

# MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

SEPTEMBER 1985

Price: Rs. 3.50

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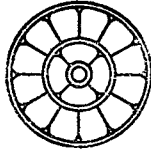
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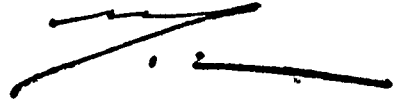
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,  
A new light breaks upon the earth,  
A new world is born.  
The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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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

# MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XXXVIII

No. 8

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

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# SUPRAMENTALISATION OF THE BODY

## SOME LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

ONE has first of all to supramentalise sufficiently the mental-vital and physical consciousness generally—afterwards one can think of supramentalisation of the body. The psychic and spiritual transformation must come first, only afterwards would it be practical or useful to discuss the supramentalisation of the whole being down to the body.<sup>1</sup>

Nobody can have the supramental transformation who has not had the spiritual.<sup>2</sup>

The idea of a transformation of the body occurs in different traditions, but I have never been quite sure that it meant the change in this very matter. There was a Yogi sometime ago in this region who taught it, but he hoped when the change was complete to disappear in light.<sup>3</sup>

Whatever may have happened to Chaitanya or Ramalingam, whatever physical transformation they may have gone through is quite irrelevant to the aim of the supramentalisation of the body. Their new body was either a non-physical or subtle-physical body not adapted for life on the earth.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library*, Vol. 22, p. 94.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 24, p. 237.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 22, p. 94.

## A TALK BY THE MOTHER

TO THE ASHRAM CHILDREN ON 8 SEPTEMBER 1954

This talk is based upon Sri Aurobindo's *Bases of Yoga*, Chapter I. The book is comprised of extracts from letters written in reply to the queries of disciples.

*"The forces that stand in the way of sadhana are the forces of the lower mental, vital and physical nature. Behind them are adverse powers of the mental, vital and subtle physical worlds. These can be dealt with only after the mind and heart have become one-pointed and concentrated in the single aspiration to the Divine."*

So?...

*Sweet Mother, what are the adverse powers of the subtle physical?*

What are the adverse forces? There are as many of them as there are elements in the world. Only, unless they express themselves physically, we do not see them. So we are not aware of them. But I told you the other day that the atmosphere is full of countless formations which are usually made up of thoughts, desires, impulses, wills, and which are as mixed as men's thoughts. There are good ones, there are bad ones; and behind that there are all the formations of the vital world, a world *essentially* hostile to the Divine. Only the vital in man, under the psychic influence, can change and become a collaborator in the divine work. Otherwise, the vital world is essentially formed of beings *hostile* to the divine work, and those who open themselves to these forces without any control are naturally under the influence of the adverse forces. So, one can't say what these adverse forces are. It would be easier to say what they are *not*.

*(Speaking to the children in the first row)* Do you have a question? You have a question? And you? You?

*It is outside the text.*

Eh? It is outside the text? It is farther on? That will be for next time. *(Mother continues questioning.)* And you, nothing? Now then, you, you too have nothing to ask?

*It comes a little later.*

So I have read very little?

Pavitra: *No, Mother!*

I have received complaints because I read *The Mother* through too fast. I have been asked to read more slowly; so I read more slowly.

*Sweet Mother, what is meant by "the substance of the mental being"?*

My child, the substance means... how shall I put it? ...it means the stuff of which the mental being is made. It could be said, for instance, that the cells are the substance of your body. It is not exactly matter, the mind is not quite material, but it is the very thing of which the mind is made. If there were no mental substance, there would be no mental being. It would be only a vibration; and even a vibration needs a medium to manifest itself.

But if your body were not made of material substance, you wouldn't have a body. This is what is called substance. It is the thing of which something is made. And precisely, what is important is that people usually think that mind is just a mode of activity, whereas there is a mental substance as there is a vital substance and physical substance. And as there is a substance, there is a corresponding world with an autonomous existence, that is to say, there can be a mind without any physical support. The physical body may disappear and the mind can continue to exist. It is here that it is important to understand that there is a mental substance which, obviously, is much more... (*silence*) how to put it? ...immaterial than physical matter.

Some people use a rather unclassical word, "rarefied", but I don't think it has exactly this sense. Well, you see, we say that substance has different densities, and the more material it becomes, the denser it is, the farther it moves away from matter, the less dense it is. But it is a substance all the same. There is even an etheric substance. I don't say that this conforms with scientific theories; I don't guarantee that I am not talking scientific heresies! But this is a cosmic fact. (*Mother laughs.*) It is exactly—I think I said this when I spoke about occultism—I said the first thing one must know before being able to practise occultism is that the different states of being have a different density, and they have an individual independent existence of their own, that they are existing realities, that they are truly real substances, that it is not just a way of being. There can be a mental being and mental activity and, for instance, a thought that is completely independent of the brain, whereas the materialistic theories say that it is the brain which creates mental activity. But this is not correct. The brain is the material transcription of the mental activity, and mental activity has its own domain; the mental domain has its reality, its own substance. One can think outside one's brain, think, act, make formations outside one's brain. One can even live, move, go from one place to another, have a direct knowledge of mental things in the mental world, in a word, absolutely independent of a body which, indeed, can be in a state of complete inertia, not only asleep but also in a cataleptic state. And moreover, it is quite certain that so long as one has not understood that one is made up of different states of being which have their

own independent life, one can't have a complete control over one's being. There will always be something that escapes you.

*(To a child)* Do you have something to ask?

*It is outside the book.*

Eh? Not from the book? If it is interesting it doesn't matter!

*Mother, what is the significance of this abrupt change in the programme?*

Oh, but that—it is something altogether personal!

Well, I can tell you: it is different for each one and it is for you to find it out in yourself. And if you find it you will have made some progress....

*(Silence)*

*(To a child)* Something to say?

No.

*(To another)* You, do you have something to ask? No? No! You are dreaming!

*(Laughter)* Nobody has a question? *(To another)* You?

*When one wants to concentrate, why do all kinds of thoughts come, which never come otherwise?*

What did you say?

*When one wants to concentrate, why do all kinds of thoughts come, which never came before?*

Perhaps they came and you did not know it! Perhaps it is because you want to concentrate that you become aware that they are there. It may also happen that there is an element of contradiction in the consciousness and that when you want to be silent, something says, "No, I won't be silent!"

I think that many of you have an inner contradiction like this. When you have resolved to be good, there is something which would like to push you into being wicked, and when you want to be quiet, there is something which pushes you into being agitated, and when you want to be silent, immediately thoughts begin to wander. It is a contradiction inherent in man's nature. It may be this; it may be what I said: that all these thoughts are there but as you were not paying any attention to them, you were not aware of them.

It is quite certain that to create absolute silence is of all things the most difficult,



for many things of which one was not aware, become *enormous*! There were all kinds of suggestions, movements, thoughts, formations which went on as though *automatically* in the outer consciousness, almost outside the consciousness, on the frontiers of consciousness; and as soon as one wants to be absolutely silent, one becomes aware of all these things which go on moving, moving, moving and make a lot of noise and prevent you from being silent. That's why it is better to remain very quiet, very calm and at the same time very attentive to something which is above you and to which you aspire, and if there is this kind of noise passing like that around you (*Mother moves her hands around her head*), not to pay attention, not to look, not to heed it. If there are thoughts which go round and round and round like this (*gestures*), which come and go, do not look, do not pay attention, but concentrate upwards in a great aspiration which one may even formulate—because often it helps the concentration—towards the light, the peace, the quietude, towards a kind of inner impassiveness, so that the concentration may be strong enough for you not to attend to all that continues to whirl about all around. But if suddenly you say, “Ah, there's some noise! Oh, here is a thought!” then it is finished. You will never succeed in being quiet. Have you never seen those people who try to stop a quarrel by shouting still louder than the ones who are quarrelling? Well, it is something like that. (*Mother laughs.*)

*Sweet Mother, may I ask you a question outside the subject?*

What question?

*In “The Brain of India” Sri Aurobindo has written that the Bengalis can think with their hearts...*

Who can think with his heart? I can't hear. The Bengalis can think with their hearts? That's a poetic way of saying it. (*Laughter*) Where has he written this? It is a very poetic description. That's to say that they are essentially emotive beings and that their heart is conscious even in their thought, that their thought is not purely intellectual and dry, and that their heart is aware of their thought. That's what he meant.

But I can also tell you that when I was in Japan I met a man who had formed a group, for...It can't be said that it was for sadhana, but for a kind of discipline. He had a theory and it was on this theory that he had founded his group: that one can think in any part of one's being whatever if one concentrates there. That is to say, instead of thinking in your head, you can think in your chest. And he said that one could think here (*gesture*) in the stomach. He took the stomach as the seat of *prāṇa*, you see, that is, the vital force. He used certain Sanskrit words, you know, half-digested, and all that... But still, this does not matter, he was full of goodwill and he said that most human miseries come from the fact that men think in their heads,

that this makes the head ache, tires you and takes away your mental clarity. On the other hand, if you learn how to think here (*gesture indicating the stomach*), it gives you power, strength and calmness. And the most remarkable thing is that he had attained a kind of ability to bring down the mental power, the mental force *exactly* here (*gesture*); the mental activity was generated there, and no longer in the head. And he had cured a considerable number of people, considerable, some hundreds, who used to suffer from terrible headaches; he had cured them in this way.

I have tried it, it is quite easy, precisely because, as I told you a while ago, the mental force, mental activity is independent of the brain. We are in the habit of using the brain but we can use something else or, rather, concentrate the mental force elsewhere, and have the impression that our mental activity comes from there. One can concentrate one's mental force in the solar plexus, here (*gesture*), and feel the mental activity coming out from there.

That man used to say, "Haven't you noticed that all men who have great power have a big belly? (*Laughter*)—Because they concentrate their forces there, so this makes their stomach big!" He always used to give the example of Napoleon; and he said, "These people stand up quite straight, always straight with the head erect, never like this (*Mother bends the head forward*), never like this (*Mother bends the head to the right*), never like this (*Mother bends the head to the left*); always quite straight up but with all their force here (*pointing to the stomach*), and so this makes them very powerful!" And he always spoke of Napoleon. He used to say, "Napoleon, you see..." (*Mother shows that Napoleon had a big stomach.*) And he had a visit from Tagore when Tagore was in Japan and he told me, "Have you observed how Tagore stands quite upright, like this, with his head erect?" Then I told him, "But he doesn't have a big stomach!" He said to me, "It will come." (*Laughter*)

There were hundreds of people at his meetings. They would all sit on their knees as one does in Japan. He struck a table with a stick and everyone brought down his mental force to the stomach, and then they remained like that for... oh! at least half an hour. And after half an hour he struck the table a second time and they released their mental force and began chatting... not very much, for the Japanese do not talk much, but nevertheless they speak.

There now! But mark that there was something very true, in the sense that if ever you have a headache I advise you to do this: to take the thought-force, the mental force—and even if you can draw a little of your vital force, that too—and make it come down, like this (*gesture of very slowly sliding both hands from the top of the head downwards*). Well, if you have a headache or a congestion, if you have caught a touch of the sun, for instance, indeed if anything has happened to you, well, if you know how to do this and bring down the force here, like this, here (*showing the centre of the chest*), or even lower down (*showing the stomach*), well, it will disappear. It will disappear. You will be able to do this in five minutes. You can try, the next time you have a headache.... I hope you won't have a headache but the next time you have one, try this. Sit upright, like this (*movement showing on āsana posture*). The

Japanese say you should sit on your heels—but that might disturb your meditation, sitting like that—they call it sitting at ease. The Indian fashion is like this (*gesture*), otherwise you must sit like this (*gesture*); this is harder when you are not accustomed to it.

So, sit quite at ease and then take all your force as though you were taking, you see... all the energy in your head, take it and then make it come down, down, down, like this, slowly, very carefully, right down here, down to the navel. And you will see that your headache will disappear. I have made the experiment many times... It is a very good remedy, very easy; there is no need to take pills or injections; it gets cured in this way. So there you are!

Any other question? Yes!

*How can we establish a settled peace and silence in the mind?*

First of all, you must want it.

And then you must try and must persevere, continue trying. What I have just told you is a very good means. Yet there are others also. You sit quietly, to begin with; and then, instead of thinking of fifty things, you begin saying to yourself, "Peace, peace, peace, peace, peace, calm, peace!" You imagine peace and calm. You aspire, ask that it may come: "Peace, peace, calm." And then, when something comes and touches you and acts, say quietly, like this, "Peace, peace, peace." Do not look at the thoughts, do not listen to the thoughts, you understand. You must not pay attention to everything that comes. You know, when someone bothers you a great deal and you want to get rid of him, you don't listen to him, do you? Good! You turn your head away (*gesture*) and think of something else. Well, you must do that: when thoughts come, you must not look at them, must not listen to them, must not pay any attention at all, you must behave as though they did not exist, see! And then, repeat all the time like a kind of—how shall I put it?—as an idiot does, who repeats the same thing always. Well, you must do the same thing; you must repeat, "Peace, peace, peace." So you try this for a few minutes and then do what you have to do; and then, another time, you begin again; sit down again and then try. Do this on getting up in the morning, do this in the evening when going to bed. You can do this... look, if you want to digest your food properly, you can do this for a few minutes before eating. You can't imagine how much this helps your digestion! Before beginning to eat you sit quietly for a while and say, "Peace, peace, peace!" And *everything* becomes calm. It seems as though all the noises were going far, far, far away (*Mother stretches out her arms on both sides*) and then you must continue; and there comes a time when you no longer need to sit down, and no matter what you are doing, no matter what you are saying, it is always "Peace, peace, peace." Everything remains here, like this, it does not enter (*gesture in front of the forehead*), it remains like this. And then one is always in a perfect peace... after some years.

But at the beginning, a very small beginning, two or three minutes, it is very simple. For something complicated you must make an effort, and when one makes an effort, one is not quiet. It is difficult to make an effort while remaining quiet. Very simple, very simple, you must be very simple in these things. It is as though you were learning how to call a friend: by dint of being called he comes. Well, make peace and calm your friends and call them: "Come, peace, peace, peace, peace, come!"

Is that all, my children?

*Mother, is the seat of understanding in the head?*

The faculty of understanding? Is that what you are asking about, whether it is in the head? I have just said the opposite. A few minutes ago I said that all mental faculties are in the mind and it is only by habit that they are in the head. One can understand from any place whatever. One can understand from wherever the seat of the consciousness is.

*You say "by habit". One can't change it, one is born like that!*

Were you thinking when you were born?

*It is natural to think with the head. How can one make a habit of it?*

It has been a habit for a very long time—the parents of the parents of the parents, and so on—but not for everyone! It is like the habit of looking with the eyes, but it has been proved that it is possible to create centres of vision elsewhere than in the eyes—with a little concentration. I don't say that the brain is not made for thinking, I have never told you that, but I said that thought does not depend upon the brain, which is quite a different thing. If one knows how to handle mental forces, one sees clearly that the brain is very suitable for expressing oneself—it has evidently been made for that, for receiving thoughts and putting them into action, into expression, words—but it doesn't need to be exclusive.

*(After a silence)* I mean that this exclusiveness is a habit. However, when one has done a little yoga seriously, one knows very well that one can think here (*Mother shows the centre of the forehead between the eyebrows, then the right side, then the left*) one can think here, one can think here, one can think in front and, as I was saying just now, one can think much higher up—but naturally, one thinks that all thought-phenomena, concentration, are produced in the brain—and when one thinks up above, here (*Mother shows the space above the head*), one thinks much better than when one thinks here. It is only that one has never tried to do otherwise. Not "never tried", there are quite a number of people who have tried and have succeeded.

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

## TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of August 15, 1985)

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

October 8, 1940

P: German troops are pouring into Rumania, it seems. Do they anticipate a British invasion through it?

SRI AUROBINDO: No; it is more a move to the Balkans by Germany, if it is also true that Italy has concentrated troops in Albania against Greece.

P: But war on two fronts will be costly to Germany.

SRI AUROBINDO: But how will the British help there? They have no army to spare unless Turkey joins and brings her troops.

P: Kalelkar has rearranged the Gita text leaving out some of the portions which according to him are not essential. And he gives each chapter a separate name *e.g. utthāpana yoga*.

SRI AUROBINDO: And Kalelkar yoga? (*Laughter*) Nobody has so far tampered with the text of the Gita.

P: No; they have done so with the Ramayana and Mahabharata but not the Gita.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes.

### *Evening*

P: America and Russia will check Japan in her imperialist policy in the East.

SRI AUROBINDO: It seems they are not willing to go to war. They want only to help China so far... Somebody writing about Egypt says that it is the British who don't want Egypt to take any action against Italian attacks just now. I don't see why. They may have reasons.

P: Kalelkar says that after the war it will be India's lead.

SRI AUROBINDO: Kalelkar's lead? (*Laughter*)

P: He says the Western powers will be crushed. Only Russia and India will survive. They will see the futility of violence, the fruits of such atrocious wars!

SRI AUROBINDO: How is Communism a substitute for violence? And why does he call it an atrocious war? In the past also there have been massacre, pillage,

sacking, burning, etc., only in a different way. In these air-attacks on England the death-rate so far is less than death by motor accidents. Only the destruction of property is there.

N: If Russia and India alone survive, India will be a great opportunity for Russia.

SRI AUROBINDO: It will be like the story of a lady of Niger and a tiger—in Edward Lear's limerick. You know the story?

P: No.

SRI AUROBINDO: A lady of Niger went for a ride a on the back of a tiger. The tiger returned with the lady sitting inside and the tiger bearing a smile on its face. (*Laughter*) There are good stories in his limericks. You know the story of the cow?

P: I have heard it. Moni's favourite, I think.

SRI AUROBINDO: It can be very well applied to passive resistance. It is like this:

There was a young man who said, "How  
Shall I melt the heart of this cow?"

So he sat on a stile

And continued to smile

Till he melted the heart of the cow. (*Laughter*)

October 9, 1940

P: It seems America's war with Japan is inevitable.

SRI AUROBINDO: Why?

P: As a consequence of the opening of the Burma Road by the British.

SRI AUROBINDO: Not likely.

P: And Russia also will have two ports—the Balkans and Japan.

S: Japan won't go to war.

SRI AUROBINDO: None of them is willing unless they are obliged to.... Have you any idea what surprise Churchill meant when he declared that Mussolini would very soon see what surprise the British would have for him? What Churchill says means in simple words, "I will show you." (*Laughter*)

N: He may have something up his sleeve. He doesn't give empty threats.

SRI AUROBINDO: Not usually... (*Addressing P with a little smile*) Baron went to see Schomberg on some business.

P: I see.

SRI AUROBINDO: He said that he had come to know it was on Schomberg's demand that he had been called from Chandernagore. Schomberg with great surprise exclaimed, "Oh, what a lie, what a lie! Who told you this? It is the Governor who called you, I had nothing to do with it." "But the Governor himself told me that you did it." "What a lie! it is not true, it can't be true." And then when Baron met the Governor he told him what Schomberg had said. The Governor now exclaimed, "What lies, what lies!" (*All of us burst into laughter.*) Baron thought one of them must be lying. He forgot the possibility that both may be lying.

P: Yes. The Governor may himself have called him back in order to please his Vichy government.

*Evening*

P: Veerabhadra has gone, it seems.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, he was asked to give up his public activity, if he wanted to stay here. He says he can't do that as public activity is part of himself. He has got permission to come to the Ashram like a town sadhak. He is fit for nothing else but propoganda. I was many times on the point of driving him out, but he escaped.

P: I wonder how he was teaching Hindi when he himself knows so little. Knows even less than Amrita, I think.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is like Amrita's teaching French at Madras. You know the joke about old French?

P: No.

SRI AUROBINDO: While he was teaching in the class, the students said that what he was saying was different from the book. Amrita replied, "That is old French."  
(*Laughter*)

P: Yes, yes, I remember Moni and others used to taunt him.

SRI AUROBINDO: It was a standing joke for a long time.

October 11, 1940

S: The British government is preparing a huge scheme of insurance for all against these destructions by Germany.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, it will be a heavy bill. I don't see how they can meet it unless they socialise the whole government. It is only by socialisation that they can succeed.

S: They may lead to socialism in England after the war.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, some form of modified socialism, of course.

P: Shaw goes a step further—he wants communism.

SRI AUROBINDO: Communism exists nowhere, not even in Russia.

*Evening*

P: Sarat Bose is also expelled from the Congress.

SRI AUROBINDO (*laughing*): Yes, two great Bose brothers are gone now. They may try to do some mischief.

October 12, 1940

(*The Czech national committee of Bombay published a pamphlet on the oppressive rules by Germany in Czechoslovakia against university education. The Mother brought a copy of it to Sri Aurobindo in the morning.*)

SRI AUROBINDO (*after breakfast*): Those who think that Hitler's rule in India won't make much difference from the British, can read it. Then they will see why I

support the British. But it is only one item of their oppression, directed only against the university.

P: I have read it. Jallianwalla Bagh seems only a small incident by its side and that also was committed by a single man who was afterwards compelled to retire from his office.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, that was an instance of a military commander doing something on his own authority, while here it is a regime. Wherever Hitler goes, he starts that regime.

N: If he could be so brutal with his own white races, what will be the fate of the coloured races?

SRI AUROBINDO: Quite so. But in Poland it is still more severe.

N: Why?

SRI AUROBINDO: Because he knows the Polish people are more resistant and won't be subjugated. At one time he thought of exterminating the Poles wholesale.

P: The Polish lady who has written to Ravindra has come back from Europe. She says she has first-hand knowledge of the condition in Poland—about what Germany has done. She prays to you for Poland's amelioration.

SRI AUROBINDO: Poland's amelioration is not possible unless Hitler undergoes deterioration.

P: Hitler's entry into Rumania seems a first step towards the Balkans.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is, like all his moves, a slow penetration from which he may go to Turkey, Egypt and Asia. What is wonderful is Stalin's attitude. He is quite silent.

N: Any secret pact?

SRI AUROBINDO: Even if there were, how long would Hitler respect it if he won? Then Russia will have either to resist or be effaced. Stalin counted on exhaustion of the Axis and England and France. Now if Hitler takes Turkey and Egypt and Africa, etc., that will mean practically England's defeat. Then what can Russia do? Hitler has a sufficient army to fight on two fronts while England can hardly spare her troops.

P: Japan is trying to be original: she says she means peace with America. The 3-power pact is not against America! (*Laughter*)

SRI AUROBINDO: I don't see how Japan can fight England and America when all her war supplies come from them. That is also why Spain can't join Germany....

P: N. R. Sarkar has given a lecture in Madura against non-violence. He says non-violence can't prevent invasion by another power.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is my opinion too. I don't see how satyagraha can prevent it, or does Gandhi expect that Hitler won't come to India? Hasn't he read anything about Poland?

P: He must have. This Polish lady who was there must have told him. Gandhi says he does not know himself what would be the exact method. He waits for inspiration at the last moment as in all his other cases. He also says Generals don't know of their moves beforehand. They wait for inspiration calmly and quietly. In



violence one can't be quiet. He is disturbed by the incidents, etc.

SRI AUROBINDO: Generals get excited by violence? If so, they can never win battles. Gandhi doesn't seem to know human psychology. If Napoleon and Marlborough had got excited they could never have been successful.

S: Gandhi doesn't say he can stop an invasion but he says non-violent non-cooperation can make it impossible for one to rule.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is another matter.

S: If done rightly it can melt other people's hearts as with Prahlad, he says.

SRI AUROBINDO: Prahlad is all right, but a nation of Prahlads doesn't exist.

(*Laughter*)

S: He actually believes that Narsimha will come down.

SRI AUROBINDO (*laughing*): To tear the stomach of the other fellow?

S (*laughing*): Yes.

SRI AUROBINDO: But at one time he thought of stopping an Afghan invasion by Charkha.

S: In my opinion he should have kept aloof after that Poona affair.

SRI AUROBINDO: Quite so. Gandhi's originality lies in bringing *Ahimsa* into politics. Otherwise non-cooperation is nothing new.

*Evening*

(*Tagore is having a relapse again and passing restless nights.*)

SRI AUROBINDO: This time it is difficult to escape, it seems, in spite of Gandhi's wish.

(*I read the Czech pamphlet.*)

SRI AUROBINDO: How did you find it?

N: Terrible!

SRI AUROBINDO: Would you like India to have that?

N: O Lord, no! I was thinking the Jallianwallabagh affair is mild beside this.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, I was wondering why they made so much noise about it.

(*Srinivas Rao had come in the morning. I asked him: "What does Madras think of Hitler? It seems it is anti-British." Rao said plenty of people were much surprised by Sri Aurobindo's contribution and were wondering how it was possible for Sri Aurobindo who once had been so anti-British. But there were others who supported Sri Aurobindo. Then Sri Aurobindo explained to Rao at great length all the points and sides of the question, most of which he had mentioned in the letter. We saw that he repeated all of them deliberately, so that Rao might speak of them to others if occasion arose. What is not included in the letter, I give below:*)

SRI AUROBINDO: In Africa the Germans have already exterminated one race. Now in France they are creating a distinction between white and coloured races which

didn't exist before. It is only the British Navy that stands against Hitler's world-domination.

RAO: I don't believe that he can dominate the world.

SRI AUROBINDO: Do you know that he is trying to get a foothold in South America and doing extensive propaganda there? If he gets a hold there, he can lead an attack against the U.S.A. He is practically master of Europe. If after the collapse of France he had invaded England, by now he would have been in Asia. Now another force has been set up against him. Still the danger has not passed. He has a 50% chance of success. It is a question of balance of forces. Up to the time of the collapse of France he was extraordinarily successful because he sided with the Asuric Power behind him from whom he received remarkably correct messages. He is a mystic, only a mystic of the wrong kind. He goes into solitude for his message and waits till it comes.

RAO: But how long can he keep these races in subjection? They will rise in revolt one day.

SRI AUROBINDO: What about Poland and Czechoslovakia? They are two of the most heroic nations in the world and yet what can they do? Besides, Hitler doesn't want to annex all these countries under direct German rule. He wants to make them protectorates under his *gauleiters*, all schools, institutions, industries serving German interests and having its culture.

R: What is the difference between Communism and Nazism?

SRI AUROBINDO: Communism is the proletariat State—no dictatorship, though Stalin is a dictator but he doesn't call himself so. Otherwise they are the same.

R: The trouble about India is that the British government has not kept a single promise so far. So nobody trusts it.

SRI AUROBINDO: The fact is that the British don't trust India to help them if she is given Dominion Status. Otherwise they would have given it.

R: I don't think India will refuse to help if we get something.

SRI AUROBINDO: You think so? I am not sure. What do you think of the left-wingers, communists, Subhash Bose for instance? And it is not true that they have given nothing. It is the British character to go by stages. Whenever their self-interest is at stake they come to a compromise. You have to take account of things as they are. They gave provincial autonomy and didn't exercise any veto power. It is the Congress that spoiled everything by resigning. If without resigning they had put pressure at the Centre they would have got by now what they want. It is for two reasons I support the British in this war; first in India's own interest and secondly for humanity's sake, and the reasons I have given are external reasons, there are spiritual reasons too. You know that no kind of propaganda is allowed by the Nazis. In that case how are you going to awaken the national sentiment?

R: Even if Hitler wins, there is Japan who will resist him in the East.

SRI AUROBINDO: But is Japan powerful enough for it? It is true that Japan wants to drive out all Europeans from Asia. She can have that power only if she is master of the Far East including China.

R: People say that the British won't allow the loss of India. If it comes to that, they will make peace. (*Laughter*)

SRI AUROBINDO: They said also that Britain wouldn't fight after the collapse of France.

P: But why should Hitler make such a peace if he finds that he has chances of success? The trouble with us is that we want to cut our nose to smite another's face.

SRI AUROBINDO: No, we call in a third party to cut our nose to smite the other's face. (*Laughter*) India has always been doing that.

R: If Hitler is defeated and they make another treaty of Versailles, there will be trouble again.

SRI AUROBINDO: But if they don't do that there will be another war in 20 years' time. Something has to be done.

P: The best thing would be to march into Germany as they wanted to do in the last war.

R: People in Madras regard Italy as no more considerate than Germany.

P: For that reason Egypt has not declared war, they say.

SRI AUROBINDO: No, it is said that the British are holding them back. But do you know that the Italians have exterminated half the native people in Libya? Whatever independence England has given they will lose if Italy comes there. Are the Egyptians so foolish as not to know that? The Arabs know the Italians very well. Hence they are completely supporting Britain though they were fighting with her before.

*(To be continued)*

NIRODBARAN

# THE STORY OF A SOUL

BY HUTA

*(Continued from the issue of August 15, 1985)*

## The Mother's Message

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



Volume Two: 1958

4

It was a Friday, the 14th February 1958. As always I received from the Mother a card and a bouquet of white roses..

In the evening I took to the Mother another note-book in which I had made several sketches.

She held my hands and plunged into a trance for a few minutes. On awaking she described the vision she had seen during that short meditation. Then she drew it on a piece of paper and gave it to me.

The next day I sketched her vision on a tinted paper with crayons and sent it to her. She gave her opinion:

“This is really *excellent*, quite expressive of the vision I related to you yesterday.”

I attached the sketch of her vision and the note of appreciation to my drawing book.

For the two last pictures of the series the Mother had written:

“It is very good with a sense of withdrawal *inside* of deep concentration.”

“The Life Divine.”

Later she looked again at the second picture and remarked:

“Child, it is amazing—when I look at this face, I observe that sometimes her eyes are moving, sometimes they are closed. It is excellent. I like the picture very much.”

Then after a pause she said:

“Do you know Elenor? I showed her your pictures. She liked them. She too is a painter. But she mostly paints sea-shells with pastel colours. You must see her pictures.”

\*

An American lady Eleanor Montgomery (whom the Mother called Elenor) used to visit the Ashram and stay in Golconde. Thus we became friends. She was very close to the Mother.

I invited her to my apartment to tea. I also expressed my wish to see her recent pictures.

She came. While looking around, she suddenly burst into tears. It was a shocking surprise for me. I asked her the reason. First she would not say anything; she just sobbed. At last she spoke with a deep sigh:

“Huta, I envy you. What a beautiful, peaceful apartment you have just near the Ashram. What a lovely atmosphere. I can’t tell you how much I pine to stay here. You see, in America I have got everything but I could not possibly find such a divine atmosphere there.

“I myself have a lovely apartment in America. But what is the use when I do not feel the divine vibrations and peace?”

“O, you are lucky. I wish I were you.”

She burst into a fresh succession of sobs. I was dismayed. What could I do? What could I say? I was utterly perplexed. I begged her not to weep and have some tea, but she refused. Perhaps she was not in the mood. She was extremely perturbed.

I said: “Look, Eleanor, please don’t be upset. I feel very sad. I do appreciate your feeling. But what can I do? I am really sorry. If you can’t have tea today, then let it be next time. Since the Mother asked me to see your paintings, I would love to see them. Please excuse me, but now I must run to the Mother. I am already late. She must be waiting for me. I will pray for you to her.”

She took a grip on her emotions, breathed deeply and began to speak but not a word came out. She simply smiled—a sad smile.

We both left. She went to Golconde—I to the Mother. She was waiting for me. I told her the cause of my being late. She listened to me seriously and attentively. Then she said:

“It surprises me. Why did Eleanor behave so? Child, all that you are having is in your destiny (*pointing to my forehead*). None can take it away from you.”

Then with a smile she affirmed:

“Ah! Mother Nature—the Material Mother, likes to give you things.

“Do not worry about Eleanor. I will explain everything to her.”

Afterwards she went within herself. When she awoke, there was a radiant smile on her face. She kissed my forehead and gave me flowers.

When I next met Eleanor, she was quite cheerful and happy. She came to my house to tea and showed me many of her paintings of shells. Some of them were remarkable with delicate rainbow-colours.

Eleanor is no more in this world. She passed away in America.

\*

On the 17th the Mother sent me a fine card figuring a yellow water-lily, along with these words:

“To my dear little child Huta,

The peace is truly there shining in the heart with the love and the supreme Grace.”

Unfortunately I did not feel peace at all. The whole world seemed the restless whirl of a ceaseless wheel. I was entangled in it. I felt lonely and lost.

My nephews were still studying in the Ashram School. But they intended to go to Africa and then to England.

When I was terribly unwell both inwardly and outwardly, I could not talk with my nephews. I did not wish to burden them with my trouble. They were very young. How could I explain to them what I had been going through? Beneath the happy smile I hid a sinking heart. Somehow I managed to crawl from one day to the next. Often I had to fight back my tears.

As usual I went to the Mother and then attended her translation class.

The following morning I received a card from her showing Carnations of different hues and these words accompanied them:

“To my dear little child Huta,  
With the joy of collaboration in all love and compassion.”

I was not aware whether my inner self collaborated with the Mother. But definitely not my outer being which was all the time revolting against the Supreme Truth.

I was too tired to work in the Mother's private Stores. I could not set my heart on my new house. I passed my time in drawing. The Mother saw the pictures and was full of admiration.

There were two parts of a theme in the sketches—a child was chained; beside him the face of a Goddess.

The Mother called it: “Chained.”

In the other one I showed the child and the Goddess united in the shape of a heart. The Mother was amused to see the effect and wrote:

“Liberated by love.”

The next morning a card was sent by her illustrating a single red lotus among many leaves and these words came like a ripple:

“To my dear little child Huta,  
With wonderful sweetness of the Divine's Presence.”

In the morning I drew a face which I copied from the magazine *Réalités*; I thought to myself that I had done a nice piece of work. The Mother would surely like it.

In the evening after regarding the picture for a moment or two she kept quiet and then asked severely:

“From where did you get this inspiration?”

I answered: “I copied from the magazine *Réalités*.” She further inquired:

“Who asked you to sketch the woman? Look at her eyebrows—they go up—they are wicked. Why did you draw from the magazine? Rub it off right now.”

She threw an eraser at me with annoyance. I said: "Mother, I am sorry. I will do so when I get home."

She spoke loudly:

"No, not at home. Now and here itself. Bear in your mind never to copy anything from magazines. Understand?"

I felt a great sense of guilt and scarcely dared to breathe. My thoughts refused to stretch beyond her order. I took the eraser, bent my head over the book cursing myself and rubbed vigorously to efface the drawing. She nodded. I managed a weak smile in response. But I felt perilously close to tears.

Her face relaxed in a smile. She leaned from her couch and kissed the top of my head. After taking the flowers given by her I got to my feet and slowly made my exit. The Mother followed my movement.

It was certainly for an occult reason that she had asked me to wipe out the picture in front of her, I thought. Perhaps she wanted to obliterate there and then in her room the bad effect.

The following morning as on other days a card came along with white roses. I particularly liked the card, because it depicted tall trees and the Mother had inscribed on it:

"Nature aspires through her tall trees."

I sent to the Mother the picture I had altered. She pronounced:

"It is quite good now and expresses well what you want to say. It will be No. 1 of the new story which was decided yesterday, a story in four parts which ends by the peace of the union."

In the evening the Mother went to the University Theatre. First she read out a Message for the All India Radio. Later it was broadcast in Tamil and in English. The Message was as follows:

"Only those years that are passed uselessly make you grow old.

A year spent uselessly is a year during which no progress has been accomplished, no growth in consciousness has been achieved, no further step has been taken towards perfection.

Consecrate your life to the realisation of something higher and broader than yourself and you will never feel the weight of the passing years."

After that the Mother surveyed the Flower-Show which was both picturesque and pleasant. Each flower conveyed its speciality and significance.

The Mother went to her room at the Theatre to refresh herself. Then she sat in



her chair near the stage. We all saw with her a grand performance of well-known artists of India. I was fascinated by the Bharat Natyam of the South. Vanamala and Malati danced gracefully. The Kathak of the North, the Manipuri of Assam and the Kathakali of Malabar were also enchanting. Gopinath did well in his Kathakali despite his obesity!

The Mother was exceedingly pleased with their skill. She blessed the dancers and gave them souvenirs.

I read in the book *Bharat Natyam: Indian Classical Dance Art*, edited by Sunil Kothari:

“It has been said that the Dance is a form of Yoga. There is no doubt about this, for if one seeks to achieve perfection as Bharat meant one to do, many years of discipline and hard work are needed to train the body, the mind and oneself. This needs true *bhakti* or devotion. We have no more temple dancing today, but we can bring the spirit of the temple to the stage. If we do this our whole attitude to this art will change. We will realise that our physical bodies will become transmuted and non-physical. It means that we shall not dance for the audience alone. Every performance will become a means of not only making the dancer one with the higher, but of taking the audience to that level. This oneness is Yoga, and it can be easily understood why the Greatest of Beings, Shiva, is the supreme dancer, Nataraja. Even the Highest dances in the lowest, and the highest spiritual experience is possible on the lowest plane of existence.

This is the way in which India sought to understand the philosophy and meaning of art. With the exception of music, only the dance lives today as an art expounded in the *Shastras*. Though the *Shastras* exist for all the arts, great research, knowledge, experience and intuition are necessary to demonstrate the continuity of art-forms from the ancient days to the present....

A truly spiritual artist is one who also forgets himself and in that self-forgetfulness achieves the Bliss which is called *Ananda*. This is why Nataraja's dance is called Ananda Tandavan—the final achievement by which He, the Yogi of Yogis, brings body and soul together, heaven and earth together, thereby bringing the world to salvation and blessing it with liberation or *Moksha*.”

Rukmini Devi has stated in the same Book about the *Mudras*:

“So vast is the art of hand gestures that it covers almost all the aspects of human life and the universe. The *asamyuta* and *samyuta hastas* are capable of expressing a number of things, including abstract concepts like beauty and truth. They express, interpret, describe and narrate several things, objects, actions and concepts. This process forms the language of the *hastas*”.

It was 21st February—the Mother's birthday—this was its 80th Anniversary. Everyone in the Ashram was in a gay mood.

I received from her a card exhibiting a pink *Gladiolus*—“Emotional Receptivity—Emotions wanting to be divinised.” She had written on the card:

“To my dear little child Huta,  
With the eternal love and compassion of the Divine Grace.”

I wore the new sari the Mother had given me. On a Sunday just before the Darshan day she distributed saris to Sadhikas and towels or napkins to Sadhaks.

In the morning after the general meditation, at 10.30 we received the Message from the Mother who sat on her high-backed carved chair in the Meditation Hall upstairs with her sweet dreamy smile.

The Message was in the form of a folder. On the cover was the coloured photograph of the Mother in sari and crown. It ran:

*Sri Aurobindo on the Mother*

“The Mother's consciousness is the divine consciousness and the Light that comes from it is the light of the Divine Truth. One who receives and accepts and lives in the Mother's light, will begin to see the truth on all planes, the mental, the vital, the physical. He will reject all that is undivine,—the undivine is the falsehood, the ignorance, the error of the dark forces; the undivine is all that is obscure and unwilling to accept the Divine Truth and its light and force. The undivine, therefore, is all that is unwilling to accept the light and force of the Mother. That is why I am always telling you to keep in contact with the Mother and her Light and Force, because it is only so that you can come out of this confusion and obscurity and receive the Truth that comes from above.

When we speak of the Mother's Light or my Light in a special sense, we are speaking of a special occult action—we are speaking of certain lights that come from the Supermind. In this action the Mother's is the White Light that purifies, illumines, brings down the whole essence and power of the Truth and makes the transformation possible. But in fact all light that comes from above from the highest divine Truth is the Mother's.

There is no difference between the Mother's path and mine; we have and always had the same path that leads to the supramental change and the divine realisation; not only at the end, but from the beginning they have been the same.”

Another quotation in the same folder was from the Mother herself:

“To celebrate the birth of a transitory body can satisfy some faithful feelings. To celebrate the manifestation of the eternal Consciousness can be done at every

moment of the universal history. But to celebrate the advent of a new world, the supramental world, is a marvellous and exceptional privilege.”

In the evening the programme was packed with various items. First the March-past on the Theatre ground. The Mother took the salute. After a brief concentration the band-music. Then the Mother gave copies of the *Bulletin* to certain people. Next the delicious refreshments.

Afterwards a performance by Ashram dancers—Rasa-Garba, dance-drama of Chandi.

Lastly all of us had a fifteen minutes' contemplation with the Mother. She sat in her chair which was now on the stage against the background of a large projection of Sri Aurobindo's photograph. It was a day to remember.

I came back to my apartment, feeling terribly lonely after seeing so many people and performances. Once more a huge wave of the inferiority complex engulfed me. On my mind's screen the pictures of these efficient dancers, actors and versatile people slid one by one. I then considered myself a sheer duffer and a perfect country-bumpkin without any aim in my life. For I thought that only to draw a few sketches could never lead me to the summit of super-excellence. I was disturbed—a bitter jealousy twisted through my heart, because the Mother did so much for bright and sophisticated people. The tears of sorrow that I could not totally explain to myself began to run down my cheeks.

Half the night I thought long and hard. It was indeed silly to cry about nothing, and that was what I was doing. I told myself this over and over again before at last I fell asleep.

The succeeding morning a card and a posy of white roses came from the Mother together with these words:

“To my dear little child Huta  
With the love that never fades and the endless compassion.”

I was so entwined in my small self—Ego and the physical consciousness—that I could not feel the Mother's love and her compassion. I only brooded over the present happenings and their consequences. The trail of negative conceptions was unabated. I was still upset.

Nevertheless, I finished the last series of drawings. The Mother showed her pleasure in all the pictures. For the final one she wrote:

“This is a happy end of the story. The expression of the child is delightful. Let this happy conclusion be a lasting one.”

(*To be continued*)

## 15TH AUGUST AND SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of August 15, 1985)

SRI AUROBINDO reminisces about the circumstances of his going to Chandernagore:

“I was in the *Karmayogin* office [trying some automatic writing] and we knew about the search that was going to be made with the object of arresting me. There were some people there [Ramchandra Mazumdar, Suresh Chakravarty, Biren Ghose, Bijoy Nag and Nolini Kanta Gupta]. Ramchandra was there preparing to give a fight to the police and many other ideas were flying about when suddenly I heard a voice from above saying—‘No, go to Chandernagore.’”<sup>1</sup>

When a disciple (Haradhan) asked Sri Aurobindo whether he had heard a voice also about coming to Pondicherry, Sri Aurobindo answered, “Yes, that is quite true.”<sup>2</sup>

Sri Aurobindo told a disciple: “Lord Minto said that he could not rest his head on his pillow until he had crushed Aurobindo Ghose. He feared that I would start the Revolutionary Movement again, and assassinations were going on at that time.”<sup>3</sup>

The *Karmayogin* case opened with a remarkable synchronicity—issuing of warrants in Calcutta on the very day that Sri Aurobindo reached the haven of Pondicherry. Another coincidence marked the conclusion of the case. On 7 November 1910, the day the High Court gave its ruling, but at least a day before Sri Aurobindo learned of it he wrote a letter to the editor of the Madras daily *The Hindu* in which he announced his presence in Pondicherry. The letter stated: “I shall be obliged if you will allow me to inform everyone interested in my whereabouts through your journal that I am and will remain, in Pondicherry. I left British India over a month before proceedings were taken against me and, as I had purposely retired here in order to pursue my Yogic sadhana undisturbed by political action or pursuit and had already severed connection with my political work, I did not feel called upon to surrender on the warrant for sedition, as might have been incumbent on me if I had remained in the political field. I have since lived here as a religious recluse, visited only by a few friends, French and Indian, but my whereabouts have been an open secret, long known to the agents of the Government and widely rumoured in Madras as well as perfectly well-known to everyone in Pondicherry... I defer all explanation or justification of my action in leaving British India until the High Court in Calcutta shall have pronounced on the culpability or innocence of the writing in the *Karmayogin* on which I am indicted.”<sup>4</sup>

The High Court’s pronouncement, however, had little effect on Sri Aurobindo’s retirement. What was keeping him in Pondicherry was not external threat but inner necessity. As he declared in a private letter of 12 July 1911:

“I need some place of refuge in which I can complete my Yoga unassailed and build up other souls around me. It seems to me that Pondicherry is the place appointed by those who are Beyond...”<sup>5</sup>

“Sri Aurobindo arrived at four p.m. on 4th April 1910. The time-juncture may be noted: month 4, day 4, hour 4 after the meridian. The number 4 has an occult significance: ‘Supramental Realisation’.”<sup>6</sup>

“In addition to force and fraud, the British Government did not hesitate to make use of temptation as well. They sent word to Sri Aurobindo which they followed up by a messenger, to say that if he were to return to British India, they would not mind. They would indeed be happy to provide him with a nice bungalow in the quiet surroundings of a hill station, Darjeeling, where he could live in complete freedom and devote himself to his spiritual practices without let or hindrance. Needless to add, this was an ointment spread out to catch a fly and Sri Aurobindo refused the invitation with a ‘No, thank you.’”<sup>7</sup>

After leaving politics it was found that Sri Aurobindo remained in a meditative mood. Motilal Roy describes him: “When I enquired of Sri Aurobindo why he was always looking upward, his answer was, ‘I see some words written and I try to understand their meaning. Even gods living in the subtle planes of existence can be as well seen.’”<sup>8</sup>

“Sri Aurobindo’s first real ‘contact with Vedic thought came indirectly while pursuing certain lines of self-development in the way of Indian Yoga’, apparently in Chandernagar in 1910. Certain symbolic names connected with specific yogic experiences came into his mind, and along with them were seen figures of three Vedic Goddesses, who represented to him ‘three out of the four faculties of the intuitive reason.’”<sup>9</sup>

“At one time, one of our main subjects of study was the Veda. This went on for several months, for about an hour every evening, at the Guest House. Sri Aurobindo came and took his seat at the table and we sat around. Subramanya Bharati the Tamil poet and myself were the two who showed the keenest interest. Sri Aurobindo would take up a hymn from the Rigveda, read it aloud once, explain the meaning of every line and phrase and finally give a full translation. I used to take notes. There are many words in the Rigveda whose derivation is doubtful and open to differences of opinion. In such cases, Sri Aurobindo used to say that the particular meaning he gave was only provisional and that the matter could be finally decided only after considering it in all the contexts in which the word occurred. His own method of interpreting the Rigveda was this: on reading the text he found its true meaning by direct intuitive vision through an inner concentration in the first instance, and then he would give it an external verification in the light of reason, making the necessary changes accordingly.”<sup>10</sup>

During the early years of Sri Aurobindo’s stay in Pondicherry the First World War broke out. From the occult viewpoint it was a battle of gods and titans.

“There is something that happens always in the history of man, this battle of the gods and the titans. Whenever there is a New Creation in the offing, and man is to be carried a step forward in his evolution, there comes up ranged against him the forces of Evil who do not want him to rise to a higher level of consciousness, towards the godhead. They want to hold man bound down in their grip.

“Such a moment of crisis came to man in the time of Sri Krishna. The Kurukshetra War is known as a war of righteousness, *dharmayuddha*; it was a war of the gods and the titans. On the battlefield of Kurukshetra Sri Krishna gave his message that

was to initiate the New Age that was coming. In exactly the same way, Sri Aurobindo began to proclaim his message with the opening of the guns in the First World War. The War began in August 1914; on the 15th August of the same year came out the first number of his Review, the *Arya*. Another point of note: the *Arya* continued almost as long as the War lasted. The 'official end' of the War came towards the close of May, 1921; the *Arya* ceased in January of the same year. The Mother had arrived in the meantime to make Pondicherry her home."<sup>11</sup>

"The message .. has three parts: (1) for each man as an individual to change himself into the future type of divine humanity, the man of the new satyayuga which is striving to be born, (2) to evolve a race of such men to lead humanity and (3) to call all humanity to the path under the lead of these pioneers and this chosen race."<sup>12</sup>

After Sri Aurobindo had retired to Pondicherry, he heard from Dr. Munje. Munje had been known to him earlier and was an influential leader. Munje pressed Sri Aurobindo to take up Presidentship of the Nagpur Session of the Congress in December 1920, as Tilak who was the unquestioned leader of the nationalists had died on 1 August 1920. But Sri Aurobindo refused to accept the leadership. He wrote an explanatory letter dated August 30, 1920:

"As I have already wired to you, I find myself unable to accept your offer of the Presidentship of the Nagpur Congress. There are reasons even within the political field itself which in any case would have stood in my way....

"The central reason however is this that I am no longer first and foremost a politician, but have definitely commenced another kind of work with a spiritual basis, a work of spiritual, social, cultural and economic reconstruction of an almost revolutionary kind, and am even making or at least supervising a sort of practical or laboratory experiment in that sense which needs all the attention and energy that I can have to spare "<sup>13</sup>

Then there is the letter to C. R. Das, dated November 18, 1922. Das requested Sri Aurobindo to take up the leadership of the Congress as the Non-Cooperation Movement under Gandhiji had failed to achieve its objective. Sri Aurobindo answered:

"I think you know my present idea and the attitude towards life and work to which it has brought me. I have become confirmed in a perception which I had always, less clearly and dynamically then, but which has now become more and more evident to me, that the true basis of work and life is the spiritual,—that is to say, a new consciousness to be developed only by Yoga. I see more and more manifestly that man can never get out of the futile circle the race is always treading until he has raised himself on to the new foundation. I believe also that it is the mission of India to make this great victory for the world. But what precisely was the nature of the dynamic power of this greater consciousness? What was the condition of its effective truth? How could it be brought down, mobilised, organised, turned upon life? How could our present instruments, intellect, mind, life, body be made true and perfect channels for this great transformation? This was the problem I have been trying to work out in my own experience and I have now a sure basis, a wide knowledge

and some mastery of the secret. Not yet its fulness and complete imperative presence—therefore I have still to remain in retirement. For I am determined not to work in the external field till I have the sure and complete possession of this new power of action,—not to build except on a perfect foundation.

“But still I have gone far enough to be able to undertake one work on a larger scale than before—the training of others to receive this Sadhana and prepare themselves as I have done, for without that my future work cannot even be begun. There are many who desire to come here and whom I can admit for the purpose, there are a greater number who can be trained at a distance; but I am unable to carry on unless I have sufficient funds to be able to maintain a centre here and one or two at least outside.”<sup>14</sup>

On 15th August 1923 Sri Aurobindo said, among other things: “Formerly we used to celebrate the event of my physical birth in a vital manner. There was the seed of the inner Truth in it, but the manifestation was vital. Now, I wish that if the day is observed it should be in keeping with the Truth it symbolises.

“I have been working all these years to meet the obstacles and remove them, and prepare and clear the path so that the task may not be very difficult for you. As for my helping you in that task it all depends upon your capacity to receive the help. I can give any amount that you can take. There is an idea that to-day every sadhaka gets a new experience. That depends upon your capacity to receive the Truth in yourself...”<sup>15</sup>

Again, on 15th August 1924 Sri Aurobindo addressed his disciples: “It has become customary to expect some speech from me on this day. I prefer to communicate through the Silent Consciousness, because speech addresses itself to the mind while through the Silent Consciousness one can reach something deeper. We are practising together a yoga which is quite different in certain essentials from other methods which go by the same name...”<sup>16</sup>

Next year, on the same occasion Sri Aurobindo clarified his aim thus:

“Our Yoga aims at the discovery of the Supramental being, the Supramental world, and the Supramental nature, and their manifestations in life.”<sup>17</sup>

Sri Aurobindo’s speech on 15th August 1926 contained the words: “But we have attached a special importance to this day and it is justified if we live in the light of the Truth it symbolises.... It is a day which ought to be a day of consecration, of self-examination and a preparation for the future advance, if possible, for the reception of a special Power which would carry on the work of advance.”<sup>18</sup>

A letter to a disciple runs:

“...It is not with the Empyrean that I am busy: I wish it were. It is rather with the opposite end of things; it is in the Abyss that I have to plunge to build a bridge between the two.”<sup>19</sup>

It is clear that although Sri Aurobindo had retired from the outward life he had not retired into an inert and ineffective state of personal beatitude. Behind the scene he was working for India’s independence. Here a letter of Isobel Cripps, wife of

Sir Stafford Cripps, to Arabinda Basu will be of great interest:

"...I may say that Stafford was very much heartened by Sri Aurobindo's unequivocal message to him. He was especially touched by the fact that Sri Aurobindo offered his public adhesion to the proposals of the Parliamentary Mission and that his message was given wide publicity.

"Some of the most eminent political leaders of India subsequently admitted the folly of rejecting the proposals of the British Parliamentary Mission. But I am not surprised that the unerring vision of a spiritual mystic of Sri Aurobindo's stature saw the reality of the situation and that he recommended strongly the acceptance of the proposals."<sup>20</sup>

Sri Aurobindo commented on the Wavell Proposals. A communication from the secretary of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, dated 15th June, 1945 reads: "We heard the Viceroy's broadcast yesterday. Sri Aurobindo says the proposals are decent enough and seem to be even better than Cripps' in certain respects. An Indian will be in charge of foreign affairs and India will have her own representative in foreign countries. This and other circumstances are an approach practically towards Dominion status. Of course, there are a few features which personally Sri Aurobindo would not advocate, e.g. the apparent foundation of the Ministry on a communal basis instead of a coalition of parties. Still these should not be a reason for the rejection of the proposals. A fair trial should be given and the scheme tested in its actual working out."<sup>21</sup>

(Concluded)

NILIMA DAS

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## THE NEED OF THE TIME

THE 21st Century is only 15 annual steps away. To prepare a fitting welcome for the incoming century, India has to get busy and put this task on the agenda of the nation's programme. Sri Aurobindo was asked to give a message for independent India on 15th August 1947. In this message he stated five of his cherished ideals for which he had lived and worked. That message is still relevant irrespective of party, profession, belief or status. These ideals are:

- (1) India's freedom and unity.
- (2) The resurgence and liberation of Asia and her return to the great role which she had played in the progress of human civilisation.
- (3) The rise of a new, a greater, brighter and nobler life for mankind resting outwardly on an international unification of the separate existences of peoples... drawing them together into an over-riding and consummating oneness.
- (4) The gift by India of her spiritual knowledge and her means for the spiritualisation of life to the whole race.
- (5) A new step in the evolution which, by uplifting the consciousness to a higher level, would begin the solution of the many problems of existence that have perplexed and vexed humanity since man began to think and dream of individual perfection and a perfect society.

Individual perfection and a perfect society are ideas which can bind together all men of intelligence and goodwill in a common endeavour. All the spare energies of groups and individuals should be mobilised and harnessed for the realisation of these ideals.

For this work to be taken up in right earnest, the words of The Mother of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, provide all the inspiration and force needed.

“His Independence Day message of August 15th 1947 needs to be read and re-read and its significance explained to the millions of his compatriots. India needs the conviction and faith of Sri Aurobindo.”

This surely should be the priority for building up the cohesion of the country and for the fulfilment of its chosen mission for the welfare and progress of India, Asia and the world.

Some of the problems that Sri Aurobindo envisaged in 1947 have been partially solved, but some of them have assumed more formidable and menacing proportions. The piling up of vast lethal armaments, nuclear arsenals, chemical weapons and space-war preparations—all capable of an ultimate devastation—supported by human jealousies, ambitions, unlimited greed unashamedly avowed. All these fill the air we breathe, and sovereign nations and states have proved themselves incapable of

checking these real and self-perpetuated threats to our planet earth.

The twenty-first century is just round the corner now. A world authority must be created and nations and groups have to be persuaded to transfer some of their sovereign rights to a World Government, Federal or Unitary, or partially of one kind and partially of the other.

Working for world unity would create a psychological atmosphere in which regional jealousies would be easier to handle. Regional federations would make problems of national egos and boundaries and self-interests easier to tackle. When family problems become intractable, they are wisely transferred to the "panchayats"; similarly, local or regional problems would be more easily dealt with at the national level and international problems become less dangerous when raised to the level of a 'League of Nations' or a 'United Nations' type of organisation. The threats to our immediate future get more fierce and menacing day by day. Quick steps have to be taken to create a "WORLD PANCHAYAT", a world authority with the power to impose its will on the recalcitrant elements. This is the job which the elite of mankind must take up. India, Sri Aurobindo believes, has the responsibility to provide a lead.

There is already a large and effective movement gathering momentum in various parts of the world demonstrating and speaking out boldly against the monstrous threat of the nuclear beast tethered with a feeble chain. We are moved on reading of the emotions felt by our space travellers when they observe our beautiful planet from that great distance. Some of them have been quite transformed since their journey and are working now to preserve and protect us and our future generations. Let us heed the warning from Sri Aurobindo:

"...thrice woe to them who are strong and ready, yet waste the force or misuse the moment; for them is irreparable loss or a great destruction." (*The Hour of God*)

SHIVABHAI

## **DID CLASSICAL PHYSICS BEAR OUT MATERIALISM?**

ONE of the distinguishing marks of the present century is the revolution in physics. This revolution has swept away many of the old theories, and the new ones that have replaced them have brought an extreme mystery which, it seems, does not rule out the possibility of even a mystical conception of the universe. But when we declare that relativity theory and quantum theory permit us to ask whether matter be not a phenomenon of something other than material, must we assume as we generally do that classical physics which knew nothing of them barred the way to a non-materialistic philosophy? No doubt, most of the classical physicists were opposed to such a philosophy; yet it may not follow that the actual findings of classical physics had no significant features conducive to uncertainty and mystery, features perilous to dogmatic materialism. Might not those physicists have somehow indulged in a tremendous illogicality that has deluded even us to take as legitimate the interpretation they put on their data?

### **Electricity, the Ether and the Atom**

Let us begin with the frequent assertion that, while modern physics has moved away from the mechanical view of the world, classical physics was wedded to it. This is hardly true. Indeed, several physicists were anxious that every process of nature should allow a mechanical model to be made of it, but long before the advent of relativity or quantum physics the mechanical model was found insufficient. For, what after all renders such a model possible? Galileo and Newton believed that all events could be reduced to forces which act between particles along lines connecting the particles and which depend only on distance. This belief and nothing else is in physics the mechanical view of the world and it is summed up in the equations set down by Lagrange towards the end of the eighteenth century. Whatever conforms to these equations can be made a mechanical model of and whatever fails to conform to them contradicts the mechanical view and transcends the mechanical model. The first non-conformity was found by Oersted when experimenting with a voltaic battery and was stressed by Rowland's experiment with a charged sphere: it amounted to the fact that the electric force acted not along the line but perpendicularly to it and depended on the velocity of the electric charge instead of only on the distance. The second non-conformity arose in connection with light: the mechanical view of light led to a jellylike ether which, paradoxically, was found to interact with matter when light passed through glass and water but offered not the least resistance to the motion of the planets. With the coming of Faraday and Clerk Maxwell, it was realised that not the charges nor the particles but the space or the "field" between the charges and the particles was essential for the description of physical phenomena. The field-concept harmonised what the mechanically viewed

ether had left disparate, and Clerk Maxwell's equations were divested of all mechanicality by Hertz, while in the hands of Lorentz they resulted in the electromagnetic description of matter itself. So we can see from any history of physics that it is not relativity theory or quantum theory that first questioned the applicableness of the mechanical model to the whole of nature and suggested processes no engineer could ever satisfactorily duplicate, processes intelligible only in abstract mathematical terms.

Even when the mechanical model was sought to be extended everywhere, the results were not such as should lead to any complacency about reality. The physicists seem to have been pretty complacent in the main but we would be deluding ourselves if we thought that physics was in tune with this complacency. The ether, as mechanically conceived, got credited with a hundred conflicting properties. Among other things, it had to be denser than the densest solid and yet so "void" that we could pass through it without feeling anything; it had to be elastic but could not be distorted; it had to be mobile but its motion could never be detected; it could exert force on matter but matter could exert no force on it. Could such a self-contradictory substance make for peace of mind or give rise to a clear unchallengeable materialism?

And it was this mysterious ether which was also regarded as the world's substratum. We commonly think that nineteenth-century physics rested with what is usually termed matter as the stuff constituting the atom. Newton, as page 375 of his *Optics* (4th edition, 1730) will prove, did believe that the atom was composed of matter. But the nineteenth century put not matter but the ether first. Lord Kelvin was representative of the general mind when he brought forward in 1867 in the *Philosophical Magazine* (vol. 34, page 15) the concept of the atom as a spinning vortex ring in the ether, something like a smoke ring in air. As Paul Heyl puts it on page 16 of *New Frontiers of Science*: "In this concept Kelvin reversed the Newtonian idea that hard particles might make soft bodies and taught us to look for the explanation of the hardness of matter in the rapid motion of something soft and yielding." And when we know what a paragon of a paradox the ether was we see how matter, instead of remaining matter-of-fact, retreated into ethereality.

Nor was the ether the sole confounding item. Some years ago Professor Arthur Smithells called attention to a controversy which took place as far back as 1882. In that year a book was published entitled *The Concepts and Theories of Modern Physics*, written by an American, J. B. Stallo. Commenting on the controversy, Herbert Dingle writes in *Through Science to Philosophy* (page 91): "Stallo was not a physicist—he was a judge; but (or should I say therefore?) he had an extremely logical mind, and with rigorous exactitude he pointed out the inconsistencies in the scheme of thought which physicists everywhere adopted. His book was reviewed in *Nature* by P. G. Tait, one of the most prominent practising physicists of the time.... On one hand, there is Stallo ..having a right royal time exposing the contradictions in which the kinetic theory of gases had become involved; and on the other, Tait, unable to answer the arguments because they were indeed unanswerable, but yet knowing as

Stallo could not know that the kinetic theory of gases was an instrument which science could not possibly abandon." The state of affairs Stallo disclosed was, in short, that from one angle science had to regard the atom as perfectly elastic and from another as perfectly inelastic, from one angle as something which was wanted to explain hardness and from another as something which already had the very hardness sought to be explained by it! Could such a glaring contradiction in matter itself be said to leave everything clear and unperplexing?

Apropos of the property of elasticity in reference to the atom we may offer a few observations which take us from apparently clear, obviously materialistic conceptions straight into the cryptic and the inconceivable. If one had asked a classical physicist how he would explain the compression that is possible of even a seemingly close-packed piece of solid matter he would have answered: "The original packing represented a porous mass: the molecules were so packed as to leave inter-spaces, like the holes in a sponge." If we had asked him again why, after moderate compression, the solid resumed its original shape and volume, he would have replied: "The material was elastic." But now comes the rub. As F. M. Denton puts it: "We can hardly say that the empty pores do themselves exert forces; the forces must be due to the walls of these pores, and these walls at any rate must consist of close-packed particles. The elasticity of a mass of close-packed particles then has to be attributed to the particles themselves. If these particles are the molecules, we know that they have a structure; they are built up of atoms and built so loosely that the atoms move about within the molecules. We might attribute elasticity to change in the closeness of the packing of the atoms, but to the atoms themselves must then be attributed the real elasticity." Consider the implication of these words. If the atom is, as many classical physicists believed, the ultimate brick of the universe, how can it be elastic? Elasticity would mean that the atom is capable of being compressed and afterwards of resuming its original shape and volume. But if it is thus capable it cannot be structureless, it cannot be without component parts. Without its having parts the idea that it can suffer a change in volume is preposterous. If we suppose it to have suffered a compression of, say, 1% of its original volume, that little element of volume must have been occupied, previously, by a part of the atom—an idea that is inconsistent with the assumption that the atom has no component parts. Neither can we suppose a structureless atom suffering change of shape: change of shape means re-arrangement of component parts.

The nineteenth-century physicist, with his atomic theory of the constitution of matter, lands plump into an obscure and unphysical conception the moment you probe the most simple-seeming property of things. And it would have helped him as little as it would help us now if the atom were given a structure and its compression made comprehensible by regarding it as a very loosely packed system of electrons. For then the electron would have to be itself elastic and possess parts! Otherwise the property of elasticity would have no physical explanation. But even if we went beyond the electron, we should not be out of the wood: the electron's components

face us with the same predicament. We shall have to go on *ad infinitum*—the property of elasticity getting ascribed to the last member of an unending series of ever diminishing particles. As Denton points out, the ultimate particle of matter presents great difficulty; the atomic notion of the constitution of matter does surely demand an ultimate particle, and such reasoning as has been suggested shows that to this ultimate particle, no properties of any sort—not even magnitude—can be assigned. The atomic theory, whether it stops with the nineteenth-century atom or with any minute grain that is the final brick of the universe, ends with matter becoming a total mystery. Nor can the alternative of pushing the responsibility on to the last member of an interminable series of particles be said to satisfy the mind with a clearly physical or dogmatically materialistic view of nature. The scientific mind fails and we are in the realm of magic, and some power which is not bound by our mind's capacity of physical conception but can achieve the impossible and whose working can be grasped by only some speech-transcending faculty such as the mystics claim confronts us as soon as we question the commonest scientific notion entertained by even the most materialistic physicist of the nineteenth century.

### The Force of Gravitation

Beating the atom and even the ether in mysteriousness was Newton's force of gravitation. We are often told that the straightforward mechanical pulls contemplated in the old theory of gravitation are gone now and bodies are deviated from their straight path by the "curved" condition of the medium in which they move and not by a force exerted on them by a distant body. Is it not, however, plain that this new explanation is actually less mysterious than the Newtonian? As Denton observes on page 39 of *Relativity and Common Sense* the Newtonian explanation "is one which involves a process impossible of conception—namely, that of 'action at a distance.' We can conceive of a force acting through a medium, but Newton's explanation of the force of gravitation demands no medium; two masses attract each other with a force proportional inversely to the square of their distances apart, even though the masses be separated by empty space or, if there happen to be an intervening medium, Newton's explanation allows this to interfere in no way with the transmission of the force. Human minds—or at any rate many very reputable human minds—revolt against the notion of such 'action at a distance,' regarding it as absurd." L. Bolton on page 144 of *An Introduction to the Theory of Relativity* stresses the same fact: "If the new point of view which Einstein invites us to adopt presents a difficulty, it is useful to remember that the Newtonian view presented no less difficulty to philosophers in his day. Their great objection was that it involved action at a distance, attributing to bodies a power to act where they are not. It seemed incredible that the sun acted across intervening space and pulled a planet out of the straight path which it would otherwise follow. Only the clearest evidence that this theory actually did give an explanation of the planetary motions and presented a picture of what, in fact, went

on in the solar system, surpassing by far in adequacy and accuracy any theory previously advanced induced philosophers as a body to accept such action as possible." Bolton, of course, is asking us not to reject Einstein on the score of contradiction of common sense or logic; but his reference to Newton serves excellently our purpose of showing that the suggestion of the supra-physical or occult is as strongly ascribable to Newtonian gravitation as to Einstein's curving of planetary motion by means of the "curved" medium around. J. Sullivan on page 77 of *Limitations of Science* develops the hint dropped by Bolton, in the passage already quoted, that Newtonian gravitation is not hampered by any intervening agent: "Nothing acts as a screen to it. We have substances that stop light, that stop heat, that stop the electric and magnetic forces, that stop even X-rays, but we know of nothing that stops gravitation. A body held up in the air weighs just as much however many bodies we interpose between it and the surface of the earth. The pull of the earth on it is not affected in the slightest." A page earlier Sullivan casts into relief another strange aspect of the gravitational force as conceived by Newton: "It seems to act instantaneously. Light, as we know, takes time to travel. So does every other form of radiant energy. But all efforts to bring gravitation into line with the other forces proved ineffectual." Added to the fact of action at a distance without any ether capable of transmitting it, the fact of an instantaneous action and of an action unaffected by any screen renders Newtonian gravitation the most mysterious, the most unphysical agency science can ever posit.

Bertrand Russell on page 140 of *The ABC of Relativity* refers also to the oddness of the old gravitational concept. "Aristotle," he writes, "thought that heavy bodies fall faster than light ones. Galileo showed that this is not the case, when the resistance of the air is eliminated. In a vacuum, a feather falls as fast as a lump of lead. As regards the planets it was Newton who established the corresponding facts. At a given distance from the sun, a comet, which has a very small mass, experiences exactly the same acceleration towards the sun as a planet experiences at the same distance. Thus the way in which gravitation affects a body depends only upon where the body is and in no degree upon the nature of the body. This suggests that gravitation is a characteristic of the locality, which is what Einstein makes it." In pre-relativity physics, therefore, there was the glaring oddity that in a given gravitational situation all bodies behave exactly alike. The modern concept is, in a certain way, far more close to commonsense. The old oddity got covered up for succeeding generations of scientists by the formula they had learned from childhood about the equality of inertial and gravitational mass. Part of Einstein's anxiousness to dispense with Newton's gravitational concept was due to his keen awareness of its supra-scientific metaphysicality. And we may remark that Einstein's aversion especially to action at a distance is itself a lingering attachment to the mechanical view. This view receives its greatest blow from untransmitted instantaneous action at a distance, and the blow was given not by modern but by classical physics. Surely Einstein has not played more strikingly than Newton a new St. Paul, crying: "Behold, I tell you a mystery!"

### Absolute Space and Time

In connection with the physics of Einstein and the Newtonian physics by which the nineteenth century of materialism swore, it is curious to note that Einstein's first criticism of the latter was on the ground that there was too much metaphysics in the ideas of absolute space and absolute time. Sullivan well remarks in the introduction to his *Three Men Discuss Relativity*: "We can say that changes in the scientific scheme have gradually converged towards a system of interpretation where none but observable factors are considered as in causal dependence. We must not interpret the word 'observable' too narrowly in this statement. It would be more correct to substitute for 'observable' 'definable in terms of physical processes.' If an entity is to be considered as a scientific entity we must be able to say what physical processes would enable us to detect it. This is the basis of Einstein's objection to Newton's absolute space and absolute time. There are no physical operations, according to Einstein, which enable us to distinguish absolute space. As regards absolute time, Newton himself confessed that there may be no natural processes which enable us to measure it. We can never, in the nature of things, say whether we are dealing with absolute time or not. Both these entities therefore are described by Einstein as metaphysical, with no real place in science. Newton said that the centrifugal force developed by a rotating body was due to the body's relation to absolute space. Here an unobservable factor, absolute space, is involved as the cause of an observed physical phenomenon. According to Einstein, science could not invoke such an entity as the cause of anything. Absolute space and time, so far as science is concerned, belong to the same class of entities as the Will of God, Beauty, the Principle of Evil and so on. They may even be realities, and some kinds of knowledge may find it necessary to assume them, but since they are not definable in terms of physical processes, since we know of no physical apparatus which measure them or even detect their existence, they are not to be imported into scientific descriptions."

These words of Sullivan's suggest two features of modern scientific procedure. On the one hand, it is implied that science is a game played according to certain rules which deliberately limit its scope and thereby indirectly grant the possibility of other types of inquiry leading to truth, though not to scientific truth. This is a definite pricking of the balloon of scientific dogmatism. On the other hand, however, nineteenth-century physics is shown to be functioning with a loose scientific conscience and hobnobbing with types of inquiry that arrived at entities like the Will of God, Beauty or the Principle of Evil: in short, its procedure, unlike that of modern physics, was essentially akin, in several respects, to that of nonscientific religion, aesthetics and ethics! If that is so, dogmatic materialism has in classical physics no leg to stand on.



## Entropy

With mention of the Will of God we may bring in the subject of what is termed Entropy. About the middle of the last century, Clausius, the discoverer of the mechanical theory of heat, was impressed by the fact that when mechanical energy is converted into heat, a large part of it is never reconverted. He argued that a time must come when all energy would exist in the form of heat and all activity other than the vibration of molecules would cease: there would at last be no utilisable energy left. The process towards this state is called entropy. As it is well known that the stars are radiating away heat, a heat-death of the universe may be expected, one dead level of temperature, a condition of maximum disorganisation in which all energy will be dissipated. In the nineteenth century there was no possibility of arguing from any natural facts that the maximum disorganisation could ever be counteracted. But the progressive disorganisation involves that the further back we go in time the energy of the universe is to be considered more and more highly organised. Can the higher and higher organisation proceed indefinitely? The answer of science was "No." We must reach a moment of time when the energy was wholly organised with none of the random element in it. In Eddington's phrases: "The organisation we are concerned with is exactly definable, and there is a limit at which it becomes perfect. There is not an infinite series of states of higher and still higher organisation; nor is the limit one which is ultimately approached more and more slowly." This means that science, if unable to contradict the law of Entropy, has to admit a moment of maximum organisation which could not have been preceded by any other of less organisation since Entropy was taken to be irreversible, a moment which also must have immediately been followed by a less organised state since Entropy was seen to go on unchecked. How are we to regard such a puzzling moment? Nineteenth-century physics had no scientific explanation for its origin. Nothing within the system of nature could account for it. We should have to say that the moment was veritably the birth of time and some eternal power other than nature created or emanated the universe and, winding it up to the full, set it going. Or we should have to opine that the universe always existed but with a power other than nature immanent in it and this Pantheos miraculously did the winding up. Or else we should hold that a power other than nature was coeval supra-cosmically with the ever-existing universe and wound it up by special intervention from beyond. Most of the classical physicists did not favour the Will of God, but here their atheism and materialism flew flagrantly in the face of the indication to be found in the data of physics. Even today scientists are hard put to it to deny Entropy or explain away its philosophical consequences. Yet some alternative to the Will of God may, in this particular connection, be considered as scientifically formulable, however lamely, at the present: in the last century it was absolutely out of the question.

In view of the various points of uncertainty and mystery and at least one point of actual mysticism, which we have brought out in the old scientific scheme, the

dogmatic materialism of most of its adherents must be adjudged an unparralleled aberration in the history of the human mind. And, emboldened by this judgment on the materialistic doctrine in its very heyday, we may well ask whether, on the strength of any findings and theories, physics can ever bear out materialism.

K. D. SETHNA

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## GOLDEN GLANCE

LONG I stood at Thy door,  
 Many a time timidly tried to knock,  
 But, afraid of being unworthy to be Thy servant,  
 Stepped back—and thus passed the day  
 And eve approached. I heard Thy tingling laughter  
 And soft footfall nearing.  
 My courage fled like a hunted thief,  
 My heart missed many a beat.  
 I ran to the shadows.  
 Unable to behold Thy sun-radiance,  
 My eyes closed of themselves.  
 In a moment Thy coach bore away  
 Its royal splendour.  
 But an ecstasy coursed through me on eagle wings,  
 For out of the corner of Thy luminous eyes  
 Thy glance had been cast on me briefly.  
 What more, what more,  
 O Love! does my beggar heart need?

SHYAM KUMARI

# FURTHER STUDIES IN INTEGRAL PSYCHOLOGY

(Continued from the issue of August 15, 1985)

## THE INTEGRAL PERSONALITY

(3)

### In the Words of Sri Aurobindo's Epic Poem *Savitri*

A portion of us lives in present Time,  
A secret mass in dim inconscience gropes;  
Out of the inconscient and subliminal  
Arisen, we live in mind's uncertain light  
And strive to know and master a dubious world  
Whose purpose and meaning are hidden from our sight.

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This is not all we are or all our world.  
Our greater self of knowledge waits for us,

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Our larger being sits behind cryptic walls:  
There are greatnesses hidden in our unseen parts  
That wait their hour to step into life's front:  
We feel an aid from deep indwelling Gods:  
One speaks within, Light comes to us from above.  
Our soul from its mysterious chamber acts;  
Its influence pressing on our heart and mind  
Pushes them to exceed their mortal selves.  
It seeks for Good and Beauty and for God;  
We see beyond self's walls our limitless self,  
We gaze through our world's glass at half-seen vasts,  
We hunt for the Truth behind apparent things.  
Our inner Mind dwells in a larger light,  
Its brightness looks at us through hidden doors;  
Our members luminous grow and Wisdom's face  
Appears in the doorway of the mystic ward:  
When she enters into our house of outward sense,  
Then we look up and see, above, her sun.  
A mighty life-self with its inner powers  
Supports the dwarfish modicum we call life;

It can graft upon our crawl two puissant wings.  
 Our body's subtle self is throned within  
 In its viewless palace of veridical dreams  
 That are bright shadows of the thoughts of God.  
 In the prone obscure beginnings of the race  
 The human grew in the bowed apeline man.  
 He stood erect, a Godlike form and force,  
 And a soul's thoughts looked out from earthborn eyes;  
 Man stood erect, he wore the thinker's brow:  
 He looked at heaven and saw his comrade stars;  
 A vision came of beauty and greater birth  
 Slowly emerging from the heart's chapel of light  
 And moved in a white lucent air of dreams.  
 He saw his being's unrealised vastnesses,  
 He aspired and housed the nascent demi-god.

(*Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library*, Vol. 29, Bk. VII, Canto II)

(4)

### **The Verification of The Truths of Integral Personality**

#### *Yogic Truths and Verification*

The demand for the verification of truths of Integral Personality is a legitimate one. Of course, the verification has to be adapted to the nature of the facts and truths concerned. Where the facts and truths are of the physical nature, standards of verification will be of one kind. But where they are of the mind and consciousness, they have to be appropriate and effective for them. Now, introspection is the method for the direct observation of mental processes and other deeper facts of consciousness. The same method, under controlled conditions, which too will have to be primarily inner—of conscious motivations and attitudes—and only secondarily external, physical, will and can provide verification for the facts and truths of consciousness.

As compared with the criterion of physical science this criterion will, of course, be difficult. But shall we then, for reason of difficulty, give up the investigation of consciousness and its pervasive facts? If we do so, we then shrink from the essential fact of human living since consciousness is our being and without it we are just unthinking matter.

The writer here has no hesitation in affirming that the pursuit of Integral Yoga and the practice of introspection, in a deliberate and persistent manner since 1940 has afforded him repeatedly a deep joy whenever he found in his own experience affirmations of Integral Yoga, now one, now another, *as really true*. This is the

verification which he has had and which gives him a sense of clarity and certitude regarding the basic truths of integral personality.

The approaches and the processes of verification can in fact be varied and they have to be adapted to the temperamental conditions of seeker and inquirer. We give below one, the most common and the most effective.

A preliminary apprehension of the truths of Integral Personality need not prove difficult if verification is pursued in a spirit of whole-hearted search for truth. A realisation of them or making them normal experience of life is a different matter, needing a great length of time.

Introspection, a correct introspection, to yield satisfactory verification is also not easy. It has in the first instance to overcome the normal out-gazing nature of mind. Our mind is capable of self-consciousness rather occasionally in its best moments of consciousness. This capacity has to be developed to a degree that we can with ease and freedom look at ourselves within indefinitely. With that should go a sincere will and attitude to seek things in the best possible spirit of truth. 'To see things as they are' again is not an easy capacity. The partialities and prejudices of personal disposition and social suggestion have to be guarded against. The yoga is, in fact, ruthless in its demand for objectivity, i.e. 'seeking things as they are'.

Introspection would thus need cultivation. But it perfects itself through exercise. The exceptional convenience in this case is that it can be practised all the time and in the midst of all the activities of life, which means carrying on those activities self-consciously not just consciously and self-forgetfully. That is useful for those activities too, if self-consciousness does not involve forgetfulness of the external as it can when it is not strong enough.

McDougall, the well-known psychologist, it appears, tried to practise introspection. He has said somewhere that he could not distinguish between the sensation of hunger and that of thirst, on getting some sensation of one or the other he would first take a glass of water. If the sensation disappeared he would feel sure that it was thirst. If the sensation persisted, then he would conclude that he was really hungry.

This is an extremely interesting introspective report. A very honest and frank one. The reader, a psychologist or a layman, may check for himself whether McDougall's observations of his inner states of thirst and hunger were correct or not.

Introspection, a trained reliable one, is evidently the first thing. This given, verifications and confirmations of inner conscious facts can be easily hoped for.

Now for Sri Aurobindo's delineation of the line of verification, which has been long used in India's spiritual history and which stands supported by contemporary yogic practice:

"If one stands back from the mind and its activities so that they fall silent at will or go on as a surface movement of which one is the detached and disinterested witness, it becomes possible eventually to realise oneself as the inner Self of mind,

the true and pure mental being, the Purusha; by similarly standing back from the life activities, it is possible to realise oneself as the Self of life, the true and pure vital being, the Purusha; there is even a Self of body of which, by standing back from the body and its demands and activities and entering into a silence of the physical consciousness watching the action of its energy, it is possible to become aware of a true and pure physical being, the Purusha. So too, by standing back from all these activities of nature successively or together, it becomes possible to realise one's inner being as the silent impersonal self, the witness Purusha."

"The Purusha has to become not only the witness but the knower and source, the master of all the thought and action, and this can only be partially done so long as one remains on the mental level or has still to use the ordinary instrumentation of mind, life and body. A certain mastery can indeed be achieved, but mastery is not transformation; the change made by it cannot be sufficient to be integral; for that it is essential to get back, beyond mind-being, life-being, body-being, still more deeply inward to the psychic entity inmost and profoundest within us—or else to open to the superconscient highest domain."

This approach of self-detachment from the superficial-uppermost thoughts and feelings and impulses to action for an access to the deeper states of consciousness is really a wonderful technique. It affords freedom from the superficial facts, correct appraisal of them in addition to the discovery of the deeper facts of consciousness. This exercise is truly stimulating as it affords further and yet further discoveries of delight, awareness and effectivity. Introspection becomes rewarding for psychology as for life.

Apart from this technique of self-detachment, the yoga and the yogic psychology provide another verification too. They are result-oriented, i.e. they aim at a state of wholeness, integration, spontaneity, simplicity, freedom from conflict and tension, peace, harmony, joy, etc. The progressive growth of these qualities is itself a test and a criterion of the psychological foundations of yoga and yogic psychology.

One may also consider that India has a strong tradition of spiritual pursuit and enjoyment of spiritual life. Could this tradition have been built up, if generation after generation had not been able to verify and confirm the truths of life and personality affirmed earlier?

Of course, the present generation has to seek and discover its own criterion of the traditional truths of personality.

INDRA SEN

## DOCTOR BABU—MY GRANDFATHER

*(Continued from the issue of August 15, 1985)*

THE Mother, waiting at the staircase landing, didn't release the news at once to my grandfather, but started with preliminaries, saying: "Doctor, are you a skin specialist?" Grandfather was not a skin specialist and said so, but added that since the skin occupies an important chapter of medical studies he might be of help if the problem was minor. The Mother remained silent for a long time and then said something that struck my grandfather like a thunderbolt:

"Sri Aurobindo seems to be suffering from some skin disease. I want your suggestion."

I have said this news struck him as a thunderbolt. But why? The reader must remember that these were the formative years of our Ashram and the sadhaks, young in experience and age, were under the impression that their Guru was immune from diseases. They could not imagine Him suffering from illness. Printed books were few in number and His letters, dealing with the problems and sufferings of an Avatar, were not yet published. Our forerunners did not enjoy the poise of knowledge that we do today.

An idle mind is the devil's workshop. My grandfather's mind was now a bit idle. If allowed to remain idle, a depression could sprout in it as quickly as a mushroom on a dank log. But wasn't the Divine Mother his guide? Depression? Pooh! It is said that a bird in hand is worth two in the bush. But the Mother didn't believe in this. Her motto was "All in all, or not at all." She chose to shoot Her arrow with such deadly accuracy that two birds could be in Her hand at once; in this instance, She wiped out both my grandfather's depression and the Master's ailment in a single shot. Before the doctor had a chance to slump into despair, She said: "Will it be possible for you to see Him once?"

A doctor is a strange conglomerate of many personalities. He has to be a humanitarian, a stark materialist, a staunch anatomist and a stout hard-worker all rolled into one. To him a human body, young or old, man or woman, is a human body, nothing less and nothing more. The moment the Mother spoke this last sentence, my grandfather's questioning mind bade him a hasty good-bye and his doctor's spirit girded up its loins. His little depressions were forgotten in an instant as he realised, to his chagrin, that he did not have the correct instrument with him to diagnose Sri Aurobindo's trouble. He excused himself and went away to get it.

My readers will recollect that in 1925, for diagnosing the Mother's ailment, the stethoscope had proved to be the great weapon; but now, not the stethoscope but a high-powered magnifying glass was to prove to be the same.

When grandfather came back, he was a changed man. Not only was he well

equipped to make the right diagnosis, his heart and mind were well equipped too to meet his Guru. He had met Him last privately on November 23, 1926—a long time ago. Yes, he was ready, well equipped.

The Mother, on seeing him return, went up the staircase without a word, and my grandfather followed. What a strange experience it must have been for him. So many times before he had mounted that same staircase, either alone to meet the Mother or in a queue on Darshan days to see Sri Aurobindo. But today, when none else knew it, She was leading him alone into the secret chamber of the Prophet of the Supermind.

In those days a heavy curtain used to block off the corridor from the first chamber. The Mother drew it aside and gestured to Her doctor to enter that land of magic and mystery.

In 1925, when he had entered the Mother's room, his tiger eye had noticed that Her left foot had been unusually dark and his infallible intuition had prompted him to surmise that the cause of Her malady had lain not in Her chest, as other doctors had suspected, but in Her leg. This time the moment he entered the corridor the same tiger eye sprang into action with an intuition that again proved to be infallible. He noticed that there were big livid pink patches along His waist line, particularly near the floating ribs just above His dhoti. He felt at once that these were not eruptions of some kind or the result of any skin disease but bruises. With intuition as one's guide, knowledge comes first, then comes analysis and verification.

The doctor got ready for his diagnosis. It ought not to have been difficult. Sri Aurobindo was pacing up and down and my grandfather had only to ask Him to stand still for a moment to examine Him. But the atmosphere was tremendous, the silence was intense and to say anything just then would have been blasphemous. For this was not the mere silence of a golden noon nor the dead silence of midnight nor the gentle silence of a wood. To call it pin-drop silence would be a simpleton's understatement. My grandfather found the corridor charged with such massive stillness that even the walls and furniture and floor and ceiling seemed to have been hushed to rapt attention as He walked up and down. To talk, to make even the slightest sound would be an indiscretion, a breach of trust. The Master, as grandfather had never seen before, had His eyes half closed. The impact of the Power He radiated was such that it knocked my grandfather speechless. Had he been a good doctor, but a bad sadhak, he might have asked Sri Aurobindo to stop walking. Had he been a bad doctor but a good sadhak, he might have closed his eyes and sat down for meditation. But the rub lay in the fact that he was both a good doctor and a good sadhak. So what did he do?

The secret of success in life often lies in the art of finding the solution of a problem within the problem itself. Aware of this, grandfather made his sadhak spirit ten times stronger so that he might not disturb his Guru even for a fraction of a second and at the same time he made his doctor spirit ten times more pragmatic. He decided to examine Sri Aurobindo in His walk.



At first grandfather tried to examine Sri Aurobindo's wounds with his magnifying glass each time the Master passed by him. He thought that several efforts at such scrutiny would reveal the exact nature of the malady. But it did not. That system needs precise timing and coordination which works well in the realm of sports, but not so well in that of the Spirit. A boxer knows how to punch his practice ball in time, a cricketer knows how to strike the ball in rhythm, a footballer knows how to time his half-volley kicks. But Sri Aurobindo's corridor did not turn out to be a suitable terrain for exhibiting one's sporting genius. The light in the corridor especially was too subdued to permit any accurate diagnosis. Grandfather could not ask the Mother to open wide the windows of the other rooms nor did he care to put on the lights.

When this failed he struck upon a second plan—a plan as risky as it was daring: his idea was to step into Sri Aurobindo's line of walk and examine Him non-stop while marching behind Him. This was risky because of two unpardonable prospects: the first, and more fearful of the two, was the possibility of his feet touching Sri Aurobindo's, the second was the chance that his lens might touch Him—a callousness he would never pardon himself for. And yet he was determined to execute his plan. Daring indeed!

The Mother's doctor knew well the difference between a foolhardy risk and a calculated one. The former is indulged in by the impetuosity of the thoughtless; the latter is undertaken by the wise after a careful consideration. The doctor observed that Sri Aurobindo's walk had a definite pattern. He noticed that Sri Aurobindo walked a fixed distance, with numbered steps, and that His steps and turns were also measured and followed a fixed pattern. Sri Aurobindo walked up to the east end of the corridor, stopped, turned clockwise, paused and walked back towards the west end where my grandfather was standing. On reaching this end he stopped, turned anti-clockwise this time, paused again and walked back to the east end. His walk had a general pattern of light steps and there were four pauses in each cycle.

To approach Supermind one has to cross its three stages—Vijnana, Prajnana, Sanjnana. To approach the Prophet of Supermind my grandfather also had to cross three stages; volition, observation, action. Volition of course was there. Observation had been completed. Now only action remained. Grandfather waited patiently at the west end for the right moment. Then, with the stars in conjunction, Sri Aurobindo came and stopped at this side. The doctor plucked up courage, steadied his will and stepped in lightly behind his Guru. The Guru-disciple march began.

What a sight it must have been! The Guru marching ahead and the disciple following Him, step for step, speed for speed, turn for turn. How I would love to have been there to witness this never-in-a-lifetime sight. As it turned out, however, only the Mother witnessed the sight. She had stood without a word, in front of the curtain, from start to finish.

I have said above that Sri Aurobindo's walk had a fixed pattern. While this is substantially true, from the moment the doctor had entered the corridor and from

his own walk behind the Guru, he had noticed that there were variations in this pattern. Sometimes Sri Aurobindo would slow his speed sometimes hasten it. What is more, He would often drift away from the straight line of walking and His waist would graze the edges of the furniture, sometimes gently but sometimes hard, so hard that it amounted almost to knocking against them.

I am of the strong opinion that no sadhak, however advanced he may be in the path of yoga, can fully measure Sri Aurobindo or His method of working. But still I would like to imagine two things about Him—that He was above pain and that, when He chose to do so, he could withdraw Himself from all physical awareness. I have come to these conclusions from the following facts related to me by my grandfather. To start with, Sri Aurobindo's eyes were half closed; next, He neither encouraged nor discouraged my grandfather in his diagnostic work—in fact He didn't even give a hint that He knew of his presence; third, He didn't talk to the Mother either; fourth, the existence of the tremendous atmosphere of silence; finally, Sri Aurobindo's seeming total oblivion of these knocks to his own body—all these add up. But who knows? Maybe He was taking the bull by the horns; maybe He was trying to bridge the gulf between a total awareness and a total unawareness of the body? At any rate, I hold to my opinion that it is not possible for us to measure Him. Dolls of salt trying to measure the depth of the ocean—impossible!

In 1925, grandfather had written down his diagnostic report and handed it to Sri Aurobindo. This time his report to the Mother was oral. After Doctor Babu was satisfied that he had examined Sri Aurobindo to his satisfaction he stepped out of the line of his walk and spoke to the Mother. He spoke either in the adjacent room where the Mother's chair is now kept or on the staircase. I can't recollect where. His report was a startling one, quite contrary to the Mother's assumption. Grandfather told Her:

“It is not any skin disease or case of eruptions. These are bruises, almost wounds, which He has incurred while walking by His repeated knocks against the furniture in the corridor.”

The Mother listened attentively and then looked serious. We in the 1980's cannot imagine the problems of the 1920's or 1930's. The prospect of the bruises turning septic was looked upon as grave by one and all, for septic infection was a big killer in those days. Penicillin, that magic antiseptic, had not yet been discovered. After an operation the patient sometimes died not because of the insufficient skill of the surgeon or of the undeveloped surgical technique but because of the septic infection arising *after* the surgery. And even with simple septic sores on the surface of the body, the doctors did not take chances. Both the Mother and my grandfather, born very much in the last century, knew well, too well indeed, of the serious consequences of surface wounds left unattended. The Mother therefore asked for Her doctor's advice, but added:

“Do you have any suggestion other than medicine?”

The doctor had a ready answer. He said: “What I cannot manage, You can.

Please ask Sri Aurobindo to leave the corridor and walk in His own room. The length of both is the same, so He should have no objection.”

The Mother put Her head down and looked thoughtful. Then after a silence, She said in a reflective mood, almost to Herself: “To disturb Sri Aurobindo...” and left Her sentence incomplete. Then suddenly She looked up and said: “All right, I will call you later.”

On his way back home, my grandfather guessed what the Mother would do: She would keep on observing Sri Aurobindo till She knew that She could talk to Him without disturbing His concentration. Then She would tell Him what the doctor had suggested. And Sri Aurobindo, unable to refuse the Mother’s request, would oblige. A neat plan. Or was it?

The next morning a messenger came to see grandfather. Yes, the Mother wanted to see him. He was exceedingly happy because he had not expected to succeed so quickly. She met him at the staircase landing, and said:

“I have made an arrangement. See whether this is satisfactory to you or not.”

As on the previous day She entered first and pulled aside the curtain. What the doctor saw, well, was nothing very encouraging. He saw that Sri Aurobindo was still pacing up and down in the corridor. His heart sank. The Mother had failed to move Him away from that treacherous passage way. The atmosphere was still as intense as the day before, but the doctor was in no mood for it. At this point, however, he suddenly saw a twinkle in the Mother’s eyes as She stood there, still holding the curtain open; he knew that something was up. Suspending his dejection, grandfather quietly entered the corridor, and, good heavens!—his mouth fell open. Within the last twenty-four hours the Mother had removed each and every piece of furniture in the corridor. Sri Aurobindo was still walking there, yes, but in an empty corridor.

The saying goes: ‘If Mohammad does not go to the mountain, the mountain will go to Mohammad.’ The Mother changed it slightly and made the formula: ‘If Sri Aurobindo cannot be moved from the path of the furniture, the furniture must be moved from the path of Sri Aurobindo.’ Unique was the doctor, unique was the Guru, unique was the Mother and unique was the cure—astounding!

After a week She called Doctor Babu again. Needless to say that except for the scar marks, the wounds had completely healed.

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I know, I am sure, that every god-man in the past suffered from illnesses and injuries. But a proper historical record of them are missing. Thus we do not know of them—perhaps the physicians of these spiritual giants were not grandfather or perhaps their grandsons had missed the point...

I have often indulged in reveries, and in these day-dreams I have seen how the spiritual stalwarts of ancient India fared when taken ill. I have seen Sri Krishna lying in a bower in the ancient city of Vrindavan. He is indisposed. It is mid-day.

His worried emissary has gone out to call His private Vaidya. The Vaidya comes and enters the bower. It is spring and the heavenly wood is in festive mood. The trees are in bloom and the air is soaked in fragrance. Radha stands at the head of Sri Krishna and looks anxiously at the Vaidya. Sri Krishna smiles at His doctor. From His body radiates a blue aura—His occult light. The cuckoos sing wildly and a spotted deer stands nearby with tears in her eyes; today she hasn't received the pat on her back from her Lord and knows that something is amiss. The Gopis, as beautiful as the spring, stand round Him, their hands clasped in agony, as they pray in holy silence for a quick recovery of their Lord. The Vaidya leans down and... that's all. At this point my day-dream ends. I can't see any more. I can't see what is his diagnosis, how he arrived at his diagnosis, what is the nature of the malady. I can't see how Sri Krishna is cured.

I often do have the same reveries, though in lesser purity, about our ancient sages, and Rishis, and King Manu, and Raja Janaka. And every one of the visions stops short of the diagnosis and the methods of cure, the moment I come to them.

Coming down from the spiritual to the occult, how often I have dreamt of a Pharaoh falling ill. When it is midnight Amen Hotep's minister gently taps at the door of the man of medicine. They walk secretly to the palace when the Egyptians are fast asleep. A strong wind from the Sahara, still hot, strikes their faces; they wince and their robes flutter. Amen Hotep's mother stands at her son's head with dignity. The ladies move out as the physician enters the bedroom. The maidens, wearing long gowns, raise a hymn of praise to their sun-god, Ra, as the doctor feels Amen Hotep's pulse and then ... again, that's all. I can see no more. How can I? How shall I dream any further, how shall I dream any more when not a single sentence of accurate description of these medical procedures is to be found in the pages of history?

Were those doctors gifted with intuitive powers? Were the cures obtained by occult means or by medical treatment? Were the illnesses real, in the first place, or were they mere surface signs of occult and spiritual causes? We cannot be sure. Or is it so? Can we not guess, guess on the basis of the reports left to us by our Gurus' physician? Don't know. At least I guess, I guess often and I guess to my satisfaction.

*(Concluded)*

TARUN BANERJEE

## HOW FAR IS PONDICHERRY ?

(Continued from the issue of August 15, 1985)

FOR some time we all remained silent. Later I came to know from the other passengers that they were going to visit important places in South India, and visiting Pondicherry was their last item; thence they would return to Calcutta.

The Professor might have heard their last words, for just then he finished his meditation. He said with a smile, 'Not only you my friends, but everyone of us must have the touch of Pondicherry, either at the beginning or at the end; because Pondicherry is the Alpha and the Omega of our existence. Here is the beginning and here is the end of our journey.'

One of our lady co-passengers who was sitting in the corner of the bench opposite to that of the Professor said, 'Excuse me, Sir, I can't follow. So far as we know, Pondicherry was a French colony before its merger with India and at present it is a Union Territory.'

The Professor interrupted her and said, 'Yes, Pondicherry in its immediate past was a French Territory or a French Colony. But before that, that is to say, before the French occupation the land and its peoples were there. Thus the land and its peoples have their remotest past which may be called their pre-historic past. In those pre-historic days a renowned hermit from the North came to the South crossing the Vindhya and settled in Pondicherry. Perhaps all of you can guess whom I refer to. He was Agastya the great sage. In his hermitage the Vedas were sung and recited every day. And so the land was then known as *Vedapuri*. His hermitage, they say, was situated at the same place where the main building of the Ashram now stands. Perhaps you know that with the recital and chanting of the Vedic hymns human life was first awakened or, in other words, the Vedic culture is the origin of human civilisation and that is why I indicated that here was the beginning—the Alpha of our existence. The present Pondicherry with its vision of the Life Divine is the ultimate goal and the end of humanity's journey, and that is why I said that here is the Omega. A complete rotation of a cycle from the Symbolic Age to the Age of the Spirit; from Satyayuga through Treta, Dwapara and Kali and then back again to the Yuga of Truth-Consciousness.' Saying this the Professor looked at me and asked, 'Am I right?'

I appreciated him with a smile. The Professor seemed to be very happy to have four more students. Of course, he didn't take me as his student, but I did. And it is now proved that there was nothing wrong in my attitude for otherwise it would not have been possible for me to bring this series—'How far is Pondicherry?'—to light.

Referring to the previous context the Professor stated, 'I fully endorse your views that the medicine has to be determined after proper diagnosis of the disease. But you know Moscow and Peking claim to have already diagnosed it; according to their diagnosis the root cause of human distress lies in the inequitable distribution

of wealth which has resulted in two distinct separate classes in the society—one possesses wealth and the other does not. The possessor dominates and oppresses the other class and deprives it of its legitimate share. This is the disease; and its medicine, according to them, is to establish equality by annihilating the possessor-class by class-struggle, so that there may not be any oppressor or oppressed in the society—all must be given the opportunity to enjoy their share of wealth according to their capability. This will ultimately result in the formation of a classless and stateless society where there will be no exploitation, no oppression, no tyranny.’

The Professor paused, perhaps to assess the psychological reaction of his listeners. Then with a slightly calm voice he continued, ‘When this theory or doctrine, as you may say, takes possession of my thinking mind I feel much disturbed, because the approach always seems to me quite negative. What is the positive picture? If there is no such thing, then what will substitute it to help people live in peace and harmony without conflict and contradiction? I mean to say—what is the positive force that can enlighten people to live together peacefully without a Government?’

The lady from the corner came over to this side and sat by me, just in front of the Professor and said, ‘People will get proper education to realise the necessity of collective living for the total development of the society or, in other words, they will become more rational. And then there will be no exploitation, no conflict, no domination of the minority over the majority.’

The Professor cast a keen look at the lady and asked, ‘Are the people who are fighting each other here and there in the present-day world not rational? Are they all uneducated or have they not the least sense of what is wrong and what is right?’

The lady felt encouraged and readily replied, ‘They are all the products of the bourgeois system of education; with the spread of the socialistic system the present social phenomena will begin to change.’

The Professor did not reply but began to think of something very deeply. The lady came nearer to him and said, ‘Now perhaps you have recognised me. Last July I had the occasion to meet you in the Annual General Meeting of the College Teachers’ Association and discussed many things with you. Can you remember?’

‘Oh yes, yes! So long I have been trying to recollect. At the first sight it seemed to me that you were somebody known. Now it is clear. You are the Vice-Principal of a Girls’ College. Isn’t it so? And if my memory does not betray me, your name is Dr. (Mrs.) Anjali Sen; and your subjects are Economics and Political Science, as mine is Philosophy.’

‘Yes. I’m indeed very happy, Dr. Banerjee, that your memory does not betray you; it is very sound still. And you must appreciate that my memory is also working well.’

‘Yes! Now let us carry on the discussion. You said that by the socialistic system of Education man could be made more rational; you meant that he would be guided by “reason” and not by impulses or emotions. But what is reason? Has it the capa-

city of determining what is fundamentally right? Your "reason" may be powerful only to annul my "reason" or *vice versa*. Reason works as an instrument of the intellect. More intelligent persons naturally have a more sharp reasoning power. You are a teacher; you have been in the teaching profession for a pretty long time. Do you believe that such an educational system can be introduced which, when strictly followed, shall result in producing such educatees as have an equal reasoning faculty at the end of a fixed period of curriculum?'

Dr. (Mrs.) Sen kept mum. But one of her companions from the other side took part in the discussion with his prompt remark, 'That can never be; whatever the system, all the students can never be made equally intelligent at the same time. There must always remain a gulf of difference, no matter how narrow or wide, in the capability of thinking and judging things, between any two students. Still we may hope that through proper education a change will be brought about in their attitude towards life, in their outlook and inlook, so that they will be able to devise certain principles of conduct to develop mutual understanding by which they may live collectively in peace and harmony. Since there will be no exploitation, no domination, we may expect that that education will be imparted to the students.'

'Yes, I do admit this,' said the Professor. 'But the principles of conduct which you have just indicated must not be anything irrational; they must be based upon human reason or else nobody in this age of reason will feel inclined to abide by them. I have already explained that Reason's verdict is always relative; some may accept it, others may not. And experience says that what is rational today in regard to principles of living, social law or order, etc. may become traditional or conventional tomorrow, and then they will automatically cease to function. We all know that long ago in the 18th century we left behind the age of Convention and entered into the age of Reason. Since then we have been gradually becoming more and more rational and, therefore, in this modern age no one should be supposed to follow any principle or order of life conventionally. So, I presume that there will be no objection if I say that Reason has a very limited capacity to formulate law and order which may function for years to come keeping pace with the rapid progress of humankind. Therefore, human reason may not be the means, though it may play its own limited role, to set up a stateless society. In my opinion, men may be able to create a stateless society and live together in peace and harmony if they *love* each other. True love is the only key that can open the door of the soul. Peace and harmony in human society can only be established on soul-relationship. Love is something positive which may help men live together without a government. If equality is to survive it has to be founded upon Love, that is brotherhood, and not upon the equitable distribution of wealth—which is a subsequent factor and not the basis. Then communism, which is the ultimate aim of Moscow-Peking, should have *Fraternity* as its foundation stone.' After a brief pause the Professor looking at the lady, said with a smile, 'You are a professor of Political Science; you must admit that 'Fraternity' and 'Comradeship of Labour' are not one and the same idea.'

The lady looked at me but did not comment.

I stated, 'Among the three gospels of the French Revolution, the last one—that is 'Fraternity'—is the only means that can help mankind to progress further. Without this viaticum man cannot take the next step in his journey towards true communism. But as a matter of fact it is very difficult to establish soul-relationship with others irrespective of caste, creed, colour and class. Without soul-relationship the inherent power of fraternity can never be realised.'

'But why is it difficult?' asked the other gentleman.

I explained, 'To call a person a brother means to realise 'oneness' with him; or in other words we must realise that we all have come from One Source. To realise this Oneness of creation is not an easy task. There are so many people intolerant of others' caste, colour and religion. Besides, there are followers of Moscow-Peking: none of them is ready to accept the truth of Oneness.'

The gentleman from the opposite side sharply pointed out, 'Followers of Moscow-Peking do not bother about caste, colour or religion. Then why have you referred to them?'

I humbly replied, 'They have been included because they do not believe in soul—in spirituality. It is in soul and nowhere else that we are One. In our outer life—in language, in practice of social customs and rites, in beliefs and in culture—we differ from one another. But in soul we are all 'One'. The followers of Moscow-Peking are of course intolerant of 'class' and they have no faith in spirituality. So, true communism based on fraternity can never be achieved through class-struggle and class-hatred. Fraternity means comradeship based on love, not on hatred and conflict. And love means a blissful feeling of Oneness with others. It is no human-love; no commercialism, no higggle-haggle, is there in it. Divinity is its intrinsic property and hence it is based on spirituality. But spirituality is regarded as something alien to their ideology, if I've not misunderstood it.'

The Professor looked at his wrist-watch and said, 'Let us stop here today. Tomorrow morning we may continue. Now let us have our dinner and after that take rest. It may be that all of us will not fall asleep at once. In that case we may recapitulate what we have been discussing,—of course not aloud—but in complete silence.'

*(To be continued)*

SAMAR BASU



# THE SONG OF THE LORD

## THE GITA WITHOUT COMMENT

*(Continued from the issue of June, 1985)*

### Chapter II

- I. SANJAYA said:  
To him thus overcome by pity, eyes awash in tears, despondent, Madhusudana spoke these words:
2. Whence comes to you this despair while in peril, so ignoble, unheavenly, inglorious, O Arjuna?
3. Do not yield to this impotence, O Partha. This base cowardice ill-suits you. Discard it and stand, O Parantapa.'
4. Arjuna said:  
O Madhusudana, how shall I fight with arrows Bheeshma and Drona who are worthy of worship, O Arisudana?
5. Rather eat by charity in this world than kill my high-souled gurus. Indeed, if I kill my gurus, the enjoyment of things and desires would be of pleasures stained with blood.
6. Nor do we know which would be better, that we should conquer them or they should conquer us—they who stand facing us, the sons of Dhritarashtra whom if we kill, we should not wish to live.
7. With my inmost being almost slain by flawed pity, with a mind in utter confusion on dharma, I ask you to say what is best for me. I your disciple, who have taken refuge in You: teach me!
8. Nowhere do I see what would remove this anguish which dessicates the senses, even obtaining unrivalled wealth and dominion on earth, or the lordship of the Gods.
9. After saying this to Hrisheekesha, the Conqueror of Sleep and the Destroyer of Enemies said to Govinda, I will not fight. And so saying he was utterly silent.
10. To him despondent between the armies, O Bharata, Hrisheekesha, smiling, spoke these words:
11. The Lord said:  
You grieve for those not to be pitied, yet try to speak wise words. Wise men grieve not either for those gone or for those not gone.
12. Never was I not, nor you, nor these rulers of men, nor is it that we shall any of us ever cease to be hereafter.
13. As when born into this body we know childhood, youth and old age, so also we know the taking of another body. The calm, strong man is not bewildered by this.

14. Indeed, Kaunteya, sense contacts like cold, heat, pleasure and pain come and go, are not lasting. Bear them, O Bharata.
15. Surely these, O Best of Men, do not hurt the man of calm strength, equal in pain and pleasure. It is he who grows to deathlessness.
16. The unreal exists not; the Real always is. Indeed, the essence of both has been seen by the seers of Truth.
17. Know That to be indelible by which all this is enveloped. The removal of the Permanent can be done by no one.
18. It is these bodies of the Eternal, of the Incarnate, the Indestructible, the Immeasurable which are said to have an end. Fight, therefore, O Bharata.
19. They who hold the Self as killer, who think it slain, they know not. Neither does It kill, nor is It slain.
20. It is not born. It never dies. Nor, having been, will It cease to be. Birthless, eternal, changeless, ancient, it is not slain with the slaying of the body.
21. Who knows It as indelible, eternal, unborn, permanent, how or whom does that man kill or cause to be killed?
22. As a man who has thrown away worn-out clothes puts on new ones, so the Incarnate Self which has thrown away bodies enters others which are new.
23. Weapons cannot cut It. Fire cannot burn It. Water cannot wet It. The Wind cannot dry It.
24. It is uncuttable; It is unburnable, unwettable, undriable. It is constant, all-pervading, stable, immovable. Sempiternal is the Self.
25. It is unmanifest. It is unthinkable. It is unchangeable. Thus it is said. Therefore, knowing this, do not grieve.
26. And even if you think the Self as always born or dying, even then you should not grieve, O Mahabahu.
27. Indeed, for those born, death is certain. For those dead, birth is certain. For these inevitable things you should not grieve.
28. Beings are not perceptible in the beginning; they are perceptible in the middle, O Bharata, and again imperceptible in the end. What is there to wail at in this?
29. One person sees the Self full of awe. So also another speaks of It full of awe and yet another hears It full of awe. But even after hearing It, no one knows It.
30. The Incarnate, the Self in the body of all, is always indestructible, O Bharata. Thus, for no being should you grieve.
31. Even looking to your own dharma, you should not tremble. Indeed for a Kshatriya there is no better way than war.
32. And happy are the Kshatriyas, O Partha, who receive such a way, coming of itself like the open gate of heaven.
33. But if you will not fight this just war, then, forsaking your dharma and your fame, you *shall* fall into evil.

34. People will tell of your perpetual infamy, and for one who is honoured infamy is worse than death.
35. These great warriors will think that you withdrew from battle in fear and you who were once so highly esteemed will become small.
36. Your enemies will say many unspeakable words, slandering your strength. What is more painful than this?
37. Killed you will obtain heaven, or victorious you will enjoy earth. Stand up therefore, O Son of Kunti, resolute for the fight.
38. Making pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat the same, join in battle. By this you will gain no evil.
39. This is the Buddhi declared to you in Samkhya. Now hear of this as seen in Yoga. Uniting with the Intelligent Will, O Partha, you will cast off the bondage to action.
40. In this there is no loss of effort, nor any turning back. Even a little of this dharma delivers us from great fear.
41. In these matters the mind of the resolute is determined and one, O joy of the Kurus, but many-branched and endless are the minds of the irresolute.
42. Those who speak flowery words, the undiscerning who take pleasure in Vedatalk, O Partha, saying there is nothing more,
43. desire-souls, heaven-bent, tied to birth from the fruits of action, exuberant from abundant results leading to pleasure and lordship,
44. the consciousness of these—who cling to pleasure and lordship—is by that distracted from the determined intelligence and is not fixed in tranquil poise.
45. The object of the Vedas is the three gunas. Go beyond the three gunas, Arjuna, without duality, always poised, neither getting nor holding. Be full of the Self.
46. As much use as a well when all around is flooded: so are the Vedas to one who knows the Brahman.
47. The only right is to action, never to its fruits. The motive is not in the results. Nor be attached to inaction.
48. Firm in Yoga, act, O Dhananjaya, letting go of the attachment to action, becoming equal in success or failure. Equality is said to be Yoga.
49. Far inferior to the Yoga of the Intelligent Will is action, O Dhananjaya. Seek refuge in the Buddhi. Wretched are the result-seekers.
50. He who is joined to the Buddhi while in the world, abandons goodness and badness of action. Therefore, unite yourself in Yoga. Yoga is in well-done acts.
51. The Wise, united in the Buddhi, giving up results, free from the bonds of birth, go to the unstained place.
52. When your Buddhi passes beyond the mire of delusion, then you reach indifference to that not yet heard and that already heard.
53. When your Buddhi shall remain immovable, steady, in tranquil poise, then you shall attain Union.

54. Arjuna said:

One who remains in knowledge, how is he described? Remaining in tranquil poise, firm in wisdom, O Keshava, how does he speak, how does he sit, how does he walk?

55. The Lord said:

When he has cast out all desires of the mind, O Partha, and is satisfied only in and by the Self, then he is said to be firm in knowledge.

56. With an unshaken mind in suffering, without longing in pleasure, free from passion, fear and anger, he is called the firm-minded Sage.

57. One who is unaffected in all things, who, receiving fortune or misfortune neither rejoices nor hates, in him knowledge is fixed.

58. One who in everything withdraws the senses from the objects of sense like a tortoise its limbs, in him knowledge is fixed.

59. For the abstinent man, the sense objects cease while the longing is left. Even this taste will cease for him who has seen the Supreme.

60. Even for the wise man who makes an effort the turbulent violence of the senses carries away the mind.

61. Taming the senses, controlling them all, sitting united, focused in Me, in him knowledge is fixed.

62. Through contemplation of sense-objects, attachment for them arises in Man. From attachment comes desire, from desire comes anger.

63. From anger there is delusion, from delusion loss of memory, from loss of memory destruction of the Buddhi, from destruction of the Buddhi he perishes.

64. Free from allurements or abhorrence but moving among worldly things with the senses self-controlled, he who is subject to the Atman knows tranquillity.

65. From tranquillity comes the destruction of all his sufferings. Soon the Buddhi of one whose mind is serene finds firmness.

66. For the un-united there is no focused intelligence. For the un-united there is no concentration and for those who are unconcentrated there is no peace and without peace where is happiness?

67. The mind following its wanderings in the senses carries away its discernment like the wind a ship on the sea.

68. Therefore, O Mighty-armed, one whose senses are completely withheld from the objects of sense, in him knowledge is fixed.

69. One who is whole awakens in what is night for all others. That which awakens all others is night for the seeing Sage.

70. Not he who yearns for desires, but he into whom desires flow like water into the sea, full and founded on stillness, obtains peace.

71. The person who abandons all desires, who acts without longings, without 'mine', without 'I', he knows peace.

72. This is the Brahman-state, O Partha; having obtained this, no one is deluded. Being established in this at life's end, we dissolve into Brahman.

## OM TATSAT

Here ends the second chapter called 'Samkhya Yoga' in the dialogue of Sri Krishna and Arjuna, in the Brahman-knowledge, the Yoga-discipline, in the Divine Songs of the Upanishads.

*(To be continued)*

*Translation by DHRUVA*

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**THE WORLD OF THE GODS**

HUNG above the dome of night like a jewel-fire  
 Glimmers the chandelier-world of the gods—  
 A splendour drawn from the gold-womb of the Vast,  
 Or like a million flames bursting from the sun  
 A ruby-glow thrown in each bud-passion of life.  
 It bears no shadow but under its wings brood  
 Our thoughts, and awake here our early dawns:  
 Over this peak towards which climb our sights  
 Summits of the Eternal lean into Time.  
 Here enters the primal ray into Ignorance,  
 A wave that brings to us tidings of the far sea,  
 A storm-speed that takes the sky to Infinity,  
 Denizens of this world are our guardian-friends  
 Who drink honey-wine of the Earth's sacrifice—  
 In their felicity expands her bosom  
 As though the Unborn found his beloved.

R. Y. DESHPANDE

## THE NURSING HOME OF THE ASHRAM

WHEN one hears the above phrase, naturally the idea at once comes that there are doctors and nurses treating the suffering patients as it happens in other nursing homes in the world. But I had a completely different impression and experience in this nursing home recently when I went as an asthma patient and remained there for ten days in January 1985.

I had an asthma attack at 3:30 p.m. It was mild so I took medicine but gradually it increased more and more by the time it was 9 p.m. I was alone and got upset. What to do? Why should I disturb anybody by going to the nursing home late at night? If I passed the night somehow, I would manage to go there in the morning. But at 10. p.m. my condition became very acute and unbearable and I felt the need to go to the nursing home at once. I informed my house colleague Mr. Khannaji. I reached the nursing home by rickshaw with my house-owner's son as it was very far from my house. Before 11 p.m. I was there. As I was climbing the staircase slowly, step by step, I saw God-like and Goddess-like figures standing in front of me. The one in charge asked me: "Asthma?" I slowly nodded my head. She said: "It is good you have come."

I wondered how she had known my idea of not disturbing anyone at night. She took me in, gave me an injection, sat with me for a while and again asked me: "Do you feel better?" I looked at her and saw that she was no other than the resident doctor herself with a nurse and a maid-worker. I felt relieved at once as if nothing had happened to me. I passed the night peacefully.

After that, during my ten day's stay there, I had two attacks but I was peaceful all the time. Once it was a very bad attack.

After my first experience I used to feel that the doctors and the nurses here were not ordinary people. They were selected by the Mother Divine. They are heavenly beings working and helping the suffering sadhaks who are fighting to prolong their lives so that they may do more work for the Mother and in that way progress more and more and grow nearer and nearer to the Mother.

As the days went by I saw that I was in a real paradise created by Dr. Nripendra who had been my first doctor for asthma when I had come to the Ashram in 1946. Later, Dr. Bose treated me. Now I was treated by Dr. Datta, Dr. Raichura and other specialists. They are all very efficient and hard-working doctors. They are all great souls united to fulfil the dream of Dr. Nripendra and to help the suffering sadhaks of the Divine Mother. All the three responsible persons came every day to check and treat me as the need arose. They used to come on time without fail and examine every patient with care. They would instruct the benignant nurses about what they had to do for each patient. They were also always active, smart and efficient with sweet and soft voices and smiling faces. They used to give everything on time. I never saw any sign of anger, fatigue or roughness in any of them. At night as in the daytime they were ever ready to help any patient who called them. They used to serve bed-tea, breakfast, soup, juices, food and medicines all regularly and without any delay. Everything would be on time like magic. You had not to think of anything.

This happened in this heaven which I saw with my own eyes for days and nights together. They are not ordinary nurses. They know their work well and do it wholeheartedly. It is a pleasure and delight to watch them. We forget our disease for a while and feel that we are not sick. As if we had come to enjoy and to know this charmed place and its care-takers who are fulfilling Dr. Nripendra's dream of A HAPPY HEAVEN.

One evening after meditation Dr. Datta came to see us. He saw that we were sitting together and talking and were very happy. At once he too felt the same and said: "Oh, today all the patients are very happy." We all laughed with him. Spontaneously I said to myself, "In heaven there is always happiness and there is no presence of suffering. There is no death in a heaven like this Nursing Home. If one dies here it means it is not a death but a call from the Divine Mother after finishing the work which one has to do here in the Ashram. So there is no death."

Once I had a very bad attack there at 3 p.m. Now see the Mother's Grace and work and presence! Dr. Datta came for some work. He asked me how I felt. I told him that I had a little trouble. He gave me some medicine and went away. Again I felt ill. I stood at the window to breathe instead of calling the doctor, thinking I would be okay. From behind, Dr. Raichura patted me and asked me, "You feel unwell?" I told him, "Yes."

He went to see the other patients but in the meantime the attack became more acute. I called for the doctors. They at once gave me a special treatment and I became okay in no time. See how all the doctors came to me in time to help me. Dr. Raichura told me afterwards: "You had a very bad attack." After this, nothing happened to me and my war—the fight to prolong life as much as one can—was ended. I became normal. The doctors told me I could go home after a few days.

One day when in the morning everyone saw me in civilian dress instead of Nursing Home dress which I called "military dress", they asked me, "Mahendrabhai, are you going? Have the doctors discharged you?" To that I replied, "My war is over and thus I am leaving. I have become a civilian and am going back to continue work for the Mother as long as She needs me." They all laughed heartily. So I have come back from the happy heaven to tell you all how I spent my days there and what I saw and felt.

One more special thing I must add which I observed. Any type of work, even the worst type—the dirtiest—which the nurses do, they never feel bad and never show anything on their faces before the patients. They are always sweet and smiling and soft to everyone, which brings a good relation between them and the patients. So the patients forget their suffering. Some of my friends used to come to see me. All liked the management and organisation very much. A young girl who is a visitor was so much impressed that she told me, "Mahendrabhai, if anything should happen to me, please bring me here."

This is all for the Nursing Home. It is a perfect example for all of us to follow.

MAHENDRABHAI

## THE MYTH OF ARYAN RACE

THE slogan of the Nordic race that the Germans are the real Aryans was vigorously introduced by Adolf Hitler in the early thirties of the present century. On one hand it led to the revival of German Militarism and a hope for the German youths after the humiliating peace Treaty in 1919 known as the 'Treaty of Versailles', but on the other hand it first led to the formation of a fascist party, the Nazi Party, which was later followed by a series of the worst types of barbarities, like the extermination of six million "non-Aryan" Jews under the most brutal conditions during the Second World War.

This concept of a superior race came in a rather unfortunately distorted manner. When Charles Darwin in the nineteenth century carried out his epoch-making observation of the various flora and fauna, and wrote his famous *The Origin of Species*, the concept gave rise to a popular slogan: 'Survival of the Fittest.' True, self-preservation is the first law of nature, but the distortion of scientific findings or philosophic principles or religious beliefs emanating from a national sentimental feeling is never to be welcomed.

A British poet wrote, "Rule, Britannia, Britannia rules the waves." Winston Churchill declared, "I am not here as the Prime Minister of His Majesty's Government to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire." Nietzsche, the German philosopher, gave the concept of a 'superman' and the maintenance of the purity of blood, which probably gave the Nazi leaders the slogan of an Aryan race, though the slogan "Deutschland Über Alles" was already prevalent in Germany, and many renowned German intellectuals were unknowingly under the influence of the belief of Nordic superiority. To maintain and establish the superiority based on the dogmas and preachings of the political philosophers of individual countries coupled with the dictum of Heraclitus that "war is the father of all things" leads us nowhere.

After the declaration of the principles of 'Equality, Liberty and Fraternity' by Rousseau and Voltaire, some Frenchmen started a revolution causing much bloodshed, and to some extent they had the belief that they were the architects of the principles of 'Rights of Man'. There is also a similar attitude among the British, who used to say 'Liberty, thy name is Britain'—though both these nations kept many nations of the world under subjection. Sri Aurobindo has said, "Faith is indispensable to man, for without it he could not proceed forward in his journey through the unknown, but it ought not to be imposed, it should come as a free perception or an imperative direction from the inner spirit." Imposition of national or religious beliefs encourages nothing except mutual distrust, jealousy and hatred among nations,—and we have witnessed that within the period of 1914 to 1945 ten years were spent in war.

Sri Aurobindo has written, "A unity behind diversity and discord is the secret of the variety of human religions and philosophies, for they all get at some image or some side clue, touch some portion of the one Truth or envisage some one of its myriad aspects."



The idea of an Aryan race appeared on the European scene sometime in the eighties of the last century and I am quoting a portion of what appeared in *Scientific American* in December 1933:

“The doctrine of Nordic superiority is an offshoot of Aryanism, the chief exponent of which was count Joseph Arthur de Gobineau, a French aristocrat who died in 1882. Gobineau maintained that one race alone, the Aryan, has been the creator and sustainer of all that is great and good in civilization. The idea of an Aryan race was based on the discoveries of similarities in the languages of the Indo-European group, which led to the theory that all these languages were derived from a common stem, the Aryan language. Gobineau and his disciples assumed that the existence of an Aryan language implies existence also of an Aryan race. Having created this mythical race they attributed to it all virtues and excellence.... In spite of all efforts no one has ever been able to produce the slightest bit of real evidence that any such race ever existed. There is no necessary relation between language and race, and the very use of the term ‘Aryan’ in a racial sense—as the Germans are using it today—has no justification whatever.’

Sri Aurobindo said, “Our true happiness lies in the true growth of our whole being in a victory throughout the total range of our existence, in mastery of the inner as well as and more than the outer, the hidden as well as the overt nature, our true completeness comes not by describing wider circles of the plane where we began, but by transcendence.”

N. K. MAITRA

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## THE FLOWER-SONG

THE glimmering blossoms sang at night,  
 They beckoned to the sky,  
 When troubled souls were not in sight,  
 And the wind was whistling by.

My heart communed with infinity,  
 In hushed-up lonely hours;  
 Soft silence spread its sympathy  
 On multipetalled flowers.

A prophet Message downward came;  
 All birds were singing then—  
 New dawn, with an Eternal Name,  
 Answered the prayer of Men.

SAILEN ROY

## STORIES FROM TAMIL LITERATURE

*(Continued from the issue of June 1985)*

### 18. SEENAKKAN'S FRIENDSHIP

SEENAKKAN was a wealthy young man with a heart of gold. Poet Poyyamoli was his close friend. Poyyamoli was a gourmet and, whenever he visited his friend, Seenakkan and his wife entertained him with special dishes which he relished. Sometimes Seenakkan himself would prepare for his friend his most favourite dish and serve him to his full satisfaction.

Late one evening the poet called at Seenakkan's house. The door was open but there was no sign of anyone close by. It was a large house and Seenakkan's wife was in the kitchen at the far end of the house. Seenakkan was away somewhere. Poyyamoli stepped into the house and walking along the passage reached the central hall. Still there was no sign of anyone and he seated himself on a chair and waited. Fifteen minutes passed and Poyyamoli was bored. There was a large bed in the hall which was meant for the guests, but occasionally used by Seenakkan also. Seeing no one coming to receive him yet, Poyyamoli laid himself down on the bed and was soon asleep.

Seenakkan's wife came from the kitchen very late. Tired after the day's heavy work she was about to enter the hall when she noticed the sleeping figure in the large bed. She had not known the arrival of poet Poyyamoli. The hall was dimly lit. Supposing that her husband had for some reason gone to sleep there, she laid herself beside the sleeping figure and dozed off. After some time Seenakkan returned and saw the two sleeping persons on the bed. For a second he was stunned and puzzled. Then he took a closer look and recognized his friend Poyyamoli. Everything became quite clear to him now. Not even a shadow of suspicion crossed his mind. For he knew his friend well and also the loyalty of his loving wife. And being a man of mature wisdom he did not want to wake them up and create for them an embarrassing situation. The bed was large enough for three and so without disturbing them he stretched himself gently beside his wife and calmly went to sleep.

The poet was the first to get up in the morning. Looking beside him he had the shock of his life. Then Seenakkan got up and greeted his friend. Fully realising what had happened, the poet was miserable in his remorse and abjectly begged for forgiveness. But Seenakkan patted him on the shoulder and said that there was no need for forgiveness for no wrong had been done. He told Poyyamoli not to make himself miserable for he thought nothing of it.

Then the wife got up and, coming to know what she had done the previous night in her hurry, was terribly ashamed of herself. But the magnanimous husband never uttered a word of rebuke. He told her also not to worry. Soon feelings calmed down and everything came to normal. As usual Poyyamoli was entertained to his

favourite dishes and they had a very good time. But he could never forget the magnanimity of Seenakkan and the wisdom with which he had handled the delicate situation.

Years later when Seenakkan died and was taken to the cremation ground Poyyamoli hurried there from a long distance and was overcome with terrible grief. He cried bitterly thinking of the high quality of Seenakkan's friendship and the greatness of his character. He was overpowered by the feeling that he must pay a fitting tribute to his friend by dying with him. He had once shared his conjugal bed unwittingly and now in expiation he would share his funeral bed. Explaining his intention to all those who had gathered for the funeral, he laid himself beside his friend's body and begged them to set fire to the pyre. In vain did people try to protest. He could not be persuaded. At last people had to submit to his will and soon the fire swallowed him along with the body of his exemplary friend.

### 19. SILAMBI AND AVVAIYAR

Kamban was the famous author of the Tamil version of the Ramayana. He was patronized by King Kulothungan III of the later Cholas. Being a genius and a poet of repute he was greatly respected in the king's court and worshipped by the people. No wonder he was proud and always conscious of his greatness.

In those days people held poets in great reverence. They were looked upon as seers and prophets. It was considered auspicious to have their blessings. People of some position and wealth sought to be sung by them. They believed that when a poet made a favourable mention of their name in a poem, it made them prosper. Moreover, through the poem their name became immortalized. Kamban being famous, many people approached him and pestered him with this request. Conscious of his importance and perhaps to avoid a crowd also, he charged a fee of five hundred gold pieces for a mention.

Silambi was a court-dancer who craved to have her name mentioned in a poem. Being a modest woman, she was not so wealthy as other courtesans were, but still great was her desire to be sung by Kamban. She started saving money and in a few years saved up to two hundred and fifty gold pieces. She felt she could neither wait nor save any more. She thought that being a court-acquaintance for many years, Kamban would oblige her for half the fee. So she invited Kamban to her home one day, laid before him the 250 gold pieces and begged him to sing of her. Kamban was vexed at heart but he did not show it. He collected his half fee and started writing a poem on the outer wall of Silambi's house. Silambi was overwhelmed, but alas, her joy was short-lived. Kamban just wrote three lines of a six-line stanza and stopped. And there was no mention of Silambi's name in those lines. They celebrated the Chola king, the Cholas' land, the Chola rivers and Silambi fell on her knees and begged the poet to put in at least one word about her in the poem. Kamban refused firmly, and pocketing the half-fee for the half poem he went away.

Great was the grief of Silambi. Not only was she not mentioned in the poem, but all her savings were gone. And whenever she looked at the half poem she smarted under the insult.

A few days passed. One morning poet Avvaiyar happened to pass that way. (This Avvaiyar was different from the Avvaiyar mentioned in the earlier stories. The name Avvai was very common among Tamil women in those days and we have more than three women-poets with the name.) Though a great poet, Avvaiyar was a very simple lady and her needs were but a few. Silambi met her in the street and invited her to her home. Accepting the invitation Avvaiyar climbed on to the pylon and was seated there while Silambi ran into the house to prepare some food to be given to her.

Avvaiyar looked at the wall casually and saw the half-poem there. Even as she sat thinking over it, Silambi returned and invited her inside the house to share pot-luck with her. She was very apologetic that she had nothing to give Avvaiyar except thin raghi porridge, but Avvaiyar was very nice about it and took the porridge with relish. Then the poet asked Silambi about the half poem on the wall and Silambi sadly related the story behind it. "So Kamban gave you half a poem for 250 gold pieces! I will furnish the other half for the nice porridge you have just given me." So saying, Avvaiyar took a piece of charcoal, wrote three more lines and completed the poem. Reading those lines Silambi was overwhelmed with joy for she found herself greatly complimented in them. With tears in her eyes she touched the feet of the poet with deep reverence and thanked her profusely. Avvaiyar blessed her and took leave of her. The full poem ran like this:

"The monarch worthy of his name is Chola.  
The land worthy of its name is the Chola land.  
The river worthy of its name is Cauvery.  
The woman worthy of her name is Silambi  
And the pair of anklets she wears on her lotus-feet  
Are the only anklets worthy of their name."

M. L. THANGAPPA

# THE WITTY JESTER

## A FOLKTALE FROM PONDICHERRY

THE king was unable to sleep on that night. He relentlessly tossed in his bed, now and then heaving sighs. The queen who lay by his side understood that the king was disturbed in mind.

"My Lord!" spoke the queen kindly. "Ever since you returned from the court you are putting on an angry look...And now you are unable to sleep. I wonder why?"

The king heaved a deep sigh. He raised his eyebrows and gnashed his teeth. Finally he said, "It is all because of the jester in my court."

"What? A jester! Should a jester be the cause of your wrath?" the queen said curling her lips contemptuously. "You should excuse me, my Lord!" She continued. "A jester in the court is expected only to please the king and make him happy. And he has freedom to make jests of persons or their actions..."

"You are right!" interrupted the king. "But my jester has misused his freedom...Today he made a jest of me."

"Made a jest of you!" asked the queen wrinkling up her nose.

"Yes. And that too in the presence of my courtiers," replied the king fuming with uncontrollable rage.

"What did your jester say?" asked the queen. "Let me share the joke, my Lord."

The king saw a fleeting smile on her lips. He stared into her eyes and shouted, "It's no joke. It is an insult."

The queen thought it unwise to proceed further. "Unpardonable, my Lord," she said stressing every word. "It is unpardonable. The jester should be punished with death."

The king heaved a great sigh of relief and said: "Yes. I too have decided. The insult must be avenged with death." He closed his eyes and lay on his bed not showing the least sign of disturbance. The queen slept with the great satisfaction of having pacified the mind of the king. But the king was actually making the best use of his brain to devise a punishment in which insult would precede death.

Before daybreak he succeeded in his attempt.

Beaming with a sense of satisfaction, he went to the court at the appointed hour. No sooner did he take his seat than his eyes searched for the jester.

The jester grinned as usual and saluted the king with both his hands.

"Scoundrel," cried the king. "Yesterday you insulted me on the pretext of joking. To-day I shall do away with you and your jokes. You shall be punished with death."

Never did the jester expect such a turn to his joke. He began shivering. With great difficulty he managed to stammer: "My joke was never meant to insult you, your Majesty. It was just a joke. It meant nothing more than that."

"No more!" cried the king waving his hand at the jester. "I shall hear no more from your side."

He then beckoned one of his servants to fetch a street dog. The order was immediately obeyed.

The jester as well as the courtiers were unable to read the mind of the king. While everyone was wondering why the cur was brought to the court, the king addressed the jester: "Fool! To me you are nothing more than the dog that you see here. I give you the liberty of killing this cur in any manner you like. I will use the same method to kill you."

The hearts of the courtiers were drumming against their chests. The king sat twirling up his moustaches, all the time smiling mischievously. But the jester remained unperturbed. His brain was more active than ever.

"Come on, my boy. What sort of weapon you would like to use in killing this cur?" asked the king flaring his nostrils.

The jester remained silent. Anxious minutes passed. He went near the cur and gave a piteous look. The cur out of fear began to growl. He then caught hold of the dog by its tail, lifted it above his head and using all his strength he brought it down with such great force to the ground that the animal's skull got smashed. The cur gave a yelp before it breathed its last.

The king was nonplussed. Sorrow in the faces of the courtiers gave way to smiles. They clapped their hands and unanimously appreciated the wit of the jester.

The king too praised the jester in superlatives. "But I am not going to leave you at that." He said. "There is no escape from death. If you are not going to die of my choice, I allow you to die as you choose. Now speak! How do you wish to die?"

While the jester remained silent, the Prime Minister stood up and said, "Your Majesty! You are not only known for your valour and strength but also for your wisdom. The accused jester has escaped death by using his wit. Is it not wise to allow him to live?"

"Yes, your Majesty! I am not very big and I do not occupy much space in your court," pleaded the jester.

The king laughed like a mad devil and told his Prime Minister: "I have decided to kill him. Yet he managed to escape in the first round. And I am sure he will meet his death in the second and last round. And I do not want any interruption."

The courtiers had no say against the king. Sad at heart, they looked at the jester. They could not but admire him when they found no trace of disturbance on his clownish face.

"Second and last round, my dear jester. Tell me how you wish to die," asked the the king again.

The jester moved towards the king and prostrated himself before him. "Your Majesty!" he said remaining in the same position. "Ever since you honoured me by appointing me jester in your court, you were kind to me. You have treated me as a good companion. You praised my wit and laughed heartily when I joked. I thank

you for your kindness. Now that you have permitted me to choose my own death. .” He stopped awhile and pouted his lips.

“Speak out!” cried the very eager king. “How do you wish to die?”

“Your Majesty! Allow me to die of old age,” the jester replied casually.

The courtiers were unable to control themselves. They jumped, gambolled like kids and hit one another in amusement.

Hearing the clever words of the jester, the king cooled down and said: “Well done. Since I used the words ‘Second and last turn’ I shall not go in for a third round. I shall keep my word and grant your wish. You shall remain in my court till you die of old age. But remember... Never, never shall you make a joke at my expense and thereby insult me.”

The jester thanked the king and said, “I am reborn today, my Lord. I shall remember this day and be careful hereafter.”

P. RAJA

# EUROPE 1974

## A TRAVELOGUE

(Continued from the issue of August 15, 1985)

OURS is a subcontinent with endless variety in topography and peoples. Compared to us, the European countries seem small. Yet it must be said that Nature has not been negligent or miserly and the variety we see in the countryside in Europe is equally interesting. Within a few miles the scene changes with a suddenness that delights us. If we start early we are in the next country by the evening. Here if we start from Calcutta it would take days to reach the border of our next-door neighbour Afghanistan. In the Indo-Gangetic plain there is not much variety. But here the charm is of a different kind. These miles upon miles of unbroken plain have a way of making us thoughtful and giving us the taste of the infinity we live in. France is the only country where we get to see green unbroken vast stretches "that clothe the world and meet the sky", as the poem says. The emerald-green joins the sky in some distant horizon where the blue-green line meets and captivates us with its beauty. And as in India we have in Europe also pockets where the stone-age people still dwell. Of course they are far more civilised than our Todas of the Nilgiri or our Santhals of the Santhal Pargana.

Such a group can be found on the border of France and Spain. The land of the Basques is situated there overshadowed by the Pyrenees and what is known as the Hautes Pyrenees on the south—a small patch of land called in Spain *el pais Vasco* and in France *le pays basque*. On its northern border flows the French river, Adour. On its southern border flows the Spanish river Ebro. On the west is the vast Atlantic Ocean. "Who are these people?" the scholars have asked from of yore. The Basques are a veritable geographical and ethnological mystery.

The area that is Basque country comprises four Spanish provinces: Vizcays, Alava, Guipuzcoa and Navarra (it might be remembered that Navarre gave France a very great King). Then there are the three French provinces of Labour, Basse-Navarre and Soule. But all these seven provinces use a language of their own although Spanish is known in the south and French also. Altogether the Basque country covers 300,000 sq. km.

Historians believe that these people are autochthones and they have been living in this area from pre-historic times. In the caves of Altamira are found paintings and the bison image that dates back from 14,000 B.C. It was Julius Caesar who first gave us a detailed description of the Basque country and its people in his book *De Bello Gallico*. He said in it that Gaul (France) was divided into three parts: that is, Belgae, Aquitani and Celtae; Celtae, known as Galli in Latin, was separated from Aquitani by the river Garonne. Aquitani was the Basque country. The word Aquitani was an innovation of Julius Caesar; actually in those ancient times this



area the people called *Eskualkunik*. Some Latin authors called the Basques Gascones, the English called their land Gascony. When the English King Henry II married Eleanor of Aquitani in 1152, it became a crown colony of the English. The Capital of Aquitani or Gascony was Bordeaux. And the English territory extended up to the river Garonne.

The Basque people had no script but coming into contact with the Latin, first an improvisation and then a more Latinised script came into being. Scholars say that the Basque language does not form part of the family of Indo-European languages. And, most curious of all, the language has no connection with any other language of any other part of the world. There is, however, a vague affinity, very remote indeed, with Ugro-Finnish, Turkish and the Magyar group. But it sounds a bit far-fetched to have a connection with languages so far-off; it can only be a hypothesis. It may be the oldest language in the world or at least in Europe and is a modern form of the speech of the nomad hunting-tribes of the Palaeolithic era. Their animals were horses, bisons, bears, reindeer and elk. Professor Aranzadi of Barcelona, a very eminent anthropologist, has dated the Basque language to the Neolithic Age: that is, around 9500 B.C. The language is changing very fast to adapt itself to modern times, and work on it is as momentous as what Kemal Pasha Atatürk did in 1926 in Turkey. He switched the Turkish language from the Arabic script to the Roman which brought flexibility in the language and clear expression. The same type of transformation is going on in the Basque language.

At first the Basques lived in caves right up to the foot of the Cantabrian Mountains and filled the walls of their caves with paintings of the animals they knew. There was also a time when tourists were allowed to see these paintings. But as the caves are dark, artificial lighting had to be installed and that had an adverse effect on the colours. So now that has stopped and only research scholars are allowed in. The place is mountainous, woody and green as it receives heavy rainfall. They say Wellington in the Peninsular War found the place wonderful for defensive tactics while fighting Marshal Soult. Its insular position had enabled the Basque people to maintain their independence and their own unique culture throughout the ages.

The Romans in 59 B.C. first invaded the Basque country for then it was only a part of Gaul and if Gaul was theirs why not the Pyrenees? But the Basques put up a terrific fight and defeated the Roman General Lucius Valerius. Finally in 56 B.C. Julius Caesar, when he was in Breton and Veneti, sent his deputy Publius Crassus for another attempt. This time the Romans won and Basque was made into a Roman province. While the two other provinces of Gaul—Belgae and Celtae—adopted the Roman ways and the Latin language, Aquitani—that is the Basque country—rejected all that and stuck to its own culture and its own language. When the Roman Empire collapsed early in the 5th century and the Roman legion was withdrawn, a series of invaders attacked Aquitani. But as with the Romans these people repulsed their cultural influence. The Vandals, Alans, Visigoths, Franks all had their bout over Aquitani. However, the Frankish influence was beneficial and these hill-people

were converted to Christianity. With great pride the Basques remember that they have given the world such illustrious men as Ignatius Loyola who came from Guipuzcoa. He lived from 1506 to 1552 and was the founder of the Jesuit order of Christianity. St. Francisco too came from the Basque land of Navarra. About the French King Henry we have already written.

In the 8th century came the Moors from the South. But the Franks did not wish to see the Moors overrun France: they were at one time on the plains of Southern France. The Franks started a counterattack under their able general Charles Martel in 732. The Moors were pushed back to Spain. A certain autonomy, in the Basque land was respected from both sides, France and Spain. Spain finally drove out the Moors in 1492. But all successive rulers recognised the semi-independence of the Basque people and, time to time, issued writs to that effect known as *Fueros*.

The 20th century saw many ups and downs in the Basque fortunes. For one, General Franco in 1936 was determined to suppress the separatist aspiration of the Basques. The Spanish Basques form a highly cultured intelligentsia while the French Basques are mainly farmers and fishermen. They are an enterprising lot who were at one time the main traders in whale-oil for they reached up to the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador. When that obnoxious king Philip II of Spain was planning to send his famous Armada against the English heretic queen Elizabeth he recruited all the fishermen of the Basque land, in his fleet.

Even today the Basques have been able to maintain their traditional customs, language, national games and dress and their beautiful *beret* which has become the military head-gear all over the world.

Our Mother loved the Basque-land and its people. She was fond of their music too, so much so that once there was a visitor in our Ashram who knew Basque music and he charmed Her by organising Basque concert for Her.

(To be continued)

CHAUNDONA BANERJI

# THE BACKGROUND TO SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS

A BOOK-REVIEW QUOTED FROM *THE HINDU* OF JULY 30, 1985  
WITH ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**“Two Loves” and “A Worthier Pen” The Enigmas of Shakespeare’s Sonnets. An Identification through a New Approach** by K. D. Sethna. Arnold-Heinemann. AB/9, First Floor, Safdarjang Enclave, New Delhi-110029. Rs. 90/-

IN addition to the dramas for which he is so famous, Shakespeare wrote 154 sonnets. These first appeared in an unauthorised edition in 1609, dedicated to “Mr. W. H.” Most of the sonnets are addressed to a young man, expressing the poet’s love for him and urging him to marry and beget children. Some sonnets deal with a “woman coloured ill”, the poet’s mistress who seduces the young man. There are also some sonnets which refer to a rival poet who is trying to gain a place in the young friend’s esteem. For more than two centuries scholars have been trying to establish the identity of the “two loves”—the Fair Friend and the Dark Woman, and of the “worthier pen”—the Rival Poet, but nothing conclusive has emerged. It is also difficult to say when the sonnets were actually written, though two of them were published in a piratical edition in 1599 and Meres makes a general reference to them in 1598.

K. D. Sethna has long been associated with the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, and is the author of a book on Sri Aurobindo’s poetry. The book under review reveals his thorough knowledge of the writings of Shakespeare and his contemporaries. Sethna establishes the dates of the sonnets by a method of “internal chronology.” By closely studying the references in the sonnets to age, and relating them to Shakespeare’s ideas about youth and old age, he manages to arrive at the age at which the poet wrote these sonnets; he establishes that the sonnets cover a time span of nine years, 1598-1607. Once this is done, identifying Mr. W. H. out of the many people proposed by various scholars becomes easy. Leslie Hotson’s candidate William Hatcliffe is eliminated as being too old. A. L. Rowse the historian and some Shakespearean scholars have suggested that “W. H.” is the inverted form of Henry Wriothesly, Third Earl of Southampton, to whom Shakespeare had dedicated his early poems, *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594). But Southampton does not fit into Sethna’s time scheme; he married in August 1598, so the sonnets urging the young man to marry could not have been addressed to him. Many critics, led by J. Dover Wilson, identify the patron as William Herbert, who became the Earl of Pembroke in 1601. He was known as a notorious shirker of marriage, and fits into the time scheme beautifully; his name echoes the “Will” in the pun of Sonnets 135 and 136. Sethna produces impressive arguments, based on Shakespeare’s works, to show that “fair” means beautiful, and does not refer to light coloured hair in “fair friend”; so the strikingly handsome but dark-haired

Pembroke fits the bill. Sethna's identification of the Dark Lady is not equally clear. He provides enough material to show that all previous guesses have been off the mark, but his own candidate, an Italian woman probably named "Anastasia Guglielma", has no historical evidence to support her.<sup>1</sup>

It is in his identification of the Rival Poet that Sethna breaks new ground. Others have suggested Christopher Marlowe or Chapman when Shakespeare mentions the "proud full sail of his great verse", but Sethna identifies him as Ben Jonson. This section of the book is a fascinating study of the close rivalry that existed between these two great playwrights, with Jonson mocking at Shakespeare's attempts to appear a gentleman and Shakespeare sneering at Jonson's habit of collaborating with others in writing plays. New light is thrown on the sonnets dealing with the Rival Poet; Sethna's analysis of Sonnet 86 reveals at least three levels of meaning; the "familiar spirit" inspiring the rival poet is not only Horace, whom Jonson publicly admired and imitated, but also Canary wine, a spirit of which Jonson was very fond!

Even readers unfamiliar with the Sonnets can read this book with profit, because Sethna has thoughtfully explained all difficult Elizabethan meanings in footnotes. As for book production values, "*Two Loves*" and "*A Worthier Pen*" can compare favourably with anything published abroad, and serve as a model to all Indian publishers; I could find just one printing error in this 300 page book, and that was a minor mistake—the name "Wilson" being spelt "Willson" in a footnote. It was a pleasure to go through this impeccably written book—coming into contact with a lively critical intelligence was an invigorating experience.

SHYAMALA NARAYAN

<sup>1</sup> *Editor's Note.* Some more lines seem to be necessary here. For surely the name "Anastasia Guglielma" has not been arbitrarily chosen. Even if there is as yet no historical evidence for her existence the name has been argued from Shakespeare's own poetic testimony in a number of Sonnets. But it would be ungracious to seriously complain when the review shows so much insight in everything else connected with the book. No finer treatment on the whole in a brief span by a scholar-critic can be conceived.