ibn Sawy says, "she is the gentle mother like the sweet kindly earth whose patient love embraces even one's faults and sins."³ She stays away from her son for a whole year as a punishment for her too indulgent love, only to rescue and assist his better nature if he happens to be abandoned and spewed out by all.

The delineation of Khatoon serves as a contrast. As the play provides a study of opposites in the figures of the two Viziers, their sons, the kings, etc., the mothers too show variance not by their inherent dispositions but by the unlucky hand of fate which placed Khatoon in a family much below her moral and mental stature. With a vile husband who does not heed her advice and who spoils her child by turning him against her, she suffers greatly and warns more than once that it would only ruin the child:

You prompt him
To hate his mother; but do not lightly think
The devil you strive to raise up from that hell
Which lurks within us all, sealed commonly
By human shame and Allah's supreme grace,—
But you! you scrape away the seal, would take
The full flame of the inferno, not the gusts
Of smoke jet out in ordinary men;—
Think not this imp will limit with his mother
Unnatural revolt! You will repent this.⁴

Khatoon is never blinded to the faults of her son by her love and opposes his perversities even at the cost of great torture to herself. Hers is a character to be pitied, for her love and sound advice go waste as sweet music over deaf ears. She tells Nuruddin in the end:

You are my sister’s child, yet more my own.
I have no other.⁵

Even when her son Fareed is killed she knows that it is her husband who is the real culprit, for the child would never have brought upon himself such disgraceful situations leading to his death if he had been advised rightly.

When we come to the play *Rodogune*, the character Cleopatra (who, by the way, is not the famous queen of that name) makes one doubt the statement that though there could be evil and wicked children there could never be evil or wicked mothers. One sees here a mother who becomes the direct cause of the tragic denouement by her self-centred emotions and prejudiced decisions.

Cleopatra is a woman deprived of her rightful joys as a mother. Politics and war force her to leave her twin sons, Antiochus and Timocles, at her brother’s place in Egypt, when they are infants. She clings to the past where her memory records her children as two lisping, pretty babes with sunlit curled hair. A major part of her life passes by without her realizing that time brings change and that her infants are now full-grown independents. Her conversation with Eunice is more like a monologue, an expression of her mind’s picture:

Sometimes I think they are not changed at all...
And I shall see my small Antiochus
With those sweet sunlight curls, his father’s curls...
Will it not be strange, so sweet and strange?⁶

In the opening act, Cleopatra is shown as a mother restless and eager for her son’s arrival. Yet her excessive joy at the death of her husband Antiochus cannot be received with tenderness. It only shows that she lacks the minimum human sympathy which any dying man needs from a fellow human, even if he were a villain all through his life. It speaks for the disharmony and the ominous tone in the tragic events towards the end. She nonchalantly answers the warning of Eunice:

Will the furies stir
Because I hated grim Antiochus?
When I have slain my kin then let them wake
...You have not been a mother.⁷

Cleopatra is an extremely emotional figure who goes into flights of wishful thinking without any sound reasoning to back them. She looks forward to a new life, a new beginning where wars and deaths have no place:

O, let our peoples sit at ease
In Grecian Antioch and Persepolis,

Mothers and children clasping those golden heads
 Deep deep within our bosoms, never allow
 Their going forth again to bonds and death.⁸

In spite of all this chatter of motherly love, Cleopatra's behaviour is always guided by her desire for power. Her idea of 'newly dawning peace' has no scope for the captive Princess Rodogune's return to her parents. Her shock at the dignified and reserved attitude of Antiochus is not out of tune with her high-strung nature:

Your words, your lips, your heart,
 Your radiant body noble as a God's
 I, I made in my womb, to give them light
 Bore agony. I have a claim upon them all.
 You do not love me?⁹

The situation, as Professor K.R.S. Iyengar points out, is similar to that of King Lear and Cordelia though the psychological reasons which brought about these circumstances in the two cases are different.

Here is a mother conscious of her rights but not of her duties towards her children. She does grave injustice to motherly nature when she decides to mould the future to suit her ideas. The fear of being neglected and deprived of her authority forces her to work against Gods and Fate in a vain attempt to snatch power, peace, love and happiness all for herself. Her philosophy of life is selfish and mean:

Man lives because he is not just, and real right
 Dwells not with law and custom but for him
 It grows by whose arriving our brief happiness
 Is best assured and grief prohibited
 For a while to mortals.¹⁰

Though high-born and royal, her values are base and stand no comparison either with the ideas of Khatoon who is always right in spite of severe insults or with those of Ungarica in *Vasavadutta* and of Casseopea in *Perseus the Deliverer* who are notable for their intelligence and love. Her love for the real worth of Antiochus is also belated and its expression only helps to fan the jealousy of Timocles. While a mother is regarded as the personification of impartial saving grace and love which asks for nothing, cares not for the evil in her child but loves the child all the more, Cleopatra manipulates affairs to suit her ends by throttling 'the mother' in her by her power-hunger. She is a tragic character whose actions ensuing from wounded motherhood, ironically beget the opposite results of what she expects.

Ungarica from *Vasavadutta* is neither passionately loving as Casseopea and

Ameena nor self-willed and irrational as Cleopatra. She is of the intellectual type—wise, cool and collected, knowing where truth and justice lie and judging impartially, soundly. She is capable of guiding her children and being their guru. She appreciates their ventures when backed by good will and sincerity and draws reverence as well as love from her children. Ungarica’s faith in nature and fate is perfect as her knowledge is not human but divine. So she does not express her maternal love in excessive verbiage. She does not advise Vasavadutta to oppose her father’s project, but is sure that finally only love would rule:

Do now thy father’s will, the God awake
Shall do his own.... Thy mother watches over thee, child...¹¹

She does not see parenthood as a rewarding business where the child remains obliged to its parents for its upbringing and sacrifices its personal pleasures or ideas at the parents’ altar. She openly condemns it:

My child, the flower blooms for its flowerhood only
And not to make its parents’ bed more high.
Not for thy sire thy mother brought thee forth
But thy dear Nature’s growth and heart’s delight...¹²

Her philosophy is not intellectual gimmicks but based on her life’s experience, for she loves and serves her lord and children as earnestly as anyone can imagine and her realisation of love as the ruling force in a woman’s life is based on her personal experience. Though she does not voice her disapproval of Gopalaca’s subversive tactics to capture Vuthsa, her pleasure at finding true chivalry in Vikarna, though his actions would oppose her husband’s plans, reveals that she is a mother who values the moral state more than material gain or personal safety:

...the proud chivalries of the old
Are not yet dead in all men’s hearts. O God
Shiva, thou mak’st me fortunate in my sons.¹³

She is not upset when her son Vikarna is banned. She guides her children by her indirect support on the right path though it would cause storms in her family—a defeat to her own husband. She impartially judges Vuthsa as the future hope which cannot be obstructed and extends her blessings to all her children’s endeavours on the path of love and justice.

In *Eric* there is no specific mother-character but Hertha, the sister-in-law of Aslaug, serves as a mother-figure for all purposes of guidance, advice, love and care. To the passionate heroine Aslaug, Hertha is the dampener. She gives her

counsel and, being older than Aslaug, she sees that peace would be better than war. She enjoys the confidence of Aslaug who values her decisions highly. Aslaug's faith in her planning is evident when she says:

Arrange it as you will; you have a swift
Contriving careful brain I cannot match.¹⁴

One finds very little motherly or selfless affection in the reasons which Hertha finds for letting out their secrets to Eric. One finds in her more of a sincere loving wife eager to have peace for herself and the rest than a selfless motherly nature. Though her part in the final outcome is negligible, as love and Eric can very well overpower Aslaug and divert the tragedy, her initiative for peace shows that she is prudent and thoughtful. The play has little scope for Hertha to be analysed as a mother-figure except that she is elderly, wise and collected where Aslaug is rash and emotional. The analysis of the mother-characters in these plays shows the different varieties of motherhood commonly found in day-to-day life.

In Indian thought the mother-and-child relationship is divided into three prominent categories: (1) Markata-Kishora Nyaya (2) Marjala-Kishora Nyaya and (3) Bhramara-Keetaka Nyaya. In the first category the mother does not shoulder any responsibility for the child's safety. It is the child who clings and draws support from the mother. In the second variety, the mother takes full responsibility for the child's welfare up to a point in the growth of the child. In the third category, the mother incessantly strives to mould the child into a perfect model. In reality one rarely finds any mother strictly confining her upbringing to any one of the above systems. But as a whole in the plays of Sri Aurobindo we find the Marjala Kishora Nyaya operating in the attitude of Casseopea and Ameena. Ungarica only advises when asked and does not strive to mould her children. So she cannot be marked under any of the above groups. There is hardly a child in Sri Aurobindo's plays who surrenders itself completely to its mother and is shaped or guided by her counsel. This is true even in his epic *Savitri*.

The human mother of Savitri is introduced by Sri Aurobindo as:

...A creature beautiful, passionate, wise
Aspiring like a sacrificial flame,
Queen-browed, the human mother of Savitri...¹⁵

While her father Aswapathy is a man of great Yogic powers and is conscious of the Divine Mother's descent as his child, her other parent is full of motherly affection and blessings for her daughter's happiness and is unconscious of Savitri's mission as an Avatar and when she fears that ill-luck may come her way, she is as worried as mother Yasoda was for her child Krishna over his adventures.

She requests sage Narad when Savitri chooses her groom:

Let thy blessing put the immortal’s seal
On these bright lives’ unstained felicity,
Pushing the ominous shadow from their days.¹⁶

Her love and word are guided only by her motherly heart and not the higher philosophy or firm convictions of the father or the child. So, naturally a foreknowledge of Savitri’s future drives her to tears. As Sri Aurobindo writes:

Though calm and wise and Aswapathy’s Queen
Human was she still and opened her doors to grief...¹⁷

It is in her tears, her anguish, her aspirations and dreams that she comes closer to the common human reader, more than Aswapathy or Savitri—more than the wizened ascetic and the sacrificing yogi who are too high above the common human’s capacity to feel at home.

As Andromeda cries in *Perseus the Deliverer*, the Queen tells Narad:

We are not as the Gods who know not grief
And look impassive on the suffering world...
Even a stranger’s anguish rends my heart
And this, O Narad, is my well-loved child.¹⁸

She has the warm, sympathetic heart needed in a Queen who is like a mother to all her people, but she lacks the determination and purpose expected of a mother if she were to guide her child on the path of self-realization as Madalasa in Markandeya Purana does. She is the representative of the world’s dumb heart and man’s revolt against his fate.

In *Vasavadutta* Queen Ungarica explains to her daughter the miracle of love and asks her to obey its decisions when it takes over the rule from the intellect. In *Savitri* the roles of the mother and the daughter are reversed in this aspect. While Savitri gladly and firmly announces:

I have discovered my glad reality
Beyond my body in another’s being,
I have found the deep unchanging soul of love...¹⁹

her mother dissuades her and tearfully asks her to alter her choice:

Alas in the green gladness of the woods
Thy heart has stooped to a misleading call...²⁰

and further she argues:

Here, on this mutable and ignorant earth
Who is the lover and who is the friend?²¹

When she attempts to guide Savitri on what she thinks is the real path by saying: "Leave not thy goal to follow a beautiful face", it is ironic, for she indirectly advises Savitri just the opposite of what Savitri desires. From the Queen's behaviour one sees that irrespective of the social status a normal woman with limited intelligence has the same protective urge and anxiety for her child's personal welfare and cannot see objectively the higher truth or judge her children on a level with others impartially if necessary or sacrifice her child for a common universal benefit if needed.

If Sri Aurobindo's plan for future humanity is a Life Divine, his heroes and heroines are representatives of that future which is a complete metamorphosis from the present or the parent generation represented by the 'mothers'. While Vasavadutta and Vikarna are a fruitful expansion and realisation of Ungarica's hopes of love and chivalry, Andromeda and Savitri are the harbingers of a new dawn undreamt of by their mothers. Their loyalties are more to the ideal they stand for, than to their parents. They prove that inner maturity and high spirits are neither bound up with age nor are hereditary. For these people the saying:

Dear as his own sweet mother to the man
Of Truth his word is dear as his heart's blood.
Truth, it's the mother of his Soul's great brood,
High Modesty and Virtue's lordly clan.²²

On the whole the human mothers in Sri Aurobindo's plays and in *Savitri*, in spite of showing individual variations in affection, intelligence, emotions and loyalties, are clearly ruled by their motherly instinct more than by impartial wisdom. Even in the case of Cleopatra who has turned out to be cruel, it is a perverse, negative attitude of motherhood which ought to be noble and selfless, for the ego in her seeks to have the upper hand. As mothers, Cleopatra and Khatoon are cursed with unfulfilled dreams but Ungarica, Ameena, Casseopea and Savitri's mother are blessed with children of whom they can be proud. It is quite a different matter whether they have helped or hindered their children's progress by their limited outlook, often failed to reach up to their children or failed to judge the children's ennobled views. Their reactions are mostly limited by the social and political circumstances. While the children have uncommon ideals (Andromeda, Vikarna, Antiochus, Savitri), the mothers, except Ungarica (who is herself semi-divine), lack both the large-heartedness to appreciate, understand and encourage and the will to support them in their ventures. They are the common voice of humanity which is happy as long as its limited family-welfare is guaranteed and shows reluctance towards any new widening plans where individual pleasure is at stake.

The younger heroines translate the writer's concept, with their love, compas-

sion and sympathy. Their love for humanity is not bound or guided by any laws or rules of race or country, good or bad. While the mothers in Sri Aurobindo’s works mostly remain as biological mothers only, the daughters grow into real universal mothers—sans limitations. If the parent generation represents the reality, the present, the imperfect stage of motherhood, Sri Aurobindo shows the ideal, the true perfect nature of a possible divine motherhood in his heroines.

B. VARALAKSHMI

NOTES

1. Sri Aurobindo: *Perseus the Deliverer*, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1955, page 36.
2. Sri Aurobindo: *The Viziers of Bassora*. Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1959, page 44.
3. *Ibid.*, page 68.
4. *Ibid.*, page 10.
5. *Ibid.*, page 177.
6. Sri Aurobindo: *Rodogune*, Jayanti No. 17, Sri Aurobindo Mandir Annual 1958, page 6.
7. *Ibid.*, page 7.
8. *Ibid.*, pages 23-24.
9. *Ibid.*, pages 30-31.
10. *Ibid.*, page 69.
11. Sri Aurobindo: *Vasavadutta*, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1965, page 51.
12. *Ibid.*, page 50.
13. *Ibid.*, page 84.
14. Sri Aurobindo: *Eric*, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1960, page 12.
15. Sri Aurobindo: *Savitri*, Book 6 Canto 1, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1954, page 473.
16. *Ibid.*, page 483.
17. *Ibid.*, page 485.
18. *Ibid.*, page 486.
19. *Ibid.*, page 493.
20. *Ibid.*, page 489.
21. *Ibid.*, page 491.
22. Sri Aurobindo: TRUTH (Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library, Vol-8), Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, page 205.

THE GRACE OF THE DIVINE MOTHER

AN EXPERIENCE

BLESSED are those who live, move and act in the Mother. Fortunate are the ones who experience the grace of the Mother—a grace so subtle at times that often one is aware of it only after the hurdles are cleared.

The 16th May 1985 was a bright sunny day in Madras. Among my morning chores, the cleaning of my car is included. For I remember the Mother's injunctions to keep one's personal effects neat and tidy. This particular morning a thought suddenly flashed through my mind as I was cleaning my car: "Why have I not placed a picture of the Mother in the car?" I lost no time in finding one and placing it inside the right-hand cupboard of the car. The chain of the car-key had always contained the Mother's emblem. The cleaning over, I attended to other duties.

By 11 a.m. my wife and I got into our car and were on our way to the airport along with our nephew who had to catch a plane to Malaysia. At 12.30, the plane took off and we started to drive back home. As the road was under repair I drove with caution. However, in the thick traffic, vehicles were honking all the time to overtake one another. After driving a few miles, I suddenly felt something unusual in the "feel" of the car. By this time, the traffic was thin. I tried to slow down and stop the car for inspection, but the brakes would not function. Still the car somehow came to a smooth stop by the side of the road without the necessity of fiddling with gears or the hand-brake. How this happened is beyond me to explain. I found my car as immobile as one could wish under the shade of a tree, by the kerb. All the time, my wife had been a silent spectator.

We got off and, after locking the car, hailed a taxi. We were on our way home. We stopped at our mechanic's garage and apprised him of our plight. He was dumbfounded. Only the day before he had checked the car. He was at a loss to understand how such a thing could happen. He, however, promised to repair the car and bring it home.

After a few hours, the mechanic appeared. The cause of the breakdown was put to a substandard brake-assembly component, recently replaced.

I do not know how many times I prayed to the Mother that day. She has taught us not to worry, not to think too much. Yet my mind was in a whirl. What made me instal a picture of the Mother in the car that particular morning? How did the car come to a smooth stop without the brake? Why did the brake-failure occur when the road was clear? Sentences from the great little book, *The Mother*, appeared before my mind:

"To walk through life, armoured against all fear, peril and disaster, only two things are needed, the two that always go together—the Grace of the Divine Mother and on your side, an inner state made up of faith, sincerity and surrender."

I am an engineer by profession. The Mother came into my life in 1952. Though I love the Mother, my faith, sincerity and surrender are far from being perfect. Yet the grace acted. Sri Aurobindo has observed that the grace cannot be considered the grace if it has to follow the yard-stick of spiritual development. He has cautioned us that the sadhana may have to continue for three hundred years, since he was aware that many of us slip up in following fundamental precepts, such as "Remember and offer", "Be conscious", "Reject, aspire and surrender"—to mention a few. I solemnly resolve once again to continue my sadhana till the end. My wife too is devoted to the Mother and follows me in the long and arduous path of Purna Yoga.

C. D. AYYAR

CROSSWORD

Clues Across

1. A cosmic Mind, Life, Substance must act, or a pure transcendent Self-Power and Bliss other than our own personal being or its building of Nature. This is a state of freedom which can come in the Yoga of works through renunciation of ego and desire and personal initiation and the surrender of the being to the cosmic self or to the universal Shakti; it can come in the Yoga of Knowledge by the cessation of thought, the silence of the mind, the opening of the whole being to the cosmic Consciousness, to the cosmic Self, the cosmic Dynamis or to the supreme Reality; it can come in the Yoga of devotion by the surrender of the heart and the whole nature into the hands of the All-Blissful as of our existence. (3, 6, 6)
11. Pron. (4)
12. Prep. (2)
13. Sattwa must be transcended as well as Rajas and Tamas, the golden chain must be broken no less than the leaden fetters and the bond-ornaments of a mixed alloy. The Gita prescribes to this end a new method of self-discipline. It is to stand back in oneself from the action of the modes and observe this unsteady flux as the Witness seated above the of the forces of Nature. (5)
14. The Lord is there equally in all beings, we have to make no essential distinctions between ourselves and others, the wise and the ignorant, friend and enemy, man and animal, the saint and the (6)
16. Prep. (2)
18. Equality does not mean a fresh ignorance or blindness; it does not call for and need not initiate a greyness of vision and a blotting out of all hues. Difference is there, variation of expression is there and this variation we shall appreciate,—far more justly than we could when the eye was clouded by a partial and love and hate, admiration and scorn, sympathy and antipathy, attraction and repulsion. (6)
20. Adj. (3)
21. Adv. (4)
23. Pron. (2)
24. If we can pass through these two stages of the inner change without being arrested or fixed in, we are admitted to a greater divine equality which is capable of a spiritual ardour and tranquil passion of delight, a rapturous, all-understanding and all-possessing equality of the perfected soul, an intense and even wideness and fullness of its being embracing all things. (6)
26. An self-consecration, a complete equality, an unsparing effacement of the ego, a transforming deliverance of the nature from its ignorant modes of action are the steps by which the surrender of all the being and nature to the Divine Will can be prepared and achieved,—a self-giving true, total and without reserve. (6)
27. Adv. (2)

Clues Down

2. This is the mode of Rajas, the way of passion and action and the thirst of desire. Struggle and change and new creation, victory and defeat and joy and suffering and hope and disappointment are its children and build the many-coloured of life in which it takes its pleasure. (5)
3. For Tamas is a double principle; it contradicts Rajas by inertia, it contradicts Sattwa by narrowness, obscurity and ignorance and, if either is depressed, it pours in to occupy its place.

If we call in Rajas again to correct this error and bid it ally itself to Sattwa and by their united agency endeavour to get rid of the dark principle, we find that we have elevated our action, but that there is again subjection to rajasic eagerness, passion, disappointment, suffering, (5)

4. When the Sadhaka has once stood back from the action of Prakriti within him or upon him and, not interfering, not amending or inhibiting, not choosing or deciding, allowed its play and analysed and watched the process, he soon discovers that her modes are self-dependent and work, as a machine once put in action works, by its own structure and propelling forces. The force and the propulsion come from Prakriti and not from the creature. Then he realises how mistaken was his impression that his mind was the of his works; his mind was only a small part of him and a creation and engine of Nature. (4)
5. Prep. (2)
6. On the other hand, the recipient of Nature's contacts, touched and stimulated, solicited or assailed by her forces, may react to the pressure or against it. She allows, encourages, impels him to strive, to , to attempt, to dominate or engross his environment, to assert his will, to fight and create and conquer. (6)
7. The Sadhaka has not only to think and know but to see and feel concretely and intensely even in the moment of the working and in its initiation and whole process that his works are not his at all, but are coming through him from the supreme Existence. He must be always aware of a Force, a Presence, a Will that acts through his individual nature. But there is in taking this turn the that he may confuse his own disguised or sublimated ego or an inferior power with the Lord and substitute its demands for the supreme dictates. (6)
8. To transcend the natural action of the lower Prakriti is indispensable to the soul, if it is to be free in its self and free in its works. Harmonious subjection to this actual universal Nature, a condition of good and perfect work for the natural instruments, is not an ideal for the soul, which should rather be subject to God and his Shakti, but master of its own nature. As or as channel of the Supreme Will it must determine by its vision and sanction or refusal the use that shall be made of the storage of energy, the conditions of environment, the rhythm of combined movement which are provided by Prakriti for the labour of the natural instruments, mind, life and body. (5)
9. Prep. (2)
10. A lonely power, peace and stillness is the last word of the philosophic equality of the sage, but the soul in its integral experience liberates itself from this self-created status and into the sea of a supreme and all-embracing ecstasy of the beginningless and endless beatitude of the Eternal. (6)
15. Prep. (2)
17. Conj. (2)
19. Ordinarily we have to begin with a period of endurance; for we must learn to confront, to suffer and to assimilate all contacts. Each fibre in us must be taught not to wince away from that which pains and repels and not to . . . eagerly towards that which pleases and attracts, but rather to accept, to face, to bear and to conquer. (3)
20. Pron. (2)
21. Tamas unenlightened and Rajas unconverted, . . . divine change or divine life is possible. (2)
22. Adv. (2)
25. Pron. (2)

1	2		3	4	5	6	7		8		9	10	
			11								12		
13					14	15						16	17
			18		19						20		
21		22			23			24			25		
				26								27	

SOLUTION: Refer *The Synthesis of Yoga*—Part I Chapters 9 & 10

SRI AUROBINDO, MY LORD

A LETTER

FOR a long time now, I have been reading Sri Aurobindo's books, mostly *Letters on Yoga*. I wish I had known them before. What I have learnt from these letters would have prevented me from doing many wrong things. And now too I was forced by circumstances to read them. Because of the almost constant pain in my knees due to arthritis I could do very little work, or play the organ (which I liked doing very much). I could play the piano a little, but not much because of the operation I had undergone for the cataract in my right eye. The left eye too has a growing cataract.

I remember so well how wonderfully pleased the Mother used to be whenever I looked at Sri Aurobindo when he came to her room to show her something or other. He looked intently at me, and it was I who turned my eyes away in order not to take his time.

His voice and gait were like those of a great emperor, and I could never forget them. So you can imagine what a shock it was for me to read his *Tales of Prison Life*, recently republished by Sri Aurobindo Pathmandir, Calcutta, in S.K. Ghose's translation.

I knew nothing about Sri Aurobindo's life prior to his coming to Pondicherry. My father was completely devoted to the British and took great care that his family should be kept away from the influence of Indian Nationalism. So I had never even heard of Sri Aurobindo at that time. But after I came to the Ashram he and the Mother became all in all to me. When I started reading *Tales of Prison Life*, I was so grieved and shocked at the inhuman treatment my Master had received in jail. "Oh, my beloved Lord, how could they treat you like that?" I cried out.

That very night, during my sleep, I saw Sri Aurobindo standing before me with a most tender and benevolent smile on his face.

My heart opened, I saw a disk of white light inside. It was not brilliant but shining all the same, and it was not in the body but deep within my being. My body was weeping unconsolably but this light within was not touched. I kept sobbing and Sri Aurobindo tried to console me. But I continued to weep. Then I came out slowly from this dream-experience. I felt a strange difference in the consciousness, a great help and progress within. I am told what I had seen in my innermost depth was my psychic being, my true soul in a symbolic shape. This was the first time I had realised the deepest entity within as an independent presence distinct from my ordinary being.

LALITA

THE CURSE

A FOLKTALE

THE king was on his death-bed. He was lean and haggard-looking. He was neither old nor affected by any disease. Yet he was unable to walk or eat. Only a little quantity of liquid food was spoon-fed to him. But his stomach, unable to hold anything, disgorged it.

Physicians from many parts of the world were consulted. They were unable to diagnose the king's ailment.

One day a wandering sage who knew the art of healing diseases that affect the human mind and body visited the palace.

The queen prostrated herself before him and wept. She begged the sage to save her dying husband, for which act of kindness she would remain grateful to him.

The sage consoled her and went with her to see the king. After a short meditation he examined him.

"He is not affected by any disease," opined the sage. "This should be the result of an effective curse. Has he any enemy?"

"Enemy! Why! He has no friends at all," said the queen. "He treated everyone with contempt. He didn't exempt me too from the list of enemies."

"Then you have to tell me what happened. What is the source of the curse? And who do you think would have cursed him?" The sage shot one question after another.

"Divine Sir! Everyone except me must have cursed him," she said. "To tell you the truth, this king found extreme delight in being cruel towards others.... Five years ago he announced that on every birthday of his all grown-ups in this country should present to him a bag of rice and in turn get a bag of paddy. It is the greatest of all sins he has committed so far."

After a pause she continued: "The rich grudgingly responded. But what about the poor people? With great difficulty they each managed to buy a bag of rice lest their heads should not be theirs. On the birthdays of the king the people stood in long queues burdened with bags of rice. Now you may understand, Sir, the plight the people were in. Unable to shoulder the weight of the bag of rice they wept and yelled in pain. It is needless to say that they cursed the king in their agony. I myself have heard them calling the king names. I have heard them tell one another: 'Can't someone kill the tyrant and make his birthday the day of his death? How we struggle to earn our living and this merciless fellow fills in his granary with our hard earned money! Is God blind? Won't he punish the king with a killer disease?' "

The queen heaved a sigh and stopped.

"The curse of the poor has worked," concluded the sage. Then he said: "The only way to save the king is to make the same people praise him. They should withdraw the curse and pray for his quick cure. Prayer works miracles.

But I do not know, O Queen, how you are going to make them pray. For prayer, you know, is from the heart and never from the lips." The sage left the queen to her tears.

The queen spent a whole night in ruminating over the words of the sage. At last her sorrow-stricken face lit up. She wiped her tears.

On the morning of the next day the queen proclaimed that she would govern the country till the ailing king recouped his health.

The people were immensely pleased to hear such news. They were under the impression that the queen would abolish the custom of giving the birthday present—the bag of rice—and thereby make them happy. But what happened was something different from their great expectations.

One fine morning a town-crier beat his tom-tom and announced in public: "The queen hereby orders all her subjects to present her with a bag of rice on every full-moon day and in turn get a small packet of dust. This practice will continue till the king is cured of his disease and is healthy enough to come back to the throne."

The rich and the poor were shocked alike to hear the order. They cursed their own fate for having such a stony-hearted woman for their queen.

"We got back at least a bag of paddy when the king ruled. But now a packet of dust for a bag of rice. My God! And that too every month," said one amidst tears.

Another murmured: "The king was noble at heart. He got a bag of rice and in turn gave us a bag of paddy. This he did with the noble intention of making all of us work hard. The paddy he gave was used as seed by many and they profited very much. But now what to do with a packet of dust?"

"Suppose the king dies. O God! The situation is unimaginable. The tyrant queen will turn into a tigress," sneered another.

"We should not let the king die. The only way to save the king is to pray to God for his quick recovery," said an old man in the crowd.

The whole county was engrossed in prayer. God heeded the mass prayer.

The king recovered from his ailment. Before he was back to the throne the queen told him what had happened between his ailment and recovery. Further she advised him to be kind towards his subjects and treat everyone of them as friends.

The king who had remained so far stone-deaf to all her pleadings now responded. Thereafter the people lived peacefully with little grudge against him.

P. RAJA

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Sri Aurobindo Circle, 41st Number, 1985

As the *Sri Aurobindo Society Annual* has been incorporated with the *Sri Aurobindo Circle* since 1970, this issue is the Society's special Silver Jubilee number. And as is perhaps appropriate in a Silver Jubilee number, all the 'regular contributors' are there. But though their names and the format of the journal have become familiar over the years, the contents are far from dull and repetitive. The editor and his helpers have given of their best to make up this special number.

Four little-known photographs of the Mother preface the text, two from 1951, and two from twenty years later, 1971; there follow two facsimiles of interesting letters of Sri Aurobindo, with the text printed below for those of us who have difficulty in deciphering his rapid hand. A section of brief but powerful messages from the Mother and Sri Aurobindo prefaces a series of longer passages, mostly from Sri Aurobindo's writings, but including also a fascinating talk from the Mother's *Notes on the Way*. All of these extracts are worth re-reading and encourage us to turn back to the works they are mined from. This reviewer found the wonderfully succinct outline of the doctrine of the Vedic mystics especially fascinating.

An illuminating collection of briefer passages entitled 'Thoughts from Sri Aurobindo' leads us on to two regular serial features: the ninth instalment of 'Conversations with Sri Aurobindo' and the translation of the Bengali 'Interviews with Sri Aurobindo', both recorded by A.B. Here one feels some shortcomings in the rendering of Sri Aurobindo's English, but this minor criticism detracts little from the interest of the topics covered—in the 'Conversations' these are more general, in the 'Interviews' they centre on the sadhana of the recorder, A.B.

A transitional section follows, consisting of six poems written during the period in the 1930s when several disciples were writing poetry under Sri Aurobindo's guidance as a part of their sadhana. Given here, with Sri Aurobindo's comments, are two poems each from Arjava, K. D. Sethna, and Nirodbaran. Elsewhere in this issue are interesting poems from 'Gleaner' and R. Y. Deshpande.

The second portion of the journal, devoted to articles by disciples with considerable standing in the world of scholarship and letters, begins with a further instalment of the background to the study of *The Human Cycle*, originally prepared by Kishor Gandhi for students of the Higher Course of the S.A.I.C.E. It continues his analysis of Marx's theory of social development, in a clear and graspable way. Professor K.R.S. Iyengar's contribution is the transcript of a talk given recently in Madras: a lively and pertinent answer to the question "Is Sri Aurobindo relevant today?" This is followed by a contribution to the debate about when and where the Rig Veda was composed, by an Ashram scholar who has delved deeply into the matter, directed by the clear guidelines sketched out by Sri Aurobindo in *The Secret of the Veda* and elsewhere: K.D. Sethna. Surely these views deserve much wider

currency, such is their importance to India's understanding of her fundamental oneness and the sense of her great past. Professor S.K. Ghose is represented by a talk on mysticism given at the Centre last year. For some reason, a few pages at the end of his talk are untypically marked by some misprints—an unusual failing in a journal which is ordinarily so impeccably produced. Another serial feature is the continuation of Dr. Prema Nandakumar's presentation of 'Sri Aurobindo's Interpretation of Indian Culture.' In this instalment she deals with the Mahabharata and Sri Aurobindo's treatment of materials from it—a fascinating series of comparisons. In the final article, A.S. Dalal returns to a topic he has handled before—mental health—to link some of the more constructive modern Western theories of mental health with the deeper psychological knowledge of the East. As he very rightly points out, "terms like mastery, meditation, disidentification, peace, joy, spontaneity, love, living in the here and now, etc., which have been recently emerging in Western psychological thought, have a much deeper connotation in the East." And to help us avoid being misled by merely verbal correspondences, he goes on to develop the deeper implications of the concept of psychological mastery in the light of the Gita and of Sri Aurobindo's teachings.

In many periodicals the matter tails off in interest towards the end; not so here. Mr. Dalal's article keeps the level of achievement high to the very last page—for there are no advertisements to bulk out the space between the covers. 156 pages of very rewarding reading make a fine 'Silver Jubilee' offering.

SHRADDHAVAN