

MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

JULY 1985

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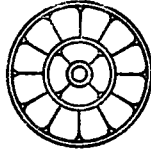
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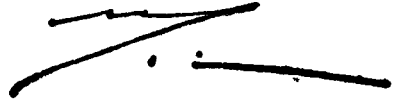


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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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

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WHAT IS “VEDANTA”?

THE Upanishads... have always been known as Vedanta. This word is nowadays often used & spoken of as if it meant the end of Veda, in the sense that here historically the religious development commenced in the Rigveda culminated; but obviously it means the culmination of Veda in a very different sense, the ultimate and highest knowledge & fulfilment towards which the practices & strivings of the Vedic Rishis mounted, extricated from the voluminous mass of the Vedic poems and presented according to the inner realisation of great Rishis like Yajnavalkya & Janaka in a more modern style and language. It is used much in the sense in which Madhuchchhandas, son of Viswamitra, says of Indra, Atha te antamanam vidyama sumatinam, “Then may we know something of thy ultimate right thinkings,” meaning obviously not the latest, but the supreme truths, the ultimate realisations. Undoubtedly, this was what the authors of the Upanishads themselves saw in their work, statements of supreme truth of Veda, truth therefore contained in the ancient mantras. In this belief they appeal always to Vedic authority and quote the language of Veda either to justify their own statements of thought or to express that thought itself in the old solemn and sacred language. “And with regard to this there are spoken these Riks.”

SRI AUROBINDO

’ (From “The Secret of Veda,” *Sri Aurobindo: Archives and Research* April 1985, p. 32)

A TALK BY THE MOTHER

EXTRACTS FROM HER TALK TO THE ASHRAM CHILDREN ON JULY 7, 1954

The following talk is based upon Chapter I
of *The Mother* by Sri Aurobindo.

Sweet Mother, it is written here: "A... submission... of the inner Warrior who fights against obscurity and falsehood."¹ Who is this "inner Warrior"?

It is the vital being when it is converted. The vital turned completely to the Divine is like a warrior. It has even the appearance of a warrior. The vital is the place of power and it is this power which impels it to fight, which can fight and conquer, and of all things this is the most difficult, for it is precisely these very qualities of fighting which create in the vital the sense of revolt, independence, the will to carry out its own will. But if the vital understands and is converted, if it is truly surrendered to the divine Will, then these fighting capacities are turned against the anti-divine forces and against all the darkness which prevents their transformation. And they are all-powerful and can conquer the adversaries. The anti-divine forces are in the vital world; from there, naturally, they have spread out into the physical, but their true seat is in the vital world, and it is the converted vital force which has the true power to vanquish them. But of all things this conversion is the most difficult.

Here, I don't understand this: "For if it [the supreme Grace] were to yield to the demands of the falsehood, it would defeat its own purpose." What does the defeat of its own purpose mean?

Yes. This means that it would be going against its work, its own work. The Grace has come; well, it works for the realisation of the truth. If it accepts the conditions laid upon it by the falsehood, it can no longer do anything. Of this, you know, I could give you *countless* examples—of people who insist that things should happen in a particular way as far as they are concerned. They implore, at times even demand that things should be like that; and what they ask for is absolutely contrary to the truth; and if the Grace obeyed their demand, it would go against its own purpose and defeat its own purpose, that is, it would go against its own work and aim. It comes here to realise the truth; if it obeys the falsehood, it turns its back on truth. And people, you see, very often put the cart before the horse—most often through

¹ The complete sentence is:

"A glad and strong and helpful submission is demanded to the working of the Divine Force, the obedience of the illumined disciple of the Truth, of the inner Warrior who fights against obscurity and falsehood, of the faithful servant of the Divine."

ignorance and stupidity; but sometimes it is also through bad will that they insist on having their conditions fulfilled, that they go in for a kind of bargaining in exchange for their surrender, and they do it.... Yes, many do it unconsciously—I said through ignorance and stupidity. There are others who do it consciously, and so they want their conditions fulfilled. They say, “If it is like this and like that...” And finally they go as far as to say to the Divine, “If you are like this and like that, if you fulfil the conditions I lay down for you, I shall obey you!” They don’t put it in this way because that would be too ridiculous, but they almost constantly do it. You see, they say, “Oh, the Divine is like this. The Divine does this. The Divine must respond like this.” And they continue in this way and they are not aware that they are quite simply imposing their conceptions and also their desires on what the Divine ought to be and do. And so, when the Divine does not do what they want or does not fulfil the conditions they lay down, they say, “You are not the Divine!” (*Laughter*) It is very simple. “You do not fulfil the conditions I lay down, so you are not the Divine!” But they do it constantly, you know. So, naturally, if to please people, the Divine Grace were to submit to their demands, it would be working entirely against its own purpose and would destroy its own Work.

Sweet Mother, what does “an exclusive self-opening to the divine Power” mean?

Instead of self-opening we could put receptivity, something that opens in order to receive. Now, instead of opening and receiving from all sides and from everyone, as is usually done, one opens only to the Divine to receive only the divine force. It is the very opposite of what men usually do. They are always open on the surface, they receive all the influences from all sides. And then this produces inside them what we might call a *pot-pourri* (*Mother laughs*) of all kinds of contradictory movements which naturally create countless difficulties. So here, you are advised to open only to the Divine and to receive only the divine force to the exclusion of everything else. This diminishes all difficulties almost entirely. Only one thing remains difficult. It is... One can do it and, unless one is in a state of total alchemy, well, it is difficult to be in contact with people, to speak to them, for example, to have any kind of exchange with them without absorbing something from them. It is difficult. If one is in a kind of... if one is in an atmosphere that’s like a filter, then everything that comes from outside is filtered before it touches you. But it is very difficult; it requires a very wide experience. That is why, also, people who wanted the easiest path went into solitude to sit under a tree, did not speak any more and saw nobody; for this helps to diminish undesirable exchanges. Only, it has been noticed that these people begin to become enormously interested in the life of little animals, the life of plants, for it is difficult not to have any exchange with anything at all. So it is much better to face the problem squarely and be surrounded by an atmosphere so totally concentrated on the Divine that what comes through this atmosphere is filtered in its passage.

And then again, even when this has been done, there is still the problem of food; as long as our body is compelled to take in foreign matter in order to subsist, it will absorb at the same time a considerable amount of inert and unconscious forces or those having a rather undesirable consciousness, and this alchemy must take place inside the body. We were speaking of the kinds of consciousness absorbed with food, but there is also the inconscience that's absorbed with food—quite a deal of it. And that is why in many yogas there was the advice to offer to the Divine what one was going to eat before eating it (*Mother makes a gesture of offering, hands joined, palms open*). It consists in calling the Divine down into the food before eating it. One offers it to Him—that is, one puts it in contact with the Divine; so that it may be under the divine influence when one eats it. It is very useful, it is very good. If one knows how to do it, it is very useful, it considerably reduces the work of inner transformation which has to be done. But, you see, in the world as it is, we are all interdependent. You cannot take in the air without taking in the vibrations, the countless vibrations produced by all kinds of movements and all kinds of people, and you must—if you want to remain intact—you must constantly act like a filter, as I was saying. That is to say nothing that is undesirable should be allowed to enter, as when one goes to infected areas, one wears a mask over the face so that the air may be purified before one breathes it in. Well, something similar has to be done. One must have around oneself so intense an atmosphere in a *total* surrender to the Divine, so intensified around oneself that everything that passes through is automatically filtered. Anyhow, it is very useful in life, for there are—we spoke about this too—there are bad thoughts, bad wills, people who wish you ill, who make formations. There are all kinds of absolutely undesirable things in the atmosphere. And so, if one must always be on the watch, looking around on all sides, one would think only of one thing, how to protect oneself. First of all, it is tiresome, and then, you see, it makes you waste much time. If you are well enveloped in this way, with this light, the light of a perfectly glad, totally sincere surrender, when you are enveloped with that, it serves you as a marvellous filter. Nothing that is altogether undesirable, nothing that has ill-will can pass through. So, automatically, these things return where they came from. If there is a conscious ill-will against you, it comes but cannot pass; the door is closed, for it is open only to divine things, it is not open to anything else. So it returns very quietly to the source from where it came.

But all these things are... One can learn how to do them through a kind of study and science. But they can be done without any study or science provided the aspiration and surrender are absolute and total. If the aspiration and surrender are total, it is done automatically. But you must see to it that they are total; and besides, as I was saying just now, you become very clearly aware of it, for the moment they are not total, you are no longer happy. You feel uneasy, very miserable, dejected, a bit unhappy: "Things are not quite pleasant today. They are the same as they were yesterday; yesterday they were marvellous, today they are not pleasing!"—Why? Because yesterday you were in a perfect state of surrender more or less perfect—and today you

aren't any more. So, what was so beautiful yesterday is no longer beautiful today. That joy you had within you, that confidence, the assurance that all will be well and the great Work will be accomplished, that certitude—all this, you see, has become veiled, has been replaced by a kind of doubt and, yes, by a discontent: "Things are not beautiful, the world is nasty, people are not pleasant." It goes sometimes to this length: "The food is not good, yesterday it was excellent." It is the same but today it is not good! This is the barometer! You may immediately tell yourself that an insincerity has crept in somewhere. It is very easy to know, you don't need to be very learned, for, as Sri Aurobindo has said in *Elements of Yoga*: One knows whether one is happy or unhappy, one knows whether one is content or discontented, one doesn't need to ask oneself, put complicated questions for this, one knows it!—well, it is very simple.

The moment you feel unhappy, you may write beneath it: "I am not sincere!" These two sentences go together:

"I FEEL UNHAPPY."

"I AM NOT SINCERE."

Now, what is it that is wrong? Then one begins to take a look, it is easy to find out...

Mother, in the Letters Sri Aurobindo says somewhere¹ that the Grace does not choose the just and reject the sinner. It has its own discernment which is different from the mind's. That is how, for example, the Grace came to St. Augustine's help. Then, why does Sri Aurobindo say here: "But the supreme Grace will act only in the conditions of the Light and the Truth...." ?

Yes, I noticed that. When I read it, I thought about this.

I thought about it. I think he wrote the sentence in this way so that it would be more easily understandable. But in fact, what he meant he has said here: You are yourself rejecting the Grace... Isn't that it? He says—where is it? what page? page four? Yes, "... pushing the divine Grace from you", yes; "... you are yourself pushing the divine Grace away from you." No, it is not that; it is... (*The child begins reading: "the Grace..."*) No, after that, my child... "It will not act..." (*To another child*) This is what we have explained. That is something else. You see, this is what I have explained: You ask the Grace to do something for you, but this thing is a falsehood. It won't do it, because It always acts only in the truth.

But then how can It come to the help of the sinner ?

It doesn't help the sinner to be a sinner! It helps the sinner to give up his sin; that is to say, It does not push away the sinner, saying, "I won't do anything for you." It is there, always, even when he is sinning, to help him to come out of it, but not to continue in his sin.

¹ See *Letters on Yoga*, Cent. Vol. 23, p. 609. .

There is a great difference between this and the idea that you are bad and so "I won't look after you, I shall throw you far away from me, and whatever is to happen to you will happen, I am not concerned about it." This is the common idea. One says, "God has rejected me", you know. It is not that. You may not be able to feel the Grace, but It will always be there, even with the worst of sinners, even with the worst of criminals, to help him to change, to be cured of his crime and sin if he wants to. It won't reject him, but It won't help him to do evil. It wouldn't be the Grace any longer. You understand the difference?

But there is a sentence here that's... here we are, it is absolutely true: "You are yourself pushing the divine Grace away from you" and then there is a . (*The lamp had to be switched on and this made a noise in the mike. Mother shows a little surprise, then continues turning the pages of the book to find the sentence.*) I thought it was here... (*She finds the sentence and reads*) "Then..." here we are, "...always you will be open to attack and the Grace will recede from you." You see, this... (*silence*) It is not the Grace which recedes from you, it is you who recede from the Grace. It is a feeling, and the expression of the fact. For in the sentence... a preceding sentence, we have: "You are yourself pushing the divine Grace away from you." This is just the thing. You are yourself pushing the divine Grace away from you. But after having pushed It away, you have the impression that It has receded from you; and it is rather this: "...then always you will be open to attack and the Grace will recede from you." It is not a fact that It recedes from you, you have the impression that It recedes from you.

While reading it I noticed this. I don't know what it is in English. Here it is on page seven. I don't know, it must be approximately on the same page, I suppose: "If you call for the Truth...", something like that.

(*Someone looks up the required sentence in the English book and reads: "the Grace will recede from you."*)

Ah, yes. "Recede from you..." "... then always you will be open to attack and the Grace will recede from you."

It expresses one's impression. But it is not that the Grace withdraws. For it is written here, you see, just a little before, "It is not the divine Grace you must blame", it is you who push It away from you.

In one case he takes the position of the Grace and in the other he takes the attitude of the person who says, "The Grace recedes from me." But it is not the Grace that recedes, it is he himself who pushes It away, that is, he has put a distance between himself and the Grace. In fact, even "pushing away" doesn't give the correct picture; you see, this is not written, it was not written to a philosopher, and it is not in philosophical terms. In one case, you see, he has taken this particular attitude, but the phenomenon is the same; that is, there is a kind of psychological distance created between the Grace and the individual. And due to this psychological distance the individual cannot receive the Grace and feels that It is not there. But It is there, in fact; only, as he has established this distance between the two, he doesn't

feel It any longer. This is the real phenomenon. It isn't that the Grace goes away, It isn't even that he has the power to push It away, for if It doesn't want to go, no matter how much he tries, It won't go. But he makes himself incapable of feeling It and receiving its effect. He creates a psychological barrier between himself and the Grace.

There you are, my children, I think that's enough for this evening.

(Questions and Answers 1954, pp. 203, 205-06, 213-218)

TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of June, 1985)

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

October 4, 1940

(P said that Girijasankar had written another instalment of Sri Aurobindo's life in Udbodhan. Nolini sent it up through P.)

SRI AUROBINDO: Is anything written there about my life which I don't know? (Laughter)

(Then Sri Aurobindo began to read it. After a while he gave a hilarious laugh.)

SRI AUROBINDO: He says *Night by the Sea* has been addressed to my English sweetheart. (Laughter) And *Estelle* to a French girl! He is trying to make my biography out of my poetry! He also says that *Baji Prabhou* was written in Gujerat under the influence of Tilak and the Maharattas. In fact it was written in Calcutta. (After reading the whole instalment) He has not made enough out of the poetry. He ought to have said that *Myrtilla* was addressed to a Greek girl—a girl whom I loved and buried in an island. Seshadri said about the poem *Revelation* that the girl spoken of there must be somebody I came across on the Pondicherry beach! (Laughter)

P: What would he say about *The Hound of Heaven* then? An ordinary dog?

S: That is not interesting.

Sri Aurobindo: There is nothing about my life here. All about my poetry, also the poetry of Tagore, Das, Monomohan, etc. He also says *Love and Death* and *Baji Prabhou* are ballad poetry. (Laughter) People are funny. Somebody criticising *Love and Death* said it was all Keats, and Girija says there is nothing of Keats, but it is a ballad!

S: As in your *Life Divine*, people find Shankara, Ramanuja, etc. (Laughter)

Evening

(It appeared Veerabhadra had been going to the labour people and teaching them Hindi. Also a pamphlet had been circulated that he would deliver a speech on Gandhi,

on Gandhi's birthday. If all that were true, naturally it would go very much against the Ashram. Sri Aurobindo was anxiously inquiring from P about it. Some days earlier P himself had spoken to Sri Aurobindo about it. Sri Aurobindo said: "In that case Veerabhadra will have to leave the Ashram. He ought to know that the Ashram is not allowed to join in any public activity." It seems the Mother also heard about the pamphlet and told Sri Aurobindo of it. Both the Mother and Sri Aurobindo were rather worried.)

SRI AUROBINDO: There are already people here who want any pretext against us. There was some enquiry some time back if we were an enemy of the British. It was reported that we were concerned with philosophy. Now if they get to know this? Mother has been telling me that something is going on in the subtle plane—against the Ashram. Of course we knew—like that.

P: I don't know why he should meddle with these things. He is a fool to do that.

SRI AUROBINDO: I may be forced to make an official statement. (*Sri Aurobindo added laughing*) If they made a real enquiry and cross-examined Yogananda for instance, then—

(*Later on it was found that the pamphlet had been circulated in somebody else's name. Veerabhadra had nothing to do with it.*)

SRI AUROBINDO (*smiling*): There is still another charge against him.

October 5, 1940

N: Mandel is acquitted!

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, he seems to have dangerous documents against everybody.

N: Like Daladier!

P: Yes, Daladier said he would drag down many others with him.

SRI AUROBINDO: If politicians were made responsible for their mistakes then many would have to go to the scaffold. It is like the French revolution: when any General failed, his head was cut off!..

S: Is it some new poetry you are writing now, Sir?

SRI AUROBINDO: No, it is *Savitri*.

N: Is it not finished yet?

SRI AUROBINDO: The writing is over, but every time I see it, I find imperfections. Only about two and a half cantos can be said to be finished.

S: It is good that it is something innocent. Otherwise every time you took up *The Life Divine* some catastrophe took place: first in 1914 and now in 1939—both times war. (*Laughter*)

SRI AUROBINDO: *Savitri* also contains war, but it is imaginative. So I suppose

the opposing forces may not object.

S: What would that commentator Girija make of it?

SRI AUROBINDO: He said nothing biographical about *Baji Prabhou*, either. He could have said that it was the glorious account of a scuffle I had with some Mahommedan!

N: But what was this man trying to prove? He seems to be trying to establish some connection between the development of your poetry and that of Tagore.

SRI AUROBINDO (*laughing*): Yes.

N: He said that Tagore wrote his *jété nāh dibo* when you came back to India and that it was as if a new glimpse of his *Aurobindo Rabindrera laha namaskar*. I don't see any connection.

SRI AUROBINDO: Neither do I. I thought Girija idiotic when he was writing in Das's paper. *Jété nāh dibo* is about some daughter, isn't it?

P: Yes. The daughter doesn't allow her father to return to his place of activity and then he philosophises about love, etc. What is the connection there?

SRI AUROBINDO: I don't know. He makes out that Das, Tagore, I and others were writing under the same influence with the same *bhāva* on the same subject! But how does he say that some new poems were added to *Songs to Myrtilla*? None were added.

P: No!

SRI AUROBINDO: In this book only earlier poems were included. He says three poems in *Myrtilla* are about a part of my life I wanted people to know about. He objects to the poem on Raj Narayan Bose being excluded from the new edition. The fact is I had no copy. Besides, these are the usual sorts of things critics do about a poet after his death. I am still alive. I should be immune so long as I am alive. (*Laughter*)

S: They construct a biography out of the poems since they can't approach dead poets. But they can approach you.

P: About Shakespeare also they have built up many stories.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes. They say his dramas are all experiences of his life. He deserted his wife, became an actor-manager, later abandoned that job. Now it is denied. They also made him an usurer, a thief who killed a deer in a park and stole it. As a protest against the theory about Shakespeare's Sonnets that "with this key Shakespeare unlocked his heart", Browning wrote :

Did Shakespeare? If so, the less Shakespeare he!¹

S: It was said that no such person as Shakespeare existed.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is given up—then they said there were two Shakespeares—both at Stratford.

P: Bacon also was bolstered up as the real Shakespeare.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes. Some critic made Bacon both an Elizabethan and a post-

¹ Editor's Note: The line occurs in the poem entitled "House" in the Series "Paschiarotto and Other Poems".

Elizabethan poet. But take the actual piece of poetry he has written: one can see how prosaic it is!

Evening

SRI AUROBINDO: Moore has written an article against Gandhi, taking his stand on the Gita and on me. He says that if Gandhi considers himself an instrument of God and preaches non-participation, he—Moore—is also an instrument of God entitled to object to it. (*Sri Aurobindo gave us a gist of the article.*)

P: Azad and others take a different standpoint from Gandhi.

S: They make it a political non-participation while Gandhi—

SRI AUROBINDO: Brings both political and conscientious objections. (*Laughter*)

S: It seems Azad, C.R. and Nehru aren't very warm on this new stand of Gandhi.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is evident from C.R.'s speech. After the rejection of the Poona offer, they didn't know what to do. So they had to take Gandhi's help. Now they are in an impossible position. It was Venkataram Shastri, I think, who has said Congress has been making mistake after mistake. After they had resigned their office, if they had stuck to the C.D. it would have meant something. Right or wrong, it was a line of action, policy. But instead they have been going now this side, now that side.

S: Nehru speaks also of being international. Now his sister speaks in the same vein.

SRI AUROBINDO: In that case he should support Britain. Otherwise he will only help Hitler.

N: If there is any trouble in India Hitler will be glad.

SRI AUROBINDO: Of course!

P: Benoy Sarkar writes in *Rupam* about art that subject-matter is not important. Indian art has been always concerned with subject while what matters in art is whether it is aesthetic or not. From that point of view, pattern, design, colour, line are things that count.

SRI AUROBINDO: But that is decorative, not aesthetic.

P: Yes, he takes the current modern view of art. He says one must see the balance and mass, etc. in a work of art, e.g., in a Buddha seated in a triangle.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is again scientific art, not aesthetic and, besides, has modern art no subject?

P: Agastya answers Sarkar by saying that by Indianness of Indian art is meant not so much the subject as the tradition, the training that one follows in one's art, which is quite different from the European tradition.

SRI AUROBINDO: Apart from the subject, art has something which is extremely important but the subject too has its value. If it is all mass and balance, why call it Buddha then? The image or figure of Buddha is supposed to express the calm of Nirvana. If you are not able to feel that or if the art hasn't been able to bring that

out, then you don't appreciate the art.

P: It is the same thing they are doing in poetry.

SRI AUROBINDO: Poetry has no subject? No meaning? Then it is what Baron makes it out when he says, "Why do you want to understand?"

(To be continued)

NIRODBARAN

TO RAJIV OF INDIA

BROTHER! Thou standest not alone,
The mights of gods stride on with thee,
In thy firm and high steps follow
The future of a people, a divine destiny.

Thus arose the Kshatriyas of old
After lighting the pyres of their own,
Dry-eyed but full of God's purpose,
Ready to succour the weak, to smite the titan-souled.

We offer thee not flowers and laurels
But the crushing weight of a mighty nation
For thee to lift to glory's pinnacle
And crown with the light of an eternal sun.

SHYAM KUMARI

THE STORY OF A SOUL

BY HUTA

The Mother's Message

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



Volume Two: 1958

2

THE day was a Tuesday, 21st January 1958.

I sketched a portrait of a girl with a white flame in her heart.

The Mother admired the picture. She looked at me for a second or two, then went into a deep trance. When she awoke, she wrote the meaning—"Grateful receptivity"—on a piece of paper and, while handing it to me, said:

“Just now I saw in my vision this girl who took me to her house imploring me to cure her mother who was on her death-bed. I cured her mother. Suddenly the girl prostrated herself at my feet in order to express her gratitude.”

My eyes filled with disbelief and amazement. I was totally submerged in my little self—the ego and the physical consciousness. I could not possibly convince myself of this fantastic vision.

I watched the Mother’s eyes which wore a far-off look and on her mouth was a gentle smile. She then spoke:

“You will be inspired to do a nice picture. I too will draw a picture in my apartment. Then tomorrow evening we shall compare our sketches. Shall we?”

I nodded, trying to empty my mind of all nonsensical questions and stupid speculations. But I did not really know what kind of inspiration I would get—what she would draw and how her picture could be compared with mine which would be a sheer mess.

At night in the silent hours I sat at my table in Golconde and drew a picture with concentration. I showed a half-bloomed lotus bud emerging from deep water. In the heart of the lotus there was a face with a flame of aspiration. Also, from dark clouds the Sun of Truth shone. The Truth responded to the aspirant soul.

It was very late. I now found the silence quite disturbing. I stood for some time near the opened shutters and then went to sleep.

The following morning the Mother sent me a card depicting a basket full of beautiful flowers which brought her perfumed words:

“To my dear little child Huta

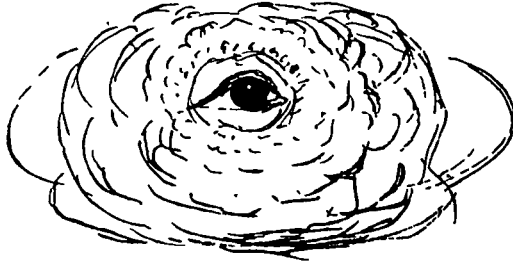
“With the love and compassion that surpasses all understanding.”

The Mother and I met in the evening. We greeted each other. Then she asked me to show my picture which I did. She showed hers which was as follows: [*See opposite page.*]

Then with a soft laugh she compared our sketches and was very pleased and nodded repeatedly with full approval.

This was, I believe, one of her experiments about the link between two consciousnesses—the Divine Consciousness and the human. This, I think, was a preparation for expressing the great epic poem—*Savitri*—through painting. At that time I had not the ghost of an idea about the Mother’s plan. I only knew that I was incapable of doing any worthwhile things in my life.

At night I wept. My tears fell unrestrainedly for quite some time, until I realised it was wrong, despising myself for weakness, and I tried to rally from the blows that had shattered all my happy dreams to serve the Truth.



*The eye of the Divine Consciousness
shines like an eternal diamond
in the depths of the Inconscient.*

22.1.59

In spite of having slept only a few hours, I was up early the next morning. I went for the balcony Darshan.

The Mother saw me in the evening. As always we meditated in her beautifully decorated room. After that she reminded me to go to her apartment in the Ashram Building on Friday the 24th.

The day approached. The Mother's card came with these words:

“The Love, the Grace, the Compassion are eternally with you.
À tout à l'heure.”

She received me in the Meditation Hall upstairs after 10 a.m.

I offered her the dress I had stitched. She appreciated it and expressed her pleasure with an enigmatic smile which became her.

It was sad I could not remember what she had told me. For at that period my memory was growing feeble.

*

Time crept on. A series of cards came from the Mother along with white roses. Each card carried true wisdom:

“Who trusts the Divine never leaves the loving arms of the Divine wherever his body may be.”

“Here is Mahasaraswati with all her skill and joy in works.”

“And the Divine’s love and Grace.”

“The purity and beauty of the snow with eternal love and compassion.”

“With the eternal presence of the Divine’s love.”

“With the blessings of skill in works and everlasting love and compassion.”

*

Now came the last day of the month. It was a Friday. In the evening I had a long meditation with the Mother. During it I got tired sitting. So I quietly laid my head on her couch, near her lap and went to sleep—half conscious half unconscious. Time and again a waft of her refreshing perfume and faint scent of flowers filled my nostrils. I was wrapped in her aura.

The Mother opened her eyes and recounted to me the vision she had seen in two parts during the deep concentration:

“Child, just now I saw your psychic being coming out from the chamber of your heart. The two panels of the door were wide open, and it stood there. Over the head of the psychic a powerful white Light was circling vigorously in order to manifest.

“After that, I saw the power of Light manifesting and enveloping your whole being.

“It is really very nice.

“You can draw this vision in two parts.”

She gave me a long, intent look. Then I made my way to Golconde. I started to sketch the vision.

Sri Aurobindo has written about the soul in the *Cent. Ed.*, Vol. 22, pp. 267-68:

“The soul, representative of the central being, is a spark of the Divine supporting all individual existence in Nature; the psychic being is a conscious form of that soul growing in the evolution—in the persistent process that develops first life in Matter, mind in life, until finally mind can develop into overmind and overmind into supramental Truth. The soul supports the nature in its evolution through these grades, but is itself not any of these things.”

I am fascinated by this delightful statement by Sri Aurobindo in the *Cent. Ed.* Vol. 20, pp. 144-45-46:

“It is the very nature of the soul or the psychic being to turn towards the Divine Truth as the sunflower to the sun; it accepts and clings to all that is divine or progressing towards divinity and draws back from all that is a perversion or a denial of it, from all that is false and undivine....

“It insists on Truth, on will and strength and mastery, on Joy and Love and Beauty, but on a Truth of abiding Knowledge that surpasses the mere practical momentary truth of the Ignorance, on an inward joy and not on mere vital pleasure,—for it prefers rather a purifying suffering and sorrow to degrading satisfactions,—on love winged upward and not tied to the stake of egoistic craving or with its feet sunk in the mire, on beauty restored to its priesthood of interpretation of the Eternal, on strength and will and mastery as instruments not of the ego but of the Spirit. Its will is for the divinisation of life, the expression through it of a highest Truth, its dedication to the Divine and the Eternal.”

I cannot restrain myself from quoting the Cent. Ed., Vol. 12, p. 254:

पराञ्च खानि व्यतूणत्स्वयम्भूस्तस्मात्पराञ् पश्यति नान्तरात्मन् ।
कश्चिद्धीरः प्रत्यगात्मनमैक्षदावृत्तचक्षुरमुतत्वमिच्छन् ॥

कठोपनिषद् २. १. १

“The self-born has set the doors of the body to face outwards, therefore the soul of a man gazes outward and not at the Self within: hardly a wise man here and there, desiring immortality, turns his eyes inward and sees the Self within him.”

*

Days, months and years had passed. Now it was February 1958.

The winter in Pondicherry was like an oasis in a desert.

A painted card came from the Mother showing a humming bird sucking honey from a white Hibiscus. These words followed:

“To my dear little child Huta
With eternal love, peace and Grace.”

As always on the Ist the Mother went to the Prosperity Room in the afternoon to bless people with flowers.

She would not miss playing tennis. There was a purpose in her every action.

I showed her the drawing of her vision in her room at the Playground. She expressed her satisfaction and pleasure with a smile. Then she and I had a quiet meditation.

There was a film. I did not know which. But it was a delight to watch it in the presence of the Mother.

Early in the morning she sent me a card displaying the head of the Gandhara Buddha together with these lines:

“To my dear little child Huta
This figure of utmost compassion.
With eternal love.”

After my bath and breakfast, I went to the Mother’s Private Stores. I did some cleaning and rearranging of things in the cupboards. Frequently I got fatigued and found myself sitting near Sri Aurobindo’s chair in deep anguish. Tears ran slowly from my eyes. I did not realise how long I sat there. Then slowly I returned to Golconde.

Lunch-time was a trial for me, because I disliked eating. After the siesta I was in time to enter the Mother’s room at the Playground. She was waiting for me. At other times I had to wait outside her room till she came out of her Powder Room, refreshed.

She greeted me with her ever-charming smile. Then at once she took a pencil and a piece of paper and asked me to look up. She finished my portrait in a jiffy. While handing the paper to me she gave that sweet, breathless, enthusiastic little laugh.

My portrait gave an impression of a warrior.
Let me quote James Allen:

“For those who will fight bravely and not yield, there is triumphant victory over all the dark things of life.”

*

It was Tuesday the 4th February. The same pattern of life lay before me except that in the evening when I was with the Mother she nourished my soul with her strength.

After our concentration, she narrated to me her vision of my true self which she had seen during her trance:

“Child, you were completely indrawn. Your psychic came out and stood in the golden tulip, which was on your right side. It stood with folded hands and praying ardently to me. It was beautiful.”

Then she drew the vision on a piece of paper and asked me to make a sketch of it on a tinted paper with crayons.

The Mother gave the meaning to the Tulip:

“Blossoming—Result of trust and success.”

Sri Aurobindo has written about the ideal prayer:

“Not prayer insisting on immediate fulfilment, but prayer that is itself a communion of the mind and heart with the Divine and can have joy and satisfaction of itself trusting for fulfilment by the Divine in his own time.”

The next morning I received a card from the Mother illustrating a vase with yellow Daisies, accompanied by these words:

“To my dear little child Huta

With love and beauty, the compassion and peace that are constant gifts of the Grace.”

My receptivity became dense. I saw nothing, felt nothing, I only pondered over my small self—Ego.

Despite the unceasing strife between the outer and the inner being, my soul nestled in the Mother’s arms and witnessed the struggle. It peeped time and again through the dark clouds. The tiny flame of my love for the Mother was unextinguished.

With the ray of that light still living, I persisted in drawing pictures.

I was not yet fully out of my difficulties. Often I sank into a terrible depression. That day was not an exception when I went to the Mother in the evening. She searched my eyes and found a new sadness there. She could not take her eyes off me. Then after a few seconds she closed them. When she awoke, the description she gave me of her vision was unique. She spoke dreamily:

“Just now I saw in my vision a beautiful pond in which bloomed white lilies. Each of them bore a luminous divine face. A pink Light showered on them. The moon regarded the glory of the scene.”

While still in the reverie of this vision I took my leave and went to Golconde.

Owing to my ill-health I could not sit in the Playground Compound for long and listen to the Mother’s answers which she gave to the children and the teachers who put questions to her. As a matter of fact, I hardly understood their interchanges.

I only knew how to draw at random. In order to forget the strange and subtle anguish, I engrossed myself in drawing, but couldn’t do much. I had a pounding headache. My life seemed more useless and empty than ever. It was not destined to be all roses and moonlight. I could not go on drifting; I had to ‘wake up and live’, and living could hurt enormously.

The succeeding morning the Mother sent me a card showing a cat with closed

eyes and her three wide-eyed kittens. These lines were on it:

“To my dear little child Huta
With the power of love and the sweetness of compassion.”

I sent her two drawings which had been done the previous night. One of them was her vision which she had related to me of pond and lilies. Her comment was:

“It is very good and well composed. The light is quite as I saw it.”

I expressed in my sketch four ethereal beings in a gradation with different coloured veils with which their heads were tied. The Mother remarked:

“This is delightfully pretty—one of the best you have ever done.

“The progress in mastering the art is remarkably rapid.

“The day follows the night. The clouds vanish and the Sun reappears more glorious than ever.

I was not content either with my life or with whatever progress I made in art. I could not possibly believe what the Mother had written. I had no self-confidence. My mind ran on—thinking of most idiotic things and all the time whispering: “This life is hopeless, this is the end, it is over.”

Fear was beginning to grow amid the chaos of my thoughts.

(To be continued)

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THE INSPIRATION OF *PARADISE LOST*

(Continued from the issue of June 1985)

12

The Metaphysics of *Paradise Lost*

B. RAJAN, in his important study, *Paradise Lost and the Seventeenth Century Reader*, has observed that *Paradise Lost* was meant to be an epic of the Christian world and therefore aimed at the utmost general conformity to the body of universal Christian belief. The words "utmost general" are, of course, the operative ones. Rajan would hardly deny unorthodox traces. Milton, being what he was, would certainly not violate his own integrity by quite submerging his differences from universal Christianity; but, according to Rajan, he would never let them obtrude in a work which was intended to be a moral and religious poem, not a systematic theological treatise in verse, and whose appeal should be to every Christian mind.

No doubt, Milton's metaphysics—his vision of ultimate realities, his basic world-philosophy—comes out as universally Christian in its dramatic part: Satan's opposition in Heaven, God's way with it, Man's original state and its loss, the role of Evil in world-history, God's providential bringing of Good out of Evil through Christ's intercession. And perhaps this part has mattered most to Christendom. But it should not induce us to agree with Rajan.

For, we can show how Milton, at least once, makes no bones about his poor opinion of Roman Catholicism, the creed of the Christian majority, and how without raising explicit theological controversies he is absolutely clear in his unorthodox tenets wherever he sets them forth in a poetic manner organic to his tale.

At a point in Book III his prejudice against the Roman Church gets so much the better of him that he frames a downright condemnation of all its religious orders and instruments. The close of the picture of Limbo evidences no attempt to be unobtrusive in sectarian attitude. That "Paradise of Fools" is reserved for "all things vain", all hope-builders on vain things, all half-finished or hideous "works of Nature's hand" including not only "embryos and idiots" but also

eremites and friars,
White, black and grey, with all their trumpery.¹

And among the vain things are to be seen

Cows, hoods and habits, with their wearers tossed
And fluttered into rags, then relics, beads,
Indulgences, dispenses, pardons, bulls.²

¹ III, 474-5.

² III, 490-2.

We may gauge the extreme strength of Milton's anti-Roman bias by noting that the context in which it leaps out is perhaps the only one where he writes inconsistently with the doctrinal passages occurring from Book III onward. Here we have the suggestion of human beings existing after death in a recognisable form, even though the existence is but in a Chamber of Horrors, as it were. This suggestion, as we shall demonstrate, is at odds with Milton's heterodox solution of the problem of what a few lines earlier he calls "the other life". Ironically, horror-crowded Limbo appears to constitute his sole concession to the body of universal Christian belief in the field concerned. And it strikes us that Milton is carried away on a flight of fancy spurred by vehement antipathies, and is not altogether conscious of doctrinal implications. In all other places where he fits metaphysics into poetry, especially when some celestial being who cannot but be endowed with responsible knowledge-ability is made to talk, Milton's meaning is unequivocal. And its frequent non-conforming peculiarity should go home to anybody who is not rapt away from intellectual questions by (to quote Todd) "his sweet and solemn breathing strains" or (to quote Rajan) his "background of incantation".

We shall not involve ourselves in every metaphysical detail and turn; nor shall we more than touch on the Unitarian-Trinitarian dispute—whether Milton believes Christ to be co-essential with God or inferior to Him. We shall briefly busy ourselves with the fundamental nature of God, the relation of it to that of His Creation, the nature of man's spirit and body, man's future on earth and beyond.

Milton's God has often been mocked: He has been dubbed a sophisticated bore, a litigious autocrat, a dry-as-dust justicer. The mockery is partially correct, for a certain icy rhetoric is, time and again, put into God's mouth; but several aspects of Paternal Deity are easily overlooked and the lack of sympathy with which the modern mind receives that rhetoric leads one often to overlook the majesty and beneficence which still go with it. And even in the very first speech He makes, where He spins out in a lofty tone an unconvincing argument about foreknowledge and freewill, He ends with these quietly thrilling words:

In mercy and justice both,
Through Heaven and Earth, so shall my glory excel;
But mercy, first and last, shall brightest shine.¹

Similarly His second speech, equally self-important and severe though still lofty, ends on a grandly moving note: it is about man's sin and its sole possible expiation:

He with his whole posterity must die;—
Die he or Justice must; unless for him
Some other, able, and as willing, pay

¹ III, 132-4.

The rigid satisfaction, death for death.
 Say, Heavenly Powers, where shall we find such love?
 Which of ye will be mortal, to redeem
 Man's mortal crime, and, just, the unjust to save?
 Dwells in all Heaven charity so dear?¹

Behind the façade of the tedious weaver of logomachy, the contentious enforcer of His own wish and the stern upholder of the letter of the law, we feel—in connection with man's frailty—a fathomless heart mysteriously planning man's final good from the very beginning, a mighty mind of intrinsic grace subtly evoking on the highest level an urge towards the redemption of mortality.

Nor must we forget that in this Book III, which first presents God to us, Milton through an account of the symphony of the Angels raises up an image and concept of God which is truly magnificent:

Thee, Father, first they sung, Omnipotent,
 Immutable, Immortal, Infinite,
 Eternal King; thee, Author of all being,
 Fountain of Light, thyself invisible
 Amidst the glorious brightness where thou sit'st
 Throned inaccessible, but when thou shad'st
 The full blaze of thy beams, and through a cloud
 Drawn round about thee like a radiant shrine
 Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appear,
 Yet dazzle Heaven, that brightest Seraphim
 Approach not, but with both wings veil their eyes.²

Here we have a general definition or description of God's nature. Two later passages serve as a commentary on the expression "Author of all being". One is related to Christ's work of creation. God bids His Son go with His Power:

My overshadowing Spirit and might with thee
 I send along; ride forth, and bid the Deep
 Within appointed bounds be Heaven and Earth.
 Boundless the Deep, because I am who fill
 Infinitude; nor vacuous the space,
 Though I, uncircumscribed, myself retire,
 And put not forth my goodness, which is free
 To act or not. Necessity and Chance
 Approach not me, and what I will is Fate!³

¹ III, 210-17.² III, 372-82.³ VII, 165-73.

This is philosophical poetry at its most pregnant-puissant. Neither the sophist nor the bore is speaking. And, if the autocrat is heard, there is nothing litigious about him: we are drawn irresistibly into immeasurable profundities that leave us emptied of ourselves yet filled beyond all aching and seeking. Nothing of the justicer's dust-dry dealing confronts us: what we meet is the all-silencing wisdom, the all-brooding perfection of the Ineffable. Poetry equally fine and intense and "epiphanic" lays bare in his true intent Milton the metaphysician of God in Book VIII where Adam and God converse on the subject whether Adam should have a mate as he desires. God asks Adam:

What think'st thou, then, of me and this my state?
Seem I to be sufficiently possessed
Of happiness, or not, who am alone
From all eternity? for none I know
Second to me or like, equal much less...¹

Adam, contrasting to God Man's limited and imperfect individuality which needs "collateral love" and has to beget its like and multiply its image says:

To attain
The highth and depth of thy eternal ways
All human thoughts come short. Supreme of Things!
Thou in thyself art perfect, and in thee
Is no deficiencie found...²

...No need that thou
Should'st propagate, already infinite,
And through all numbers absolute, though One...³
Thou, in thy secrecy although alone,
Best with thyself accompanied, seek'st not
Social communication—yet, so pleased,
Canst raise thy creature to what highth thou wilt
Of union or communion, deified...⁴

These passages point to a Godhead at once transcendent and immanent and cosmic. In His essential being He is one without a second. Above all the references usually taken as balancing each other and hanging in "dubious battle" in the Unitarian-Trinitarian debate we may put the general expressions—"alone from all eternity" and "none... second... or like, equal much less"—which render God unique

¹ VIII, 403-7.

² VIII, 412-6.

³ VIII 419-21.

⁴ VIII, 427-31.

and unparalleled. The expressions are nominally related to the occasion of Adam's problem of a mate but in themselves they might go the whole way with the "Arian heresy" of Christ's inferior status in Milton's later prose treatise, *De Doctrina Christiana*.

Yes, Paternal Deity is, as another phrase has it, in His "secrecy... alone"; yet His unity is neither sterile nor self-blocked. He can be ever productive, and His oneness is essential, not numerical, not broken or abrogated by manyness. Being infinite, He runs His unity through all multiplicity and holds all "numbers" realized eternally in Himself. And even what we may consider distinct from Him—the Deep of Chaos before Creation—is really pervaded by His infinity and is nothing except Himself in a special state—a state in which His being exists with all His goodness inactive in it, withdrawn, as it were, by the freedom He eternally enjoys to put it forth or no. And when He chooses to put it forth, Creation takes place, an imposition of form upon a crude confused inconsistency of stuff. The assertion of His formative will upon that part of His substance from which He has "retired" is the creative process. Creation is not *ex nihilo*, out of nothing, as most Christians hold, but out of His own Self or, if we like, out of nothing except His own Self—His concentrated Self acting upon His Chaos-Self within His own single yet multipotent boundlessness. And in whatever He does He is neither compelled by anything outside Him nor driven haphazardly: He is sole and whole master and everything is decided by His decree.

However, His mastery and decision are to be understood in connection with His power to suspend His active virtue. By suspending this virtue He not only can leave part of Himself an undivine blindly driven Chaos: He also can leave a part of Himself divinely free from His own mastery and decision. There is the phrase:

God in Heaven

Is centre, yet extends to all...¹

Here we get a higher counterpart to what is done with regard to Chaos. In Chaos the God-essence grows passive, the goodness inactive: in Heaven a withdrawal into centrality is accomplished and yet it does not render the God-essence null in what is left outside the centre: the divine goodness extends everywhere in Heaven without sacrificing its concentration as Something Other or without everything being God in His supremacy. The result is, in the first place, God as a particular Person no less than a general Presence and, in the second place, the company of Angels—of "Gods", as Milton often calls them—in distinction from the one central Godhead. In relation to these Gods the central Divinity Himself grows passive, as it were, and transfers to them a freewill akin to His own, though on a minor and less widely powerful scale. He is still lord over all inasmuch as He can overrule whatever is willed by others; and others can freely will nothing else than what He permits. But

¹ IX, 107-8.

He does not directly initiate their willings: He curbs His own omnipotence, voluntarily allows others to will by themselves. Thus He remains sole and whole master without being a dictator. Although able to determine everything and to arrest anything, He refrains, and He allows His creatures to exercise in free action the divine essence He has put into them. But, in the very movement of refraining from letting His omnipotence hold active sway over everything, He brings to birth a certain weakness in those whom He grants freedom: their freedom to act as they wish in distinction from God is the same as a weakness in them by which, though divine, they can act undivinely and fall from grace.

All this complicated position is not stated explicitly by Milton but it is hinted at by him and perhaps most interestingly when God is made to say that nought done by Satan or by Adam was "immutably foreseen" by Him. Evidently, if anything is immutably foreseen, it cannot help happening precisely as foreseen: otherwise God would be proved essentially fallible. And if, immutably foreseen, everything would be predestined. Milton specifically says that the Maker's relation either to the Angels or to human beings in Eden is not

As if Predestination overruled
Their will, disposed by absolute decree
Or high foreknowledge.¹

However, Milton does suggest some kind of foreknowledge on God's part, and he is not very clear in distinguishing it from the power by which things would be "immutably foreseen". He leads God to state:

If I foreknew,
Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault,
Which had no less proved certain unforeknown.²

Here we seem to face a contradiction: the fault, although foreknown to be certain, was not certain because of the foreknowledge. But the contradiction can be partly resolved on our realising that the certainty known beforehand was a logical deduction from God's perfect knowledge of the nature of the agents concerned. The agents were free to choose among the possibilities open to them, but their nature was such that under a particular set of circumstances they would be certain to act in one way and not another: they would be bound by their own nature and would be free only in the sense that nothing outside that nature bound them. Thus the resolution of the contradiction depends on a change of the meaning of the word "free". I wonder whether Milton himself was quite aware of the change. The change introduces a sophistry in the speech of God; and, if we do not allow it and stick to a perfect freedom of choice among the possibilities open, the foreknowledge which God can

¹ IX, 114-6.

² IX, 118-20.

have is, according to that phrase about nothing being immutably foreseen, a mutable one. We can characterise it as the foreknowledge which, by a voluntary self-limitation, catches only an extreme probability because of God's perfect awareness of the nature of the agents—an extreme probability which amounts to practical though not absolute certainty.

Before we proceed further, we may remark that Milton's God, being the single substance that variously disposes its own infinitude as divine centre, heavenly self-extension, chaotic self-suppression, creative form-imposition, is not at all the God of common Christian belief. A pantheism is here of a special sort. It is not a pantheism such as Western thinkers posit, restricting the Supreme Existence by negating the Deity as Person and as Lord of all. It does not identify God and Nature or even God and Supernature to the exclusion of an independent over-ruling status. Miltonic pantheism is akin to the ancient Indian or Vedantic type, the realistic Advaita of the Upanishads and the Gita rather than the later illusionistic one, though even the illusionistic has the same fundamental multi-aspected theology and differs from the realistic only in its ultimate attitude to the world. Of course, Vedanta has several features not found in Milton. And it may be asserted that Milton's system remains undeveloped and contains elements which have not been worked into a final harmony. But its basis is avowedly an omnipresence of God in a literal and substantial sense: this sense conflicts with the general Christian doctrine that God is omnipresent only by having His power active everywhere as creator, sustainer, overseer and not by being essentially identical with everything He freely creates and sustains and oversees.

In regard to the problem of angelic or human freewill, Milton seems to be in line with the usual Christian thought. And, in consonance with that thought, man's freewill in his system is a necessary postulate in relation to—among other things—the punishment God metes out to him. But when we consider the content of the punishment we are brought up once more against a Milton wildly at loggerheads with conventional Christianity. For, the problem we have already mentioned of "the other 'life'" is the burning topic here. And the right answer would be the one with the best logic, considering what God's punishment is generally taken to be and that it should apply most to the inner rather than the outer being of man since it is the former which is primarily concerned in the free disobedience constituting man's sin against God. The punishment is clearly defined in the first few lines of the epic, when man's disobedience is said to have

Brought death into the World, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden...¹

"Death" is the central stroke and, as we have already found, Adam's "whole posterity must die" in payment of his sin, and this sentence can be relaxed only if God's Son incarnates himself and by his self-sacrifice pays "death for death". But, as the

¹ I, 3-4.

result of Christ's redeeming "Man's mortal crime", what do we get in place of death? In other words—to quote the poem's opening again—how does

one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful Seat?¹

To understand the nature of man's punishment it is important to grasp the character of Christ's restoration or redemption of man.

In Book III the restorative act, the redemptive process, is expounded in an explicit form for the first time and the terms used at the poem's opening gain their elucidation. God's long speech to Christ has the verses:

...be thou in Adam's room
The head of all mankind, though Adam's son.
As in him perish all men, so in thee,
As from a second root, shall be restored
As many as are restored; without thee, none.
His crime makes guilty all his sons; thy merit,
Imputed, shall absolve them who renounce
Their own both righteous and unrighteous deeds,
And live in thee, transplanted, and from thee
Receive new life. So Man, as is most just,
Shall satisfy for Man, be judged and die,
And dying rise, and, rising, with him raise
His brothers ransomed with his own dear life.²

An unmistakable meaning resides in the term "restored". The restoration is of the life that Man forfeited through Adam's sin: the fate of perishing, of dying, which this sin incurred is in principle annulled by the death of God made Man who rises from the grave and thus assures the rising of the whole death-doomed race of Adam by resort to the power of God made Man and by abnegation of all power of self expressed either in human virtue or in human vice.

Now comes the crucial question. Christ conquers death by his resurrection after being laid in the grave. He rises bodily from death and, as we learn from other passages of the same Book, he ascends to Heaven in physical form. Thus, after God's promise of grace and His demand for a sacrifice to appease Justice, Christ says:

Behold *me*, then: me for him, life for life,
I offer; on me let thine anger fall;...³

¹ I, 4-5.

² III, 285-96.

³ III, 237-8.

But I shall rise victorious, and subdue
 My vanquisher, spoiled of his vaunted spoil.
 Death his death's wound shall then receive, and stoop
 Inglorious, of his mortal sting disarmed;
 I through the ample air in triumph high
 Shall lead Hell captive maugre Hell, and show
 The powers of Darkness bound. Thou, at the sight
 Pleased, out of Heaven shalt look down and smile,
 While, by thee raised, I ruin all thy foes...¹
 Then, with the multitude of my redeemed
 Shall enter Heaven, long absent, and return,
 Father, to see thy face, wherein no cloud
 Of anger shall remain, but peace assured
 And reconciliation: wrath shall be no more...²

God speaks next. Towards the end of His speech we read of Christ's reward on his return, the despatch by him of Archangels to proclaim the Last Judgment, the hastening from everywhere of the living and of all the dead roused from their sleep by a peal, the judging of "bad men and Angels" who will be shut up in Hell for ever:

Meanwhile

The world shall burn, and from her ashes spring
 New Heaven and Earth, wherein the just shall dwell...³

The "New Earth" would mean the regaining of the blissful Seat, Eden, on a wider scale than before—an event about which we read also in Book XII with a more direct reference:

for then the Earth
 Shall be all Paradise, far happier place
 Than this of Eden...⁴

The terrestrial Paradise would continue till the time when all the happy just would go to Heaven in their new physical bodies. If these passages are taken along with the other in a literal sense, the terms definitely imply that Man's redemption is identical with Christ's conquest of death: he is freed from death by being enabled to rise, like Christ, physically from the grave and ultimately to ascend to Heaven as Christ does. No other kind of death-conquest is implied.

¹ III, 251-9.

² III, 261-5.

³ III, 334-6.

⁴ XII, 463-5.

But, if man's bodily resurrection is the saving grace and the significant prelude to his regaining of Eden on the one side and his subsequent entry into Heaven on the other, the question of questions is: "What happens to his inner being, his 'spirit', when the body dies—what happens to it in the period between the body's death and the physical resurrection?"

Ordinarily, we should suppose this crucial query in a Christian context to be concerned with an after-life in Heaven or Hell or Purgatory. And the early fanciful flight of Milton's about Limbo prompts an idea of after-life. But, when Adam is condemned to die, no after-life of any sort at all figures in his anxious thoughts. He poses the mournful argument:

Yet one doubt
Pursues me still—lest all I cannot die;
Lest that, pure breath of life, the Spirit of Man
Which God inspired, cannot together perish
With this corporeal clod. Then, in the grave,
Or in some other dismal place, who knows
But I shall die a living death? O thought
Horrid, if true! yet why? It was but breath
Of life that sinned: what dies but what had life
And sin? The body properly hath neither.
All of me, then, shall die ..¹

The concern in this speech is: either in a grave or in some other dismal substitute of a place where the dead body lies, will the "spirit" survive alongside the perished "corporeal clod", and undergo in its company "a living death"? To Milton's Adam, to Milton's Man, the idea of survival as Christians commonly conceive it is irrelevant: the single pertinent idea to be resolved is the issue raised by the school of Mortalism which had some influence in Milton's day: "Does the spirit die with the body or does it stay alive with the lifeless flesh wherever the flesh is deposited?" Milton, in his *De Doctrina Christiana* (XIII) returns an unequivocal answer: "Inasmuch as the whole man is uniformly said to consist of body, spirit and soul (whatever be the distinct provinces severally assigned to these divisions), I will show that in death, first, the whole man, and secondly, each component part, suffers privation of life.... No reason can be assigned why if God has sentenced to death the whole man that sinned, the spirit, which is the principal part offending, should be alone exempt from the appointed punishment." The terms of this answer echo some of Adam's own:

It was but breath
Of life that sinned: what dies but what had life
And sin?

¹ X, 782-92.

Adam's conclusion—"All of me, then, shall die"—is the same as Milton's in his doctrinal declaration. On the strength of it we should ascribe unqualified Mortalism to Milton of *Paradise Lost*.

Critics like Rajan are not sure on this point. They refer us to another passage which they regard as the only one bearing on Adam's "doubt". It is a speech of Christ:

On me let Death wreak all his rage.
Under his gloomy power I shall not long
Lie vanquished. Thou hast given me to possess
Life in myself for ever; by thee I live;
Though now to Death I yield, and am his due,
All that of me can die, yet, that debt paid,
Thou wilt not leave me in the loathsome grave
His prey, nor suffer my unspotted soul
For ever with corruption there to dwell.
But I shall rise victorious, and subdue
My vanquisher, spoiled of his vaunted spoil.¹

It is pleaded that the lines are not decisive. But they are actually part of a passage containing the long excerpt made by us, from which analogically we inferred that "restoration" for man can mean only resurrection like Christ's and no intermediate existence after death in another world. Our inference should hold unless we have elsewhere a statement to the contrary. None of the critics denying explicit Mortalism in the epic have produced such a statement. And they have failed to note that there is another passage which leaves no doubt of Milton's Mortalism in *Paradise Lost*. It occurs in Book XI, where God speaks of His two gifts to man:

I, at first, with two fair gifts
Created him, endowed—with Happiness
And Immortality; that fondly lost,
The other served but to eternise woe,
Till I provided Death; so Death becomes
His final remedy, and, after life
Tried in sharp tribulation, and refined
By faith and faithful works, to second life
Waked in the renovation of the just,
Resigns him up with Heaven and Earth renewed.²

Observe the three stages in man's existence mentioned here: (1) the present life, a term for refinement and preparation for the future; (2) the state of death which

¹ III. 241-51.

² XI, 57-66.

continues till what Christianity knows as the last trump, a state from which that trump will wake him and so a state resembling sleep; (3) the new or "second life" that will be ushered in by a double event, man's resurrection and the renewing of Heaven and Earth. Between the death and the resurrection there is no survival of man's spirit: there is only a long slumber-like subsistence of the spirit together with a similar condition of the body, a death of the spirit along with the body's death. Our lines clinch Milton the epic poet's Mortalism.

Of course, the general Christian reaction would be, in Adam's words: "O thought horrid!" But Adam was horrified only by the prospect of having his spirit consciously tied up with the dead decaying body. He in fact welcomed the alternative of the spirit's death. The common Christian recoils because he is appalled by the tremendous length of time during which he would be totally extinct if Mortalism were true. But Milton, with the comparison of sleep in his mind, was quite placid: when we wake up in the morning after unbroken sleep, do we consider the length of time spent in sleep to be horrid? It is as if no time at all was spent—the morning awakening is almost instantaneous after the falling asleep at night. Mortalism has no fears: it is neither an intermediate waiting nor an endless extinction, it is but the moment before the resurrection.

Perhaps we may ask Milton: "How can a substance like the spirit die?" Here we enter the whole philosophy of Milton regarding Body and Spirit. This philosophy is clearly formulated in Book V when the visiting Angel explains how it is that he is able to eat of earthly food with creatures like Adam and Eve:

O Adam, one Almighty is, from whom
 All things proceed, and up to him return,
 If not depraved from good, created all
 Such to perfection; one first matter all,
 Endued with various forms, various degrees
 Of substance, and, in things that live, of life;
 As nearer to him placed or nearer tending
 Each in their several active spheres assigned,
 Till body up to spirit works, in bounds
 Proportioned to each kind. So from the root
 Springs lightly the green stalk, from thence the leaves
 More airy, last the bright consummate flower
 Spirits odourous breathes: flowers and their fruit
 Man's nourishment, by gradual scale sublimed
 To vital Spirits aspire, to animal,
 To intellectual, give both life and sense,
 Fancy and understanding, whence the Soul
 Reason receives, and reason is her being,
 Discursive, or Intuitive; discourse

Is ofttest yours, the latter most is ours,
 Differing but in degree, of kind the same.
 Wonder not, then, what God for you saw good
 If I refuse not, but convert, as you,
 To proper substance; time may come when men
 With Angels may participate, and find
 No inconvenient diet, nor too light fare:
 And from these corporal nutriments perhaps
 Your bodies may at last turn all to Spirit,
 Improved by tract of time, and winged ascend
 - Ethereal, as we, or may at choice
 Here or in Heavenly Paradises dwell;
 If ye be found obedient, and retain
 Unalterably firm his love entire
 Whose progeny you are...¹

This passage should be taken in association with what we have concluded from Milton about God's Self. God in His specific Godliness concentrates Himself in supreme transcendence, the central Divinity; but, in an unformed state, all is God, for He is the one infinite being. When He applies His creative will to make form, all existences come forth: they "proceed" from Him, as our quotation puts it, in a vast variety but all linked by their common being-stuff, so to speak, the "one first matter", and constituting an ordered hierarchy. Within this hierarchy there can be progression from one degree to another, right up to Godhead, so long as things are "not depraved from good". Body and Spirit are, therefore, the same "matter", but only different grades or intensities of it. Body is not inherently mortal: it can enjoy immortality if it retains the goodness given it by God. In fact, immortality is an attribute of the bodies of Adam and Eve, side by side with happiness. Conversely, mortality is not impossible to Spirit, except when—as we shall shortly see—they happen to be Heavenly and can only be annihilated by God. Earthly spirits are immortal if they stay "good": the moment they lose the God-granted goodness they can be as mortal as earthly bodies.

Thus Mortalism is perfectly logical for Milton, once depravity sets in. And, naturally, what we may term Immortalism is just as logical, provided depravity is absent. Nor is that all, on the positive side. Within the Immortalism of both body and spirit, there is the wide range of progress opened up by Milton: human bodies can all turn to spirit, gain wings and move about freely in earthly or heavenly Paradises.

Here is a doctrine, however crude, of physical transformation, by which the human form can be completely spiritualized and live a divine life, the life of "Gods". Of course, to Milton, such a life was possible to unfallen Man and cannot be lived

¹ V, 469-503.

now by any means: it can come about only at the Resurrection for those who have passed their days virtuously before death. But the concept is of curious interest in view of the "Integral Yoga" propounded by modern India's greatest spiritual figure, Sri Aurobindo who, by the way, was educated at Milton's own University, Cambridge, and has written, among other things, the sole full-blown epic that, after *Paradise Lost*'s 10,565 lines, has seen the light in English: *Savitri, A Legend and a Symbol*, whose lines add up to 23,803. Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga envisages a total transformation—not only the liberation of our inner being into the Infinite and Eternal but also a divinisation of our entire nature culminating in a spiritualised earthly body. The bodily transformation would be the result of a descent or manifestation of the archetypal form of man, the divine original "truth-body", known to the ancient Vedanta as the *kāraṇa śarīra*, "the causal body", secretly underlying the *sūkṣma śarīra*, "the subtle body" as well as the *sthūla śarīra*, "the gross body".

Just as the doctrine, in *Paradise Lost*, of God's literal and substantial omnipresence has broad affinities to the Vedantic multi-aspected pantheism, so also the doctrine of body turning all to spirit has a broad suggestion of the profoundest modern development from the Vedantic vision of man's triple-bodied existence.

As to what would be the nature of the body turned all to spirit, Milton offers several vivid descriptions when he tells us of the matter composing the Angels, the Spirits, whether obedient or rebellious. First we hear of the marvellous capacities of their pure essence:

For Spirits, when they please,
Can either sex assume, or both; so soft
And uncompounded is their essence pure,
Not tied or manacled with joint or limb,
Nor founded on the brittle strength of bones,
Like cumbrous flesh; but, in what shape they choose,
Dilated or condensed, bright or obscure,
Can execute their airy purposes,
And works of love or enmity fulfil.¹

Next we learn of their invulnerableness and are told again of their capacities. A further elaboration is made on the theme of their being "Not tied or manacled with joint or limb, / Nor founded on the brittle strength of bones". The positive aspect of this freedom is now briefly sketched, with the consequence of being invulnerable as well as infinitely plastic:

Spirits that live throughout
Vital in every part—not, as frail Man,
In entrails, heart or head, liver or reins,

¹ I 423,-31.

Cannot but by annihilating die;
 Nor in their liquid texture mortal wound
 Receive, no more than can the fluid air :
 All heart they live, all head, all eye, all ear,
 All intellect, all sense; and as they please
 They limb themselves, and colour, shape, or size
 Assume, as likes them best, condense or rare.¹

Finally, we come to know of the wonderful relationship among themselves, that the Spirits are capable of. Adam asks Raphael:

Love not the Heavenly Spirits, and how their love
 Express they—by looks only, or do they mix
 Irradiance, virtual or immediate touch?²

Milton continues:

To whom the Angel, with a smile that glowed
 Celestial rosy-red, Love's proper hue,
 Answered—"Let it suffice thee that thou know'st
 Us happy, and without love no happiness.
 Whatever pure thou in the body enjoy'st
 (And pure thou wert created) we enjoy
 In eminence, and obstacle find none
 Of membrane, joint, or limb, exclusive bars.
 Easier than air with air, if Spirits embrace,
 Total they mix, union of pure with pure
 Desiring, nor restrained conveyance need
 As flesh to mix with flesh, or soul with soul..."³

We may well end our survey of the metaphysics of *Paradise Lost* with these words and particularly one phrase from the passage. This phrase quintessences the beatific life of the Spirits and does it with a Dantesque economy of mingled sweet and severe:

Let it suffice thee that thou know'st
 Us happy, and without love no happiness.

We find in the expression a felicitous balance to the one which, though emanating from the mouth of Satan, is still revelatory of the Archangelic in him, representative of "a mind not to be changed by place or time":⁴

¹ VI, 344-53.

² VIII, 615-7.

³ VIII, 618-29.

⁴ I, 254.

Fall'n Cherub, to be weak is miserable,
Doing or suffering...¹

Strength that saves one from being miserable, love that leads one to being happy—the two in their highest form would make the perfect life in the Miltonic vision, their highest form which would show them as part of a constant communion with Divinity. Such a life Milton saw not only in Heaven eternally but also on earth at the end of time and mingling even throughout time with earthly existences in an unremitting movement towards God:

Millions of spiritual Creatures walk the Earth
Unseen, both when we wake, and when we sleep:
All these with ceaseless praise his works behold
Both day and night...²

Milton's "spiritual Creatures" provide the followers of Sri Aurobindo, of whom the present author is one, with a model for the fulfilment of their own Yogic attempt here and now at turning their bodies "all to spirit". They may regard those unseen millions as kindred to their own archimages, so to speak, active secretly upon earth and waiting to be turned in them all to body.

(Concluded)

K. D. SETHNA

¹ I, 157-8.

² IV, 677-80.

FURTHER STUDIES IN INTEGRAL PSYCHOLOGY

(Continued from the issue of June 1985)

THE INTEGRAL PERSONALITY

(I)

Yoga as Psychology

INDIAN culture has a strong strain of Psychology in it. Ideas of growth, evolution, individual variation, levels of development, personal faith and worship, toleration and understanding for others' faith and ways of life, various pursuits of perfection and liberation are all grounded in the psychological conditions of the life of the individual and society. The 'Adhikarabheda', the 'differential capacity', is the familiar Indian concept representing these ideas. A man's duty, work, faith, worship, education, pursuit of perfection must necessarily take account of it, be based on it, if an individual or a social unit is to have a true and effective growth in life. If this is ignored, we shall not have growth, but a superimposition, a formal structure, which will tend to create an external uniformity of behaviour, but not a genuine enrichment of experience. And the result will be a deep inner conflict and dissatisfaction. The ideas of reincarnation, of the classes or castes in society, the *varnas* or the four *ashramas* or stages or divisions of life are founded on profound psychological insights and actual experience. The growth of the soul, the spiritual fact of life, is the real thing and our ordinary mental, moral, aesthetic growth and its experiences are contributory factors to this basic growth. And this basic growth needs long stretches of time, which can only be possible through repeated incarnations. Life is essentially an adventure of experience aiming at an infinite enrichment of itself. And we pursue it through fresh births and varied situations of life.

Psychology is thus a basic trend of Indian culture and deeply embedded in the religious and philosophical thought and life of the country. But in the latter-day traditional phase of our life it has not been there as a living fact and, therefore, got encrusted with fossilised matter. Our organisation of knowledge has followed a different scheme from that of the West, has had its own advantages and disadvantages, laying a greater emphasis on the unity of 'the whole' than on the separation of the disciplines and branches of knowledge. Hence psychology figures in our literature in a form of its own. It is there in the works of philosophy (Darshanas), of literary criticism (Rasa Shastras), of medicine (Ayurveda) and in many other kinds of writings. But the vast literature on yoga is primarily a psychological creation. Yogic writing is all comparable to modern psychology, whether it exists in the contexts of philosophy, religion, literature, medicine, etc. or in independent treatises of Hatha yoga, Raja yoga, Bhakti yoga, Jnana yoga, Karma yoga, Tantra and other innumerable unnamed Sadhanas up till the contemporary *Synthesis of Yoga* of Sri Aurobindo.

However, its standpoint is not exactly that of modern psychology. Its standpoint is that of practical pursuit of self-perfection, or self-fulfilment, from different points of view and by different techniques and processes, physical, physiological, social, religious, philosophical, psychological. It considers what man is, what he can become and how he can reach his fulness. And in doing so it assumes all freedom, it accepts no limitation on its search and research. Such has been the daring, the courage, the vision displayed by the explorations in this field throughout the long history of our cultural life that we can truly call this our people's most favourite line of work and achievement.

And is the same not the real business of human culture? That is, to become more and more what it can become, to achieve an increasing enrichment of itself or a progressive realisation of its potentialities and possibilities. This is exactly what education too needs. The problems of one state of growth can always be solved through the development of higher capacities or the unfoldment of new potentialities. Do our contemporary culture and education through their state of chronic crisis not seem to call for the growth of new capacities, and does yoga with its insight into the deeper potentialities of human nature not suggest an answer? Here is, indeed, an inviting and promising avenue for exploration.

Now, what is human personality as we come to know it from the varied researches of yoga? Indeed, most varied have been the approaches of yoga and most varied the pathways to self-perfection. But there is a wide agreement among them so far as the conception of personality is concerned. There is the ordinary form of it, which consists of the body, the numerous impulses of life seeking varied ordinary satisfaction and the thinking activity, which attempts to organise life and environment and even contemplates ultimate truths. All this form of personality is outward-turned (*i.e.*, Bahirmukha) and is environment-dependent and environment-involved. This is the normal outer personality of yoga. But when an individual, through a long process of self-detachment from identification with things external, seeks an inward growth, he ultimately contacts a self-existent deep inner core of consciousness, which is innately luminous and delightful. This inner or really inmost consciousness is a complete new world of thought, feeling and will, possessed of self-existence, independence, creativity, mastery of body, life and mind and the environment. It opens up a life of intrinsic values, a life of positive pursuit and enjoyment of these values and thus gives to the life of external values a perspective altogether new and different. This is the essential and central personality of yoga, which sets off the outer personality in the role of outer instrumentation.

This deeper personality is an integrated fact and primarily attuned to the perception of wholeness of things. Unity is to it a spontaneous fact, not a matter of inference or a high ideal. Positive pursuit of unity and its progressive realisation is its natural activity.

In between the two lies a region of mind, life and body, which is not so particularised and limited as is the normal outer personality, but much wider tending to

be universal and capable of freer contact and communication with other minds, lives and bodies. Telepathy, telekinesis and the like are the capacities belonging to this part of personality. This is truly the inner personality in relation to the outer, but not really the self-existent personality. It is yet environment-dependent and environment-involved and subject to the ordinary dualities of life.

The inner and the inmost personalities are two wide realms or domains of the integral personality of man which one discovers through a persistent effort of inner penetration and exploration. And they bring into concrete reality and enjoyment most interesting new values of life, giving to the ordinary values of life a novel context.

However, if one follows a line of upward growth from within one's normal consciousness one discovers ascending ranges of consciousness, wide, full of peace and unity, increasing in luminosity and commanding universal existence. These ranges possess a striking largeness and universality and overall direction and command. Their values are again characteristically their own. These fields together constitute the superconscious of yoga.

'Samadhi' ordinarily consists in ascending to it with the intention of accepting it as the sole truth and of rejecting the ordinary consciousness of external reality. But this intention is not essential to the discovery of the superconscious. One can also seek it to illumine, to reorient and to transform the ordinary personality. However, there is also a Samadhi in the region of the heart. That Samadhi too can be sought exclusively for its own sake as well as for a transformation of the outer personality.

In addition to these major domains of personality, the outer, the inner, the central and the higher, there is also a lower domain, the realm of the subconscious and the unconscious. This is much marked by obscurity, disorderliness, self-will and obstinacy and it exercises an extensive determining power over conscious life and behaviour. It is a large store-house of all past experiences greatly influencing our present and future experiences.

Such is the large picture of our personality as clearly elaborated and explained and widely supported by ample data of yogic experience as expounded in the writings of Sri Aurobindo. But in different forms, implicit or explicit, and in parts these are present in all yogic pursuits and all attempts at exceeding the normal personality and achieving something higher and greater. Sri Aurobindo in his 'Synthesis of Yoga' has achieved a coherent systematization of the various discoveries and realisations of the different yogic pursuits.

It may also be stated here that this conception of Integral Personality is based upon positive facts of experience, which have been confirmed repeatedly in different individuals in contemporary experience at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry and elsewhere.

Western psychology is a young science but a highly progressive science and it tends to meet the yogic psychology of personality, the sensations, perceptions,

instincts, habits, thinking, imagination, memory, emotion and the organisation of self-hood. It has followed the models of physics, chemistry, biology and tended to become experimental and quantitative. But all that has led to a situation in which a representative psychologist, Gardner Murphy, feels impelled to say that we know a great deal about the reactions of personality, but practically nothing as to what personality by itself is. Now, obviously such an observation reflects the awareness that psychology needs to know personality as it really is. This is, in fact, a favourable circumstance for a mutual appreciation by Western Psychology and Yogic Psychology

Freud has added a completely new dimension, that of the subconscious, to Western psychology, and between psycho-analysis and yoga there are many interesting points of contact though the fundamental approaches are in fact opposed. The psychoanalytic doctrine that the symptoms of the disease are willed by the patient is matched to the yogic principle that nothing happens to a person unless there is a basis for it in his will. Again, the principle that the psychoanalyst must first be himself psychoanalysed before trying to psychoanalyse others is parallel to the yogic ideal that one who is not himself liberated should not try to liberate others. The opposition in the basic standpoints too is as strong as the similarity in the above points. To psychoanalysts the subconscious is the basis, the cause of the disorder and the cure too is to be found or achieved through an exploration of the same. To yoga the superconscious is the focus of interest and it is through a contact with it and its collaboration that perfection and harmony in life have to be achieved.

It is, however, in Jung that Western psychology comes nearest to yogic psychology. His affirmation of a 'centre' of personality, on the basis of dream analysis, particularly what he calls the Mandala dreams and certain other facts, is strikingly similar to the yogic conception of the central psychic or spiritual personality. This 'centre' Jung affirms is other than the normal ego-personality and its various dualities. His book *The Integration of the Personality* gives a lucid and convincing account of what this 'centre' of personality is.

Recent Western developments of parapsychology and experiments in telepathy show many further points of contact between the two systems of psychology.

William McDougall, an eminent Western psychologist, once observed that if telepathy came to be proved then psychology will have to be rewritten. Western psychology is all based on the assumption that consciousness is a function of the brain and, therefore, necessarily dependent upon physical instrumentation of the sense-organs. In telepathy consciousness becomes a fact by itself capable of acting on another consciousness by itself independently of physical instrumentation. For yoga it is the outer personality or its consciousness, which is dependent on the body. So is also the subconscious. But the inner personality comprises wider functions and the central and the higher domains of consciousness are independent facts.

All this raises a great prospect of a wide and integrated knowledge of personality, of a psychology slowly taking shape but yet to emerge into its full form.

Now let us contemplate how such a fuller psychology is likely to affect human life and culture and in particular the problems of education and mental health.

What is exactly the nature of the crisis that our life as a whole is facing today? The crisis takes on many shapes, political, economic, social, educational, etc., but is it not a fact that at the root it is all a matter of certain values of life, which we cling to yet which are not as abundant as we would wish and even when they are abundant they are not wholly satisfying. The values we seek and cling to are the values of the outer personality, the values of the wherewithal of life, material, social, intellectual, aesthetic or the values of the body, life and mind. Now these are in their nature limited and then the satisfactions they afford are superficial and transitory. But not knowing much about the intrinsic values of life, the values of the spirit, which are in their nature unlimited and which satisfy too in a profound manner, we take the extrinsic values of body, life and mind as entire and ultimate, and hence all the struggle, the interminable conflict and the persistent dissatisfaction of life.

The contemporary crisis is virtually a crisis of personality: the surface personality being cultivated too exclusively, being taken as the whole man and full satisfaction sought from it which it cannot give.

The yogic psychology of personality clears up the entire situation in a surprising manner. We have in our recent culture and civilisation laid too exclusive an emphasis on the outer personality and its life. But there are other domains and dominions of personality and other systems of values too. And if they are taken note of and duly cultivated, then new values would emerge, which would afford larger and deeper satisfactions and give to the extrinsic values a new modest proportion in life as a whole.

The contemporary crisis is a matter of great perplexity to us today and it is extremely interesting how clear and convincing the whole situation becomes if we look at it in the light of a fuller view of human personality.

The problem of education has at this time become particularly serious because it involves a widespread dissatisfaction and revolt in the youth the world over. In exasperation we talk of a radical change in education. But the radical change needed is really not in outer forms, processes and the content of education so much as in the approach and the total perspective of it. That is, we need to keep in view the fuller personality, accord to the essential personality of intrinsic values its proper first place and give to the outer personality its own due place as the instrumentation of life. With this new radical revaluation of personality we need to think out and reorganise our entire educational life. This too is made amply clear by a yogic view of personality.

However, of all contemporary problems the most serious is perhaps that of mental health or the fear of becoming unsound in mind on a large scale. This fear has not yet assumed serious proportions, but its possibility is completely in view and that is of all things the most dangerous since it pertains to man's sanity itself. There cannot be a more damaging commentary on a civilisation than that it is tending to drive man insane.

Here again yogic psychology has something clear and convincing to offer. If

the outer personality is the whole man, the numberless desires, which are the governing fact of the outer personality, become all important. And these desires are very self-willed, insistent and mutually contradictory. Inner conflict, anxiety, tension, frustration become unavoidable. It is only when deeper and more abiding inner satisfactions of the self-existent joy within, of love and beauty and goodness become available that we are able to take a relatively freer and non-insistent attitude towards our desires, their satisfactions and non-satisfactions. Thus as a wide preventive measure we need to bring to the fore in our public life the vision of the essential central fact of human personality and its intrinsic values and their limitless satisfactions. Such a general trend will minimise the importance given to desires, make desires easier of management and reduce inner conflict and tension.

In the matter of the treatment and cure of mental disorders too yogic psychology has a capital idea to contribute. Now the problem here is to restore inner peace and harmony to the patient. What we ordinarily do is to find out the causes of conflict and tension and then try to eliminate them. The strict psychological procedures try to raise the unconscious conflict to the level of consciousness and then let a new relatively wholesome orientation to life's situation come about or otherwise help the patient to take a more reasonable and less insistent attitude towards life and its problems. The various physical procedures adopted, *e.g.*, shock therapy, ignore the psychological causes and try to bring about certain neurological conditions, which tend to put away the mental symptoms concerned. But this does not bring about the mental synthesis needed for a proper guidance of life. The diversion therapy diverts attention to other unharmed channels.

They all have their relative values and serviceability. Now, the contribution which yogic psychology can make is this. There are domains of consciousness in man where peace and harmony obtain as normal qualities and functions. If their influence and action could be made available to the disrupted outer personality then peace and harmony could come into it and in a more effective form and maybe more quickly too.

We may now conclude that yoga as the most devoted and dedicated approach to personality and its perfection, without any assumptions and limitations and with its great tradition, is perhaps the most promising pursuit of the study of man and his true and full nature. And our conception of man determines the character and the quality of our cultural life as well as our educational pursuit. Besides, the problems of one part of personality can best be solved by a reference to the other parts of personality. An exploration of the largest resources of personality is, therefore, of the utmost importance.

May Yoga and Western psychology come closer together soon. They would enrich each other by doing so and help in the emergence of the psychology of the integral man.

(To be continued)

INDRA SEN

AN UNUSUAL DARSHAN OF SRI AUROBINDO

At the beginning of June 1947—the date may be 4th or 5th—I was inspired (so I would say now) to see Sri Aurobindo. I waited for a second and then went up to Pavitra's room. Nobody was there. I moved on to the passage leading from it towards Sri Aurobindo's room. Mrityunjaya was standing outside the room where the Mother used to spend some time during the day. He caught hold of me. I had a short struggle with him, but I broke free.

Thus I moved on to Sri Aurobindo's room. Sri Aurobindo was sitting on his bed. I stood, respectfully, at a distance. He told me—not by spoken word but mentally—that the Mother's permission was necessary for coming and seeing him; and he gave a hint on my sadhana. This must have all taken not more than a minute.

Then I went down by the staircase near Amrita's room. The Mother was giving "Blessings". I went towards Nolini's room. I had some yellow "Service" flowers, from which I selected five or six to offer to the Mother. When my turn came to go to her I gave them into her hand. I have the recollection that the Mother said something like: "You should be obedient."

I bowed and moved away from there.

INDUBHAI

Editor's Note

Here is the sequel from Mrityunjaya. When Indubhai broke free from him and went in the direction of Sri Aurobindo's room, Mrityunjaya felt he should follow him to see what was happening. On reaching Sri Aurobindo's door he saw the Master. It was a serenely magnificent sight. But nobody else was found. Mrityunjaya had not been quick enough. Now he went down the staircase to the Meditation Hall. There he saw Indubhai bowing to the Mother. So he went up again and waited for the Mother to come up after the "Pranam". On meeting her he told her of what had happened. She said: "He was very restless." Then, with a smile, she added: "So you too had a darshan of Sri Aurobindo!"

THE MOTHER'S MINISTRY OF MANAGEMENT

Note: In this article the author has taken Sri Aurobindo's words in several places and dovetailed them with his own. Those acquainted with Sri Aurobindo's writings will recognise the incorporated matter.

Introduction

MANAGEMENT is an exercise in harmonising men, material and methods towards the fulfilment of goals leading to human development, social benefit and global welfare. However, MAN remains the basic factor in any field of human endeavour—it may be home, hospital, business, industry or any other profit/non-profit socio-economic organisation. By MAN we do not mean here only a 'lump' of bones and flesh, nor an 'amalgam' of hands, feet and physical organs, not even a 'mental animal' contained in a physical frame, but a 'conscious creature' designed by a Divine Craftsman. He has a spirit and a soul. Management of man, therefore, should not aim at mere regulation and control of his outer appearance but it should also aim at developing his inner consciousness, his soul and his divinity.

In her scheme of management, the Mother of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram emphasised the inner aspects of man and material and sought to develop the inner being for manifestation in the physical. In her management process, consciousness was her approach, harmony was her tool and perfection was her aim. Her approach to management was not sectoral or piecemeal, but experimental for the integral. Success was not her criterion. For outward manifestation she would develop the inner consciousness. For prosperity in living, life aspects should be prosperous, consciousness needs to be developed and the approach should be based on the right attitude.

Faith and sincerity were the two prerequisites of her management philosophy. Her organisational hierarchy was based on equality, trust, capacity and the nature of the individual. Centralisation of authority, if at all, was meant to diffuse and decentralise functions and the power to perform them. Her ways were subtle, her base was spiritual and her approach was love. Fear was alien to her scheme of work and opening to the inner being was her impetus for the start.

With such traits of her management system, the Mother managed the Ashram and its affiliates laying firm foundations for the welfare of posterity. Let us study some of these management processes to be emulated for our management policies and practices.

Central Authority

The Mother was the sole authority and all work could be done under her authority and according to her free decision. She was free to use the capacities of each separately or together according to what was best for the work and best for the worker.

A sadhak had to act under the Mother, carry out her instructions, work according to the ideas she had given him. She had laid down the lines on which he must work and whatever he did must be on those lines. He was not free to change them or to do anything contrary to the ideas given him. Where he made decisions in details of the work, they had to be in consonance with these ideas. He had to report to the Mother, to take her sanction and accept her decisions on all matters. If the Mother's decisions were contrary to his proposals he had still to accept them and carry them out.

The Mother had her reasons for her decisions. She had to look at work as a whole without regard to one department or branch alone and with a view to the necessities of the work and management. Whatever work was done, one had always to learn to subordinate or put aside one's own ideas and preferences about things concerning it and act for the best under the conditions and decisions laid down by her.

Hierarchy

None could regard or treat another member of the Ashram as his subordinate. If he was in-charge, he could only regard the others as his associates and helpers in the work, and he should not try to dominate or impose on them his own ideas and personal fancies but only see to the execution of the will of the Mother. None could regard himself as a subordinate, even if he had to carry out instructions given through another or to execute under supervision the work he had to do.

All would try to work with harmony, thinking only of how best to make the work a success; personal feelings could not be allowed to interfere, for this was a most frequent cause of disturbance, failure or disorder in the work.

Her guide-line was: Let others be influenced by the rightness of your attitude and work smoothly with you, if through any weakness or perversity they create difficulties, the effect will fall back on them and you will feel no disturbance or trouble.

Decentralisation of work

It was not physically possible for the Mother to allocate work directly to each worker and exercise a direct control. So for every department, there was to be a head who would consult her in all important matters and would report everything to her, but in minor matters he was autonomous and need not always come for a decision—and neither was that possible. But it did not mean that the head of the department was to be considered as a superior person or that he had to surrender to his ego. But those who had charge could insist on the execution of their arrangements.

It was the Mother who selected the heads of the departments for her purpose in order to organise the whole. All the lines of the work, all the work had to be arranged by her and the heads trained to observe her methods and it was only

afterwards that she stepped back and let the whole thing proceed on her lines but with a watchful eye on it always. The heads were to carry out her policy and instructions and report everything to her and she would often modify what they would do when she would think fit.

The head of a department was also supposed to act according to the Mother's directions—or in their spirit when he was left free. If he acted according to his mere fancy or obeyed his own personal likes and dislikes or misused his trust for his personal satisfaction or convenience he was answerable for any failure in the work that may result or wrong spirit or clash or confusion or false atmosphere.

The Mother did not usually think about things herself or take the initiative and direct each one in each instance about what they would do or how, unless there was some special occasion for doing so. She would not do so, in fact, in any department of work. She would just keep her eye generally on work, give sanction or refuse sanction, intervene when she thought necessary. There were only a few matters in which she would take the initiative, plan, design, give special and detailed orders. Work done in this way was as much work done according to the Mother's will as anything initiated, thought of and planned wholly and in detail by her alone.

Independent work does not exist in the Ashram. All is organised and inter-related—neither the heads of the departments nor the workers are independent. To learn subordination and co-operation was always necessary for all collective work; without it there would be chaos. It was impossible for the Mother to arrange the work according to personal considerations, as then all work would become impossible.

Principle of Action

The Mother's principle of action was not to undertake useless and unnecessary work merely in order to keep the men employed. She did not intervene at every moment to check the persons at work. A standard had been set, they had been warned against waste, a framework had been created and for the rest they were expected to learn and grow out of their weaknesses by their own consciousness and will. In the organisation of work there was formerly a formidable waste due to workers following their own fancy almost entirely without respect for the Mother's will. That was largely checked by reorganisation. But still the waste continued. Here, too, the Mother did not always insist. She watched and observed, intervened outwardly more than in the individual lives of the sadhaks and still left room for them to grow by consciousness and experience and the lessons of their own mistakes and often employed an inner in preference to an outer pressure.

Material Responsibility

There were two foundations for the material life with the Mother. The first was

that one is a member of an Ashram founded on the principle of self-giving and surrender. One belongs to the Divine; in giving, one gives not what is one's own but what already belongs to the Divine. There was thus no question of payment or return, no bargain, no room for demand or desire. She was under no obligation to act according to the mental standards or vital desires and claims of the people; she was not obliged to use a democratic equality in her dealings. She would deal with each according to his true need or the best line in his spiritual progress. Personal demands and desires could not be imposed on her. If one was not ready to bear the discipline, he or she could remain apart and meet his/her expenses. There was then no discipline for him on the material plane and there was no material responsibility for the Mother.

Consciousness-Approach

The second foundation was the consciousness-approach. While dealing with men or material, the Mother was very particular about this. She felt that physical things have a consciousness within them which feels and responds to care and is sensitive to careless touch and rough handling. To know or feel that and learn to be careful of them is a great progress of consciousness. It was always so that the Mother felt and dealt with physical things and they remained with her much longer and in a better condition than with others and gave their full use.

The Mother believed in beauty as a part of spirituality and divine living. She believed that physical things have the Divine Consciousness underlying them as much as living things. She believed that all physical things have an individuality of their own and ought to be properly treated, used in the right way, not misused or improperly handled or hurt or neglected so that they perish soon and lose their full beauty or value. She would feel the consciousness in them and was in so much sympathy with them that what in other hands may be spoilt or wasted in a short time would last with her for years or decades.

Aesthetics and Orderliness

In management of material things, the Mother had a superb sense of aesthetic values. It was on this basis that she had planned Golconde. First, she wanted a height of architectural beauty, and in this she succeeded—architects and people with architectural knowledge have admired it with enthusiasm as a remarkable achievement; one spoke of it as the finest building of its kind he had seen, with no equal in all Europe or America; and a French architect, pupil of a great master, said it executed splendidly the idea which his master had been seeking for but failed to realise. In addition the Mother wanted all the objects in it, the rooms, the fittings, the furniture to be individually artistic and to form a harmonious whole. This, too, was done with great care. Moreover, each thing was arranged to have its own use, for there was a place for each thing and there could be no mixing up or confused or

wrong use. But all this had to be kept up and carried out in practice; for it was easy for people living there to create a complete confusion and misuse and to bring everything to disorder and ruination in a short time. That was why the rules were made. The Mother hoped that if the right people were accommodated there or others trained to a less rough and ready living than is common, her idea could be preserved and the wasting of all the labour and expense avoided.

Harmony

In the living patterns and behaviour of daily life, the Mother greatly emphasised harmony in thoughts and actions and harmony in man with man. She believed that in relations with others, when incidents occurred, it would be much better for one not to take the standpoint that he was all in the right and the others were all in the wrong. It would be wiser to be fair and just in reflection, seeing where you have gone astray, and even laying stress on your own fault and not theirs. This leads to more harmony in your relations with others. At any rate, it would be more conducive to your inner progress which is more important than to be top-dog in a quarrel. Neither is it well to cherish a spirit of self-justification and self-righteousness and a wish to conceal from yourself your faults or your errors.

Where there was a big work with several people acting together for a purpose which was not common to all or personal to any, it could not be done unless there was a fixed arrangement involving subordination and discipline in each worker. It was not possible to get the work done if each and every worker insisted on being independent and directly responsible to the Mother or on doing things in his own way.

Mistakes come from people bringing their ego, their personal feelings (likes and dislikes), their sense of prestige or their convenience, pride, sense of possession into work. The right way was to feel that the work was not only yours, but the work of others as well and to carry it out in such a spirit that there would be general harmony. Harmony cannot be brought about by external organisations only, though a more and more perfect organisation is necessary; inner harmony there must be or else there will always be clash and disorder.

Financial Management

About the financial arrangements: it was an arduous and trying work for the Mother to keep up the Ashram, with its ever-increasing numbers, to make both ends meet and at times to prevent deficit budgets and their results. Carrying on anything of this magnitude without any settled income could not have been done if there had not been the working of a Divine Force. The Mother started charging visitors for accommodation and food because she had expenses to meet but she charged in fact less than her expense. The Mother never objected to people

who "cannot pay" residing and visiting the Ashram without paying—she would expect payment only from visitors who could pay. She did really object strongly to the action of rich visitors who could pay but who had come, spent money lavishly on purchases etc. and went off without giving anything—that is all.

According to the Mother, money was not meant to bring more money—money was meant to increase the wealth, prosperity and the productiveness of a group, a country, or, preferably, the whole earth. As with all forces and all powers, it is by activity and circulation that it grows and intensifies, not by accumulation and stagnation.

Waste

Free expenditure, according to the Mother, was not always waste. To have a higher standard than was current in a backward place was not necessarily a waste. In matters of building and maintenance of buildings as in others of the same order the Mother had from the very beginning set up a standard and she would not believe in the use of the cheapest possible materials, the cheapest labour and in disregarding appearance, allowing things to go shabbily or making only patch-work to keep them up.

If the higher standard was being kept, it was not for the glory of anyone—the Ashram, or the Mother—but from another point of view which was not mental but could only be fully appreciated by the higher consciousness.

Austerity

The Mother did not provide the sadhaks with special comforts. She did not think the desires, fancies, likings, preferences should be satisfied—in Yoga people had to overcome these things. The first rule of Yoga in the Ashram was that the sadhak must be content with what comes to him—much or little. If things are there, he must be able to use them without attachment or desire, if they were not he must be indifferent to their absence.

Work

No work was high or low, according to the Mother. As for the work, the inner development, psychic and spiritual, was surely of the first importance and work merely as work was something quite minor. But work as an offering to the Divine becomes itself a means and a part of the inner development. One can see that more as the psychic grows within. It was not the work which was important, in the scheme of the Mother, but it was the spirit with which the work was done. The Mother has said—Work through the human body is the best prayer to the Divine, but that work must be done in the right spirit and with a right attitude.

Intimacy

The Mother always wanted to be very close to and intimate with the sadhaks/workers, to have a close communion with each of them on an inner plane. If she would ask you to tell her everything, it was not in order that she might give you directions in every detail for your compliance. It was in order that there might grow up the complete intimacy in which you would be entirely open to her, so that she might pour more and more and continuously and at every point the Divine Force into you which would increase the Light in you, perfect your action, deliver and develop your nature. Besides, it would help her to give whenever needed for necessary direction, the necessary help or warning—not always by words—more often by a silent intervention and pressure. This was her way of dealing with those who were open to her. Especially, if the psychic contact was there, it would get the intimation at once and see things clearly and receive the help, the necessary direction or warning.

Conclusion

To conclude, the Mother's ministry of management was based on the right attitude of man, his consciousness towards his inner being and his faith in and sincerity to the Divine. The Mother was not a rigid disciplinarian. On the other hand, she had met whatever mass of indiscipline, disobedience, self-assertion, revolt that had surrounded her, even vituperation at times with constant leniency, tolerant patience and kindness. A rigid disciplinarian would not have treated things like that. It was only the Mother's authority, the frame of work she had given and her skill in getting incompatibilities to act together that had kept things going. To quote the observation of a casual visitor—

“Everywhere in the Ashram the visitor feels the atmosphere of an all-pervading executive genius. Everything is done in the most perfect way. The combination of economy, efficiency, pleasantness and cleanliness is captivating. Nowhere is there any waste of substance. The blend of nature with engineering and art is exquisite and there is scarcely a building without its little garden of green grass, plants, foliage and enchanting flowers.”

Mr Eisenberg, the American expert on Management who had visited the Ashram, said to himself—“Amazing experiment, most amazing experiment!”

India, says Sri Aurobindo, ‘preserves the Knowledge that preserves the world’. India has had a rich heritage and any management system, to be rich and enduring, must be based on this Knowledge and Heritage.

Inaugurating a “Round-Table on India” organised by the Geneva-based European Management Forum in New Delhi, Shri Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister of India asserted thus—

“The Indian mind is very receptive to quick changes, and we are able to absorb things much faster than many other people...
We have to blend tradition with technology, not with Western materialism but with India's spiritualism.”

This was what the Mother had preached and practised in the realm of management. Let us hope her words shall endure!

DR. G. P. GUPTA

UNFOLDMENT

A GLEAM from the gloom of a moonless night
Is born to draw a crescent arc.
Its horns of faith and hope will join
A circular outline of Perfection's mark.

From the womb of despair hope's ray is born,
From the sheath of untruth truth peeps out,
From the mist of unfaith faith emanates,
From crystallised death life's tissues sprout.

From the formless mass a form takes shape,
From rough ugliness a beautiful face,
A smile makes dimples to enhance its charm,
An inward peace is soul's loveliness.

The being unfolds till perfection is reached,
The soul is drawn to the Oversoul bewitched.

BHANUSANKAR BHATT

SRI AUROBINDO AND THE TRADITIONAL SANKHYA

The Role of Tradition in Philosophy

ALL knowledge proceeds from previous traditional knowledge. Tradition supplies the basis and sets the direction, and all subsequent endeavours consist in shaping the developing thought in accordance with the traditional framework. In this process not only does tradition give shape to the new ideas but it allows itself to be reshaped if those ideas cannot be absorbed without a change in the basic structure. This principle is in operation wherever there is an effort to come to grips with new ideas. Indian Philosophy is no exception to this rule.

To illustrate the principle, let us see how Shankara revived the ancient tradition of Vedanta. When he arrived on the philosophical scene, Buddhism was at its peak. The entire nation was under the spell of Buddhist monks and scholars. The Buddha had wanted to put an end to the ceremonial religion of the Veda by appealing to the mass of the people to follow his independent teaching and come out of the evil of universal suffering. Buddhism accomplished the mission when the ancient tradition of Veda and Vedanta was compelled to withdraw its influence to a point of near extinction. Pledged as he was to resuscitate the ancient tradition, Shankara saw that for the Vedantic tradition to come alive and become popular, it had to meet the basic requirements of his age—asceticism, anti-ritualism, and negativism. With this aim in view he set to work and brought out the famous system of Advaita. The system, with its doctrines of the Nirguna Brahman and Maya, met the requirements of the age, and Buddhism had to retreat.

The teachings of the Upanishads are comprehensive, many-sided, and predominantly realistic. But Shankara was in need of a rigid and well-defined system which favoured an exclusive view of Brahman and dismissed the world as an illusory appearance. He developed the system by throwing emphasis on the Nirguna Brahman and redefining the idea of Maya as a power of illusion. With his system of Advaita Shankara accommodated the aspirations of his age as reflected by Buddhism, but performed the miracle of replacing the Buddhist mould by the Vedantic framework. Since he upheld the aspirations of a society moulded by Buddhism through a re-interpretation of the teachings of Vedanta, he was referred to as a Buddhist in disguise. Advaita is therefore a product of a twofold process, one extending an ancient tradition to the age of Shankara and the other modifying the structure of that tradition to suit the needs of this age.

The Sankhya: Its Teachings and Influence on Later Developments

I. The Sankhya is a dualism which “explains existence not by one, but by two original principles whose inter-relation is the cause of the universe,—Purusha, the

inactive, Prakriti, the active.”¹ Purusha is self-luminous and immobile. Though immobile, he reflects Prakriti and consents to identify himself with her. As a result of this reflection and consent, Prakriti produces the universe. Though her activities are mechanical, they appear to be conscious by their reflection in Purusha.

How does Purusha’s reflection and consent make the evolution of Prakriti possible? Prakriti is the original energy which expresses herself through the gunas of *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. As long as the gunas are in equilibrium, Prakriti produces nothing. But when they fall into disequilibrium, Prakriti begins to evolve. What is it that causes their disequilibrium? It is Purusha’s consent. If his consent is withdrawn, the disequilibrium is removed and the gunas fall back into their original equilibrium.

While Purusha’s consent creates bondage to Prakriti, withdrawal of his consent removes that bondage. Thus there seem to be only two powers of Purusha—the power to reflect Prakriti and the power to identify with Prakriti through consent or to withdraw that consent and recover from identification with Prakriti. However, they do not imply any activity on the part of Purusha for “even his giving of consent is passive and his withdrawing of consent is only another passivity.”²

The Sankhya is not only a dualism but also a pluralism, because it affirms the existence of many independent Purushas. It is true that we witness the same world and have the same internal and external experience. But this unity does not establish that the witnessing principle must be one; on the contrary it establishes that Prakriti, from which arise the general principles constituting the same internal and external experience for all, is one. In support of this view of Sankhya Sri Aurobindo writes:

Because Prakriti is one, all witness the same world; because her principles are everywhere the same, the general principles which constitute internal and external experience are the same for all; but the infinite difference of view and outlook and attitude, action and experience and escape from experience,—a difference not of the natural operations which are the same but of the witnessing consciousness,—are utterly inexplicable except on the supposition that there is a multiplicity of witnesses, many Purushas.³

The evolution of Prakriti seems to have one aim: to produce a world of infinite forms, forms which serve as bodies for the Purushas. The forms fall into a fixed hierarchy ranging from the lowest to the highest. Since evolution is a process of expansion, the whole hierarchy of forms comes into visible existence from its unmanifest condition when the potencies of Prakriti pass through the various stages of manifestation. In all forms the principles of Buddhi, Ahankara, etc., are active. But the hierarchy of forms is determined by the extent to which Buddhi, the primary

¹ Sri Aurobindo, *Essays on the Gita* (1972), p. 65.

² *Ibid.*, p. 66.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

and discriminating principle, becomes a predominant factor in them. In the human body *Buddhi* is in a position to exercise its authority as a force of intelligence and will. It sees that *Purusha* does not have any reason to be associated with *Prakriti* and can withdraw his consent to identify himself with her *gunas* and cease to reflect them in his consciousness. And *Purusha*, ceasing to reflect and give consent to the disturbance of the *gunas*, becomes free and realises his nature as an immobile and self-luminous principle.

The Sankhya looks upon the world as a kingdom of warring *gunas* causing endless suffering. It is a kingdom where no one can live in peace or be free from suffering. A wise man is one who identifies himself with *Purusha* and escapes suffering by totally severing his relationship with the body which is a product of *Prakriti*.

2. Whenever there was a need to develop an appropriate philosophical outlook in order to deal effectively with a challenging situation, great minds have risen to the occasion by turning to the Sankhya. Shankara is an outstanding example. His system of Advaita, which he developed with a view to unfold the philosophical significance of the aspirations of his age, may be regarded as a radical improvement on the ancient Sankhya. While the fundamentals of the Advaita are found in their elementary forms in the Sankhya, some of its ideas concerning the creation and constitution of the world are borrowed from the latter and retained without any major modification. Shankara's attack on the Sankhya is not so much an attack on its ideas as an attempt to assimilate them by removing their inconsistencies, as is evidenced by his commentary on the *Brahma Sutras* (2-2-7).

Ramanuja and Madhva, though they represented themselves as the major opponents of the Advaita, followed the example of Shankara in responding to the demands of their age *viz.* asceticism, individualism, and realism. Their systems of Visistadvaita and Dvaita may well be considered as improved versions of the Sankhya, though the Sankhya is chosen as a major point of attack by both Ramanuja and Madhva. A cursory glance at their views is enough to prove how their ideas are ultimately traceable to the teachings of the Sankhya, how the Sankhya is an important source of materials out of which their philosophical systems have been constructed.

The Sankhya seems to possess an unlimited potentiality for growth, even after the ages of Shankara, Ramanuja and Madhva. Though there is a vast difference between the aspirations of their ages and those of our age, the Sankhya has once again risen to the occasion and offered itself as a basis for developing a new philosophical outlook in consonance with the requirements of the modern world. This is what one finds in the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo as outlined in his *magnum opus*, *The Life Divine*.

The Modern Aspirations

Before we proceed we shall briefly outline the demands of the modern age which, in my opinion, have received the best possible philosophical interpretations at the hands of Sri Aurobindo.

Affirmation of Earthly Life: All ideas, despite their apparent contradiction of existing facts, are not really divorced from earthly life, because they represent unrealised possibilities in the world. Their opposition is really not a denial, but a clear indication of the absence of a supreme effort to realise the hidden potentialities. It is therefore wrong to insist on their contradiction and draw exclusively idealistic conclusions from them and dismiss earthly life which is the real field of achievement. This goes against the modern experience which has established that all ideas which initially appeared to be too remote become realised facts if there is a determination to be firmly rooted in earthly life.

Mastery Over the Forces of Nature: The conflict between the claims of the individual and those of Nature is a problem for which no satisfactory solution has been found. History abounds with instances of how man could not extricate himself from his desire to conquer Nature and establish his supremacy. Until recently the solution was either a passive submission to the forces of Nature or a compromise which carefully avoided the areas of conflicting situations. There were also occasions of real victory over the natural forces, but they were very few and their impact on humanity was very little. But the modern experience is different: man's victories over the forces of Nature are not only remarkable and unprecedented but have produced an amazing impact on humanity. As a result, the aspiration for a complete mastery of Nature has established itself as a dominant motive of human life.

Evolutionary Development: In modern thought all growth in the world is viewed as an evolutionary development, because it establishes a vital link with the results of the past and promotes a harmonious rather than an exclusive growth. It is particularly relevant to a situation where there is an appearance of a higher from a lower term. The appearance of the higher term fulfils the law of evolutionary development when it modifies the lower without destroying its essential qualities and upgrades it to its own level. The law requires that all that appears on earth, even if it is unearthly, must become part and parcel of earth nature.

Social Orientation: Modern thought recognizes that the individual is a part of the society and exists for the society. Therefore all individual gains, however valuable they may be, must be placed at the service of the society and universalised as the common possessions of humanity. Even lofty and noble achievements, when restricted to the individual, are considered to be illegitimate possessions which promote selfish aims rather than serve the larger needs of developing humanity.

We shall now show how Sri Aurobindo has brought out the real value of these modern aspirations by suitably modifying and enlarging the traditional framework of the Sankhya in the light of the teachings of Vedanta as well as his independent perceptions.

(To be continued)

N. JAYASHANMUKHAM

DHYANA WITH THE DIVINE MOTHER

(Continued from the issue of June 1984)

A MEDITATION under the system of Sri Aurobindo's integral yoga where integral transformation is the goal has special needs of its own—"Trance is not essential—it can be used, but by itself it cannot lead to the change of consciousness which is our object, for it gives only an inner subjective experience which need not make any difference in the outer consciousness. There are plenty of instances of sadhaks who have fine experiences in trance but the outer being remains as it was. It is necessary to bring out what is experienced and make it a power for transformation both of the inner and the outer being. But it can be done without going into *Samadhi*, in the waking consciousness itself. Concentration of course is indispensable".

The Mother had many such experiences when the sadhak was one thing during meditation and quite the opposite at other times. He was even more difficult to deal with than the common man during other periods of their lives. She feels it is not necessary to leave everything and go to the forests or mountains. Even the discipline of meditation is not an absolute for the Mother's yoga. One may go the way of works with concentration and surrender and through that may realise the Divine.

The Mother said: "It seems to me, according to my experience of life, that if one succeeds in subduing one's nature in the midst of difficulties, if one endeavours to be all alone within oneself with the eternal presence while keeping the same surroundings which the Grace has given us, the realisation which one obtains there is infinitely more true, more profound, more lasting."

The Mother is on the side of those who aspire for physical transformation, transformation of nature, and not for those whose gaze is turned towards the above and the beyond. The former she calls apprentice superman. In the integral yoga or yoga of transformation, personal salvation is not the ultimate goal. The goal is divinisation of life on earth, more emphasis is put on collective growth through yoga and meditation. So the Mother used to give meditations to the sadhaks in the Ashram in the morning and at the playground in the evening. While in the Ashram meditation she helped to kindle a flame of aspiration in each one and helped each to rise up as high as possible, during the evening meditation in the playground she would push her force into each one, for which each was required to be as receptive as possible and was asked to open himself, offering his entire being to the Divine. While the latter was a movement of descent the former was that of ascent. In the former any man or woman of goodwill could participate; to the latter "Only those who really want the perfection of their physical body can come, not those who want to escape from life, escape from themselves, escape from their body to enter into the heights.... We wanted only those who had truly taken it into their head that they wished to perfect their physical body... who sought to perfect it, who wanted to try to make it a receptacle of a higher truth, not an old rag one throws aside saying 'Do not bother me!'"

Sri Aurobindo has pointed out:

“The best help for concentration is to receive the Mother’s calm and peace into your mind. It is there above... only the mind and its centres have to open to it. It is what the Mother is pushing upon you in the evening meditation.”

Integral yoga is more psychological than ritual. It lays down no rigid rule for anybody. One has to proceed according to his inherent nature, tendencies and peculiarities. Yet there are certain general conditions the absence of which will not help the aspirant to go forward. Though one has not to resort to the forest, the cremation ground or deal with dead bodies, the result aimed at in the above course—seclusion, detachment, fearlessness—are achieved through a certain attitude which leads towards the goal, through an unshakable faith and an intense aspiration. To be accurate, we quote Sri Aurobindo’s golden words from *The Mother*:

“To walk through life armoured against all fear, peril and disaster, only two things are needed, two that go always together—the Grace of the Divine Mother and on your side an inner state made up of faith, sincerity and surrender. Let your faith be pure, candid and perfect. An egoistic faith in the mental and vital being tainted by ambition, pride, vanity, mental arrogance, vital self-will, personal demand, desire for the petty satisfactions of the lower nature is a low and smoke-obscured flame that can not burn upward to heaven. Regard your life as given you only for the divine work and to help in the divine manifestation. Desire nothing but the purity, force, light, wideness, calm, Ananda of the divine consciousness and its insistence to transform and perfect your mind, life and body. Ask for nothing but the divine, spiritual and supramental Truth, its realisation on earth and in you and in all who are called and chosen and the conditions needed for its creation and its victory over all opposing forces....

“In all that is done in the universe, the Divine through his Shakti is behind all action but he is veiled by his Yoga Maya and works through the ego of the Jiva in the lower nature.

“In Yoga also it is the Divine who is the Sadhaka and the Sadhana; it is this Shakti with her light, power, knowledge, consciousness, Ananda, acting upon the Adhara and, when it is opened to her, pouring into it with these divine forces that makes the Sadhana possible....

“The Mother not only governs all from above but she descends into this lesser triple universe. Impersonally, all things here, even the movements of the Ignorance, are herself in veiled power and her creation’s in diminished substance, her Nature-body and Nature-force, and they exist because... she has consented to the great sacrifice... But personally too she has stooped to descend here into the Darkness that she may lead it to the Light, into the Falsehood and Error that she may convert it to the Truth, into this Death that she may turn it to godlike Life, into this world-pain and its obstinate sorrow and suffering that she may end it in the transforming ecstasy of her sublime Ananda....”

On several occasions we find our Mother expressing profound disgust for having

plunged in the deep hell of matter for its redemption which evidently is a self-chosen divine holocaust out of love for her children. Realising the self-chosen path she alternates her disgust with complete surrender to the Lord.

“Oh, my Lord: my sweet master, for the accomplishment of Thy work I have sunk down into the unfathomable depths of matter, I have touched with my finger the horror of the falsehood and the inconscience. I have reached the seat of oblivion and a supreme obscurity.” (24-II-1931)

“The burden of its darkness and ugliness must be borne to the end even if all divine succour seems to be withdrawn. I must remain in the bosom of the Night and walk on without compass, without beacon light, without inner guide.” (7-3-1915)

It seemed to the Mother that even the Lord had withdrawn. No one to help. Yet she accepted the challenge for she alone can take the stride. She alone can look Death in the face and accomplish the victory—the victory of the Lord who finally grants all the prayer of Savitri. For the Mother is both the Divine Mother and Savitri: At one point she desperately asks: “Lord, wilt Thou permit thy enemies to prevail, falsehood and ugliness and suffering to triumph?”

But the Mother is the Divine incarnate who knows that she has not to function only but to carry the burden, destroy the enemies and come out triumphant in the end. So the attitude of her being:

“... it refuses to despair, it refuses to believe that the misfortune is irreparable; it waits with humility in an obscure and hidden effort and struggle for a breath of Thy perfect joy to penetrate it again. And perhaps each of its modest and secret victories is a true help brought to the earth...”

“All my energy is in tension solely to advance, always to advance step after step, despite the depth of the darkness, despite the obstacles of the way, and whatever comes, O Lord, it is with a fervent and unchanging love that Thy decision will be welcomed”. (7-3-1915)

“I cry to Thee with an absolute faith in Thy grace and I know that Thy grace will save.

“... I beheld Thee in Thy radiant splendour; Thou didst appear and Thou saidst to me: ‘Lose not courage, be firm, be confident, I come.’” (24-II-1931)

We see here a complete surrender of the divine worker with the utmost humility supported by full self-confidence and faith that finally brings the promise of victory.

The Divine Mother does everything but Sri Aurobindo reminds us again:

“So long as the lower nature is active the personal effort of the Sadhaka remains necessary.

“The personal effort required is a triple labour of aspiration, rejection and surrender,—

an aspiration vigilant, constant, unceasing—the mind’s will, the heart’s seeking, the assent of the vital being, the will to open and make plastic the physical consciousness and nature;

rejection of the movements of the lower nature—rejection of the minds ideas,

opinions, preferences, habits, constructions so that the true knowledge may find free room in a silent mind,—rejection of the vital nature's desires, demands, cravings, sensations, passions, selfishness, pride, arrogance, lust, greed, jealousy, envy, hostility to the Truth, so that the true power and joy may pour from above into a calm, large, strong and consecrated vital being,—rejection of the physical nature's stupidity, doubt, disbelief, obscurity, obstinacy, pettiness, laziness, unwillingness to change, *tamas*, so that the true stability of Light, Power, Ananda may establish itself in a body growing always more divine; surrender of oneself and all one is and has and every plane of the consciousness and every movement to the Divine and the Shakti."

The aspiration has to be constant, unailing, in all activities covering the whole life, as the Mother notes:

"Words are poor and clumsy, O divine Master, and mental transcriptions are always childish.... But my aspiration to Thee is constant, and truly speaking, it is very often Thou and Thou alone who livest in this body, this imperfect means of manifesting Thee." (23-2-1914)

To profit from this aspiration during meditation the Mother suggests several ways. First, one has always to aspire for progress and thus the meditation becomes dynamic. The Mother described meditation as mental muscle-building. In fact proper concentration is that but with the help of aspiration and prayer which is analogous to aspiration one proceeds further.

"Suddenly a flame is lit, you feel an enthusiastic élan, a great fervour, and express it in words which to be true must be spontaneous. This must come from the heart, directly, with ardour, without passing through the head. That is prayer.... well, if you don't throw more fuel into the flame, after a time it dies out. If you do not give your muscles time to relax, if you don't slacken the movement, your muscles lose the capacity of taking strains. So it is quite natural, and even indispensable, for the intensity of the movement to cease after a certain time."

In this connection the Mother very practically suggests to the Sadhaka to get up from meditation after the slackening of concentration, etc., and to engage himself in other useful activities, for it is no use pretending. In fact we have come to know that during her former meditations in the early years she never meditated for more than half an hour. Of course, it depends on the person and his intensity and need and, after all, his capacity.

(To be continued)

AJU MUKHOPADHYA

EUROPE 1974

A TRAVELOGUE

(Continued from the issue of December 1984)

ONE of the most sonorous words in European history is "Byzantium". It marks another glorious chapter in the East-West relationship. For 2,000 years the West had taken from the East and had taken profusely. Heir of the ancient Roman Empire the Byzantine Empire whose centre was Byzantium, also called Constantinople, was part Christian, part Classical Greek and a few centuries later part Islamic. There was a time when the Byzantine world was a unknown factor to the readers of European history. Today, thanks to Baynes, Runciman and Obolensky, it is a wonderful tale of power, colour, movement and ideas. These works put into the shade the ideas of Gibbon and others who had the opinion that the Byzantine Empire was obscurantist and that it made a dismal tale of "the triumph of barbarianism over Christianity." Even Voltaire and Montesquieu had nothing nice to say about the Byzantine Empire. Contrary to their ideas we now find that it was the most dynamic and colourful and alive possible and was not inferior to any great empire or civilization created by man. It was a happy tryst of Europe and Asia and a tremendous rendezvous of West and East.

In the annals of European history, there is a whole galaxy of great kings and queens. But the word "Great" is applied to only eight monarchs: Cyrus, Alexander, Constantine, Alfred, Charles, Peter, Catherine and Frederick. Elizabeth of England ought to have been called Great; so too Akbar of India; but they are not as a rule, although V. A. Smith has honoured Akbar by naming his book "Akbar the Great Moghul." And Elizabeth almost everywhere is referred to as the great Elizabeth. As their names suggest, all these great ones had great ideas. And they had a tremendous impact on the progress of man. They also left behind some disastrous results and problems that later monarchs found difficulty in solving. Such was the case of the work of Constantine who founded Constantinople. His ideas were great, but his actions proved the undoing of the works of a whole legion of great men.

The visions of all these Greats were basically the same, to build a mighty empire including many peoples and many cultures and even many religions if that could be compassed. A heterogeneous empire *de jure* no doubt, yet a compact whole where all would live in amity and would gain and progress by not destroying one another but by interchanges and exchanges create a *de facto* whole under one ruler.

Nature, however, has a plan of its own. And we find sometimes our most cherished idea turned into a fiasco, for Nature had other intentions. That is what happened to the efforts of Constantine the Great. If Julius Caesar's crossing the Rubicon created one of the greatest Empires that the world has ever seen, Constantine's going to Constantinople was the undoing of the same Empire. The West was sufficiently Romanised but not the East which was still under the influence of ancient Greek thought. His idea was to take Rome to Constantinople and the East!

This he thought could not be achieved just by sending legions and men. He must take his own person there to force the people to feel the greatness of Rome and all that was Roman. He gave out that it was for administrative purposes that he wanted to move to the East. But anyone could see that it was Rome itself that was situated in the most central position. His leaving Rome made it an orphan. All the pride and martial strength, all the glory and name and fame vanished as in a dream. Rome and Italy lay like a *carte blanche* and an open invitation to the Barbarians. The place of the secular Emperor was taken up by the spiritual head, the Pope. While Italy perished, the Byzantine Empire thus created flourished and bloomed like a new and dazzling flower. Europe declined into the Dark Age but Byzantium reached its zenith in power and glory. Observing dispirited and disheartened Europe, some of the Popes became militant themselves. But their following could not do anything to check the decline. Even the Crusades were one failure after another.

Byzantium flashed across the European horizon with the light of twenty meteors. The people of Constantinople called themselves Konstantinopolites. And the whole of Roman Europe saw Byzantium through the eyes of the Crusaders and was nonplussed by its glory and energy and variety. Both the Roman, or shall we say European, philosophers and the Greek philosophers tried to comprise each other's theology. So far the dominant culture and language had been Greek, now slowly everything turned Roman. Yet ethnically, linguistically, the empire never became one group. Justinian and other militant Emperors reconquered parts of the Ancient Roman Empire. With all its ups and downs the continuity of its political structure, its legislature, its religio-cultural unity in tremendous diversity remained undisturbed throughout ten centuries. The Byzantine Empire created by Emperor Constantine in 330 A.D. lasted till the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the handiwork of Sultan Mohammad, a young man of wide culture who spoke half a dozen languages including Greek. He was half Greek, for, in the thought of Isocrates, "It is culture, not blood that makes a man a Hellene."

In 533 Emperor Justinian built the great show-piece of Europe, the Church of Hagia Sophia. Its beauty, its technical perfection, its harmonious appearance was such that the like of it man had never seen before. When completed the Emperor was called to see it and declare it open. It was reported that the Emperor murmured, "Solomon, I have surpassed thee." The minarets we see today were later added by the Muslims.

Tourists to Europe would do well to read up a few lines about the Byzantine Empire, not only to enjoy Constantinople and the Eastern European countries more but also to appreciate so much of art and tapestry displayed in the Western European art-galleries. Byzantium excelled in poetry, philosophy, science, religion, commentaries and interpretations, engineering and technology, statecraft, art and architecture.

(To be continued)

CHAUNDONA S. BANERJI

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Basic Asanas, edited by Shri *Pranab Kumar Bhattacharya*, Director of Department of Physical Education, Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, Pondicherry, published by Navajyoti Karyalaya, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, pages 16. Price Rs. 4.00 including postal charge. Copies available from Navajyoti Karyalaya.

SEVERAL books have been published in connection with Asanas in both the East and West by different schools of yoga. It has been scientifically proved that the Asanas of Hatha yoga can not only improve the state of health but also confer psychological benefits. Sri Aurobindo says: "By various subsidiary but elaborate processes the Hatha yogin next contrives to keep the body free from all impurities and the nervous system unclogged for those exercises of respiration which are his most important instruments" (SABCL, Vol. 20, p. 29).

Asana means posture. Asana can be divided broadly into two groups—meditative postures and postures for physical health and fitness. *Basic Asanas* deals with the latter category. It is a unique booklet intended for both young and old. It contains 29 series of useful and attractive photographs of different postures.

The Asanas here are organised in such a way as to make the body grow in balance, strength, receptivity and plasticity. This booklet illustrates a complete programme of the Asanas which can be done in one hour. Their essential aim is to go beyond the ancient type of yogic exercises and give sound physical health. These exercises have also a corrective and curative value. As our Mother says: "Any rational system of exercises suited to one's need and capacity will help the participant to improve in health. Moreover, it is the attitude that is more important." A cassette in which instructions and timings with a musical background are given as in the class is available at the P.E.D. Office.

NILIMA DAS

Engineering Lyrics by *K. Chidananda*. Published by Hyma Books, Silva Lane, Kankanady, Mangalore—575 002. Pages: XIV+57. Price: Rs. 9.75.

"A scientist worthy of the name experiences in his work the same impression as an artist; his pleasure is as great and of the same nature," observed Jules Henri Poincaré. Here is an engineer who is also a gifted poet trying to fuse his profession and art together. "Both an engineer and a poet are thinkers," observes K. Chidananda. "An engineer thinks and his thoughts are materialised in the physical realm in the form of machines, instruments, bridges, buildings and so on. A poet thinks and his thoughts are materialised in the literary realm in the form of poems—lyrics, sonnets and so on."

"Most of the poems in this volume," writes the poet in his Preface "are centred around scientific theories, engineering realisations, and parallelism between science

and humanity, physics and metaphysics." To K. Chidananda the creator is an eminent engineer and a cunning fugitive; the high sky is a workshop; electron, proton and neutron are the three superior deities. He compares Adam to science and Eve to religion and declares in 'Adam and Eve':

"A bright beginning for a happy world order
When science and religion embrace;
A gloomy end of everything good and fair
When out of phase are religion and science."

He feels that we are all cars and our actions are verily gears; we are all bipoles as magnets:

"With poles of virtue and vice
Acts foolish and wise
omissions and commissions."

We are all 'circles' and the centre is 'I' and individuality is due to the perimeter. The human mind is compared to a storage battery of a superior kind and K. Chidananda beautifully brings out the difference thus:

"the battery drains with constant use
like water in a leaking tank;
but the mind gains by constant use
like money in a commercial bank."

He opines that the multi-coloured flowers are the "finished products of a growing green mill" and explains scientifically how their flowers get their colours. Everyone affectionately calls his sweetheart a "moon-faced angel". But according to the poet one should feel sorry for calling her so. Why? 'Moon-Faced' gives the answer. He views 'Atom', in the form of 'Bhasmasura—the Ash-Demon' and 'Kumbhakarna, the Sleeping Giant'.

Science, he believes, is a useful machine tool and it very much depends how one uses it. Explicating this idea he says:

"A surgeon's knife that is life-saving
Used for forcibly taking one;
A screw-driver useful as a machine-tool
Ill-used for stabbing a man",

which brings to our mind the famous words of the assassinated American President John F. Kennedy, "All men will benefit if we can invoke the wonders of science instead of its terrors."

The poem titled 'No Admission for Engineers' is full of fun. It is about an engineer who after his death went to the underworld, but made use of the "Eternal Fires" and "steaming Water" to electrify hell. God on one of his rounds was perplexed to find hell brighter than heaven. He probed into the matter and finally gave commands to the guards thus:

"Whatever might be the magnitude of their sin
For engineers to hell deny admission!"

Here is another humorous poem 'A Robot'. A robot may be smart with a computer mind, but the engineer-poet can't think of substituting a robot for his "shapely backed", "sweet fragranced", "smiling beautiful secretary".

It is a sheer delight to go through these fifty poems for these are the offspring of a fertile poet and engineer. Since there is a fusion of art and science, this volume is certainly a milestone in Indo-Anglian Poetry.

P. RAJA