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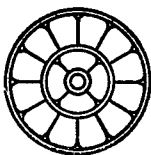
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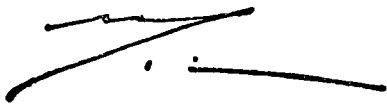


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute

A new light breaks upon the earth

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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“Great is Truth and it shall prevail.”

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A TALK BY THE MOTHER

TO THE ASHRAM CHILDREN ON OCTOBER 26, 1955

Mother reads from *The Synthesis of Yoga*,
"The Four Aids"

No questions!

There aren't any questions here, it is clear as crystal.

Here it is written: "The word within may be the utterance of the inmost soul in us which is always open to the Divine or it may be the word of the secret and universal Teacher..." Why are they different, the Divine and the universal Teacher?

The universal Teacher is only an aspect of the Divine, you see. The Divine contains all the possible activities; the teacher is only one activity, the One who teaches. Sri Aurobindo means that either it is a direct contact with the Divine or a contact with an aspect of the Divine, the One who teaches, the divine Guru. But the Divine is not only a Guru.

That's all?

Sweet Mother, here: "In some cases this representative word is only taken as a sort of excuse for the inner power to awaken and manifest..." Then in this case is it the individual's aspiration or the power of the Word?

This depends a great deal on the degree of the Sadhak's development, you see. If he is developed and conscious enough to be in direct contact with the spiritual Force which is working behind the words, then the word is only an excuse. But if for him it must pass through his mental understanding in order to have its effect, then the word takes on a much greater importance. It depends on the degree of development.

If one is capable of receiving directly, then one opens a book for instance, finds a sentence and has an illumination; because it was just the word one was waiting for in order to put himself into contact with the Force he needed to take the next step.

Otherwise one must take a book, study it, read it sentence by sentence, word by word, and then reflect and then understand it and then assimilate it and then, later, very slowly, after the assimilation and understanding, it begins to have an effect on the character, and one makes some progress.

In one case it is a direct contact, you see, and just one sentence, one word... one reads a word, reads a sentence, and has an illumination. And then one receives all the Force that one needs. The other is the path of the learned man, the scholar, who is an intellectual being and needs to learn, reflect, assimilate, reason about all he has learnt, in order to make progress. It is long, it is laborious.

That's all?

Sweet Mother, there is a flower you have named "The Creative Word".

Yes.

What does that mean?

It is the word which creates.

There are all kinds of old traditions, old Hindu traditions, old Chaldean traditions in which the Divine, in the form of the Creator, that is, in His aspect as Creator, pronounces a word which has the power to create. So it is this... And it is the origin of the mantra. The mantra is the spoken word which has a creative power. An invocation is made and there is an answer to the invocation; or one makes a prayer and the prayer is granted. This is the Word, the Word which, in its sound... it is not only the idea, it is in the sound that there's a power of creation. It is the origin, you see, of the mantra.

In Indian mythology the creator God is Brahma, and I think that it was precisely his power which has been symbolised by this flower, "The Creative Word". And when one is in contact with it, the words spoken have a power of evocation or creation or formation or transformation; the words... sound always has a power; it has much more power than men think. It may be a good power and it may be a bad power. It creates vibrations which have an undeniable effect. It is not so much the idea as the sound; the idea too has its own power, but in its own domain—whereas the sound has a power, in the material world.

I think I have explained this to you once; I told you, for example, that words spoken casually, usually without any reflection and without attaching any importance to them, can be used to do something very good. I think I spoke to you about "Bonjour", "Good Day", didn't I? When people meet and say "Bonjour", they do so mechanically and without thinking. But if you put a will into it, an aspiration to indeed wish someone a good day, well, there is a way of saying "Good Day" which is very effective, much more effective than if simply meeting someone you thought: "Ah! I hope he has a good day", without saying anything. If with this hope in your thought you say to him in a certain way, "Good Day", you make it more concrete and more effective.

It's the same thing, by the way, with curses, or when one gets angry and says bad things to people. This can do them as much harm—more harm sometimes—than if you were to give them a slap. With very sensitive people it can put their stomach out of order or give them palpitation, because you put into it an evil force which has a power of destruction.

It is not at all ineffective to speak. Naturally it depends a great deal on each one's inner power. People who have no strength and no consciousness can't do very much—unless they employ material means. But to the extent that you are strong, especially when you have a powerful vital, you must have a great control

on what you say, otherwise you can do much harm. Without wanting to, without knowing it; through ignorance.

Anything? No? Nothing?

Another question? ... Everything's over?

About sound, Mother, different languages have different expressions of sounds; then on what does the power of a language depend?

But when one is perceptive, sensitive enough, if someone speaks a language which one does not know at all, but he puts into it a very precise intention, the same effects are felt.

If someone wishes you a good day or good health in a tongue that you don't know at all and which has no relation with yours, you can feel the effect without understanding the words. Or else if someone says something violent to you or curses you in a language you are totally ignorant of, you can very well receive the vibrations. This does not depend on the understood word. In each language there are sounds which are expressive; it is not only one language that is expressive. And there are several ways of expressing the same thing. There are countless ways of expressing the same thing.

I remember having heard learned people discussing things, and they thought themselves very wise—and discussed with an imperturbable seriousness to find out in which language God has said: "Let there be Light."

Some of them said that it must have been in Sanskrit, others said that it must have been a still more ancient tongue, others said that it must have been Syrian, and so on, you see; and nobody thought that perhaps it was not any language at all!

Does the word also follow the evolution?

That means?...

It means that what was studied before has now become mediocre.

What Word?

What had been conceived by the scholars in the written shastras; that is, what is written here...

Of the old traditions?... Yes. But Sri Aurobindo also says that there is no reason for it not to change, for things not to be added, changed. He says... he himself answers your question.

It is very good to keep the memory of the past if it helps you, but it should not prevent you from going forward. And the teaching which was good at one time is no longer so at another, that's absolutely certain.

What I am asking is: Does it too follow the evolution?

What evolution?

That is, what was necessary formerly is no longer sufficient now?

Logically, one should always add.

But, usually, those who are attached to the past want to keep the past by itself, and the others who want to go forward want to reject everything and keep only what they have found. And so both of them make a common mistake... that is, of limiting themselves and making their consciousness narrow instead of widening it.

Is sound particular only to the physical world or is there sound in the other domains also?

There is sound there also.

In the same way as here?

There certainly is a sound in all the manifested worlds, and when one has the appropriate organs one hears it.

There are sounds which belong to the highest regions, and in fact, the sound we have here gives the feeling of a noise in comparison with that sound.

For example, there are regions harmonious and musical in which one hears something which is the origin of the music we have here—but the sounds of material, physical music seem absolutely barbaric in comparison with that music! When one has heard that, even the most perfect instrument is inadequate. All constructed instruments, among which the violin certainly has the purest sound, are very much inferior in their expression to the music of this world of harmonies.

The human voice when absolutely pure is of all instruments the one which expresses it best; but it is still... it has a sound which seems so harsh, so gross compared with that. When one has been in that region, one truly knows what music is. And it has so perfect a clarity that at the same time as the sound one has the full understanding of what is said. That is, one has the principle of the idea without words, simply with the sound and all the inflexions of the... one can't call it sensations, nor feelings... what seems to be closest would be some kind of soul-states or states of consciousness. All these inflexions are clearly perceptible through the nuances of the sound. And certainly, those who were great musicians, geniuses from the point of view of music, must have been more or less consciously in contact with that. The physical world as we have it today is an absolutely gross world; it looks like a caricature.

It's the same thing with painting: all the pictures we know today look like daub-

ings when one has seen the domain of form and colour, the source of the things expressed through the painting.

And fundamentally it is the same thing from the point of view of ideas. If one enters into contact with the domain of pure ideas beyond words, all words are such limitations, restrictions... it becomes a kind of caricature. The intensity of life contained in the idea is untranslatable. One can receive it if one is capable of entering consciously this domain. One can transmit it to a certain extent if one is master of its vibrations and can let them pass and emanate from him. But all that one says or all that one writes is truly a caricature.

Is that enough?

Or other questions still?

Mother, today is Victory Day (Durga Puja). It is said that every year on this day you win some victory.

But in order to have the right to know it, you must have at least some faint experience of it.

What victory has been won today?

Do you know it, you, eh?

No? You haven't had any experience of this kind?

Has anyone had an experience?

The conquest of desires.

What? You no longer have any desires, you? It is finished? I congratulate you!

(Laughter)

(Silence)

Even following the tradition—which is only a local tradition, you know, not even a terrestrial tradition and still less a universal one—for how many thousands of years has she been winning a victory every year? And then she must begin once again always.

It must be something very difficult to destroy.

Is that all?

Ah! We are going to make an experiment. We are going to meditate for ten minutes, and during these ten minutes I shall put you in touch with what has happened; but I won't say a word to you. If there is someone who becomes aware of something, well, you will write it down on a sheet of paper later, and I shall see it tomorrow.

There, now.

TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of September 1986)

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

December 22, 1940

M: Have unicellular organisms like the amoeba no soul, Sir?

SRI AUROBINDO: No, they have a psychic spark, not a developed soul or even a psychic being.

M: According to Jainism there are different types or grades of lives with grades of development of senses. Thus some creatures have only one sense, e.g. touch, some have two—touch and smell—and so on, till we come to the human grade with five senses. Is that true, Sir?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is for the scientists to say.

M: Perhaps it is the underlying principle of the evolution of life that they want to show. But is it by any sort of virtuous act that a lower form of life becomes a higher one?

SRI AUROBINDO: Virtuous act? No, it is a question of consciousness, a change from a lower to a higher consciousness....

M (*after a while*): My shoulder is still resistant, Sir. The pain in the joint continues.

SRI AUROBINDO: Apply the Force.

M: I have done so, Sir, but no result!

N: Is the Force weak or shoulder resistant?

M: Both.

SRI AUROBINDO: I got rid of my shoulder-trouble by a triple process: the Force, the doing of those movements that bring on pain, and perspiration!

M: I have tried all that.

N: You have added another—Salicylates. (*Laughter*)

P: He leaves nothing to chance—try everything so that one at least may hit.

M: Yes. Fomentation, embrocation, massage, etc.

SRI AUROBINDO: Perhaps you tried too many things, each reacting with the other and producing no result.

Evening:

(Sri Aurobindo had finished his lunch earlier than usual today. Mridu came late with her preparations. So Sri Aurobindo could not take the fritters. I foolishly told Mridu that Sri Aurobindo had finished his meal and that was enough to send her weeping and lamenting. She repeated the story to Dr. Manilal.)

M: Mridu was weeping today, Sir, because she was late and you had finished your meal.

SRI AUROBINDO: It shouldn't have been told.

N: It was I who unguardedly told her about it.

SRI AUROBINDO: Oosh, these things should not be told.

M: But she has already recovered. I must say she has improved. Formerly I used to hear her giving the threat of suicide two or three times a week. Now this was the first time in one month. She says she won't eat.

C: She will eat all right.

M: She counts everything—how many *luchis* she had given, how many you have taken.

SRI AUROBINDO: She won't know how many I have taken and how many others have taken. But there is no reason why she should cry. It is I who ought to cry as I didn't have the fritters. (*Laughter*)

December 23, 1940

M: Has *trikārajña* no knowledge of the future?

SRI AUROBINDO: It means knowledge of all past, present and future.

M: But if we can change the future by effort—

Sri Aurobindo: Who says that?

M: I think you have said it, Sir.

SRI AUROBINDO: I! What about it then?

M: Then how can one read the future completely?

SRI AUROBINDO: What does "completely" mean?

M: It means in every detail.

SRI AUROBINDO: I didn't say in every detail. As I said, one has the faculty of knowing.

(*After this there were miscellaneous talks about this and that, about the philosophical Congress at Madras, etc. Radhakrishnan came into them.*)

N: Radhakrishnan seems to have said that he doesn't believe there is anyone who can challenge Shankara. It was in a talk in Belur Math regarding Sri Aurobindo.

SRI AUROBINDO: There have been many people who have challenged Shankara.

P: Yes, Vaishnavas, Ramanuja, Madhva, etc.

(After this I referred to Prof. Amarnath Jha's lecture in *The Hindu on Indian English*. where he has mentioned Gandhi's prose style as simple, sincere, almost Biblical.)

M: I must say Gandhi has improved Gujarati literature remarkably well.

(On this topic Manilal had an argument with Purani. All recent stylists of Gujarat came into it: Kanu Munshi, Musriwalla, Kalelkar, etc.)

M: What has happened to Kalelkar? He doesn't come here now after his first visit.

SRI AUROBINDO: Harin has frightened him away.

P: What about B. K. Thakore?

M: Oh yes, he is a great stylist. (After a pause) He is a great drunkard, too.

P: I thought he had given up drink.

M: Oh no, he can't do without it. He used to go every day to a Bombay station and drink heavily in the station restaurant. Of course he didn't get tipsy.

SRI AUROBINDO: If not tipsy, how is he a drunkard?

M: He drinks so heavily—

SRI AUROBINDO: But drinking heavily doesn't make a drunkard; you can call him a heavy drinker.

M: He drinks in excess.

SRI AUROBINDO: What do you mean by excess? Excess for somebody else. But if the quantity doesn't affect him, it can't be excess for him.

M: I submit, Sir.

SRI AUROBINDO: In Plato's *Symposium*, Socrates, Aristophanes, Agathon and others meet and discuss the nature of love and drink wine. Everybody gets drunk except Socrates. Even after heavy drinking he keeps discussing philosophy with some friends, while the rest fall asleep. You can't call him a drunkard!

Evening

(Dr. Manilal has wrapped a piece of cloth around his head because of the cold.)

N: Dr. Manilal is looking like a Maharaja.

SRI AUROBINDO: I thought he looked like a college professor.

M: I feel cold in the head, Sir, that's why I have put this cloth on it. Usually I catch cold in the chest and head.

N: In spite of so many layers of garments? He has at least five on.

M: Only one is warm.

SRI AUROBINDO: Even there he doesn't hold the record. I remember in London that the strength of Sarat Ghose—one of the Christian Ghoses—was disputed in

some talk. He began to take his garments off. He took off his coat, waistcoat, shirt, one vest, then another, and still another and so on—altogether eleven! (*Laughter*)

(*Purani started a talk about some evening procession of the Selvaraju family.*)

M: Did the family ever come to you, Sir, I mean in your early days here?

SRI AUROBINDO: Come to me? It is said the father of the family tried to kidnap me into British territory, if that is what you mean by coming to me.

M: I saw the Governor today. He looks absolutely like a bull-dog with ruddy face.

P: That is due to drink!

M: He drinks?

SRI AUROBINDO: He is a heavy drinker, not a drunkard (*laughter*), but he goes on to the point of apoplexy.

M (*after a while*): They speak of *gandharvaloka*, Sir. Is there any such world?

SRI AUROBINDO: Supposed to be.

M: Have you seen it, Sir?

SRI AUROBINDO: I have not been there.

M: I meant: did you have any experience?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is not necessary: there are many musicians in the Ashram. (*Laughter*)

P: Prof. Indra Sen (who has come for the Philosophy Conference at Madras) says that nowadays anybody who has written on any subject, economics, social reform, is called a philosopher. Gandhi and Tagore are being called so.

SRI AUROBINDO: Karl Marx is also a philosopher and all the communists too.

P: Yes. Indra Sen is asking if by the Supramental Descent the whole of humanity is going to be transformed and how humanity is going to be benefited by it. By a change in consciousness?

SRI AUROBINDO: If he means Supramental Transformation, no.

N: I thought there would be a general heightened consciousness.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, in some persons.

P: I told him there would be a move towards a higher consciousness by the influence of people who have attained to that consciousness.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is what I have said myself.

P: He wants also to know how humanity today is better fitted for the change than before. I replied that nowadays one has to conceive of the whole of humanity as one unit: one can't think of it in separate terms or divide it into so many compartments. Nature won't allow any such division.

SRI AUROBINDO: The main question is of the development of mind. There is a general development more than before—of course it is nothing famous. I am speaking of the masses—and that is the first necessary condition.

P: Yes, I told him how in Buddha's time or the classical period of the Greeks,

their teachings and culture were limited to a small area, the greater part of the race had no access to them. Now, communication being so easy, there is no such obstacle. One can hear Roosevelt here in India.

There was a Muslim professor who spoke in the Philosophical Congress. He spoke on Freud. He has criticised Freud's theory that everything is due to the subconscious. Freud says that Moses turned into a prophet because of his sufferings, the repression in his childhood. (*Laughter*)

SRI AUROBINDO: Repression complex?

P: The professor says that Freud's theory doesn't explain Moses.

SRI AUROBINDO (*laughing*): Not at all. It explains Freud (*Laughter*). He himself had so many complexes that he couldn't find any other theory than that for every human action. The sense of injustice in children is born from their inability to retain their excrement, he says. (*Laughter*) And it is surprising that everybody in Europe believes it. His real contribution is about the subconscious. Even there some of his disciples, Jung etc. are throwing out many things.

P: And the professor says that the idea that in primitive races men used to kill their fathers in order to marry their mothers is not true.

SRI AUROBINDO: Oh, that old thing!

P: Everyone didn't kill his father.

SRI AUROBINDO: Neither did everyone marry his mother.

NIRODBARAN

THE BEYOND

TOUCH not too soon, O aspiring Flame,
 The mist-veiled cliffs of a topless Ether,
 Or thou shalt be engulfed in the mystic shadows
 Of a supreme nameless cipher.
 Though the great only attain
 The rare reaches of this fathomless stillness,
 Yet break not thy Journey at this high soul's bivouac,
 Renounce not the rainbow dawns of a greater Delight,
 Rest not in this Void's stark freedom.
 O dead to thyself, alive to the One,
 For thee awaits the Lord,
 To thee beacons His Ever-Beyond.

SHYAM KUMARI

THE STORY OF A SOUL

(Continued from the issue of May, 1986)

BY HUTA

The Mother's Message

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



Volume Three: 1959

I

I RETURNED the welcoming smile of the stewardess and moved down the aisle between the seats. I was asked to take the middle seat according to the boarding number. On either side of me there was a man.

In the evening the B.O.A.C. taxied to the runway to start its several hours' flight from Nairobi to London. The screaming of the aircraft's engines mingled

with the wind gusting over the tarmac. And then a zoom—my eyelids squeezed shut for a few seconds.

After an hour or so the plane landed at Entebbe (Uganda) airport. There I met a Gujarati girl, Suddha Gokal, who too was going to the U.K. She had been living in Johannesburg (South Africa). We became friends. She was tall, fair, hefty and wore thick glasses.

The plane flew once again. The man on my left introduced himself as the Maharaja of a small state in India. He was an invalid and was going to England for treatment. The man on my right was rather glum. He constantly flicked through a sheaf of papers with a frown which certainly did not become him.

I was not at ease with these two specimens. So I requested the air hostess to change my seat with a person who was sitting near Sudha. We were happy to be together and talked on several subjects. She gave me her address. I could not give her mine, because I did not know where I would be staying.

The plane left Entebbe behind and set off across Europe towards England. After the supper the cabin lights were dimmed. I was drowsy and thoughtful. I felt as if one chapter of my life was closed and a new one opened ahead. I was looking forward to it so enthusiastically, so eagerly, but I was not stupid enough to be unaware that there would be hideous difficulties, problems, miseries in my adventure as there had been in my life earlier. Perhaps I would be jumping from the frying pan into the fire.

The aircraft nosed down through the clouds. In the gathering fog I saw the big city, London. We made up our faces quickly.

Outside the air was biting cold. December had slipped by and January was in front.

The sky was grey with a slight touch of sunshine. This was London, where fog made everything hazy and hazardous. I drew my olive-green overcoat closer around me as a sharp wind swept across the aerodrome. My new shoes were hurting me terribly.

There was no difficulty in going through the Customs preliminaries. There was a chatter of voices speaking diverse languages. Everyone seemed to be in a hurry. I was nervous. For, I did not know how to go on from the airport and where to go, though I had been told by my people at Miwani that our agent Mr. I. Gundle would do the needful.

Meanwhile the announcement of my name came over the loudspeaker and I was informed that a car was waiting to take me to my destination. Oh, what a relief!

When I approached the car, its navy-blue uniformed chauffeur with blue eyes saluted me and handed to me a big envelope. I gave him a thankful smile. He put my suitcase in the boot. I sat on a passenger seat which was very comfortable. Now the car gathered speed and I went through the letter in which every detail was given about the arrangement the agent had made.

It was a long ride up to the Queens Gate. The dull grey houses with smoke from the chimneys mingled with the fog. Trees were standing sad and saggy without leaves. It seemed that everything was frozen with chill.

The driver was talkative. He mostly spoke about the weather and asked me a few questions—my feeling about the winter, my purpose of travel and so on.

The car halted near the big building of a convent. I alighted. The driver rang the bell. The heavy door swung open.

The first reaction after seeing two nuns in long black robes was to run away from the place. They led me to a hall and gave a genial smile. The driver brought my case. One of the nuns exclaimed: "Why, is this all you have?" I said: "Yes, I prefer light luggage."

I gave the chauffeur his tip and thanked him. He touched his cap, climbed back into the car and drove off as I turned to re-enter the hall.

First the nuns showed me the beautiful decoration of Christ's crib, and the Christmas tree in one corner of a big dining room. The lingering gaiety of Christmas was still in the air.

Then I was taken to my cell-like room along with my belongings. The convent was near the Denson Secretarial College to which I was supposed to go.

As a matter of fact, I had no inclination to take degrees or diplomas. My intention was to gain self-confidence. I had been brought up in such a way that I had formed the habit of being always dependent on others. I had led a rigorously sheltered life.

I got frightened and shaky whenever I met strangers. In fact, I had no courage or strength to face the world.

And, now here, I was a stranger. I felt as if I had been thrown into a vast sea. I had to swim to find a shore all alone by dealing with countless waves of circumstances.

This was the first time in my life I had travelled all by myself. In those days there were not as many Indians in London as there are at present.

I sat on a chair at the small window, lost in deep thought. Certainly I did not view this prospect with much zeal. I was desolated, depressed beyond measure.

The bed was like the one in an army-barrack. The black woven coverlet that touched the floor had a dark-grey fringe which made my mood more gloomy. I remembered the Ashram and my palace-like Huta-House. Suddenly a wave of homesickness swallowed me. The tears were running unchecked down my face. But I told myself firmly not to be silly and not forget the motive of my coming.

After taking a long relaxing bath I dressed and went downstairs to telephone Mr. I. Gundle and thank him for the arrangement. Nevertheless, in my mind I was cursing him for having found such a place for me! But he was not at fault, because the directions were given from Miwani by our manager that I was leading an ascetic life.

The agent said that he had already sent the address of the convent to my family

and answered the calls from some Indian students who were studying here and known to us in Africa. He invited me to his house which was in Essex—pretty far from London. Further he told me that he would be happy to assist me whenever need be. I thanked him again.

This convent was a hostel where only Christian girls could stay—this I came to know later. They thought I was one of them. So the nuns showed me their chapel which was in the basement and asked me to join the congregation early in the morning. *Mon Dieu!* They also took me round the place. I stood looking about me with an increasing sense of dismay and disagreement.

Now I was famished. The nuns asked me whether I would like hamsandwiches and a cup of coffee. I shuddered and told them that I was a vegetarian. Their eyebrows shot up. They wanted me to take cheese sandwiches. I asked them if they knew any Indian restaurant nearby. They said they had no idea. I made a move and found one which was rather distant. I ate curry and rice. The waiter wanted to know if I were new to the city. I cleverly told him I knew London very well.

Then I wondered if I could find my way back to the convent—though I had memorised certain signs I had noted while going to take my food. But I was scared of being alone in London—scared of walking on the pavements in the evening and scared of more frightful events. I was young and could not dare to look too far into the future and further failures. It was quite enough to get through this one day, I thought. I returned to my room.

The occurrences of the day crowded in my head—filling my heart with despair. After a disturbed night, I woke up with a sad, sick feeling. Outside it was very cloudy and cold. My spirit dropped to zero.

After my breakfast, I was called by the Rev. Mother. She was almost six feet tall and ample in proportions. She shook hands with me and asked me to sit on a sofa. I did. Then she inquired from where I had come and what my religion was. At once it flashed across my mind that those two nuns must have given a full account of me in advance. Moreover I had not gone to the chapel. I respected Christianity but I could not be a hypocrite.

I answered: “Rev. Mother, I have come from East Africa but actually I have been staying in the Ashram of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother in Pondicherry. I have no particular religion. I believe in developing the consciousness and on realising the Supreme Truth and Love.”

She was mystified but indeed had the grace to give an understanding smile. She told me that all the girls who resided in the convent had gone on holidays. When they would be back then there would be difficulty in accommodating me.

I felt from some vibrations that there was something discordant. I replied: “Very well, please give me a few more days and I will find another place. And thank you for having me and helping me.” Secretly I longed to get out of this house.

Food was a problem since I could not eat meat. So I took only tea or coffee,

sandwiches, boiled potatoes, tomatoes and cheese.

Once again the Rev. Mother called me and talked to me for quite a long time about religion. I listened to her attentively. But my innermost heart would not approve of anything.

I gave her a few books of Sri Aurobindo along with some carved wood animals which I had brought from Africa.

Finally she said with a smile: "Miss Hindocha, I like you. When you shift to another place I do want you to come every Sunday to take tea with me." I affirmed: "Yes, thank you. I shall come." Then I made for my room to pack.

This was the beginning in London

*

Sashikant Morjaria—cousin of Paroobhai's wife, Urmila—had come to see me upon my arrival in London. I was amazed. He then told me that he had got the news from Mr. I. Gundle according to the instruction of my sister-in law Urmila who had seen me off at the Nairobi airport accompanied by my brother. "If you need any help, please do let me know," he added. I thanked him.

On 5th January I rang up Sashi who took me to 19 Seymour Street at Marble Arch. I was to stay in one of the rooms of a big building. Mrs. Bee was the house-keeper there. She let rooms. She was a bright-eyed plump little woman with unruly grey hair, tortoiseshell glasses halfway down her nose. Her floral long frock and frilly apron were her typical attire. She knew some of my family members, so indeed I had no worry. But her face—sometimes with a hesitating smile and mostly a poker expression—indicated nothing specific. However, she was good at heart.

My room was not fabulous but quite cosy with central heating. I was given the key of the front door.

The bathroom was not attached. It was doubtful whether anybody in the house took a regular bath except me!

There was a long hall—a standing rack—where hats and umbrellas were to be hung. The house-owner, I believed, was staying upstairs. Mrs. Bee and her kind old husband lived in the basement.

I was not sure how long I would be residing in this house. Though it suited me fine, because it was in a central part of London, everything was close except my college and that was the hitch.

I had to wear layers of woollen garments and nylon stockings. My two long plaits were out of place on an overcoat. They looked like a Red Indian's plaits! So I had to change my hair-do. It was coiled into a knob at the nape of my neck, fastened with a narrow black ribbon.

An account was opened in Barclays Bank Limited, 19 Great Cumberland Road. The Manager was a nice person. I was to receive £100 from Miwani.

I telephoned Sudha Gokal who instantly responded to me and came over. We

discussed our studies. I told her to join the same college as mine. Somehow Mrs. Bee took a dislike to her.

We waited for college to open. Meanwhile we roamed quite a bit in this strange and startling city. All sorts of clamour, hustle and bustle confused me. I wished myself back home—but it was the starting-point and a challenge—I could not back out.

*

Sudha and I commenced our studies at the Denson Secretarial College.

My letters were re-directed to my residence by the nuns. Among other letters I found an envelope from Pondicherry—I opened it impatiently. A lovely card from the Mother showing a gleaming golden-yellow figure of a lady and some heartening words.

(See opposite page)

(To be continued)

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1959

To my dear little child

Hulā

Bonne arrivée!

At your arrival at London,
I want you to find my
best wishes for a happy
stay and a good success
in your studies.

Let this year bring
to you the realization
of your highest hopes,
and your most sincere
aspirations.

With love



POETS, POEMS, POETRY

A TALK BY AMAL KIRAN TO NIRODBARAN'S CLASS

(Continued from the issue of September 1986)

Now we come to the next poem. It is written in short lines, unlike the iambic pentameters of the previous one. It is also by a woman, as I have already said. This woman gives a reply, you might say, to the other woman. But at the same time there is an element of agreement. She doesn't say that no poetry should be written but she says that poetry should be written only under certain conditions. So she corrects the imbalance of the other one's poem which is categorical in saying that poetry should never be written. This new piece is called: "Advice to Would-be Poets." All of you, I think, are would-be poets; so it should prove useful to all except for Nirod and me who are supposed to have fulfilled ourselves and are now have-been-poets. Well, what does Mary Sinton Leitch say?

Would you be a poet,
Be silent till you drink
Deep of a rainbow
At a brook's brink!

You shall tread deftly
Lest beauty be bereaved
By bruising of a flower.
Your spirit shall be grieved

When a bough is broken,
Else from your lips shall come
No elegy, no idyll,
Or prothalamium.

When you hear the world's laughter
And feel the world's grief
In the wash of a wave,
In the stir of a leaf;

When there shall fall upon you
The shadow of a wing
Though never a bird is in the sky,
Then sing!

You may remember that the other poem had, towards its end, the phrase: "He squanders joy who draws back from the brink of beauty." Now here we begin with that theme:

...drink
 Deep of a rainbow
 At a brook's brink!

Kobrin has said that "at the brink of beauty" you must be silent and Leitch says the same thing: "be silent." Yet there is a vital difference. The former wants us not to draw back from its brink and start poetising; the latter wants us to stay by the brink and poetise, but not until we have had the full experience: we must be in no hurry to express ourselves. And here the brink is made the bank of a brook: the brook is a symbol of something which is flowing, it is a symbol of the flux of existence. As old Heraclitus said: *Panta rhei*, "Everything flows", and Heraclitus is supposed to have added to the flow of things by being, as we are told, "the weeping philosopher", just as Democritus is called "the laughing philosopher". But the flux-symbolism is not all we have here. We are asked to drink deep of a rainbow. This is a peculiar expression. How can you drink deep of a rainbow at the brink of a brook? It suggests that the brook is a tremble and a quiver of many colours and also that it is reflective. There is something marvellous above, which the brook catches in its lucidity, its crystalline quality. Or it can mean, if we think of this verse in the light of the very last verse of the poem, that when you are drinking of the brook you have not just to drink what is there in the brook: you have to feel something which is not there, something which is beyond the brook itself, something which is haunting it in some way: a rainbow presence—that is what you have to get, a beauty that belongs to the world of the imagination, the world of inner vision.

Then the poet gives a second piece of advice:

You shall tread deftly
 Lest beauty be bereaved
 By bruising of a flower....

There again you have the play of alliteration: "beauty" and "bereaved" and "bruising". This kind of repetition of sounds sometimes takes the place of logic in poetry. Instead of trying to prove a point we are given a sort of inner connection, a consistency of expression by means of alliteration. The idea is that in the world of nature there is a living spirit. Beauty is conceived as a living spirit capable of feeling. If you tread in an unskilled, gauche, insensitive way, you will hurt the spirit of beauty which is there and which wants to keep her own manifestations or creations as beautiful as she can, as truly expressive of herself as possible. A flower is not meant to be hurt, its petals to be torn apart or its stalk to be broken. Its delicate poise should be left untroubled, and that is why we are asked to be very careful, very conscious of the

world spirit, which is the spirit of beauty. A poet has always to feel that there is a living being in the world, a cosmic consciousness, a vast soul of the universe. A poet cannot be a poet unless, whether openly or not, he is both a pantheist and a polytheist over and above whatever other brand of theist he may be. He feels that there are gods or spirits or guardian entities everywhere in the world who can respond to him and whose self-expression he tries to echo or visualise. He feels too that there is a complete unity in the whole world by which all the different objects and their shapes and colours are interwoven and made inter-reflective. What after all is the function of a simile or a metaphor? It is to show not only the relations between things but also the existence of one thing in another. A simile is meant to show a certain correspondence, but a metaphor identifies two things and sees the same thing in both. Similes and metaphors suggest not only that there is a cosmic scheme holding a variety of elements together in concord but also that there is one single cosmic fact which expresses itself in various modes and, by its omnipresence, renders the modes interchangeable so that we can speak of one thing in terms of another.

To continue: our poet says:

Your spirit will be grieved
When a bough is broken...

Not only must you avoid grieving the spirit of nature, you must also yourself be so sensitive that in case you have not trodden deftly and have done something to bruise a flower or break a bough you will be grieved as if you have done a horrible deed, committed a crime. You must have such sensitivity that every time you do damage to the smallest piece of beauty you feel as if you should fall on your knees and beg forgiveness from the little thing which is hurt as well as from the great thing which has given birth to it. Unless you feel thus, you will never be a true poet, never give tongue to an elegy, an idyll, a prothalamium. An elegy is a composition which expresses a sad experience, it may not be a lament but there is a sense of the Virgilian "tears of things", a mortality-moved melancholy. An idyll is a poem which expresses a romantic figuration of life, a Shelleyan world "where moonlight and music and feeling are one". A prothalamium is a preliminary to a marriage song. Edmund Spenser of the Elizabethan Age coined the word and made it famous by a poem of his to go with another, entitled "Epithalamium", the Marriage Song. This means a poem which expresses joy. Not only the romantic imagination, not only the feeling of "the heartbreak at the heart of things", as Wilfred Owen puts it, but also the common happinesses of earth-existence—nothing deep-delving or high-flying or wide-running is possible unless the poet is super-sensitive.

Next we come to more positive directions for the poet. Here the author puts forth one of the pre-conditions of bursting into poetry. When should you really take to singing? She gives an example of what you should do in the first place. The small-

est thing holds for you immense significances, as if all mankind were finding tongue in the most tiny and trivial phenomenon you witness. The least occurrence of the objective universe is packed with the drive of all human history on the face of the earth, the whole world's movement through space and time with its million vicissitudes of evolutionary struggle—a struggle carrying tones of both laughter and grief, recurring fulfilment and recurring frustration. Perhaps the rejoicing and suffering of the totality of life and not merely of human history are the tones you have to feel. And the feeling is not to be confined to great events: it has to extend even to infinitesimals like the soft foam-burst of sea-water along the beach and the faint quiver a breath of air makes in delicate foliage. In these small events you have all terrestrial life happy or sorrowful in a low key—low yet with the entire essential meaning of the experience couched there. Before you are able to catch that entire essential meaning at every point of the cosmic scene you must not try to write poetry. That is one pre-condition.

Now we come to another, which is even more profound:

When there shall fall upon you
The shadow of a wing
Though never a bird is in the sky...

You feel as if a great presence, a wide-spread presence from something very high were there. You are being haunted by it. There is an intense movement going on far above you, and you are aware of it when you are standing on the earth. You have a sensation not only of wideness, of a cosmic being, but of something very elevated far beyond, something transcendental, and you feel there is a supreme being high above who is attracting you. You are with the universe still, but you have the sense of a sort of sky and not only the horizon. And it is as though the feeling that you have were of the shadow of great wings and you look up to see if there is anything really there, but you see nothing. The world you see, the cosmos you see, but here is something not contained within them. It is something supreme but invisible. As Shelley says,

Thou whom, seen nowhere, I feel everywhere.

You look up and there is nothing there except the world you know, which is a very grand world no doubt and has to be a very active force in you, yet now you are aware of an invisible reality which is outside this world. There is nothing to the physical eyes, and still you feel something. When you feel it, a kind of supernatural, a kind of divine, a kind of supracosmic movement is held by you in your heart. Then you are in a condition to give utterance to poetry,

Then sing!

There comes a definitive command at the end: you are fit to be a poet. This last verse is very intuitively suggestive and profound. One can write a whole essay on it. The last two stanzas could form the core of a whole theory of poetry which would be very much in tune with Sri Aurobindo's version of the poetic phenomenon. Mark how effectively Mary Sinton Leitch closes the poem. The fourth lines in all the stanzas have several words: "At a brook's brink", "Your spirit shall be grieved", etc. These are either two feet or three feet—four syllables or six. But in this last line of the poem there are only two words:

Then sing!

They fall like great hammers and strike home the central theme in a way which the previous poem fails to do. I should think this piece is more successful than the other because whatever the writer wants to say, even if it be not the totality of what can be said on the subject, is given a certain completeness which is satisfying.

Q: Would you call it didactic?

Yes, in the sense that advice is given on what we should do, but it is not didactic in the ordinary sense of the word because it is full of imagery, full of vision, full of inner feeling and is not just a number of thoughts arranged effectively to teach us a lesson. In the last verse the poet escapes into a sheer world of intuitive vision, and what is hinted is deep and the lesson is lightened up as well as lighted up, it becomes air-borne by the form chosen. There is no heaviness about the movement, not even the weightiness which would be impressively associated with a didactic poem. There is a certain springyness, a certain wingedness and all that suggestion of wingedness ends with the mention of a wing in the end!

Q: Which poem is greater in the beauty of expression?

That is a ticklish question because some would think that where the expression is rich we have the greater beauty, but there is a supreme beauty also in the absolute economy of phrase. So how are you going to define "beauty of expression"?

Q: Suggestiveness?

Suggestiveness can come from both styles. If you take Shakespeare you most frequently find in him a wealth of words. Instead of saying one word he says five. Similarly in Milton you have a plethora of words, art which is enriched, art which is abundant. But sometimes even in Shakespeare you come across very bare lines which are just as effective as his wealth-burdened movements. Milton too has such effects. In Dante you have, according to Sri Aurobindo, a perfect example of poetry

where richness and restraint are fused. There are poets who are restrained rather than rich yet they achieve supreme effects. So it is difficult to say where beauty is more present. All that you can ask is: "In the type of expression selected, which poem succeeds more?" There we have some ground for discussion.

Q: Which poem would you say is more successful by your criterion?

I give my verdict in favour of the second piece. In the genre chosen, the beauty of expression is more here. In its class of poetry it succeeds better than the other does in its own class. But there the judgment is a little complicated since what makes the difference is that the argument of the second poem is not mental as in the first. In the first the process of the argument peeps in, while the process is completely concealed or transfigured in the second. The discursive intellect shows itself in the other poem, there are even the very words "I think". But here is no question of thinking: here are diminutive visions given to us as parts of the argument. Though there is a leaping forward, a process, it is a process of the intellectual imagination more than of the imaginative intellect. The intellect is more prominent in the first poem than here. The imagination is more in evidence here than there. In that sense, though the two poems have something in common, I consider the second to be more successful.

Now, if you still have time to hear me, I'll read you a third poem, with only a very short comment. It's called "Soul of Song." The two other poems have talked of keeping quiet: one poet says, "Shut up", the other says, "Hold your tongue for a while." The present poet says, "I have shut up, I have held my tongue sufficiently and so I have the right to say something." And, because of the silent inner preparation, what he says answers to all the definitions of poetry which one may briefly essay. I once defined poetry as "Sight and Insight, Light and Delight." I should add a third pair: "Passion and Peace." Let me elaborate the three pairs just a little. The poet has to respond to the colourful surface of the world and at the same time pierce through to catch the response to him of a hidden World-Life. Again, he has to bring a visionary understanding upon a surge of creative rapture echoing in some manner the rapture of the Spirit that has created the world. Finally, he has to embody an intensity, a *vivida vis*, a force of thought and feeling that builds up both detail and totality, but the pulsating dynamic structure should convey a sense of completion, fulfilment, reposeful roundedness, as if an eternal pattern of beauty and truth were progressively caught for ever in the point-instants of time. Now for the poem:

I have been quiet a long while
 To fill my singing smile
 With a magic beyond the lips of man,
 And very quiet will I be
 After the burst of minstrelsy

To find at the close
 The light with which my tune began.
 Glowing behind
 The singer's mind,
 A mystery journeys forth to meet
 Across the rapture of rhyming feet
 Its own unplumbed repose.
 Come then, O listeners, with a tranquil mood
 To feel far more than the loud heart knows,
 Or else the King who moves through the common word
 Shall never be heard
 And keep unseen the strange infinitude
 He bears above our mortal woes,
 The purple of his dream divine.
 Look deep for his true royalty's sign:
 Haloed with hush he enters, coronaed with calm he goes!

"The purple of his dream divine": that is the truth at the back of all poetic beauty. But the expression naturally differs from poem to poem. In "Soul of Song" there is what you may call "intonation". This intonation you do feel also in the last verse of "Advice", but here the whole piece is filled with it. We may speak of its intonation more descriptively as a play of undertones and overtones, the vibrations of the being both behind and beyond the mind. But they still leave it a clear-cut disclosure of that being: it is not something that is mystery-remote, much less something that is mystery-entangled. What it does is to suggest a mystery with a kind of lucid spontaneous ingeniousness. This does not prevent it from mentioning physical objects and sensations—as in

Across the rapture of rhyming feet
 and
 . the King who moves through the common word.

Yes, you have imagery in full swing, yet all of it is wrapped and illumined by the atmosphere of the suprasensuous and of the inward. You hear all the time a traffic of depths within and heights above. The poet has stationed himself in those depths, with a keen hushed receptivity to those heights, so that he may be in tune with the mantra, as the Vedic Rishis put it—the Divine Word. Having done this he feels his own readiness for expression, and he looks at the outer world, picks out a few concrete impressions and with their help bestirs himself to poetic speech. At the end of his song he feels again the great silence that has given birth to it and he is able to convey to others the Master-Presence whose home is that silence. It is the communication of that Presence with the very life-sense of it in his music that we hear in the last line:

Haloed with hush he enters, coronaed with calm he goes!

I think, my friends, you also should go now with at least a glint of the same corona.

Such a glint should be natural to you who are all Aurobindonians; for if this line points to any earthly counterpart of the Presence it evokes, it is to Sri Aurobindo.

SILENT SELF

I AM the blue of the cloudless sky
 Poised in the depth of being!
 Pain and passion touch me not,
 I watch the world from within ..

Above, the Almighty looks after me;
 Below lie the rigid rocks and the turbulent sea—
 Thunder clouds assail me often;
 I take recourse to the Supreme Sun!

I invoke the highest Light to flow
 Through the blind alleys of Life—
 And build amidst men the golden bond
 For the reign of the Race Divine.

O my Lord, let Thy shining Sword
 Cut asunder the roots of futile disputes—
 And make the suffering soil
 Reflect for ever the smile of Heaven...

CHUNILAL CHOWDHURY

WHY DID SHELLEY AND KEATS DIE SO YOUNG?

DURING their vacations and after finishing college my father and uncles abandoned their course-books for careers, or cards. Their loss became my gain. Burrowing amongst these volumes I discovered the anguish and pathos of Hardy, the high adventure of Scott and the supreme artistry and magic of Shakespeare. But the great and most treasured moments were when I took a plunge in the magic realms of the poetry of Shelley and Keats. The utterance of these two poets of an alien land held for me a glamour, a mystery and an enchantment. My mind was dazzled, my heart enamoured. Life took on strange iridescent hues and simple things became poignant. I was twelve or thirteen. Without understanding much I read their works again and again. Their ethereal, fine faces seemed to come alive in their pictures with eyes focused on some Beyond. Searching for more of their wizardry I was confronted with the cruel fact that both had died very young. It was a great shock. I was forlorn and for years mourned their death and questioned cruel Fate. Was their demise a mere stroke of chance, a cruel coincidence? I sensed something secretly sublime. A question-mark was firmly imprinted in my consciousness. With the passage of time it became fainter and fainter but a regret lingered.

In Pondicherry by the Grace of the Divine Presence sooner or later all questions inner or outer are answered. While reading *The Future Poetry* by Sri Aurobindo I remembered my long-forgotten question, for there I found the answer to it.

In the land of Merlin and Milton had suddenly descended some chosen and pure beings whose feet kept somehow a bewildered hold on our earth but whose minds, hearts and souls were always straying and wandering into other worlds and higher regions. These poets—Coleridge, Wordsworth, Blake, Byron and above all Shelley and Keats—were much nearer to the Indian tradition of singers of the Spirit, the Rishis.

Sri Aurobindo called Shelley "...a seer of spiritual realities" who "can see the forms and hear the voices of higher elemental spirits and natural godheads..."¹ Shelley, according to Sri Aurobindo, was not an evolutionary earthly being: he came from "a world far from ours" and, though he chose "the sphere of our sorrow" for his sojourn, he was ill at ease amidst the dross and drift of life. He was called "The Elf-King and King of Faery" by the girls of the Newton family and "Ariel" (an aerial spirit), "Oberon" (King of fairyland) by the elder Newtons. His hold on life was never secure. The incoherence of this world baffled him. In the words of a biographer:

"This boy, who was exceptionally beautiful, with brilliant blue eyes, dark curling hair and a delicate complexion, displayed a sensitiveness of consciousness most unusual in one of his class as well as an incredible tendency to question the rules of the Game."²

¹ *Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library*, Vol. 9, p. 125.

² *Ariel*, by André Maurois, p. 6.

Shelley, the most sensitive of souls, the most unearthly of poets had the bad luck to be educated in a school where uniformity was the rule and also the goal. All students were forced into a stereotyped personality, indifferent to higher values and unfeeling or even cruel towards those who upheld such values: they were blind to idealism or spirituality. Their lives passed in endeavouring hard to conform to the general type. Originality of thought was conspicuous by its absence and visionaries were cruelly mocked. Shelley during his school days was the butt of the ridicule of his classmates. Indeed Shelley-baiting was a favourite pastime in his school. Those wounds inflicted in tender years must have been deep indeed.

This seer was centuries ahead of his times. He tried to live his ideals and make them come true and perforce received countless blows while fighting the shams of the society and the tyranny of the church. "An unbreakable will, with a lack of necessary strength to carry out its decrees, forefated him to rebellion. His eyes, dreamy when at peace, acquired, under the influence of enthusiasm or indignation, a light that was almost wild; his voice, usually soft and low, became agonized and shrill."¹ He could not bear hypocrisy yet it ruled the hearts of humanity at large. He questioned the truth of every rule and premise of life and would let nothing hide behind spurious pretexts. Single-handed he challenged all that is retrograde and degenerate in family, society and church. He saw through the falsity of organised religion and in his teens wrote a pamphlet against the church. About the church he said, "It is a word of abuse, to stop discussion, a painted devil to frighten fools." Yet Shelley believed in a Divine Reality and in another life. When his friends asked him why he had called himself an atheist and had thus raised the ire of society, he replied that his atheism was a revolt against superstition, injustice and the limitation of Christianity. He called himself an atheist to express his abhorrence of superstition. He said, "I took it up as a knight takes up a gauntlet, in defiance of injustice. The delusions of Christianity are fatal to genius and originality; they limit thought."

This bold proclamation of his thoughts and beliefs, this defiance of the might of morality embodied in a church cost him dearly. His father cut him off without means of outer sustenance, would not allow him to visit his home, debarred him from meeting his beloved sisters—except surreptitiously. He had to wander homeless and friendless in alien lands. There was never enough money for a heart so generous that it could have given away the riches of a whole world as largesse. He incurred debts again and again to help worthy or unworthy friends and causes. This world which slammed door after hard door in his face was beyond his understanding. He used to lament, "How difficult it is to know why we are here, a perpetual torment to ourselves and to every living thing." This poet of a new dawn lived in his dreams. Yet in him blazed the will to make real his ideals and he suffered because it was impossible for those ideals reserved for a far future to flower in his own times. Maybe he died a little when 'Harriet', his dream and rose princess,

¹ *Ibid*

threw away her pretexts of high-mindedness and wanted him to procure for her riches and carriages. Maybe he died a little when on the basis of his proclaimed atheism the courts did not allow him the guardianship of his first two children by Harriet. Life in those days was much more harsh than now and the cruel tax-collector death appeared too frequently at Shelley's door. He lost three of his children. His rosy Harriet and gentle Fanny committed suicide. And the living were no better—his father an ignorant, egoistic fool had to live an inordinately long time—till the poet lost his moorings and was literally carried away by the flood-waters of hostile Time.

Shelley was like a heavenly dream astray on the earth. He who was above jealousy and deceit could not bear it in others. His compassion was boundless. To Byron he wrote regarding Jane when Byron complained of her nagging—"But poor thing, she is very unhappy and in bad health, and she ought to be treated with as much indulgence as possible. The weak and foolish are in this respect the kings—they can do no wrong."

Such compassion and generosity of nature found the realities of the world uncongenial and bewildering. To quote Sri Aurobindo:

"If the idea of a being not of our soil fallen into the material life and still remembering his skies can be admitted as an actual fact of human birth, then Shelley was certainly a living example of one of these luminous spirits half obscured by earth; the very stumblings of his life came from the difficulty of such a nature moving in the alien terrestrial environment in which he is not at home nor capable of accepting its muddy vesture and iron chains, attempting impatiently to realise there the law of his own being in spite of the obstruction of the physical clay."¹

Shelley preferred the vistas of soul-avenues to common reality. He said, "The error consists in seeking in a mortal image the likeness of what is, perhaps, eternal." In this search for embodiments of beauty and nobility, ideals and lofty thought both in men and women he was mostly disappointed. And for a Shelley who tried always to match the dream with the deed, it must have been hard to reconcile the great gulf that existed between the thought and the action, the ideal and the life of great people like Godwin and Byron. He was more at home with nature. Running water, rustling leaves and green glades changed his "misery into melancholy."

His friends used to say that Shelley came and went like a spirit one knew not when and where. "Subjects for his poems vague and shadowlike floated around him, which, feeding on his sorrowful thoughts, gradually took form at the expense of his power of action."² There was a whole world of marvellous beauty, high thought and fairy shapes tangible to his eyes. The quest of nobility and beauty, harmony and light in this contrary world of harsh imperfections constantly let him down. A bruised sensitiveness, a heart bleeding at the apparent injustice of it all was his destiny. And finally he had to live his later years in alien lands which were more congenial to a soul free of the fetters of conventionality. Surely there was a dream-

¹ *S.A.B.C.L.*, Vol. 9, p 125

² *Ariel*.

like beauty in Italy, yet for years there was also an unwelcome loneliness. There he could not live like an equal among equals.

Like a beautiful flower born aloft by vagrant winds Shelley was tossed hither and thither on the currents of a hostile life, a fossilized society impervious to higher values, which to preserve the *status quo* punishes the divine rebels yet in some deeper parts and better elements also admires them. Shelley's being was not imprisoned in his body. His heart overflowed and encompassed friends, foes and strangers even. He could not think of or take care of his interests. This "cor cordium", "heart of hearts", in even its physical aspect was extraordinarily large and—like that of yet another mystic, Joan of Arc—would not burn even in intense fire, though generous quantities of wines were poured on the pyre.

Fate while giving with one hand takes away with the other. The inner life of Shelley and Keats was intense, rich, ethereal and creative to a high degree. It had a certain divine quality, a vein of mystic gold ran through it. But as if the cruel gods could not allow too great a measure of felicity, they loaded the dice and stacked the cards against the poets.

The cause of financial difficulties for Keats was the untimely death of his father while returning from a visit to Keats while he was not yet ten, and subsequently the death of his mother also. A helpless grandmother placed the poet's inheritance as well as his brother's with a man who may have been rich in money and so-called common sense but was poor in feeling and lacking in fineness. He was totally blind to the beauty of poetry and tried to scotch the budding talent of Keats. This seeker of "Beauty", initiate of Soul-Mysteries, adventurer of inner vision, found life as hersh as did Shelley. He wandered the lanes of life, a stranger in love with unearthly realities which came to him on the wings of his imagination. Rightly he wrote: "I am certain of nothing but of the holiness of the Heart's affections and the truths of imagination—what the imagination seizes as Beauty must be truth." The least sunbeam brought to him the message of unknown presences. "The other day, for instance, during the lecture there came a sunbeam in the room, and with it a whole troop of creatures floating in the ray; and I was off with them to Oberon and Fairyland." He knew that he was more than a mere man, made of a stuff greater than general humanity's. And the grip of corporeal reality was never fast on him: he was "liable to fly upwards towards poetry and love in such a way that different levels of experience are magnificently confused."¹

His inner being was always in a turmoil. It was due to the constant conflict between the aesthetic and the prosaic. How to harmonise action and contemplation? The heart was eager to soar to Oberon yet the feet had to tread the cold corridors of a hospital and see death in all its hideous aspects. And while yet in his teens he had to nurse and lay into an early grave his younger brother. He would have liked to possess this earth yet had to soar into spirit-regions through the high nobility of his poetic revelations. To some of his friends his face "had an expression as though he

¹ *Keats and His World*, by Timothy Hilton, p. 32.

had been looking on some glorious sight." According to Haydon he had "an inward look—like a Delphian priestess who saw visions." The uncertainties of a poetic nature he termed "Negative capability": "...that is, when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts without any irritable reaching after fact and reason." Self-improvement through acquisition of knowledge and the good of the world were two things dear to Keats's heart. Only in his creative activity could he truly live. To escape the cold face of life he went into inner worlds and there a great downpour of vision brought about a state in which he could have said, like the Apollo of his blank-verse narrative *Hyperion*: "Knowledge enormous makes a God of me." And "magic casements" opened in imagined higher planes—supraphysical planes which so enveloped him that he once cried out: "Tonight I am all in a mist, I scarcely know what's what." His inner experiences were contradicted so harshly by the corporeal that some "Beyond" seemed inevitable and in the very logic of things. He said: "Is there another life? Shall I awake and find all this a dream? There must be. We cannot be created for this sort of suffering." Like Shelley, Keats had a short lease of life. Only twenty-five years were granted to this poet who received hardly any recognition and with the sense of his life being wasted wrote two years before he died: "Twenty-three years old now, without a wife, without children—'the roaring of the wind is my wife and the stars through the window pane are my children.'" For his own epitaph he chose the words: "Here lies one whose name was writ on water." Above all, Keats was a worshipper of beauty, his real genius did not lie in the marvellous plenitudes of imaginative beauty. He was striving for something else, something more. In the words of Sri Aurobindo: "It was the discovery of the divine Idea, Power and living norm of Beauty which by its breath of delight has created the universe, supports it and moves towards a greater perfection, inspires the harmonies of inward sight and outward forms, yearns and strives towards the fullness of its own self-discovery by love and delight."¹ And this young poet found in thought and imagination a clue to the spiritual idea though not the secret of its realisation, not yet "what the spirit in him is trying to reveal, its mystically intellectual, mystically sensuous, mystically imaginative vision, form and word."²

But the age in which these seer poets were born was out of step with them; its limping ideals could not soar with them to the spiritual heights they aspired to bring down, the divine depths they almost touched. They were trying to wed heaven and earth and to transmute our matter's iron into spirit's gold and to upraise our mortality into the ether of eternity and infinity and to invite the Godheads of the Empyrean to earth's paths. Either way the attempt was premature: the time was not ripe, earth not ready. Yet these poets rarified English poetry, made it spiritually supple and scattered the seeds of Spiritual Idea, Beauty and Imagination in the western world. They prepared English as a fit vehicle for the expression of higher

¹ *S.A.B.C.L.*, Vol 9, pp. 130-131

² *Ibid.*, p 131.

emotions and gave it a new suppleness, fineness and fullness. They enriched it and made it capable of receiving Sri Aurobindo's Divine Insight. More was not required of them. The Time-Spirit was not yet ready for further revelations. Another age had to pass, another Avatar had to bring down a Supreme Power for that to be possible. Hence these impetuous steeds of the Sun, these angel singers of Higher Verities were not allowed to proceed further. Their life and work were cut short.

Sri Aurobindo said of Shelley that such "a mind and nature cannot live at ease in this dark day and time but must escape to dwell prophetically in a future heaven and earth in which the lower life shall have accepted the law of his own celestial worlds."¹ The same holds true of Keats.

Sri Aurobindo has revealed the true cause of their being withdrawn from our earth, their early death:

"The time had not come when these spiritual significances could be more than hinted. Therefore Keats and Shelley were taken before their powers could fully expand, Byron led far out of the path, Blake obscured in his own remoteness, Coleridge and Wordsworth drawn away to lose the poet and seer in the mere intellectual mind. All wandered round their centre of inspiration, missed something needed and stopped or were stopped short."²

SHYAM KUMARI

¹ *S.A.B.C.L.*, Vol. 9, pp. 125-126.

² *Ibid.*, p. 131.

SUMUR ANKA

A Turkish fairy-tale heard by Elsa Sophia von Kamphoever, who, fluent in the Turkish language and disguised as a man, sat with Nomads around their campfires and travelled with them for many years.

MEHMED sat as usual by the southern gate of the bazaar on the ground, just hoping to earn a little something from a caravan passing through. He sometimes was asked to hold the bridle for a rider, or to run some errand and for that, or sometimes even without such service, he was tossed a small coin in the name of Allah.

Mehmed was very poor, like many others; he knew of no parents or brothers or sisters, but this was nothing special either. How many children were there like him! The only thing one had to be wary of was wily slave-dealers disguised as benefactors or helpful friends. This apart, life was all right. One would sit in the sun, the ground was warm, life was colourful and gay, and quite as sharply as today he rarely felt his empty stomach. Still, Mehmed strongly believed in Allah's unfailing help. Only today—well, today it was well, past noon and no caravan had as yet approached the southern gate." "Oh, Allah, I am hungry," whispered Mehmed softly, so softly that not one grain of sand had been displaced by his breath. And just as softly a very small voice answered: "So eat then, if you are hungry!" Mehmed looked about to all sides wondering who had spoken to him, but could not discover anyone. Something was plucking at his loincloth, and there he saw a tiny hand holding a Pistachio-nut quite as small as the hand.

In the sort of life Mehmed led, he had learned to lose all fear of man or beast, still the sight of this minute hand made him shudder involuntarily and to gain some courage he called out loudly: "Show yourself, whether good or evil, show yourself!" There came a faintly whispered answer: "Why shout like that? Do eat first to appease your hunger!" It sounded sweet and friendly, and Mehmed wondered what difference it would make to eat one Pistachio, when that is not even enough to satisfy a sparrow. He took, hesitatingly, the small nut from this tiny, cold, grey hand, ate, and found it well-roasted, salted and it tasted better than any he had ever tasted in his life.... And it fitted itself so nicely in his stomach that there was no more room for hunger. "Mashallah!" he exclaimed, "Whoever you are, you secret Giver, you know the art of giving! Now show yourself, that I may thank you!"

There came creeping from behind the stone against which Mehmed was leaning a small grey creature, a monkey, a sickly, mangy, poor little monkey. It sat down next to Mehmed and looked at him imploringly, with great sad eyes. "Aman!" cried Mehmed with disgust, "how ugly you are, Maimuh, sick and dirty and I ate out of your hand! Aman, Maimuh, get out of my sight, go!" But the little monkey—and Mehmed wasn't in the least surprised that it could speak—whispered sweetly: "Why would you chase me away, you who know loneliness and suffering, you who know how the friendless heart freezes in its isolation? You who know the pangs

of hunger, say, why drive me off?" Mehmed was deeply touched by the words of this little creature that looked so sad and had in such an extraordinary way stilled his hunger. He could not refuse its piteous appeal. "Come, then, little Maimuh," said Mehmed softly, stretching his own thin hand towards the monkey, "Come, I'll hold you tight, grateful for your help; and your heart shall no longer freeze in isolation!"

The little monkey hopped on to his hand and nestled close to Mehmed's warm body. The boy no longer felt any disgust. In fact, just as the one Pistachio had agreeably filled his stomach, so the touch of this creature filled him with a sense of never-known well-being. He stretched and nodded and as in a dream he heard: "A man will come and call you. Agree to whatever he says. Do it without hesitation, fear nothing, only you must take me with you." A hard kick rudely shook him out of his dream: "Eh you, get up and listen. I'll change your poverty into wealth, you filthy bundle of hunger, if you'll do what I ask of you!" "I'll do it," answered Mehmed straight out of his dreams, "Yes, I'll do it"—without even enquiring about the task. The fat rich man nodded unsmilingly, "Right. Come on!"

Mehmed got up and clasped the monkey tightly to his body. "Never fear," it whispered into his ear, "whatever happens, do not fear, just keep me with you!" Following the fat man through a narrow side-street of the bazaar out onto a vacant lot, he saw there the hide of a small donkey lying on a heap of rubble and some men standing about, obviously waiting. "Listen, boy," said the fat man, "this is what you'll have to do: we shall sew you into this hide and leave you lying here. Soon a big bird will come and take this hide off with him, high up there, you see, to his aerie. And that's the only way to get there! Once there, the bird will start tearing with beak and claws to eat what he believess to be the carcass. But fear not, I'll give you a sharp knife with which you'll free yourself out of the hide. You'll find in his aerie countless jewels, precious stones and pearls of unequalled beauty. Now all you have to do is scoop them up and throw them down to us, and you can keep for yourself as many as you like, for inexhaustible is his wealth. Will you do that?" the fat man asked, never caring how the boy was ever to get down again, nor whether the bird would eat him up.

Nor did Mehmed have any such worries, instead he consented giggling to this very unusual adventure and keeping the monkey tucked in his loin-cloth he let himself be sewn into the donkey hide. The men made haste to get the job done. Soon, near sun-down, the big bird would come, as he did every day, to search for food on this refuse-dump. Mehmed felt faint with the stench inside the hide and the men cut a little hole for him to breathe and they left rapidly. There he lay, waiting, with only the little monkey's comforting presence. But not for long did he lie, when there came the sound of mighty wings descending on him. The hide was taken and lifted higher and higher. "Sumur Anka," sang out the monkey's small musical voice, right near Mehmed's ear and it sounded jubilant. Mehmed saw enormous claws that penetrated the hide, and it filled him with joy, a great inexplicable joy. Before

long they felt themselves dumped upon a rock, and the bird started to tear the hide immediately. Mehmed quickly gripped the knife, cut the hide open and stepped out. Surprised the bird let off to look at the boy with deep liquid brown eyes, and the little monkey scrambled out from the boy's embrace and jumped at the bird, onto his wing and from there to nestle right deep in the bird's ample chest-feathers. Mehmed blinked in the sudden light, saw the little creature gleam and sparkle like a jewel between the feathers, and all around him the sunlight was reflected manifold by heaps and heaps of precious stones. Mehmed breathed long and deeply the aromatic mountain-air, so refreshing after the stench inside the hide. Far down below he saw the sand-coloured town surrounded by the desert stretching far beyond the horizon. The bird never tried to attack the boy, but was quite still, his great wings folded tenderly across his chest from where the monkey hummed ecstatically: "Sumur Anka, Sumur Anka."

The boy sat, enjoying the the place more and more with every breath, looking at the vast panorama with the far receding horizon, listening to the humming of the monkey's voice that blended with the voice of the wind blowing over the high mountain-edge. The summoning of an impatient trumpet rudely tore him out of his blissful reveries: down by the foot of this vertical mountain-side, like ants, were the men, shouting and waving, looking utterly insignificant and ridiculous. Mehmed laughed and, remembering his promise, scooped up pearls and precious stones with both hands, threw them to the madly scrambling men down there. Scooping, throwing and laughing on and on, and the more he threw down the more there seemed to be; on and on, more and more, until he got tired laughing. Then he turned, clambered easily up few jutting rocks behind the aerie and found himself on a high plateau. A different world it seemed to him. He forgot the men furiously grabbing and fighting for every sparkling stone, he forgot the monkey and the bird, —his feet sunk deeply into the soft carpet of fragrant herbs, green, fresh, cool and strewn with an endless variety of flowers. Butterflies danced over them and many friendly creatures, furry, feathery or scaly, accepted him as one of them, and the air was so intoxicatingly scented and fresh, the beauty around him so indescribable that his heart was filled and more than filled with bliss and he felt like running, running to widen his heart, to take in more of this heavenly bliss. And he ran, singing out his joy, he ran, never looking for direction or path, never questioning the now, nor caring for tomorrow. He ran until the sun-down overtook him and night blotted out from his sight the marvellous beauty around him. Mehmed just let himself fall, fall onto this fragrant carpet of herbs and fall into a deep and happy sleep, such as he had never known in his hard, lonely, friendless life.

He awoke with the sun and it needed some time for him to make out where he was. Then he remembered and jumped up, laughing with joy, and about to run on, when he saw sitting near him an old man milking a goat. The milk flowed into a strange wooden vessel. Looking at the milk Mehmed felt his empty stomach. The old man looked up and smiled at him. "Come, my boy," he

said, "come and drink!" Mehmed did not wait to be asked twice. He accepted with reverence and drank. The milk tasted wonderfully like the fragrance of the herbs and flowers and Mehmed drank it all up. Thanking the old man he asked: "Tell me, Baba, didn't you see a small, I mean a very small, Monkey about? It is sick and it is mine. I must find it and look after it, because it is much too small, to look after itself." The old man smiled, got up with very youthful agility and answered: "Surely I saw what you are searching for. Come and I'll show you." Mehmed followed the old man—for him everything was just fine, just perfect—as long as he could stay on in this beautiful world. Together they went across flowering vasts, through cool, whispering forests, past sparkling waters, and finally they stopped by a gate that shone like gold in the sunlight. "Knock at this gate, my boy, knock and call: Sumur Anka!" Mehmed looked questioningly up at the old man and asked: "Sumur Anka?" The old man nodded quietly. Mehmed knocked at the gate as hard as he could and called out with his clear young voice: "Sumur Anka, Sumur Anka!" And his call was echoed from far and near, which startled the boy and made him laugh—he had never heard such a funny answer to any call. But then the gate suddenly opened to a garden and on the very top of the left gate-post there sat his little monkey, its fur shining silkily with health and cleanliness, its voice, soft and musical, sounded very sweet: "Come in, my friend, come and see the happiness you created! Just one thing first: Look, I hold here in my hands two things, you must choose. Look and choose freely; whichever you prefer, that you may take." And the little monkey held its two hands open for Mehmed to see. In one there was a fabulous, big and sparkling diamond and in the other a small flower, one of those that dotted the high plateau he had been running across the day before. The choice was not difficult. Without a moment's hesitation Mehmed took the flower, and the monkey disappeared before his eyes. He held the flower tenderly in his hand when around him the echo took up its chiming again: "Sumur Anka, Sumur Anka." There came a procession out from the depths of the flowering garden behind the gate. In front came a young man of royal bearing and great manly beauty and by his side a sweet, radiant maiden and following them were many exquisite youngsters, singing and tossing flowers to each other and to all sides.

Stone-still stood Mehmed, Mehmed the poor naked boy, whose only possession in the world was a small, ragged loin-cloth. The youngsters seemed to make him their special target for tossing flowers, and—what do you think?—the flowers stuck to him, so that after a very short while he was all dressed with a most intricate pattern of sweet-scented flowers. Mehmed looked at himself and laughed. He thought this so beautiful and so incredible that he laughed and laughéd, twisting to see his own back he laughed. The sweet radiant maiden looked at him smilingly: "You do not recognise me, do you? I am your poor little Maimuh," and her voice was indeed the soft musical voice of the monkey. "Yes, the little Maimuh to whom you gave your love and protection. And here by my side is Sumur Anka, who was under an enchantment like me, he a bird and I a monkey. We had

to stay under the spell until we found a human being who did not care for riches, but had compassion and courage. A boy, who knew poverty and loneliness and still knew no greed, but threw the precious stones like worthless pebbles down to the covetous men and even now preferred the flower to the diamond—tell me, Mehmed, would you like to stay here with us? Would you want to be with the spirits of the plants and the mountains and all the creatures on the fragrant heights? Far, far away from human beings? Down there the people will think that you have perished and never bother any further—tell me, Mehmed, would you like to stay?”

Mehmed had during this lovely address time to realize that all his misery had come to an end and his surprise and happiness left him breathless. All that cramped, lowly existence, the dusty town and heartless humans were left behind, far, far behind, and he belonged, for the first time in his life he belonged, and he whispered, softly with joy: “Home.”

Down there, when he had grabbed all he could get from his helpers, the fat man laughed contentedly touching the dark-grey sacks full of pearls and diamonds, rubies and sapphires, that he would now lock into the darkest deepest of vaults. Greed had made him forget the little beggar-boy, whose place by the southern gate remained empty.

Translated by SHANTA NEVILLE from the German

JUNG'S RELEVANCE FOR INDIA

HIS PSYCHOLOGICAL WORK, ITS INSPIRATION, ITS GUIDANCE AS REVEALED IN HIS MEMOIRS—THE CULMINATING PHASE OF HIS LIFE

“My life has been permeated and held together by one idea and one goal: namely, to penetrate into the secret of the personality. Everything can be explained from this central point, and all my works relate to this one theme.”

Jung

JUNG was an avowed empiricist and proud of the scientific heritage of the West even though an admirer of the wisdom of the East. ‘Ego-consciousness’ was to him the best asset of the Westerner, even while he held ‘wholeness’ as the inherent goal of personality and admitted the yogis to be past-masters in this art. He had the urge to go far and deep in the understanding of the human psyche and thus even as an empiricist he felt obliged to affirm a ‘centre’ or ‘self’ in personality, which transcended the empirical polarities of personality. He affirmed it too as an archetype in the unconscious. So did he affirm ‘God’ as ‘God-image’ in the unconscious. He was anxious to be an empiricist and that was the farthest that he could go even here.

It is interesting to see in him the interplay of Jung the scientist and Jung the unhampered inquirer of truth in the realm of the psyche.

His last book, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* is a most interesting piece of writing, autobiographical, where he reveals his inner convictions as they grew up in him and those which matured only in old age. These later ones he finds at variance with the judgements of the scientist in him and he is reluctant to declare them. He insisted that this last writing should not be included in his collected works.

But the truth stands that he ultimately came to certain conclusions which, being not demonstrable, he was hesitant to declare.

This last writing was recorded and edited by Aniela Jaffe and she says in her ‘Introduction’ to the book, published in English in 1961, a few most interesting things. Says she: “While Jung was writing of his youthful rebellion against the church, he once said, ‘At that time I realised that God—for me, at least—was one of the most immediate experiences.’”¹

And he had written to a clergyman in 1962: “I find that all my thoughts circle around God like the planets around the sun, and are as irresistibly attracted by Him. I would feel it to be the grossest sin if I were to oppose any resistance to this force.”²

Jung indeed had a deep feeling for God and the deeper motivations of religions, but as a scientist he was to the end of his life scrupulous to be an empiricist and abide by the standards of scientific proof and demonstration.

¹ C. G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Vintage Books, N.Y., p. xi.

² *Ibid.*, p. ix.

It is interesting that this division in him between the scientist and the inner personality of personal experiences was always there. Science was an objective social fact. Inner psychic life had another objectivity, which personally he respected even more.

Indeed, he considered as the most real experience what he inwardly was. That was the reality. Outer behaviour was a consequence. His spontaneous feeling for the psyche and for the happenings of the psyche is a marvellous fact in Jung. This last book of his, which is an autobiography, is no account of the events of his life. It is an account of his inner experiences, from earliest childhood to boyhood, youth, maturity and old age. It is essentially an account of thoughts, feelings and volitions, of his dreams, fantasies and visions and their relative realisations. And it is these that stand out prominently in old age when he wants to work out an autobiography. But he does not want to expose his inner life to others. He is hesitant and, therefore, he undertakes the work of preparing an autobiography with reservation. It is significant that this autobiography is named "Memories, Dreams and Reflections." Here memories are primarily of inner psychic facts rather than of outer physical one. He has said:

"Only what is interior has proved to have substance and a determining value. As a result, all memory of outer events has faded, and perhaps these 'outer' experiences were never so very essential anyhow, or were so only in that they coincided with phases of my inner development. An enormous part of these 'outer' manifestations of my life has vanished from my memory for the very reason, so it has seemed to me, that I participated in them with all my energies. Yet these are the very things that make up a sensible biography: persons one has met, travels, adventures, entanglements, blows of destiny, and so on. But with few exceptions all these things have become for me phantasms which I barely recollect and which my mind has no desire to reconstruct, for they no longer stir my imagination."¹

"On the other hand, my recollection of 'inner' experiences has grown all the more vivid and colourful."²

This book is a demonstrative proof of this great reality of Jung's life. He had so largely overcome the ordinary prepossession of the physical reality. Mythologies, religions, customs, rites and ceremonies are all developments of experience and have contributed to the enrichment of the human Psyche—science too is a new enrichment, but the rational consciousness is not the highest asset of man. It has its great value but intuition gives us a peep into the future.

Jung sees contemporary events like war, peace, etc. also as psychic events.

And dreams are so real to him and they have played such a large part in his life. He is a wonderful observer of his dreams, has a profound faith in their capacity to indicate the future possibilities and he dwells on them and continues to do so until they suggest their meanings to him. Of course, not all dreams are significant. Some

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Ibid*, p. 1x, 2.

are just reproductions, in a haphazard manner, of some of the previous day's experiences, some offer solutions of the individual's deepest problems and his real tasks of life. It is these dreams, which Jung values most. Indeed, some are purely wish-fulfilments. Says he, "All my works, all my creative activity, has come from those initial fantasies and dreams which began in 1912, almost fifty years ago. Everything that I accomplished in later life was already contained in them, although at first only in the form of emotions and images."¹

Let us take a concrete case of a dream, which gave to Jung the central vision of his life. The dream is as follows:

"I found myself in a dirty, sooty city. It was night, and winter, and dark, and raining. I was in Liverpool. With a number of Swiss, say, half a dozen—I walked through the dark streets. I had the feeling that there we were coming from the harbour, and that the real city was actually up above, on the cliffs. We climbed up there. It reminded me of Basel, where the market is down below and then you go up through the Totengasschen ('Alley of the Dead'), which leads to a plateau above and so to the Petersplatz and the Peterskirche. When we reached the plateau, we found a broad square dimly illumined by street lights, into which many streets converged. The various quarters of the city were arranged radially around the square. In the centre was a round pool, and in the middle of it a small island. While everything round about was obscured by rain, fog, smoke, and dimly lit darkness, the little island blazed with sunlight. On it stood a single tree, a magnolia, in a shower of reddish blossoms. It was as though the tree stood in the sunlight and were at the same time the source of light. My companions commented on the abominable weather, and obviously did not see the tree. They spoke of another Swiss who was living in Liverpool, and expressed surprise that he should have settled here. I was carried away by the beauty of the flowering tree and the sunlit island, and thought, 'I know very well why he has settled here.' Then I awoke."²

Let us also see his comment and interpretation of the dream.

"This dream represented my situation at the time. I can still see the greyish-yellow raincoats, glistening with the wetness of the rain. Everything was extremely unpleasant, black and opaque—just as I felt then. But I had had a vision of unearthly beauty, and that was why I was able to live at all. Liverpool is the pool of life. The liver, according to an old view, is the seat of life—that which makes us live.

"This dream brought with it a sense of finality. I saw that here the goal had been revealed. One could not do beyond the center. The center is the goal, and everything is directed toward that center. Through this dream I understood that the self is the principle and archetype of orientation and meaning."³

Indeed, the self is Jung's most important discovery and central to the entire

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 192.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 197-8.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 198-9.

structure of his psychological thought. This was given to him in a dream with a vivid sense of reality, which he could not ignore.

He has explicitly admitted, "The years when I was pursuing my inner images were the most important in my life—in them everything essential was decided. It all began then: the later details are only supplements and clarifications of the material that burst forth from the unconscious, and at first swamped me. It was the *prima materia* for a lifetime's work."¹

Along with dreams go fantasies, imaginative activities of great moving power, rooted in the collective unconscious. Then there are the visions, the superb intense images of surprising objectivity. There is a whole section in the book devoted to this subject. There we see a quality of experience, which is altogether exceptional. These visions came to him during a few weeks of illness and their effect on his later life was very profound. All this has to be read in his own words. Here is his full account of his experiences (visions etc.) during the few weeks of illness.

"During those weeks I lived in a strange rhythm. By day I was usually depressed. I felt weak and wretched, and scarcely dared to stir. Gloomily, I thought, 'Now I must go back to this drab world.' Toward evening I would fall asleep, and my sleep would last until about midnight. Then I would come to myself and lie awake for about an hour, but in an utterly transformed stage. It was as if I were in an ecstasy. I felt as though I were floating in space, as though I were safe in the womb of the universe—in a tremendous void, but filled with the highest possible feeling of happiness. This is eternal bliss, I thought. This cannot be described; it is far too wonderful.

"All these experiences were glorious. Night after night I floated in a state of purest bliss, 'thronged round with images of all creation.' Gradually, the motifs mingled and paled. Usually the vision lasted for about an hour; then I would fall asleep again. By the time morning drew near, I would feel: Now grey morning is coming again; now comes the grey world with its boxes. What idiocy, what hideous nonsense! Those inner states were so fantastically beautiful that by comparison this world appeared downright ridiculous. As I approached closer to life again, they grew fainter, and scarcely three weeks after the first vision they ceased altogether."²

"It is impossible to convey the beauty and intensity of emotion during those visions. They were the most tremendous things I have ever experienced. And what a contrast the day was: I was tormented and on edge; everything irritated me; everything was too material, too crude and clumsy, terribly limited both spatially and spiritually. It was all an imprisonment, for reason impossible to divine, and yet it had a kind of hypnotic power, a cogency, as if it were reality itself, for all that I had clearly perceived its emptiness. Although my belief in the world returned to me, I have never since entirely freed myself of the impression that this life is a segment of existence which is enacted in a three dimensional boxlike universe especially set up for it."³

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 199. ² *Ibid.*, p. 293 ³ *Ibid.*, pp. 294-5

"I would never have imagined that any such experience was possible. It was not a product of imagination. The visions and experiences were utterly real; there was nothing subjective about them; they all had a quality of absolute objectivity."¹

"After the illness a fruitful period of work began for me. A good many of my principal works were written only then. The insight I had had or the vision of the end of all things, gave me the courage to undertake new formulations. I no longer attempted to put across my own opinion, but surrendered myself to the current of my thoughts. Thus one problem after the other revealed itself to me and took shape."²

Such a quality of experience one does not find in Jung elsewhere. His own entire section on the subject is thrilling. The foregoing excerpts are but a taste of it.

In the 'Retrospect,' the last section of the book, Jung sums himself up in these words:

"I have had much trouble getting along with my ideas. There was a daimon in me, and in the end its presence proved decisive. It overpowered me, and if I was at times ruthless it was because I was in the grip of the daimon. I could never stop at anything once attained. I had to hasten on, to catch up with my vision. Since my contemporaries, understandably, could not perceive my vision, they saw only a fool rushing ahead."³

It is indeed a revelation that Jung was conscious of such a sure guidance from within. He was not just a conscientious and disciplined thinker. Here are more sentences telling us how he felt about himself as a whole:

"I am satisfied with the course my life has taken. It has been bountiful, and has given me a great deal. How could I ever have expected so much? Nothing but unexpected things kept happening to me. Much might have been different if I myself had been different. But it was as it had to be; for all came about because I am as I am."⁴

"In spite of all uncertainties, I feel a solidity underlying all existence and a continuity in my mode of being."⁵

"The world into which we are born is brutal and cruel, and at the same time of divine beauty. Which element we think outweighs the other, whether meaninglessness or meaning, is a matter of temperament."⁶

"...I cherish the anxious hope that meaning will preponderate and win the battle."⁷

Certainly, there is an overall self-satisfaction in Jung as the crowning fact of life and that is a great thing. The visions of a few weeks' illness, which had a quality of absoluteness, possibly gave to his normal life and its pursuits a sense of relativity and unimportance. And that must have deepened his self-satisfaction. However,

¹ *Ibid.* p. 295 ² *Ibid.*, p. 297 ³ *Ibid.*, p. 358.

⁴ *Ibid.* ⁵ *Ibid.* ⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 358-9. ⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 359.

the wholeness of the psyche, so vivid and real to him, remained an ideal. Even a harmonisation of the scientific truth and the religious truth did not come about. That would have been a great thing for the future of human advancement in culture and in life. The daimon within, the sure spiritual voice that he reports, was perhaps the greatest achievement of his old age. Socrates was also conscious of the same and that was the greatest asset of his life. But it was yet an occasional phenomenon, perhaps not a realization of life for normal consultation and guidance of life.

In Jung's psychology and life the crux of the problem is a clear discrimination between the good and evil, the higher and the lower, the above and the below, in the total psyche apart from the ego-consciousness of normal waking life. The collective unconscious admittedly contains good and evil, the divine and the demoniac. Indeed all this is unconscious, i.e. unknown and unconscious to the ego-consciousness. But are the divine and the demoniac of the same quality? Are the divine elements not in themselves conscious and the demoniac relatively unconscious? That is the distinction needed. Archetypes are powerful and they are things of the mass, but they are unconscious. Wholeness and self can be present as images in the collective unconscious of the mass, but would they not in themselves be principles of consciousness though we are unconscious of them?

"Letting things happen in the psyche" is a fine principle. But this is the attitude to be taken towards things divine and not things demoniac.

'Active imagination' as is being developed by the contemporary Jungian Analysis possibly involves an attitude and openness towards the divine. That will certainly promote wholeness. An understanding for the archetypes or the primordial images will come about within the scheme of wholeness. We cannot just be passive towards the archetypes and let them prevail. That will not lead to wholeness.

In the section entitled "Sigmund Freud", Jung says, "Freud himself had a neurosis, no doubt diagnosable and one with highly troublesome symptoms, as I had discovered on our voyage to America. Of course he had taught me that everybody is somewhat neurotic, and that we must practise tolerance. But I was not at all inclined to content myself with that; rather, I wanted to know how one could escape having a neurosis."¹

For yoga the answer is simple, i.e. the Self, which is the principle of wholeness, should become a realisation. Then all conflicts and divisions will be made good. Then there could be no neurosis.

Jung's pursuit was wonderful and he achieved the truths of personality remarkably. He recognised the divine and the demoniac clearly enough. But the collective unconscious needs further inner clarifications and they are happily being worked out more and more by the Jungian Analysts. The Self is getting into prominence more and more.

INDRA SEN

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Sri Aurobindo and Jung: a Comparative Study in Yoga and Depth Psychology by *Satya Prakash Singh*, Aligarh, Madhuchandas Publications, 1986, Rs. 125.

It is encouraging to find a serious study of psychology which is written by a professor of Sanskrit. It is a sign that in India at least the age of the 'complete man of letters' is not over, and that not all scholars have yet been forced into narrow academic specialisations.

Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) wrote many rather inaccessible professional studies in the course of his long career as a pioneer in the Western study of psychology. He also wrote an extremely readable and fascinating autobiography, *Memories, Dreams and Reflections*, in which he relates the developments of his life and his work to moving contacts with another level of reality, which together with the other followers of Freud he labelled 'the unconscious'. These contacts came, for Jung, mostly through dreams, but also through waking vision and other spontaneous experiences. In the course of the 1920s he developed a serious difference of approach to Freud's, which led to an acrimonious split between the two. Freud accused his younger associate of dabbling with the 'occult' and becoming a mystic. Freud's view of the human unconscious as a sort of rubbish-basket containing *only* repressed sexual impulses became quite incompatible with Jung's experience of the unconscious as a treasure-house of knowledge and inspiration. For Freud, the only thing to be done with the unconscious was to call up out of it repressed material which was causing havoc with the normal lives and mentalities of his patients. And, indeed, by exposing repressed fantasies to the light of the conscious awareness he was able to help many back into a more balanced condition of control. Jung followed similar methods of exploration, but found in himself and in his patients that the unconscious formed a deep ocean of knowledge and imagery that went far beyond the scope of personal repression. If some troubling image tried to surface into the normal consciousness and was repeatedly refused, then problems could arise; but quite apart from this, the unconscious was an area of tremendous potency and value in itself, worthy of exploration and understanding. Jung's explorations and analyses of his findings over a period of fifty years form the system known as 'Depth Psychology'.

The fact that Jung gave a value to the unconscious in itself probably accounts not only for his split with Freud, but also for his present lack of total respectability in the academic world of Europe. His insights are a serious challenge to the supremacy of the rational mind. In the universities of Europe, the two deities are Freud and Marx, whose systems stand for the triumph of rationality over even personal instinct and the unpredictable course of human history. Jung, on the other hand, with his 'mystic' tendencies, is *the* beacon light for all Westerners who feel impelled to search beyond the bright fields of pure reason. In my own development I remember that

reading a posthumous collection of his writings entitled *Man and his Images* was extremely important in the preparation for coming to Sri Aurobindo. And even today I often find a 'Jungian' interpretation of my dreams the most satisfying one.

It is probably this unique importance of Jung for Western seekers which has prompted Satya Prakash Singh to attempt a systematic comparison of his psychological theories with the insights of Sri Aurobindo. His introduction gives a life-sketch of each of his subjects, and six chapters present a comparison of various central aspects of their thought under the headings: 'Collective Unconscious and the Subliminal'; 'Archetypes and Visionary Beings'; 'Consciousness, Ego and Self'; 'Structure and Dynamics of the Inner Reality'; 'Individuation and Transformation'; 'Active Imagination and Integral Yoga'. In each of these chapters the views of his two subjects are presented, often in their own words, and only at the end of each section does the author add his own comments and conclusions. The scrupulousness of his method allows the reader to come to his own conclusions, but the author often indicates that in his opinion Sri Aurobindo goes much further than Jung, and that his scheme is able to include and complete that of the Western seeker.

I found some of the parallels he draws rather far-fetched, or based on only superficial resemblances, while one of the oppositions he mentions—between Sri Aurobindo's reliance on subjective authority and Jung's 'empiricism'—to me marks the true similarity and point of comparison between them: Sri Aurobindo and Jung both recognise the authority of inner 'subjective' experience. Jung's empiricism is really only a concession to the academic framework within which he had to function. Nevertheless, despite some minor shortcomings, this book will surely be of interest to Aurobindonians wishing to be better informed about the thought of Jung, or to Jungians wishing to have an introduction to the psychology of Sri Aurobindo.

For this reviewer, however, it is difficult to accept a comparison which treats the two men on the same level. Jung, though a thinker of great originality and significance for his own time and place, was nevertheless no more than a thinker. Though he drew on his own inner experiences in understanding those of others, in order to communicate with his contemporaries he has categorised his insights into a system elaborated upon a set of theories. Some of these theories are more luminous than others. Jung has explored the fringes of a vast continent, and at some points penetrated deeper than at others. He was a pioneer without a chart, and we must be grateful to him for reporting his findings honestly and clearly—and usefully. Sri Aurobindo, on the other hand, speaks with authority. He has seen in detail, not only this one continent, but many others to which it is connected. At certain points we can say 'They have both seen the same thing'; but the eyes of the one were still veiled with a fallible human consciousness—the other could see the whole, in all its detailed significances and complexities. Really, there can be no comparison.

Nevertheless, as Dr. Singh says, 'the common conclusions' expressed by Sri Aurobindo and Jung are of interest—in that they show us what a sincere and highly

developed Western mind, working mainly independently (he is reported to have deliberately avoided 'holy men' on a late visit to India) could discover and formulate of the vast realms of inner experience which Sri Aurobindo has authoritatively mapped out in such comprehensive detail. The book closes with an interesting quotation from Jung's autobiography, which seems worth re-quoting here:

“I want to be freed neither from human beings, nor from myself, nor from nature; for all these appear to me the greatest of miracles. Nature, the psyche, and life appear to me like divinity unfolded.. . and what more could I wish for?”

SHRADDHAVAN

PATIENCE REWARDED

A FOLK-TALE

ONCE a dozen or so people happened to travel in a vessel. They all belonged to various walks of life. All were finely dressed except one. He was a sadhu.

But for his loin-cloth the sadhu was naked. His long matted hair crowned his head. His beard long and grey flowed down to his navel hiding his bare chest. A garland of rudraksha beads adorned his neck. He had smeared his body with holy ash. Hence he remained the target of attraction.

An hour rolled by. The vessel was already on the high sea. It would take a couple of hours more to reach its destination. Amidst the travellers there were two young fellows. Fed up with the same horizon and the same stretch of sea, they wanted to have some fun to while away the time.

“Fun! At whose expense?” Together they racked their brains and their eyes fell on the sadhu who they knew would not retort.

And so one of them began the mischief. “What are you hiding in your matted hair, holy man?”

Attracted by the question the travellers turned their attention towards the sadhu and the young mischief-maker.

The sadhu smiled. But his lips didn't part to utter a syllable.

“Food for everyone there?” asked the young fellow again. The other travellers giggled.

“Must be the egg of a horse!” answered another young fellow and thereby tickled the travellers to laughter.

The sadhu smiled and remained silent.

“Well! Sadhu! How do you brave the weather by remaining naked?... You are thick-skinned, aren't you?” asked a young fellow.

“Dogs and cats brave the weather... Why not a sadhu?” answered his companion making a dig at the sadhu.

The travellers broke into guffaws. The sadhu smiled and continued his silence.

The silence of the sadhu emboldened the other travellers to have their share of mischief.

“Sadhu! Can you swallow swords?” asked a traveller.

“Can you bake bread out of earth?” asked another.

“Are you an eater of fire?” asked another.

“No! No! No! Had he such powers, he would have conjured up a shirt for himself. Look at his loin-cloth. This fellow must be a beggar,” replied a young fellow showing all his teeth.

The travellers roared with laughter. The sadhu didn't bother to open his mouth. He only smiled.

“This beggar must be dumb... Or is he deaf?... Or both?” asked another.

“We must try and find out,” suggested yet another with a mischievous smile. Meanwhile the sun was in the mid-sky. The sadhu sat crossing his legs and closed his eyes in prayer.

The travellers laughed like hell at him. One among them pinched the sadhu’s back expecting a yell from him. But the sadhu showed no sign of pain.

Another traveller tickled the sadhu in his arm-pit, expecting to see him twist and turn. But undisturbed the sadhu continued his prayer.

“Has he turned himself into a stone?” asking thus the chief mischief-maker took his footwear in his hand and began showering blows on the back and the head of the sadhu.

The sky all of a sudden turned murky. Lightning split the sky and thunder rolled.

“This is too much... too much,” came an angry voice from the sky.

The sadhu opened his eyes. Dumbstruck stood the travellers.

The voice from the sky continued: “Limitless endurance is cowardice, O Holy Man! Say ‘Yes’ and I will sink this vessel. But you will be safe.”

The travellers shivered in fear and huddled close to one another. They looked at the sadhu in a pitiable way to draw his sympathy.

The sadhu smiled and consolingly looked at them. His lips parted and words came out. “Brothers! Do not be afraid. The voice you heard from the sky is not the voice of God. It must be the Devil’s... As long as I am with you in this vessel, no force in the whole universe will be able to harm you... I will not harm you, I assure you. Continue with your fun and I will continue with my prayer.”

The murky clouds disappeared as quickly as they had appeared. The sun shone brightly.

“Well done, my son, well done,” came another voice from the sky.

The sadhu stood up, his face glowing with bliss.

“Listen! Listen! It’s God who is speaking now,” whispered the sadhu to his co-travellers.

The travellers blinked at the sky and at the sadhu.

“They can’t hear me... those with immature brains.” Those were the final words of God.

The sadhu looked at the travellers. They were already on their knees. Their eyes bathed in tears were seeking the sadhu’s pardon.

P. RAJA

Students' Section

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

SIXTIETH SEMINAR: 27 April 1986

WHAT IS THE SECRET OF SUCCESS IN SADHANA?

SPEECH BY SWATI AGARWAL*

FOR the successful practice of the sadhana of the integral yoga of Sri Aurobindo, a number of qualities or conditions are required. The most important of them are: Sincerity, Aspiration, Faith, Devotion, Surrender, Perseverance, etc. But it may be asked, out of these, which quality is the most essential, which, so to say, is the key or the secret of success in sadhana?

This is the question which forms the subject of our Seminar today, and the answer can be given in more than one way, depending upon the stress one is inclined to give to this or that quality.

To me it seems that out of these several qualities, the two most essential ones are sincerity and surrender, and together they can be said to be the twin secret of success in sadhana. I shall, therefore, deal with them in my speech and try to explain their significance and importance in the light of what Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have said about them.

First, I shall speak about sincerity. It is so very important in sadhana that the Mother says: "Sincerity is the key of the divine doors"¹, "Sincerity is the gate to Divinity."² But what does sincerity mean? The Mother's answer is:

"Sincerity means to lift all the movements of the being to the level of the highest consciousness and realisation already attained.

"Sincerity enacts the unification and harmonisation of the whole being in all its parts and movements around the central Divine Will."³

Sri Aurobindo also explains the central importance of sincerity in a passage in *The Synthesis of Yoga* which I quote: "The first necessity is to dissolve that central faith and vision in the mind which concentrate it on its development and satisfaction and interests in the old external order of things. It is imperative to exchange this surface orientation for the deeper faith and vision which see only the Divine and seek only after the Divine. The next need is to compel all our lower being to pay homage to this new faith and greater vision. All our nature must make an inte-

* Slightly revised and enlarged.

¹ *Collected Works of the Mother* (Cent. Ed., Vol. 14), p. 67.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

gral surrender, it must offer itself in every part and every movement to that which seems to the unregenerated sense-mind so much less real than the material world and its objects. Our whole being—soul, mind, sense, heart, will, life, body—must consecrate all its energies so entirely and in such a way that it shall become a fit vehicle for the Divine.”¹

As Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have said, in order to be sincere, all the parts of our being must unite and collaborate and aspire for the Divine for the Divine's sake and not for any personal gain or advantage. If there is any sort of ambition, desire, greed or even a conflict in our parts, it is the sign of insincerity. And “Insincerity”, the Mother says, “leads on the path to ruin”.²

At another place she says:

“In your sadhana what is important is sincerity at every point; if there is that, mistakes can be rectified and do not so much matter. If there is any insincerity, that pulls down the sadhana at once. But whether this constant sincerity is there or there is any falling off from it at any point, is a thing you must learn to see in yourself; if there is the earnest and constant will for it, the power to see will come. Sincerity does not at all depend on satisfying others—it is an inner matter and lies solely between you and me.”³

She even says that those who are truly sincere she can help easily but if there is no sincerity or even aspiration for being sincere she can do very little.

It is not easy to have complete sincerity from the beginning of sadhana because to make all our parts come to an agreement is extremely difficult. There is a constant battle which goes on in us. Only if our highest part takes the control and becomes the governor of the house, then it becomes possible to achieve it. For this we need to have a very strong will and sustained perseverance.

There are some who think that they are absolutely sincere. This is rather dangerous, for often it is an illusion and it leads to self-deception. If this is allowed to go to its extreme then the contact between you and the truth of your being breaks and you fall into the abyss. One must have the constant aspiration to think rightly and to act rightly. This is very essential in order to have a perfect sincerity.

Though to be truly sincere all parts of the being must be united, most often this does not happen. One part is sincere but the other parts do not co-operate. At this stage if one is ignorant of the fact that he is insincere then some strange things may happen, as in the case of a sadhak, who wrote to the Mother:

“I feel sincerely that I want the Divine and nothing else. But when I am in contact with other people, when I am busy with things without any value, I naturally forget the Divine, my one goal. Is it insincerity? If not, then what does it mean?”

Here is the Mother's reply:

¹ Centenary Edition, Vol 20, p. 66.

² *Collected Works of the Mother* (Cent. Ed., Vol. 14), p. 70.

³ *Ibid.*

“Yes. It is insincerity of the being, in which one part wants the Divine and another part wants something else.

“It is through ignorance and stupidity that the being is insincere. But with a persevering will and an absolute confidence in the Divine Grace, one can cure this insincerity.”¹

The Mother also says that “An uncompromising sincerity is the surest way to spiritual achievement.”² And if we truly want to be sincere we must not pretend, but be; not make promises, but act; not dream, but realise.

If we are sincere we must not fear anything. People usually have a tendency to tell lies and telling lies means being insincere. And if one tells a lie, to cover this first lie he has to tell several more lies. This insincerity is born out of fear. If we do not fear and are sincere all obstacles will be surmounted.

A sadhak asked the Mother:

“Sweet Mother, how does one do Yoga?”

The Mother replied:

“Be wholly sincere, never try to deceive others. And try never to deceive yourself.”³

Thus sincerity plays a key role in our sadhana, and so does surrender. Actually speaking, I think that they are both very closely connected. For, in order to surrender you need sincerity, and the more sincere you become in all the parts of your being the more your surrender to the Divine increases. But let us first understand what the Mother means by surrender. She says:

“Surrender: the decision to hand over the responsibility of your life to the Divine. This is done either through the mind or the emotion or the life-impulse or through all of them together.”⁴

“To surrender to the Divine is to renounce your narrow limits and let yourself be invaded by It and made a centre for Its play.”⁵

Surrender is indispensable in Sri Aurobindo’s sadhana because without it the aim of transformation cannot be achieved. Surrender means offering every bit of yourself—your good parts as well as your bad parts—to the Divine. Only by completely surrendering we can become the recipients of the Divine Will, the instruments of the Divine for His work. Surrender is the basic need for becoming a perfect instrument of the Divine Will.

The Mother says:

“If you are truly surrendered to the Divine, in the right manner and totally, then at every moment you will be what you ought to be, you will do what you ought to do, you will know what you ought to know.

¹ *Collected Works of the Mother* (Cent. Ed., Vol. 14), p. 70.

² *Ibid.*, p. 68.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

⁵ *Ibid.*

“But for that you should have transcended all the limitations of the ego.”¹

True surrender enlarges you because it removes your limitations and increases your capacity. You forget that you exist for yourself, you are no more you. By surrendering you identify yourself with the Divine.

Some people think that surrender to the Guru is the same as surrender to the Divine. But Sri Aurobindo has said:

“No, surrender to the Divine and surrender to the Guru are not the same thing. In surrendering to the Guru, it is to the Divine in him that one surrenders—if it were only to a human entity, it would be ineffective. But it is the consciousness of the Divine Presence that makes the Guru a real Guru, so that even if the disciple surrenders to him thinking of the human being to whom he surrenders, that Presence will still make it effective.”²

Personal effort is necessary in sadhana at the beginning and for a long time because it is not easy to surrender to the Divine all at once. But more and more one's surrender increases, less and less personal effort becomes necessary. And when surrender becomes complete no effort is needed because the Divine himself takes up the total responsibility of one's sadhana.

I hope that I have been able to explain to you to some extent what is meant by sincerity and surrender and what are their respective roles in sadhana.

I conclude my speech by reading two quotations from Sri Aurobindo in which he points out the central role of sincerity and surrender in sadhana. In the first he speaks of sincerity as “The most important thing” in sadhana. It is another way of saying that it is the secret of successful sadhana. It is so marvellous that I am sure you will like to read it again and again. It is from one of his letters:

“The most important thing for the purification of the heart is an absolute sincerity. No pretence with oneself, no concealment from the Divine, or oneself, or the Guru, a straight look at one's movements, a straight will to make them straight. It does not so much matter if it takes time: one must be prepared to make it one's whole life-task to seek the Divine. Purifying the heart means after all a pretty considerable achievement and it is no use getting despondent, despairful, etc., because one finds things in oneself that still need to be changed. If one keeps the true will and true attitude, then the intuitions or intimations from within will begin to grow, become clear, precise, unmistakable and the strength to follow them will grow also: and then before even you are satisfied with yourself, the Divine will be satisfied with you and begin to withdraw the veil by which he protects himself and his seekers against a premature and perilous grasping of the greatest thing to which humanity can aspire.”³

In the second quotation he reveals the supreme value of surrender in sadhana in most memorable words. It is simply magnificent. I shall read it out to you:

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Letters on Yoga* (Cent. Ed., Vol. 23), p. 615.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 903-4.

“The first word of the supramental Yoga is surrender; its last word also is surrender. It is by a will to give oneself to the eternal Divine, for lifting into the divine consciousness, for perfection, for transformation, that the Yoga begins; it is in the entire giving that it culminates; for it is only when the self-giving is complete that there comes the finality of the Yoga, the entire taking up into the supramental Divine, the perfection of the being, the transformation of the nature.”¹

¹ *Sri Aurobindo: Archives and Research* (Dec. 1982), p. 196.