

# MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

SPECIAL ISSUE

15 AUGUST 1986: THE ANNIVERSARY OF  
SRI AUROBINDO'S BIRTHDAY

Price: Rs. 3.50

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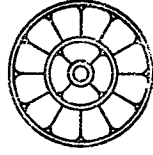
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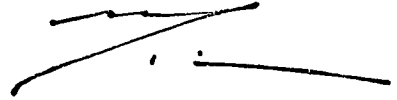


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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

Editor's Phone: 4782

Publishers: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust

Editor: K. D. SETHNA

Published by: P. COUNOUMA

SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM TRUST, PONDICHERRY - 605 002

Printed by: AMIYO RANJAN GANGULI

at Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, Pondicherry - 605 002

PRINTED IN INDIA

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

# MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XXXIX

No. 8

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

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## FROM SRI AUROBINDO

I AM not here to convert anyone; I do not preach to the world to come to me and I call no one. I am here to establish the divine life and the divine consciousness in those who of themselves feel the call to come to me and cleave to it, and in no others.

\*

If good fortune and ill fortune, if respect and insult, if reputation and obloquy, if victory and defeat, if pleasant and sorrowful event leave us not only unshaken, but untouched, free in the emotions, free in the nervous reactions, free in the mental view, not responding with the least disturbance or vibration in any spot of the nature, then we have the absolute liberation to which the Gita points us, but not otherwise.

\*

One who has so great an aim as to be united with the Divine and to manifest Him, how can he be affected by all the futilities and foolishnesses of life?

\*

*(A definition from the Gita)* Man's divorce from his long wedlock with sorrow, which is called yoga.

## FROM THE MOTHER

WHAT we are doing now is a new thing; it has nothing to do with the past.

It can be called an adventure because it is the first time that a Yoga aims at transformation and divinisation of physical life instead of escape from it.

\*

Before you can undertake this work of physical transformation, which of all things is the most difficult, your inner consciousness must be firmly established, solidly established in the Truth, so that this transformation may be the final expression of the Truth—final for the moment at least.

\*

To keep constantly a concentrated and in-gathered attitude is more important than having fixed hours of meditation.

\*

When you are sure that you have attained absolute sincerity, you may be certain that you have plunged into falsehood.

## WORDS OF THE MOTHER

APROPOS OF "PRAYERS" READ OUT IN MEETINGS IN 1947

(Prayer of December 22, 1914)

It was in 1914 that I had an inner experience and saw India free. I had the experience of the Lord of the Nations, who was an Asura, and I knew that he and his group would perpetrate horrors unknown to man. I saw all the horrors that were subsequently enacted—even the Second World War.

But I knew also another fact: "Horror is gone from the world." Between the knowledge and its translation into material fact there is a long interval. India has got her freedom just now, in 1947, but in the subtle world she was already free in 1914. It took 23 years to translate that truth into the plane of Matter.

(Prayer of January 18, 1915)

*Q. Why should you feel like common humanity?*

One must participate in the limitations of the plane on which one wants to bring about a change: that is to say, one must participate in the conditions of the earth-plane.

If the being who wants to change the law of the earth has no understanding of the defects and the workings here, he cannot bring about a transformation: he will not know what the difficulty, the obstacle is.

If I did not feel like others, I may bring down the Truth but I cannot bring it to you. In fact, nothing that I may say or do would touch you.

*Notes by A. B. PURANI, approved by THE MOTHER*

# GANAPATI

A Note Based on Words of the Mother on September 9, 1947

*Q. How would one be able to meet, or have contact with, a particular God?*

FIRST of all, by becoming conscious in the same domain as the God. Secondly, by believing in him and having a desire to see him. It is like your meeting with a great personality. You first of all desire to meet him and then make an arrangement to meet him.

I may relate an experience of mine. I had for long found it very difficult to believe in the reality of Ganapati. I had thought that it was perhaps a form more constructed by man's imagination and mental conception than a real one. One day in the "Prosperity Room" I found that Ganapati had walked in as he had been described. He was very nice with his elephant trunk on a human body with a big belly. He knew how to deal with the welfare of this world, how to ensure success and earn wealth. He filled the whole room with a fine atmosphere like that of a true friend who was ready to do good and ensure success. He said: "You know I am here—whatever you want I can give you." Since then he has been very nice.

Then I found that the form which he had was not grotesque, but rather harmonious. He—that is, his being—was independent of the form. But at that time I saw that there was an inner harmony which expressed itself in the form.

All the Gods are there in the Overmind. Ganapati is there with *bonne volonté*, agreeable, pleasant, helpful. He removes obstacles, though his power is limited by hostile forces: he is not absolute in his power, but the specialisation in "good will" is there.

*Q. Why has such a being so queer a form?*

At that time I understood the relation between his nature—the thing he has to express—and his form. For instance, the elephant-appearance gives the sense of power. You know how powerful an elephant is. A special part of it is the trunk, which is the most wonderful organ possible and it is exceedingly clever. The elephant pokes his nose everywhere into the most minute things.

A. B. PURANI

## A TALK BY THE MOTHER

TO THE ASHRAM CHILDREN ON AUGUST 3, 1955

Mother reads from *Lights on Yoga*,  
“Surrender and Opening”.

*What is “the true life-activity”?*

It is to express the Divine. That is the very reason of existence and life, its truth and its sole true activity.

*Sweet Mother, here Sri Aurobindo has said “It is impossible.” Why? For you have said that nothing is impossible!*

Nothing is impossible in principle. But if one refuses to do what is necessary, obviously one cannot succeed.

In the material world there are conditions, otherwise it would not be what it is. If there were no conditions and processes, everything could be transformed and done miraculously. But evidently it is not in this way that it was decided, because things don't happen miraculously—in any case, not miracles as the human mind conceives of them, that is, constant arbitrary decisions. It is obvious that in the world there are no arbitrary decisions.

Sri Aurobindo says: In order to do such and such a thing, these are the conditions. If you refuse to fulfil these conditions you won't do that particular thing, you will do something else; that, evidently, is not the only thing possible. But if that's the thing one wants to do, one must fulfil the conditions... One can do something else!

I believe that if you take the world in its totality, in Time and Space, it is obvious that you can say, “Nothing is impossible”, and that probably everything will be; but that's in the totality, and in Time and Space, that is, through eternities of time and infinities of space all is possible. But at a given moment, at a given point, there is a certain number of “possibles”, and all are not there, and certain conditions have to be fulfilled for these possibilities to be realised. The world is constructed like that. We can do nothing about it. I mean it is useless to say, “It ought to be otherwise.” It is like that, we must take it as it is, endeavour to make the best possible out of it.

*Sweet Mother, here Sri Aurobindo has said: “If the inmost soul is awakened, if there is a new birth out of the mere mental, vital and physical into the psychic consciousness, then this Yoga can be done...” Why has he said “the inmost soul”?*  
*Is there a superficial soul?*



It is because this inmost soul, that is, the central psychic being, influences the superficial parts of the consciousness (superficial in comparison with it: mental parts, vital parts). The purest mind, the highest vital, the emotive being—the soul influences them, influences them to an extent where one has the impression of entering into contact with it through these parts of the being. So people take these parts for the soul and that is why he says “the inmost soul”, that is, the central soul, the real soul.

For very often, when one touches certain parts of the mind which are under the psychic influence and full of light and the joy of that light, or when one touches certain very pure and very high parts of the emotive being which has the most generous, most unselfish emotions, one also has the impression of being in contact with one’s soul. But this is not the true soul, it is not the soul in its very essence. These are parts of the being under its influence and manifesting something of it. So, very often people enter into contact with these parts and this gives them illuminations, great joy, revelations, and they feel they have found their soul. But it is only the part of the being under its influence, one part or another, for... Exactly what happens is that one touches these things, has experiences, and then it gets veiled, and one wonders, “How is it that I touched my soul and now have fallen back into this state of ignorance and inconstancy!” But that’s because one had not touched one’s soul, one had touched those parts of the being which are under the influence of the soul and manifest something of it, but are not it.

I have already said many times that when one enters consciously into contact with one’s soul and the union is established, it is over, it can no longer be undone, it is something permanent, constant, which resists everything, and which, at any moment whatever, if referred to can be found; whereas the other things—one can have very fine experiences, and then it gets veiled again, and one tells oneself, “How does that happen? I saw my soul and now I don’t find it any more!” It was not the soul one had seen. And these things are very beautiful and give you very impressive experiences, but this is not the contact with the psychic being itself.

The contact with the psychic being is definitive, and it is about this that I say, when people ask, “Do I have a contact with my psychic being?”, “Your question itself proves that you don’t have it!”

That’s all, my children?

*Sweet Mother, I have heard that the magicians who use occult powers for their work suffer a great deal after their death. Is it true?*

What sort of magicians are you speaking about? Any kind?

Those who have occult powers and use them for their personal interest? You mean these?

Yes.

I don’t know whether they suffer after their death or lose their consciousness,

but in any case, obviously they are not in any state of peace or happiness, that's absolutely certain, For it is a kind of absolute rule from the spiritual point of view: it is by an inner discipline and by consecration to the Divine that the powers come to you. But if with your aspiration, your discipline and consecration, an ambition is mixed up, that is, an intention to obtain powers, then if they come to you it is almost like a curse. Usually they don't come to you, but something vital which tries to imitate them comes to you with adverse influences which put you entirely under the domination of beings who give you powers simply with the intention of making use of you, using you to do all the work they have the intention of doing, and to create all the disorder they want to create. And when they find that you have served them enough and are no longer good for anything, they just destroy you. They may not be able to destroy you physically because they don't always have the power to do it, but they destroy you mentally, vitally and in your consciousness, and after that you are good for nothing, even before dying. And after death, as you are entirely under their influence, the first thing they do is to swallow you up, because this is their way of making use of people—to swallow them. So it cannot be a very pleasant experience. It is a very, very, very dangerous game.

But everywhere, in all the teachings, in all the disciplines, in all ages, the same thing has been repeated: that one must never intermingle ambition and personal interest with the sadhana, otherwise he is inviting trouble. So it is not only a particular case, it is all the instances of this kind which have fatal consequences.

*Sweet Mother, are there any magicians who do not work magic for their personal interest?*

You mean magical rites? Because, you see, you must not mix up magic with occultism.

Occultism is a science and it is the knowledge of invisible forces and the capacity to handle them, as one has the capacity of handling material forces if one has studied them scientifically.

Magic: these are different kinds of processes which were fixed probably by people who had a certain knowledge, and still more a certain power of vital formation. These things can be learnt without having any special capacity, that is, someone who has no inner power can learn this as he learns chemistry, for example, or mathematics. It is one of the things which are learnt like that, it is not a thing one acquires. So it doesn't itself carry any special virtues except the same kind of qualities as those one learns through chemical manipulations. You may reproduce these manipulations, but if you are an intelligent and capable being, you can by the help of those manipulations obtain an interesting and useful result, and in any case, be sheltered from all danger; whereas if you are an idiot, misfortunes may come to you. It is something similar.

With the help of magical formulas one may produce a certain result, but this

result is necessarily limited and has no particular interest for those who, through their inner development, spontaneously receive powers of which they have a higher knowledge, not a mechanical one. It is not for someone who is truly a yogi; it has no interest except that of curiosity. It is interesting only for people who are precisely not yogis and who want to have certain powers which, in fact, they have in a very limited way—it is always limited.

What is special about it is that it has a direct action upon matter; while usually, apart from some rare exceptions, with people who have spiritual powers, yogic powers, it acts through the intermediary of the mental forces usually—either spiritual or mental forces—sometimes of the vital forces (more rarely), but not directly upon matter, except naturally with those who have done yoga in matter, but these are exceptional cases of which one doesn't speak. These things put into motion certain small entities which are usually the result of the decomposition of human beings and yet have a sufficient contact with the material world to be able to act there. But anyhow, if the action is of a lower order, the power is of a lower order, and it is something almost repugnant for one who is truly in relation with the higher forces.

To act in order to accomplish a work with the spontaneous powers of spiritual realisation, that is well understood. But one may say that everybody does that, because just the fact of thinking means that you are acting invisibly; and according to the power of your thought your action is more or less wide-spread. But to use small magical formulas to obtain a result is something that has no true relation with the spiritual life. From the spiritual point of view it appears even surprising that these things can always prove effective, because for each case the need is different; and how putting together certain words and making certain signs can always have an effect seems surprising.

When one wants to act spiritually and for some reason or other it is necessary, for example, to formulate words, the words come spontaneously and are exactly the words needed for the particular occasion. But things written beforehand which one repeats mechanically most of the time, without even knowing what one is saying and why one is saying it—it is difficult to see how this can always work. There is bound to be a great imprecision in the action. And one thing is certain, that this same formula cannot have exactly the same effect, and that one factor is indispensable for it to take effect: fear. The first thing is a kind of fear, a fright created in the person against whom the magic is done; for if he has no fear I am quite sure that it cannot have any effect or has so ridiculously small an effect that it's not worth speaking about it.

What opens the door to the action of these forces is fear, a kind of apprehension, the feeling that something is going to happen; and it is these vibrations of fear which put out certain forces from you, forces which give these entities the power to act.

*Sweet Mother, there are people who do hypnotism. Then, when they always practise it on the same person, does that person fall ill after a while?*

Not necessarily ill. It depends on the kind of hypnotism and hypnotiser. Not necessarily ill. One thing is certain, that this person loses his personal will, that the hypnotiser's will takes the place of the personal will, otherwise it would not work. But not necessarily ill, terribly dependent! It creates almost a kind of slavery.

*(Long silence)*

It is very difficult to say, because it depends entirely on the hypnotiser and the hypnotised, and how it is done. In its ordinary outer form it is something that can cause much disturbance.

But there can be a spontaneous hypnotism which may be the expression of a divine force, but then that does not work in the ordinary way.

I think there are as many cases as people. It's like every other thing. If you put scientific knowledge in the hands of ignorant and stupid people, it can produce catastrophes. And if to this is added the fact that they are people with ill-will or those who have personal motives, then the results are as bad as can be. It's the same with hypnotism. It depends exclusively upon the one practising it and how he practises it.

It's not something genuine; like all so-called human knowledge, it is not true, but the deformation of something.

It could be said that if the divine will works in you, you can call it hypnotism, if you like, and yet it is the supreme Good, you see.

But what is usually called hypnotism is a completely blind and ignorant action: the use of the power of a force which one doesn't even know very well. So naturally it has unfortunate results; and then, as I say, if it falls into the hands of someone who is unscrupulous or has bad intentions, it becomes altogether disastrous.

*(Questions and Answers 1955, pp. 262-68)*

## TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of July 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 19, 1940

M: Gandhi has asked to stop the Satyagraha during Christmas.

SRI AUROBINDO: I see. The Government can also release the prisoners for that period.

M: This may be Gandhi's first step for a compromise.

SRI AUROBINDO: How?

M: He may stop the movement and join hands with the Government.

SRI AUROBINDO: Not likely. I don't think he will.

*(After some time Manilal began again.)*

M: There is then no such thing as *sarvajña*, Sir! *(Laughter)*

*(After so much battering last night by all of us when he again raised the subject, we couldn't but burst out laughing.)*

N: Did you have a good sleep last night? *(Laughter)*

M: Is there no such thing, Sir?

SRI AUROBINDO: I don't know.

M: How could the word come then? And what could be the meaning of it?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is for them to say, who have used the word.

M: Have you not used it?

SRI AUROBINDO: I may have.

M: Are not those who have realisation *sarvajña*?

SRI AUROBINDO: What realisation?

M: Nirvana, for instance.

SRI AUROBINDO: Why should one who has separated oneself from everything know everything?

M: What then could be the meaning of *sarvajña*, Sir?

N: As he has said, knowledge of everything.

M: What everything?

SRI AUROBINDO: Everything means everything.

P: Their meaning of *sarvajñatva* is knowing all the facts of existence.

SRI AUROBINDO: Even what Lloyd George had for his breakfast, or knowledge of the share markets?

*(Then some other talk intervened. After this Manilal again resumed the topic.)*

M: What is the meaning of the English words omniscient, omnipotent, etc.?

SRI AUROBINDO: They are applied in English to God.

M: We are being asked "Always behave as if the Mother was looking at you; because she is, indeed, always present." What could be its meaning then?

P: It means the sadhaka should feel as if he was before the Mother—

M: Don't mix the meaning.

SRI AUROBINDO: Does it mean that Mother is expected to know what one is doing in the W.C.?

M: But doesn't it mean that she can know?

SRI AUROBINDO: That is a different thing. She can know if she wants to.

M: She can know then everything?

SRI AUROBINDO: What do you mean by everything? She can know what is necessary for her to know. She may not know everything in her physical body but in her universal entity she can know. *Sarvajñatva* doesn't mean knowledge of everything. It usually means knowledge of the *trikāla*. When the Gita says *sarva-vid*, that doesn't mean knowledge of everything.

M: But *trikāla* would mean all time.

SRI AUROBINDO: No, it may mean that whatever is necessary to know, what one is concerned with in the past, present or future, he may; beyond that he is not concerned with anything.

If Mother wants to know a particular thing she has to concentrate. A yogi can know, but by a process of concentration. It is a power, not a state of preoccupied knowledge of things. But that doesn't mean that he knows everything.

N: When one gets into contact with the subliminal self, one can know whatever he wants without any concentration.

SRI AUROBINDO: How?

N: Isn't the knowledge there automatic?

SRI AUROBINDO: What do you mean by automatic?

N: I mean without any need for concentration one knows a thing directly.

M: He means for instance that when one sees a gold ring, he will know at once that it is made of gold.

SRI AUROBINDO: But it may not be made of gold, it may be so only in appearance.

N: No, what I mean—if suppose I see Dr. Manilal, I will at once be able to

know without any concentration that—

SRI AUROBINDO: All about his life?

N: No, say, what he has been doing.

M: He may know the essential parts of my being or consciousness.

SRI AUROBINDO: Why? it may be the most inessential part also.

M: Or for instance if he visits a case, he will diagnose without any exam that it is a case of T.B.

SRI AUROBINDO: It may not be a case of T.B. Subliminal consciousness is not all true knowledge. It is mixed with Ignorance. Also you have to develop the capacity to know. Even if you know, the capacity of utilisation may be absent; or if you have the knowledge you may cure in some cases but it doesn't mean you will be successful in every case.

N: In other words, awareness of the subliminal may give knowledge and not power?

SRI AUROBINDO: You have to develop the power. It doesn't come by itself. Even then as I said you may not be successful in every case. As, for example, when Christ came to some parts of Judea, he couldn't cure. He said, "These people have no faith."

M: Faith is then always a preliminary to cure?

SRI AUROBINDO: Not necessarily. Without faith also one may be cured. So many cases get cured without their knowing about the action of the Force. Lack of faith may be an obstacle too, especially a positive disbelief.

C: Is one born with faith?

SRI AUROBINDO: One is not born with it, but one may be born with a capacity for faith.

### *Evening*

M: The *sarvajñas* (*laughter—Sri Aurobindo exclaimed, "Oh!"*)—are they concerned with only a higher plane of knowledge, Sir?

SRI AUROBINDO: How do you mean?

M: I mean they are concerned only with the higher planes of existence, not our day-to-day mundane affair?

SRI AUROBINDO: By clairvoyance also one can say things. But what is your idea about *sarvajña*? Who, according to you, is *sarvajña*?

M: Those who have realisation.

SRI AUROBINDO: What realisation?

M: Of Nirvana or *kaivalyajñān*.

SRI AUROBINDO: I don't know what is *kaivalyajñān*.

M: One who has a solitary realisation of the One.

SRI AUROBINDO: If he has a solitary realisation of the One how can he be expected to have knowledge of the many?

M: I mean One and the many.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is not solitary. That is a comprehensive realisation.

M: I mean that; it was a wrong expression.

SRI AUROBINDO: Not expression, but wrong statement. Even if one has knowledge of the many, it doesn't mean he has knowledge of the all. That is, he may know what he has to know or wants to know.

M: Like Vyasa's shadow-reader who could by a study of anyone's shadow tell the past and present etc.

SRI AUROBINDO: Oh, he can say everything! (*Laughter*)

M: Nirod says by knowledge of the subliminal one can know everything. Isn't it so, Nirod?

N: No, no, I must read the chapter again.

SRI AUROBINDO: What I have said in *The Life Divine* is that when you get into contact with the subliminal self, you get into a greater source of knowledge. But it is not all pure and correct knowledge because the subliminal is also mixed with Ignorance and it has many parts and depths.

P: What Nirod told me was something like this—by getting into the subliminal one can project into the physical whatever incident or event one comes in contact with.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is too mechanical a way of seeing it. Besides, there are so many ways of approaching and knowing the subliminal—penetrating, enveloping and then there are various depths of the subliminal.

N: What I wanted to say was that the knowledge of the subliminal gives one a direct automatic knowledge without any need for concentration. That is how I understood the matter.

SRI AUROBINDO: You may or may not have to concentrate.

M: How far is the Supramental from the subliminal, Sir?

SRI AUROBINDO: What do you mean by "far"?

M: How distant, I mean.

SRI AUROBINDO: 10,000 miles. (*Laughter*)

M: There is a Jaina story about two yogis who went to *Mahavideha Kshetra* and met *Padmadevi* and asked her how distant their realisation was. She said to one three years and to the other as many years as there are leaves on a tree. The latter began to dance—

SRI AUROBINDO: Oh, that is Narada's story of *tapaswi* and *bhakta*.

C: That story you told me when I asked you on my first visit, "Shall I have realisation?"

SRI AUROBINDO: This is more pointed than the Jaina story.

(*At this stage Dr. Mamilal departed.*)

N: But a contact with the subliminal may give me direct knowledge—say, diagnosis of a case as T.B. without any exam.



SRI AUROBINDO: It may, but it is only a knowledge, how will you have the power to cure? Besides, knowledge is not necessary for cure. Plenty of people can cure without knowledge.

P: That is what I too told him.

N: How does one get the power to cure?

SRI AUROBINDO: By getting the Force.

N: But the subliminal may give me the knowledge of the right drug.

SRI AUROBINDO: If you know the right drug, will it always cure a case? Are there no failures in spite of the right drug being administered? Are all diseases curable?

N: So says homeopathy, that every disease has a right drug and is curable unless the organs are too destroyed.

SRI AUROBINDO: I don't know about homeopathy. But there are any number of instances where cases have failed in spite of the right treatment.

N: Did you say in the morning that Mother may not know in her body but know in her universal entity?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes. It is not necessary for her to know in her body. There are many people whom Mother has not met or seen but who call Mother and get help.

C: Yes, Mother told such a story in the stores that some people were calling her.

P: I remember distinctly her other story while sitting among us. Suddenly she went into a trance and returned after 20 minutes or so. Then she said to us that she had gone to the Himalayas to help a yogi who had been calling her. We saw her actually shivering due to the cold of the Himalayas. Mother said she didn't know who the yogi was.

SRI AUROBINDO: In her sleep Mother goes to various places. It doesn't mean that she knows or remembers in her waking moments all the places and persons she visits.

N: Now it is clear. But how will her knowledge in her universal entity be practically applied in her physical which may not know about that knowledge? I mean her universal entity may have the knowledge of a particular act done by such and such a person. How will she be able to say which particular person has done it?

SRI AUROBINDO: If it is necessary for her to know, she can know by concentration. The physical brain is an instrument of the true individuality. Even the yogis are not concerned with what is happening in Jupiter or Venus.

B: Does an Avatar know everything?

SRI AUROBINDO: What everything? It is the same question: Did Rama know it was not a real deer?

B: They say that he knew it was a false deer but in order to set an example—

SRI AUROBINDO: Good Lord! you mean to say that all he has done, the fight with Ravana and rescuing of Sita, etc. are all deception for setting an example? Then the Ramayana and Rama lose all their value. And his lamentation for Sita is also a pretension? Does an Avatar resort to deception in order to teach people?

P: What about Sita's *agniparikṣā*?

B: That was real, they say. But the Sita that was stolen by Ravana was not the real Sita, but her shadow. (*Laughter*)

SRI AUROBINDO: So all the time the real Sita was with Rama? And why then did Rama play that deception with Hanuman about *Gandhamādan parvat*? He could have told him straight away that it was in such and such a place, instead of Hanuman searching for it everywhere.

The shadow-of-Sita story reminds me of Helen's story. Someone—perhaps Euripides—says that it was not the real Helen but her image that was taken by Paris and that after the battle was over she rejoined her husband.

(*To be continued*)

NIRODBARAN

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## A CORRECTION AND AN EXPLANATION

AT two points something needs to be said apropos of *Talks with Sri Aurobindo* appearing in *Mother India*, June 1986. On p. 340 it is asked whether the Mother had any teacher. Sri Aurobindo is reported as answering: "No, except Jnan Chakravarti, husband of Krishnaprem's Guru. He gave her initiation in the Gita's Yoga in Paris." There was a mistake in the transcription from Nirodbaran's Notebook. The correct reading should be:

"No, except Théon. Jnan Chakravarty, husband of Krishnaprem's Guru, gave her initiation in the Gita's Yoga in Paris."

Here Nirodbaran wishes to explain that the word "initiation" is not used in the technical Indian sense, *dīkṣā*, which implies a Guru. It only means what the Mother in a talk conveys about Chakravarty and the Gita: "he advised me to read it and gave me the key—his key, it was his key.... He said, 'Read the Gita, and take Krishna as the symbol of the immanent God, the inner Godhead.'"

Again, on p. 341 of the June issue Sri Aurobindo is quoted as saying about Hitler: "...all his power comes from the Asura, by whom he is possessed and guided while Napoleon is a normal human being acting through the power of his brain which reached the highest development possible in a human being."

This seems to contradict what Sri Aurobindo has said elsewhere—namely, that Napoleon was no ordinary human being but a Vibhuti, the embodiment here on earth of a force of another plane. The word "normal" used in the Talk is to be understood to mean that, unlike Hitler, Napoleon was not possessed by an Asura.

# THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING PSYCHOLOGY\*

## SOME PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

THE importance of studying psychology is so great that it can well be said that there is hardly any other branch of knowledge whose study is more valuable, both for thought and life, than that of psychology. Even European psychologists are coming to realise this increasingly in spite of their narrow outlook and inadequate methods of investigation of psychological phenomena. This recognition has gone so far that now some of them even call it "the master science". This is mainly because in a continually increasing number of individual and social spheres of life the application of psychological knowledge and procedures and techniques is found to be essential for achieving successful results. This has led to an abundant proliferation of several branches of applied psychology in recent years. To name only some of them, we have now Educational Psychology, Child Psychology, Social Psychology, Industrial Psychology, Abnormal Psychology, Crime Psychology and several others. It is this increasing universality of scope and all-dominating influence of psychology that has given rise to the claim that it is "the master science". This claim may seem to be an exaggeration so far as modern European psychology is concerned, but if we liberate it from the very restricted bounds in which it is now confined and extend its dimensions into the vast unexplored regions of our inner and higher being, then we shall find that it is not an exaggeration but a truth, because the importance of the knowledge we gain from it is so fundamental and all-comprehensive that no other branch of knowledge can equal or surpass it.

This can best be shown by considering the role of psychology in relation to the attainment of self-perfection which is the highest aim of human life. In evolution it is man, the self-conscious mental being, who in his awakened thought tries to conceive the aim of his life and to realise it by conscious will and endeavour. This takes the form of some ideal of individual and collective perfection which seems to him to be his highest possibility, depending upon his conception of himself and the potentialities of his nature. But whatever may be his ideal of perfection, there are always two essential requirements for its realisation: self-knowledge and self-mastery or, as the Mother puts it, "To know oneself and to control oneself."<sup>1</sup> But the attainment of self-mastery or self-control depends on the acquisition of self-knowledge, for it is its necessary pre-condition. And it is psychology, more than any other branch of knowledge, that enables us to acquire both authentic self-knowledge and effective self-mastery. This alone, apart from any other consideration, gives psychology a place of paramount importance among all the branches of knowledge.

Self-knowledge, in its full sense, has two aspects: knowledge of our true self

\* From class-notes, prepared in 1966, for the introductory lecture to the students of psychology in the Higher Course of the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education.

<sup>1</sup> *Collected Works of the Mother* (Centenary Edition), Vol. 12, p. 3.

or reality and knowledge of the different parts of our total being and their complex and intricate movements and functionings. It may be argued that the knowledge of our true self or reality is the subject-matter of metaphysical philosophy and therefore it cannot fall within the scope of psychology which is a science. Being a science it can study only the phenomena of the various parts of consciousness and their workings and processes and is not competent to undertake the inquiry about the essential and ultimate reality of our being. But this view of the scope of psychology is partial and limited because a complete psychology cannot restrict itself to the study of the phenomena of consciousness leaving out the inquiry into the ultimate nature of consciousness and self. As Sri Aurobindo maintains, "A complete psychology cannot be a pure natural science, but must be a compound of science and metaphysical knowledge."<sup>1</sup>

The importance of the self-knowledge and self-mastery which psychology provides needs to be emphasised because though it is essential for our true perfection, it has not always been adequately recognised and pursued in the historical development of human knowledge. In human evolution when the thinking mind develops, it creates in man an insatiable seeking for knowledge, but for the most part he has directed this seeking towards the objective world outside and around him and not to the subjective world within himself. He has the implicit idea that he knows himself and that it is only the world outside him of which he has to acquire knowledge. That is why through the long millenniums of history man has been labouring so hard to increase his knowledge of the external objective world but has remained so ignorant of his own inner self and the vast regions of the subjective world within himself. In the modern age with the help of physical science he has taken giant strides in his exploration of the material universe and achieved miraculous results in his conquest of material energies; but there is no corresponding advance in his knowledge and mastery of the hidden ranges of his inner psychological being. This one-sided development has created an acute disequilibrium in the life of modern man and is in fact the root-cause of the crisis of modern civilisation. As Sri Aurobindo vividly explains: "The utmost widening of a physical objective knowledge, even if it embraces the most distant solar systems and the deepest layers of the earth and sea and the most subtle powers of material substance and energy, is not the essential gain for us, not the one thing which it is most needful for us to acquire. That is why the gospel of materialism, in spite of the dazzling triumphs of physical Science, proves itself always in the end a vain and helpless creed, and that too is why physical Science itself with all its achievements, though it may accomplish comfort, can never achieve happiness and fullness of being for the human race. Our true happiness lies in the true growth of our whole being, in a victory throughout the total range of our existence, in mastery of the inner as well as and more than the outer, the hidden as well as the overt nature. Our true completeness comes not by describing wider circles on the

<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo: *Archives and Research*, Vol. 6, No. 2, Dec. 1982, p. 144.

plane where we began, but by transcendence."<sup>1</sup> It is psychology alone that can bring to us this knowledge and mastery of the forces of our inner hidden nature and thereby provide the effective remedy for the acute disequilibrium in his life from which modern man suffers and the lasting solution for the present-day crisis of civilisation.

Further, we may also say that the self-knowledge which we acquire through the study of psychology is also the key to all other knowledge—the knowledge of other persons and of the world around us. Our life is c'osely interlinked with the lives of others and there is a constant invisible interchange of psychological influences with those with whom we live and are associated in various capacities in our group life. But normally our understanding and control of these influences is very scanty and superficial and limited to what we can observe from their external signs or infer from their physical movements or gestures, and therefore it is mostly uncertain and unreliable. It is only through self-knowledge gained by the observation of our own psychological movements that we can understand similar movements in others. We can know very little of what they think and feel and what their inner motives and reactions are unless we have a clear understanding of our own similar thoughts and feelings and motivations. It is the study of psychology which enables us to have this understanding and therefore we may say that the self-knowledge which we gain through it dispels not only self-ignorance but our ignorance of others also.

And in the deepest truth of things self-knowledge and the resultant self-mastery are also the secret of world-knowledge and world-mastery. This is because essentially it is the Spirit or Self that has created or become the world and contains and dwells in it and in all things in the world and therefore knows them by identity. We ourselves by realising this Self become one with all things and forces and beings in the world and know them by identity as the Self itself knows them. In this highest knowledge by identity there is no division between the knower, the knowledge and the known. It is described in the Gita as "a pure awareness of self-truth of things in the self and by the self", *ātmani ātmānam ātmanā*.<sup>2</sup> The same truth is expressed by the Upanishad in the phrase "That which being known, all is known", *yasmīn vijñāte sarvam idaṁ vijñātam*.<sup>3</sup> But we have to note that we cannot have this knowledge by identity by following the methods of modern European psychology; it is only the psychological processes of yoga that can help us to attain it.

This, then, is the importance of the study of psychology that by providing self-knowledge and world-knowledge and through them self-mastery and world-mastery, it enables us to attain self-perfection which man has been incessantly seeking as the highest aim of his life. His conception of self-perfection varies according to his conception of his true self at different stages of his evolution. Initially he conceives himself to be a physical and vital being and his endeavour at self-perfection is confined to the perfection of his physical and vital nature and its capacities. At a higher elevation

<sup>1</sup> *The Life Divine* (Cent. Ed. Vol. 19), p. 729.

<sup>2</sup> *Gita*, XIII, 25.

<sup>3</sup> *Shandilya Upanishad* II. 2.

he thinks himself to be essentially a mental being with reason or intellect as his highest faculty and tries to perfect his whole being in the light of ideal reason. Rising still higher he considers his true self to be a soul or spirit and strives to realise spiritual self-perfection. In *The Human Cycle* Sri Aurobindo has named these three stages of human evolution as infrarational, rational and suprarational or spiritual respectively. Man's endeavour at spiritual self-perfection in the last stage is in fact what is called yoga which, if pursued in its integral scope, will lift him up from his present transitional mental level to the highest supramental level and divinise his life.

It is especially at this last stage, when man strives for spiritual self-perfection through yoga, that the study of psychology becomes of paramount importance. The practice of yoga in its integral scope aims not only at the realisation of our true spiritual self but at the discovery and mastery of all the powers of knowledge and will in the vast unexplored regions of our inner and higher being of which we are normally unaware. It is yogic psychology which enables us to gain the knowledge and mastery of these ranges of our being behind, below, around and above our small narrow surface consciousness in which we ordinarily remain confined.

But mere mental knowledge of these hidden layers of our being is of little value if it is not accompanied or followed up by a practical endeavour to conquer and master all the secret powers of knowledge and will lying concealed in them. We may, for example, mentally know all about what Sri Aurobindo calls the inner or subliminal being, the psychic being, the Jivatman or the central being, the cosmic self, all the overhead planes from the Higher Mind to Overmind; we may even have a clear mental understanding of what Supermind is. But all this mental knowledge, though it can be very helpful as a preparation, will not bring us any living experience or concrete realisation of these planes of consciousness unless we undertake the necessary yogic practice to enter into them and master their secret powers. It is for this reason that both Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have stressed the point that yogic psychology should be not merely theoretical but also practical. In *The Synthesis of Yoga* Sri Aurobindo has stated that, "Yoga is nothing but practical psychology",<sup>1</sup> and he has further elaborated this statement by saying that "The whole method of Yoga is psychological; it might almost be termed the consummate practice of a perfect psychological knowledge."<sup>2</sup> And the Mother, in a personal communication to a professor of psychology at the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education remarked, "It seems to me that psychology without yoga is lifeless. The study of psychology must necessarily lead to yoga, at least to practical yoga, if not to theoretical."

There is thus an intimate and dynamic interrelationship between the study of psychology and the practice of yoga. We may say that if the study of psychology is fruitless without the practice of yoga, the practice of yoga also, if it is to proceed on sound lines, requires a clear and systematic psychological knowledge of all the planes and parts of our integral being. It is for this reason that a considerable portion of

<sup>1</sup> Centenary Edition, Vol. 20, p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 496.

Sri Aurobindo's philosophic and yogic writings is devoted to giving precise explanations of these psychological planes and to making clear distinctions between a number of psychological terms which are usually mixed up in other ancient and modern systems of philosophy and psychology, leading to extreme confusion and misunderstanding. Sri Aurobindo has not written a separate book for psychology, as he has done for philosophy and yoga, but there is ample psychological material in his philosophic and yogic and even literary writings, and especially in his letters to his disciples. If all this material is compiled and systematically organised we can construct out of it a complete psychological system which will not only help us in the practice of yoga but open up vast new dimensions of psychological knowledge mostly unknown to or ignored by European psychology, both traditional and modern. If European psychology, which has restricted its scope to the study of the normal surface consciousness has to make a real and fruitful advance it can only do so by extending its field beyond its present limited frontiers into the vast unexplored regions of the subliminal and superconscient levels of our being. But this it can do only if it sheds its present self-imposed bonds and, taking the lead from yogic psychology, consents to plunge into the profundities and soar into the heights of the deeper and higher ranges of our consciousness. This is a pioneering work which, as students of psychology in Sri Aurobindo's International Centre of Education, we cannot shirk. We have first to construct a complete system of integral psychology by collecting all the psychological material strewn in Sri Aurobindo's philosophical, yogic and literary works and then, after a study of Western psychology, show how in every sphere that it is now trying to advance its knowledge, the most fruitful advance can only be made if it takes its direction and guidance and adopts new methods and procedures of research from yogic psychology. It will be an uphill task but it is a part of our work here and we must pursue it with courage and confidence.

There is a further reason why the study of integral psychology will be of great help to us. All the works of Sri Aurobindo—on philosophy and yoga, sociology, history and politics, literature, poetry and art—require for their proper understanding an adequate knowledge of his psychological system. The great philosophical thought elaborated in *The Life Divine* is not built on intellectual speculation but on spiritual experience and realisation, and spiritual experience and realisation is essentially psychological in character, because it can be had only by entering into the inner and higher planes of supra-intellectual consciousness. Without a clear knowledge of these psychological planes we cannot comprehend the full meaning of the philosophy of *The Life Divine*. This knowledge of Sri Aurobindo's psychological system is especially necessary in order to grasp his theory of spiritual evolution to which he has devoted a large number of chapters in the later part of *The Life Divine* and in which he has fully explained the process of transformation which forms the core of his supramental yoga. For the same reason his other major work, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, also will not reveal its full meaning to us without a clear understanding of his psychological system. And, as I have mentioned before, his whole treatment of the

cyclic evolution of society given in *The Human Cycle* is essentially psychological in character because the stages of this evolution are the stages of a psychological gradation of consciousness which can be fully understood only if we have grasped the distinguishing characteristics of each of these ascending grades. In fact Sri Aurobindo himself had titled this work *The Psychology of Social Development* when it originally appeared in the *Arya*.

So also for a proper understanding of Sri Aurobindo's poetry and other literary writings an adequate knowledge of his psychological system is essential. In his major literary work, *The Future Poetry*, for example, he has traced the evolution of English poetry from the earliest to the modern period in a series of chapters in terms of the ascending planes of consciousness from which successive English poets have derived their inspiration and vision. Without a prior knowledge of these planes as given in his psychological system, it would not be possible to grasp the full significance of these different sources of poetic inspiration graded in an evolutionary sequence. For this purpose his letters on poetry and literature are of immense value, for in a large number of them he has clearly explained the distinctive characteristics of these ascending planes of poetic inspiration and vision and their subtle nuances of rhythm and significance. Especially valuable are his letters on what he has termed "overhead poetry" which deal with different varieties of poetic inspiration emanating from the planes of spiritual mind intermediate between the intellectual mind and the Supermind. And his great epic *Savitri* also requires a knowledge of the psychological gradation of the planes of consciousness for a full understanding of a large number of its cantos, particularly the fifteen cantos of Book Two of Part One named "The Book of the Traveller of the Worlds" describing the "World-Stair" which Aswapathy climbs in his yoga, and of Books Seven to Eleven which deal with Savitri's journey in the inner and higher worlds after Satyavan's death in the forest.

I have given instances only of Sri Aurobindo's major works but what I have said applies more or less to his other works also. We can therefore say that a knowledge of his psychological system is the key which opens the doors to a full understanding of all his works.

These, in brief outline, are some of the main points showing the great importance of studying psychology, especially the integral yogic psychology of Sri Aurobindo.

KISHOR GANDHI



# THE PROS AND CONS OF HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI

## TWO OPINIONS WITH THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS

*Every August brings up the memory of the first use of the atom bomb—the release of nuclear energy in its destructive aspect on two closely connected occasions before its various peaceful applications could be developed. Ever since those stupendous explosions, the world's mind has been vexed by the question whether or not they were justified. Several articles appeared last year which marked the 40th anniversary of the events. What has seemed to the Editor of Mother India the most comprehensive and balanced treatment is a review of four books which defended the crucial act—an article published in the Times Literary Supplement (London) of August 9, 1985, pp. 869-70. There was only one piece of criticism of it, a letter in the TLS's issue of September 6 the same year, p. 975, col. 1. With acknowledgements to that well-known weekly, at once popular and academic, we are reproducing both the writings, along with the Editor's Comments at the end.*

## THE JUSTIFICATION OF TRAGEDY

ON August 6, 1945, at 8.15 a.m. local time, the first atomic bomb in the history of mankind was dropped on Hiroshima, a Japanese city with a population of 343,000. Three days later the second, and please God the last, was dropped on the port of Nagasaki, whose population was 240,000. Between them the two bombs killed just over 100,000 people outright, horribly maimed a further 100,000 and left over 200,000 homeless: many, without knowing it, already mortally sick with radiation disease. By 1950 the total number of casualties directly attributable to these two weapons had risen to 300,000: about half the population of the two cities combined.

The dropping of the Nagasaki bomb was described by one observer, the American physicist William Laurence, quoted by Leonard Cheshire in *The Light of Many Suns*:<sup>1</sup>

We watched a giant pillar of purple fire 10,000 feet high, shoot up like a meteor coming from the earth instead of outer space. It was no longer smoke, or dust, or even a cloud of fire. It was a living thing, a new species of being, born before our incredulous eyes. Even as we watched, a ground mushroom came shooting out of the top to 45,000 feet, a mushroom top that was even more alive than the pillar, seething and boiling in a white fury of creamy foam, a thousand geysers rolled into one. It kept struggling in elemental fury, like a creature in the act of breaking the bonds that held it down. When we last saw it, it had

1 *The Light of Many Suns: The Meaning of the Bomb*, 138 pp. (Methuen), £ 7.85

changed into a flower-like form, its giant petals curving downward, creamy white outside, rose-coloured inside. The boiling pillar had become a giant mountain of jumbled rainbows. Much living substance had gone into those rainbows.

It had indeed. But those out of whose deaths this new and monstrous life had been born were luckier than many of those who survived. One thirteen-year-old schoolgirl describes her own experiences in Anne Chisholm's *Faces of Hiroshima*.<sup>1</sup>

I saw something drop—white I think—and pow!—a big explosion knocked me down. Then I was unconscious—I don't know for how long. Then I was conscious, but I couldn't see anything, it was all black and red. Then I call my friend Toshiko; then all the fog goes away but I can't find her. I never see her again... Someone gave me oil for my hands and face. It hurt; my face had a swollen feeling, and I couldn't move my neck. My eyes were swollen and felt closed up. I go to my school yard and sat down, put my head against a wall and—unconscious again. When I wake up—I don't know how long—it was so dark! I kept saying, "Please give me some water; my name is Shigeko. I live at so and so, tell my parents..."

The physicist Freeman Dyson has drawn a useful distinction between "the world of the warriors" and "the world of the victims". In the case of Hiroshima it is the victims we chiefly remember. From John Hersey's pioneering study *Hiroshima* (1946) onwards their sufferings have been documented scrupulously and horribly. Many people believe these sufferings to have been so appalling that nothing can possibly justify their infliction. For them Hiroshima was a war crime comparable to the Holocaust itself: an irredeemable evil which must lie heavily on the conscience of those responsible for it. The military and moral justifications for the bombing are brushed aside or disbelieved. It is simpler to assume that so immoral an act must have been motivated by immoral intentions (as in the case more recently of the sinking of the *Belgrano*). These critics consider that it was not necessary to drop the bombs to compel the Japanese to surrender: did not the Allies know, from intercepted radio signals, that the Japanese government had already made such overtures through the Soviet Union? The bomb was dropped, the argument goes, on a helpless and defeated people by an American government concerned only to forestall Soviet intervention in the Japanese war and to demonstrate American power in the face of her newly threatening rival. It was not so much the last act in the Second World War, they maintain, as the first round in the Third.

This belief, made fashionable in the 1960's by such revisionists as Gar Alperovitz and Gabriel Kolko, has not stood up to critical examination. The Allies did indeed know that the civilians in the Japanese government were seeking a way of escape; but they also knew that the military colleagues of those statesmen were determined

<sup>1</sup> *Faces of Hiroshima*, 182 pp. (Cape), £ 9.95 (paperback, £ 4.95).

to prevent it. The Potsdam Declaration with its modified surrender terms was issued precisely to strengthen the hand of the Japanese peace party, but the military were strong enough to ensure its rejection. The military leadership of Japan still planned an inch-by-inch defence of the home islands—to say nothing of the regions of South-East Asia which they still held with over half a million fighting troops. In the event of an allied landing they planned a massacre of their prisoners both in South-East Asia and in Japan. The quality of their defence of Okinawa, where they had inflicted 50,000 casualties and themselves lost 110,000 dead, made American estimates of probable casualties in an invasion of the home islands—half a million Americans out of an invasion force of five million, and ten million Japanese from the combined effects of battle, bombing and starvation—seem all too plausible. Only after the second bomb did their spokesmen in the Cabinet fall silent. Even then a group of fanatical young officers attempted a coup, to sabotage the Imperial order to surrender.

In 1944-5, Allied war leaders had in fact little time to speculate about post-war possibilities. Their attention was necessarily focussed on the immediate task of destroying enemies whom they saw, with good reason, as powerful, desperate and overwhelmingly evil. Stephen Harper has done good service in his clearly written narrative, *Miracle of Deliverance*,<sup>1</sup> by reminding us of the military background against which the decision to drop the bomb was taken. The Americans were planning an invasion of Kyushu in November 1945 (Operation OLYMPIC, with 750,000 men) to be followed in March 1946 by a landing in the Tokyo region (Operation CORONET, with 1.8 million men). Harper also reminds us of the dimensions of American “conventional” bombing: the raid on Tokyo on March 9 had killed 84,000 people and left a million homeless, itself only the curtain-raiser to an offensive which killed or wounded 750,000 Japanese and destroyed the homes of nine million. The Hiroshima casualties must be seen against the background of these losses; and not even these had brought the Japanese military within sight of surrender.

But the bulk of Stephen Harper’s book deals with what is still the forgotten front—South-East Asia, where Lord Louis Mountbatten’s command faced the task of evicting Field Marshal Terauchi’s forces, 100,000 strong, from Malaya. For this they were mounting a massive offensive (Operation ZIPPER) to be launched in September 1945 on the coast of Malaya between Singapore and Penang, with 182,000 men, 17,700 vehicles, and 225,000 tons of supplies, serviced by 112 merchant ships and protected by fifty-eight warships. The landings did indeed take place as planned, but only after the Japanese had surrendered. This was just as well. Landing-craft went aground on hidden off-shore sandbanks; vehicles bogged down on the soft beaches beyond. As an operation of war it would have been a catastrophe comparable to Dieppe. How and whether the re-conquest of Malaya would have proceeded after that is anyone’s guess: Terauchi had no intention of surrendering, and needed a direct order from the Emperor, brought by a royal prince, to persuade him to do so. It is not

<sup>1</sup> *Miracle of Deliverance: The Case for the Bombing of Nagasaki*, 224 pp. (Sidgwick and Jackson), £ 10.95.

surprising that all those involved or likely to be involved in fighting the Japanese, not to mention the prisoners already in their hands, saw the dropping of the bombs in the same light as did Winston Churchill—it was “a miracle of deliverance”: deliverance not for the Allies only, but for the Japanese themselves.

The same view is taken by one of the only Englishmen to witness the dropping of the bombs, Group-Captain Leonard Cheshire. Cheshire had already won the Victoria Cross by his pioneering of precision-bombing against targets in Germany, and he was present on the flight to Nagasaki as an official British observer. This courageous and highly professional officer might be written off as belonging unambiguously to the world of the warrior, had he not spent the years since the Second World War in working among the victims; founding and running the Cheshire Homes, for which he has received the only civil award capable of matching his military honours: the Order of Merit. Cheshire is a convinced and explicit Christian, and his vision encompasses both worlds. In *The Light of Many Suns* he not only describes his own experiences at the time of the dropping of the bomb—itsself a dramatic enough story—but explains why he still considers the action to have been necessary at the time and salutary for posterity. He states indeed, with a certainty which one can only find enviable, that the coming of nuclear weapons marks “a decisive stage in human history, in that they have banished from our beautiful earth the terrible spectre of world war”.

Whether one agrees with this conclusion or not, Cheshire’s book is essential reading for all those, especially Christians, who are concerned with the morality of nuclear deterrence. He takes issue with the pacifist and specifically the nuclear pacifist case on grounds both of prudential and of Christian morality. Like many of us, he sees little advantage in a world once again made safe for conventional war. While he does not equate Soviet Communism with Nazism or Japanese militarism, he does, like all Christians, believe in the reality and persistence of evil in the world. In consequence, “for the Western Alliance to repudiate the possession of nuclear weapons would be to leave their development and deployment for the rest of time to those nations who see no moral objections to using them for their own ends.” Nor does Cheshire have any reservations about using these weapons if the worst comes to the worst:

The atomic attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, although directed against major military targets, killed many thousands of civilians indiscriminately; yet, because of the fact that they brought the war to an immediate end, thereby saving millions of lives, there is a compelling case for holding them to be morally tolerable. Can one really say that, in the highly improbable event of an all-out attack on Europe, to threaten a limited nuclear strike on a military but populated target for the clear purpose of halting the aggression, and to have the intention of carrying it out unless the attack is called off, is morally unacceptable? I do not think so. Only because this very intention was in doubt did war break out. To take the

one step capable of correcting the error and halting the war cannot be immoral in an absolute sense.

Put like that, Cheshire's case is a strong one. It would be stronger still if we could be certain that this is all that is visualized in American—or come to that, British—nuclear targeting plans. Nuclear deterrence is no longer a matter of a single bomb and a single city. Each missile fired by either side now has the capacity to destroy half a dozen Hiroshimas. And this time the victims would have the capacity to retaliate in kind.

Finally, the world of the victims is movingly described in two studies of "The Hiroshima Maidens":<sup>1</sup> the group of Japanese girls, horribly disfigured by the Hiroshima bomb, who were taken to America in the mid-1950s for plastic surgery. The simultaneous appearance of these two books must be an embarrassment for their authors to which I shall not add by trying to compare their merits. Both are careful, restrained accounts by professional writers of a cultural confrontation which showed American generosity at its best, if also occasionally American brash insensitivity at its worst. But what is most notable about both these works is the complete absence of bitterness displayed by these victims towards the warriors whose calculations were responsible for their sufferings. Their attitude to the bomb which deformed them was that of the entire people of Hiroshima, as reported by one of the heroes and survivors of the disaster, the Rev Kiyoshi Tanimoto. According to him they said simply, "We hope it will bring peace to the world." That is a sentiment which we can still devoutly echo forty years on.

MICHAEL HOWARD

### JUSTIFYING HIROSHIMA

Sir,—Michael Howard, the foremost military historian in the English language, was disappointing in his review (August 9) of four books about the dropping of the two nuclear bombs on Japan in August 1945. He made too many excuses for the blunders of the American Government.

He is undoubtedly correct in assuming that the nuclear bombs saved American military lives. Whether they also saved Japanese military and civilian lives is more controversial. He left out four important facts that might lead others to a different conclusion.

1. The US Army estimate of 500,000 casualties, if the New Mexico experiment had failed and the islands had been invaded, was inflated. What was the exact date of this estimate? And did not the US Navy and Army Air Force make lower estimates at a later date based on the projected destruction wrought by fire bombing and starvation caused by the submarines and blockade?

<sup>1</sup> One is *Faces of Hiroshima*; the other *The Hiroshima Maidens, A story of Courage, Compassion, and Survival* by Rodney Barker, 256 pp. (Viking), £ 9.95.

2. The estimate of Japanese lives to be sacrificed had the invasion been necessary should not have been made on the basis of the losses on Okinawa. The Germans lost many men in their Italian campaign of 1943-4 but surrendered quickly to the Western Allies in their homeland after January 1945.

3. Professor Howard does not discuss the problem of retaining the Emperor. Japan made diplomatic overtures in May 1945, and several in the American Government, particularly Secretary of State James Byrnes, refused to consider this option until August 10, 1945. Had the United States accepted the Emperor's status earlier, both the Russian invasion and the use of atomic bombs might have been avoided.

4. The Soviet Union was obligated under the Yalta formula agreed to in February 1945 to declare war on August 8. This event, along with the dropping of the two bombs, helped persuade the Japanese Army and Government to surrender quickly. Had the New Mexican nuclear experiment failed in July, and had the Soviets still declared war, 500,000 estimated casualties would certainly have had to be lowered.

Admittedly these arguments are based on many hypotheticals, but so then is the analysis in Professor Howard's review, which tended to justify what happened as the only possible course of events.

ROBERT H. WHEALEY

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## EDITOR'S COMMENTS

## I

Robert H. Whealey's arguments against Michael Howard are beside the mark in most respects. Some are even palpably thoughtless in their suggestions.

One does not need to be a champion of America to see through these criticisms. An exposure of their inadequacy and of other likely strictures must not lead people to raise their hands in indignation and cry: "Here is a rank Americophile!" No tinge of political partiality towards the U.S. should be read in the following comments apropos of Professor Whealey.

Can any capital be made of a possible error in Howard's estimates? If the estimate of 500,000 U.S. casualties during a hypothesised invasion of Japan is inflated, does it mean that if only, say, half or one-fourth the number of American lives were to be lost, the avoidance of the atom bomb which saved them all would be rational and humane? To set aside the saving of lives merely because the loss of them might come to less than 500,000 is an absurdity.

Shirking the use of the atom bomb, how could Truman have explained his choice to the families of the soldiers who in whatever numbers would subsequently have died? How could he have excused the continuation of the war at their expense when he had a weapon to bring about a swift end?

The same reasoning holds on the opposite side of the situation. If less Japanese than the estimated 10,000,000 would have been sacrificed in the invasion, does it mean that a somewhat lowered number was worth sacrificing by preferring an invasion aided by non-atomic modes of slaughter in place of the atomic attack which would avoid the sacrifice altogether?

The notion that, like the Germans who surrendered quickly when their homeland was being invaded, the Japanese would have easily given up and not fought as doggedly as they did on Okinawa—this notion misses the difference between the calculating German mentality and the kamikaze psychology of the Japanese. In the summer of 1945 Japan was reported to have more than 2 million soldiers and 30 million citizens prepared to die rather than be dishonoured by surrendering. The analogy from Okinawa is not just the American view. Kawamoto and most other Japanese today feel that nothing short of a catastrophe would have made Japan's military government surrender.

Besides, it is not quite true that nearer home the Germans were surrendering quickly everywhere when Allied military success was virtually assured. John Erickson, Director of Defence Studies at Edinburgh University, has drawn attention to how in the early spring of 1945, as well as to a lesser degree in the late winter of 1944, Stalin was irked on observing that practically "Germany had ceased warring in the west against the British and the Americans while continuing to fight Britain's and United States' ally, Russia, in the east."<sup>1</sup> Obviously, the German mind was calculating that

<sup>1</sup> Review of A.J.P. Taylor's *How Wars End* in the TLS of July 19, 1985, p. 804, col. 3.

it would be advantageous to admit defeat and thus to sue for peace in the west instead of the east where Stalin would be the master. Whealey not only overlooks the difference between the mentality of Germans and the psychology of Japan: he also misses the special reason why there was quick surrender by the Germans to the British and the Americans when their homeland was being invaded in the period after the campaign in Italy.

Professor Whealey says that Japan made diplomatic overtures in May 1945. But he forgets that in late July a warning was issued to her from Potsdam where Truman, Churchill and Stalin had conferred. Radio Tokyo broadcast that the Japanese government would treat the warning with "silent contempt". True, the Potsdam message when it called for "unconditional surrender" made no mention of either the atom bomb or the Mikado's future status. But surely Japan could have hinted her willingness to co-operate if Hirohito would still be held in honour.

The argument from Russia agreeing to declare war is invalid on the same score as argument No. 1. From what Professor Whealey says it is clear that Japan would have surrendered but not so quickly as she did when Russia's declaration of war on August 8 was accompanied a day later by the second atom bomb—now dropped on Nagasaki. This means that Japan would have fought on and numerous lives been lost on both sides. The conclusion that the estimated 500,000 lives would certainly have to be lowered because of Russia's coming in is rather cold-blooded. If even a small number of American lives had to be jeopardised by refraining from the atom bomb, the use of this weapon by their country was vindicated. Would any nation sacrifice its soldiers unnecessarily?

As for the morality of the American action, nobody knew beforehand how much damage would be inflicted on Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the atom bomb. There was no idea of its unusually dire results. The scientists responsible for its development never stressed that their product might unleash radioactive fallout that would make it the most sinister weapon conceivable. J. Robert Oppenheimer, the mastermind of the project, who in the later "witch-hunting" McCarthy era was suspected of Communist sympathies, "gave short shrift to those scientists working under him [at Los Alamos] who urged that their creation not be used".<sup>1</sup> What Truman and his advisers were told was simply that the explosion would be phenomenally large. Naturally they believed that it would be no more repellent morally than the tremendous fire-bombing of Tokyo. The question was of degree and not of kind: the atom bomb seemed as legitimate as any other deadly weapon of modern war.

Doubtless, there were some other considerations. An investment of \$2 billion had been made in the "Manhattan Project" that had produced the bomb. Practical sense ruled: "The results had better be worth such a lot of money." The investment would go down the drain if the product were shelved. But practical sense was not the final arbiter. What decided the non-shelving was the feeling of certainty that

<sup>1</sup> Walter Isaacson, "Why Did We Drop the Bomb"?, *Time*, the Weekly News magazine, August 19, 1985, p. 45.



the product would serve to terminate a war enormously wasteful as regards the human quantum no less than the economic.

More serious in the long view were political considerations *vis-à-vis* the Soviet Union. Before the bomb was ready, the American government was very eager for Russia to enter the war against Japan. On the eve of the Yalta Conference in early February 1945, Roosevelt was apprised of the War Department's estimate, based on information about Japanese military strength, that the fight with her would certainly last till the autumn of 1946 and might be prolonged by the additional Japanese Kwantung Army into 1947 if not even in to 1948 unless Russia joined forces with U.S. Stalin promised Roosevelt—on the latter's concurring with the claims and conditions stipulated by the former—to strike at Japan within 3 months of Germany's surrender. When Germany capitulated on May 7, 1945, Truman, who had by then become President, was bent on Russia acting soon. At Potsdam in July he, along with Churchill, secured Stalin's promise to declare war on Japan within a few weeks. He did this in spite of receiving on the very first day of their meeting—July 16—the cable from General Groves that the bomb-test at home had been successful. However, when Groves gave the assurance through Secretary of War Henry Stimson that a bomb would be ready for use in August, American officials began to look at the new weapon as a possible way to avoid Stalin's involvement in the Pacific area, as well as to alarm him and render him more manageable in the future. It was even thought eminently strategic to finish the war before the Soviet Union could come in. The Hiroshima bomb was dropped two days ahead of Russia's participation. Japan did not surrender immediately and Stalin managed to declare war on her just in advance of the Nagasaki bomb. The political manoeuvring on America's part has to be admitted, but it bears only on the timing of the atomic attack. And here too the other consideration—namely, saving lives, especially American ones, on a huge scale—has an important say. As early as possible the first bomb was to go into action. Though the Kremlin still holds that it was used by the U.S. to frighten the Soviets, both the decision to bomb Hiroshima and the fixing of August 6 for the operation depended fundamentally on the life-saving motive, the extreme anxiety to avoid the vastly wasteful invasion of the Japanese homeland. Itself a state of the ethical conscience, it could take effect unhindered because of the explicit air of moral legitimacy carried at the time by that extra-powerful addition to the modern armoury.

At most Japan could have been informed that a greater weapon than any so far was to be exploited. Indeed a proposal to inform her was made by Stimson's assistant John McCloy, but it received no encouragement. Japan was unlikely to be intimidated. Even the terrible casualties of the Hiroshima bombing did not lead her to surrender at once. It took her three days to do so. Actually one minute before the Nagasaki bomb was dropped—and therefore too late to prevent this drastic measure to force her hand—the Japanese Prime Minister told his cabinet: "The only alternative [to being destroyed] is to accept the Potsdam Declaration and terminate the war." Short of witnessing concretely the enormity of the destruction and taking some

time to overcome the desperate streak in her character, Japan would have brushed aside the proffered information as grandiose bluff.

It appears that Roosevelt had even contemplated inviting Japan to watch a trial explosion in some wasteland like Siberia or the Aleutian Islands. Two months before Hiroshima a committee of American scientists under the chairmanship of James Franck urged the U.S. Secretary of War to make an atomic demonstration to Japan in an uninhabited locality. But military opinion was bound to go against any such idea. When one of the Army Chiefs of Staff was told of it after the experimental explosion at Alamogordo, he is reported to have protested: "All the time we are notifying the enemy of the demonstration, all the time we are arranging the details of it and awaiting word if she'll attend, all those weeks, American boys will be losing their lives." Besides, it was extremely doubtful whether the Japanese would have trusted the Americans and not thought the plan a ruse to put them off some military advantage open to them. At least they might have delayed inordinately, cooking up some counter-plan of their own.

Under any circumstances the first use of the atom bomb at Hiroshima and Nagasaki strikes one as having been inevitable.

When the full awareness of the horror dawned on America with the piecing together of all the reports, she learnt the lesson from them unforgettably. This is shown by her non-use of the bomb ever since. She never even held the overawing weapon as a threat against any nation although she had the monopoly of it until 1949—that is, until the formulas stolen from her by Russia-inspired spies enabled the Soviet Union to make its own bomb. Clearly, the present nuclear programme of the U.S. does not stem from an aggressive motive. It stems from a distrust of Russia based on the latter's moves in Eastern Europe in the wake of World War II and the recent advance into Afghanistan. The distrust may be at the moment misguided, but it is intelligible against the background of the past as usually interpreted. Russia too lacks faith in "capitalist" America, accuses her of imperialist conspiracies, censures her CIA-organisation and complains of her non-acceptance of proposals to relinquish nuclear armaments. Let us hope that the two Super-powers will learn to live with confidence in each other.

In passing, we may mark that the idea of making and using an atom bomb was in the air during the last war not only in America but also among her allies. When Truman and Churchill at Potsdam got a cable from General Groves on the successful detonation of the test-bomb, they were averse at the start to letting Stalin know of it. Eight days later—July 24, 1945—Truman mentioned the new weapon as Stalin was about to get into his car at the close of the day's discussion. Stalin showed no curiosity, put no question, expressed no opinion, but that very night he despatched a telegram to the team working on the atom bomb in Russia to hurry with the job. After two days, with all the Big Three aware of what might be in store for Japan in case she was intractable, the call for "unconditional surrender" was made to her.

To return to our subject. All in all, there is scarcely any plea possible against the first use of the atom bomb. Howard's presentation of the pros and cons of the matter and his leaning towards the pros stands essentially unrefuted.

## 2

To complete our survey, a couple of points neither he nor Whealey has dealt with need to be clarified in view of criticism hailing particularly from Asiatic nations. One of them has been touched upon by Howard. It requires a little bit of extended treatment. Howard has said that for many people "Hiroshima was a war crime comparable to the Holocaust itself". The Holocaust is, of course, "the final solution" Hitler put into practice when he liquidated 6 million non-combatant Jews. The comparison with that colossal genocide is ridiculous. The bombing of Hiroshima was basically a military operation with a military target. The city was serving as a rail-terminus and port, a regional army headquarters and a major producer of synthetic oil and industrial war-materials. The death or mutilation of civilians was unavoidable. It was also in keeping with the horrific principle of "total war". This principle was accepted not only by the Western democracies but by the Soviet Union as well. It had already been acted on against Hitler who had himself followed it if not even invented it with the bombing of Coventry and Lidice. Again, there was no systematic pursuit of atomic bombing as there was of "the final solution". Neither Hiroshima nor Nagasaki (another military target) are crimes at all in the same sense as the persistent multiple murder of civilian Jews as a matter of policy. Belsen, Auschwitz and other centres of genocide stand apart in a category of their own.

It has often been said by Asiatics that the atom bomb was dropped on Japan because Japan was an Asiatic nation and that if Germany had not surrendered on May 7, 1945, more than two months before the first experimental bomb was exploded in the New Mexican Desert at 5.30 a.m. on July 16, it would still have not been dropped on her. The facts are entirely at odds with such a statement. No doubt, America was very sore about Japan after Pearl Harbour, and a strong impulse for retribution was at play. Many besides Harold Agnew felt that the Japanese "bloody well deserved" Hiroshima. But it is a mistake to think that the making of the bomb was ever Japan-oriented. The decision to develop it was taken by the U.S. as the result of a stimulus from Europe under the threat of Nazism.

The Gestapo was after Lise Meitner, a former student of Einstein's as well as a fellow-Jew and in 1939 a co-worker with Otto Hahn at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute in Berlin. She managed to elude the Gestapo and reached Denmark with her precious notes on chain-reactions. She sought out Niels Bohr in Copenhagen. Bohr smuggled her notes across the ocean to Enrico Fermi, an Italian refugee working at Columbia University with a Hungarian Jewish refugee from the University of Berlin, Leo Szilard. Both had been following up Meitner's earlier experiments. Bohr sent also his extremely disquieting impression that Hitler was on the road to developing

the atom bomb. Fermi and Szilard approached Einstein and persuaded him to write to Roosevelt on the urgency of making the bomb first. After the war it became known that Hitler and his officers had decided that every bit of government money was required for ground armies—long-range guns, anti-aircraft and small cannon. So the scientists researching in nuclear energy and wishing to utilise the uranium-supplies from Czechoslovakia received little help. But this post-war knowledge is neither here nor there in evaluating the intentions of the U.S. It was precisely against Germany that the atom bomb was planned with an eye to its early use. In later years, when the total information on its effect had been gathered, Einstein regretted his two famous letters to Roosevelt, forgetting that at the time he had signed them it was thought to be no more than an ultra-efficient explosive, but the very words of his somewhat confused regret prove our point. For they link America and the bomb directly with the Nazis: “Had I known that the Germans would not succeed in producing the bomb, I would not have lifted a finger.”

If Germany had delayed her surrender she would have suffered the first atomic attack. And it is most likely that Japan, shocked by the consequences of this weapon for her western ally, would have come to terms before it could have been directed at her. She would have had more time than three days to recognise the utter folly of further resistance. Japan was the prime victim simply because Germany escaped this fate by laying down her arms prior to experiencing the punishment being prepared for her. “Asiatic” and “European” have no vital bearing on the issue of the first destructive use of what is seen in Sri Aurobindo’s *Savitri* as “strong by death to slay or to create”—

The riven invisible atom’s omnipotent force.

### 3

We may close with a question which has never been raised but is none the less relevant in the final analysis. Suppose America had fully known that atomic bombing was worse even than chemical warfare. Would she still have gone in for it? The answer—rather disturbing when stated baldly—is “Yes”. For America had no option in the peculiar situation in which she found herself. Massive life-saving on her own side was involved. On the other side massive life-destruction, and no possibility of retaliation. In so lucky a position what country would agree—out of general humane principles—to let its sons die in their hundreds of thousands, just to spare a ruthless enemy who, given the chance, would not hesitate to act in the same manner?

Our judgment would be different if a country made such a weapon a means of aggression. That would be sheer savagery. There has been no instance of it in American history after World War II. And now that the pair of Super-powers are equally matched in nuclear capability, this capability has rendered them wary, for the exploitation of it by one party would draw a reprisal from the other and cause by re-current attack and counter-attack a global devastation, nearly the end of *homo sapiens*.

If *homo* is really *sapiens*, the first employment of the atom bomb will have no sequel: the sequel under present conditions can only be a universally catastrophic World War III.

As a happy anticlimax to the closing question we have raised we must add: "The question is a pure fantasy. There was no way to know fully in advance how sinister the atom bomb would be. If there had been a way, Truman and his advisers would never have been in the dark as evidently they were. No conceivable moral dilemma could actually have arisen. In terms of historical facts we should imitate the Japanese in their admirable ultimate attitude to Hiroshima and Nagasaki: a quiet stoicism, a lack of bitterness in the midst of sadness, and a face turned in hope of wisdom towards the future."

K. D. SETHNA

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## ECLIPSED

HITHER and thither fluttered  
 An autumn leaf yellow and withered  
 On the turbulent winds.  
 Tossed back and forth it danced  
 To the tortuous tune of Fate's whims.  
 Thus like a lost echo, the eclipsed ego,  
 Its work done, passed on Time's wings.  
 In that high moment, unfettered and free  
 My soul stood in front, victorious.  
 Truth's golden rays lined the verdure  
 Of an inner forest of magic hues.  
 Now bare of limits the tree of Self flowered  
 Penetrating the topless ether of the Infinite.

SHYAM KUMARI

## ASTROLOGERS AND MOUNTBATTEN'S CHOICE OF THE INDEPENDENCE DAY

*Last year in our issue of August 15 we published some passages from Chapter 8 of Freedom at Midnight by Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre (Vikas Publishing House). They showed how Lord Louis Mountbatten happened to choose Sri Aurobindo's birth-date for India's day of Independence. Now, with acknowledgments again to the authors and publishers, we are following up with passages on its reception by a certain influential segment of India. Here is an interesting anti-climax to the sublime coincidence achieved by Mountbatten.*

NOWHERE, however, did his choice of the date of 15 August for India's independence cause as much surprise and consternation as it did in the ranks of a corporation which ruled the lives of millions of Hindus with a tyranny more oppressive than that of the English, Congress and maharajas combined. Mountbatten had committed the unpardonable fault of announcing his choice without first having consulted representatives of the most powerful occult body in India, the *jyotishis*, the astrologers.

No people in the world were as subservient to their authority and rulings as the Indians. Nowhere did their competence extend into so many domains. Every maharaja, every temple, every village had one or two astrologers who ruled like little dictators over the community and its inhabitants. Millions of Indians wouldn't dream of setting out on a trip, receiving a guest, signing a contract, going hunting, putting on a new suit, buying a new jewel, cutting a moustache, marrying a daughter or even having their own funerals arranged, without prior consultation with an astrologer.

Discerning the divine order of things in their reading of their celestial charts, the astrologers claimed for themselves a power that made them masters of millions of lives. Children whom they proclaimed were born under an unlucky star were often abandoned by their parents. Men elected to commit suicide at the hour they announced the conjunction of the planets was particularly favourable to the act. They laid down which days of a given week would be auspicious, and which would not. Sunday was inevitably an inauspicious day; so, too, was Friday. Anybody in India could have discovered with the aid of a chart no more occult than a calendar that in 1947, 15 August happened to fall on a Friday.

As soon as the radio announced Mountbatten's date, astrologers all over India began to consult their charts. Those in the holy city of Benares and several others in the south immediately proclaimed 15 August a date so inauspicious that India 'would be better advised to tolerate the British one day longer rather than risk eternal damnation'.

In Calcutta, Swami Madananand rushed to his celestial charts as soon as he heard the date announced. He took out his *navamansh*, an enormous circular chart composed of a succession of concentric circles on which were plotted the days and

months of the year, the cycles of the sun and moon, the planets, the signs of the Zodiac and the positions of the 27 stars influencing the destiny of the earth. At its centre was a map of the world. He twisted the circles on his chart until they were all set for the 15th of August. Then, from a map of India in the chart's core, he began to draw a series of lines out towards the edge of his wheel. As he did so, he sat up aghast. His calculations foretold disaster. India on 15 August would lie under the Zodiacal sign of Makara, Capricorn, a sign one of whose particularities was its unrelenting hostility to all centrifugal forces, hence to partition. Far worse, that day would be passed under the influence of Saturn, a notably inauspicious planet, dominated by Rahu, scornfully labelled by astrologers 'the star with no neck', a celestial body whose manifestations were almost wholly malign. From midnight, 14 August throughout 15 August, Saturn, Jupiter and Venus would all lie in the most accursed site of the heavens, the ninth house of Karamstahn. Like thousands of his colleagues, the young astrologer looked up from his charts overcome by the magnitude of the disaster they had revealed. 'What have they done? What have they done?' he shouted to the heavens whose machinations he interpreted for man.

Despite the discipline acquired in years of yoga, meditation and Tantric studies in a temple in the hills of Assam, the astrologer lost control of himself. Seizing a piece of paper he sat down and wrote an urgent appeal to the man inadvertently responsible for this celestial catastrophe.

'For the love of God,' he wrote to Louis Mountbatten, 'do not give India her independence on 15 August. If floods, drought, famine and massacres follow, it will be because free India was born on a day cursed by the stars.'

## “SUDDENNESS” IN SAVITRI

MANY a time the inner light of the soul is too shrouded to show the way. The steadfast enthusiasm of the mind and heart falter and vanish and the body, prodded beyond its limits by the constant cruel goads of misguided vital élan and mental premises and strivings falls like a tired bullock by the roadside or drags its feet, its strength not being able to match the joyous gallops of the vital or the eagle flights of the mind. And the defeated and despairing heart is also like a wounded bird laying its head on its folded wings. In those moments of dark and painful disequilibrium the pilgrim of the spiritual path, awed by the difficult ascension ahead, lays down his staff and sits dejected. The night seems unending, the dawn a fiction, to say nothing of the ever elusive noons and all efforts prove vain.

Then through some unexpected cleavage a road is glimpsed, some unseen hand gives support, a new light breaks on the horizon. It is the sun-face of Grace. Sri Aurobindo has written of it in ringing words:

“And when the grace and protection of the Divine Mother are with you, what is there that can touch you or whom need you fear? A little of it even will carry you through all difficulties, obstacles and dangers; surrounded by its full presence you can go securely on your way because it is hers, careless of all menace, unaffected by any hostility however powerful, whether from this world or from worlds invisible. Its touch can turn difficulties into opportunities, failure into success and weakness into unfaltering strength. For the grace of the Divine Mother is the sanction of the Supreme and now or tomorrow its effect is sure, a thing decreed, inevitable and irresistible.”<sup>1</sup>

But who can know the ways of the Divine Grace? How can our time-bound hearts rely on its timelessness? And who can lay a claim on the Sovereign Grace or pretend to force or compel it? To it a million years of Tapasya are but a moment’s play, its conditions are hard to fulfil, deliberately made so by the Divine, for does not Sri Aurobindo say, “Nay, then is immortality a plaything to be given lightly to a child, or the divine life a prize without effort or the crown for a weakling? Strive rightly and thou shalt have; trust and thy trust shall in the end be justified; but the dread Law of the Way is there and none can abrogate it.”<sup>2</sup>

This phenomenon of Grace does not obey any human rules or ways. Then how to hope against all odds? and how to wait like a monument of patience repeating,

“Since I want only the Divine, my success is sure, I have only to walk forward in all confidence and His own hand will be there secretly leading me to Him by His own Way and at His own Time.”<sup>3</sup>

Musing on the ways of Divine Grace—this elusive enchantress, the supreme remedy,—one may catch a thin thread of revelation from *Savitri*. This golden word

<sup>1</sup> *Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library*, Vol. 25, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol 17, p. 40.

<sup>3</sup> *Mother India*, April 1981, p. 186.



of revelation is “Sudden”. The Grace has its own ways which may seem to us mortals explicable or inexplicable, justified or unjustified, tardy or swift. But in *Savitri* we get some rare glimpses of its workings and come to know that many a time it comes “suddenly”. Sri Aurobindo’s adjectives and adverbs are always the *mots justes* and in the lines quoted below we get revelation after revelation of the sudden dawns and flowerings of the Spirit.

The following lines give us the knowledge that “suddenness” is an intrinsic quality of the Divine actions:

“Here with the suddenness divine advents have,  
Repeating the marvel of the first descent,  
Changing to rapture the dull earthly round,  
Love came to her hiding the shadow, Death.” (14:21)\*

Below I list all the relevant passages from *Savitri* which disclose this suddenness of revelation and experience and above all the suddenness of the mysterious all-powerful Grace. This knowledge may give our plodding feet a new impetus, or unshakable staff of faith, and a total reliance on Grace because none knows in which moment of intensity the Divine Grace may swoop down like an eagle and upbear our soul to the oversoul and our earth-bound feet may be carried in some golden chariot to some divine plateau of Light, Peace, Love and Life where all may become “sky and God”. For it is not the longevity of the Sadhana but its intensity and one-pointedness that opens the way. Just one divine moment of Grace is sufficient before whose intense luminosity Nescience fades away:

“A great nude arm of splendour suddenly rose;  
It rent the gauze opaque of Nescience.” (38:34)

Once the veil is gone, there begins the upward ascent, the millennial effort—failure and success, the endless circling of life in the paths of evolution—from the insect to the intellectual and Sattwic man. The incubation is long, tardy, limping and its outcome often unknown to the outward mind. Yet something in the being tries again and again till in some unexpected moment of the Gods the upward leap is taken and man is propelled into another Space and Time. Something gets done, some reversal or realisation, and he touches the heights like

“An arrow leaping through eternity  
Suddenly shot from the tense bow of Time...” (79:30)

Man wonders at the ways of God. He is mostly ignorant of the drift of his life

\* Along with the page number the number of the first line of each passage has been given for the reader’s convenience.

and its outcome. He is not so much baffled or downcast by defeat or pain as by the lack of purpose and direction behind life, all the million happenings over which he has no control and the seeming injustice of it all. And then in some quiet moment when his tired being refuses to search any more and, utterly confused, concedes defeat, the Eternal lover may relent and

“The divine intention suddenly shall be seen...” (100:21)

In the light of such revelations all the pieces of the puzzle of existence seem to fall into their places. The cause of all the contradictory-seeming happenings becomes known. The soul in its upward effort tries again and again in mental ways to cleave a path to the Beyond, to attain the heights. But the true knowledge eludes him:

“Then suddenly a luminous finger fell  
On all things seen or touched or heard or felt  
And showed his mind that nothing can be known...” (284:22)

This realisation of the futility of all human effort also comes by the Divine Grace. And when all human upward efforts fail and one cannot advance an inch or force his way forward then also:

“A magic leverage is suddenly caught  
That moves the veiled Ineffable’s timeless will:  
A prayer, a master act, a king idea  
Can link man’s strength to a transcendent Force.” (20:09)

This gives the wavering will and flickering aspirations a new life, for just one prayer may move the will of the Lord. Then His Timelessness may take note of our human Time.

Thus man who battles in the siege of matter, bound by the menacles of life, may one day find that the immense hushed reaches of self have become accessible—

“Out of this world of signs suddenly he came  
Into a silent self where world was not  
And looked beyond into a nameless vast.” (31:20)

All of this is the marvel of Grace, which has its million inscrutable ways of gladdening our lives and of opening vistas after vistas—

“A bliss is felt that never can wholly cease,  
A sudden mystery of secret Grace  
Flowers goldening our earth of red desire.” (278:16)

The unknown becomes known and knowledge and revelation illumine and relume our dark roads like a searchlight helping wandering feet—

“In sudden moments of revealing flame,  
In passionate responses half-unveiled  
He reached the rim of ecstasies unknown;  
A touch supreme surprised his hurrying heart,  
The clasp was remembered of the Wonderful,  
And hints leaped down of white beatitudes.” (236:36)

This mystic and mysterious bliss comes stealthily because its very nature is to be unexpected:

“Its rapture’s poignant beat of sudden bliss...” (29:32)

And it courses in the being on the crests of overwhelming waves of inner Ananda

“And sweet temptations stole from beauty’s realms  
And sudden ecstasies from a world of bliss.” (31:07)

The Grace has its own way and its own reasons, too sublimely high to be understood by our circumscribed minds. But once the soul is ready and the divine moment dawns then all shall be changed into divine ecstasies, the very face of earth and humanity will be moulded in the likeness of God—

“A sudden bliss shall run through every limb  
And nature with a mighty Presence fill.” (710:34)

But how to begin this Godward ascent? The leverage is missing, the drag of human nature, the downward gravity makes it extremely difficult, almost impossible to be fit and expectant recipients of the higher nature and to enter these regions. It is most difficult to change over from the exoteric to the esoteric state, and how does it happen?

“Then suddenly there came on her the change  
Which in tremendous moments of our lives  
Can overtake sometimes the human soul  
And hold it up towards its luminous source.” (571:15)

Then in such a soul-state the tangible becomes intangible and the intangible becomes tangible. A holy silence wraps our being and the manifold activities of our outer nature leave us:

“All vanished suddenly like a thought expunged...” (217-27)

We may grope in the densest darkness for long periods and then when we are hedged in by appearances we may break out of the prison of our knowings parading as Knowledge—and Reason faces the mystery of things:

“Suddenly she stumbled upon things unseen:  
A lightning from the undiscovered Truth  
Startled her eyes with its perplexing glare  
And dug a gulf between the Real and Known  
Till all her knowledge seemed an ignorance.” (254:16)

This is the lila, the eternal hide-and-seek. Thus the Divine lover calls to us constantly. His flute’s magic notes make us leave our repetitious mundane concerns and plunge us into His deeps, we are

“Overtaken by the spirit’s sudden spell...” (235:11)

With such unexpected help which may come any instant and lead us higher and deeper to sun-washed summits or magical depths—who need despair?

“This now revealed its antique face of joy,  
A sudden disclosure to the heart of grief  
Tempting it to endure and long and hope.” (118:26)

Karma loses its crushing hold and the obstructions melt, the impossible comes within reach—

“A touch can alter the fixed front of Fate.  
A sudden turn may come, a road appear,  
A greater mind may see a greater Truth...” (256:08)

These new openings lead us into the soul-recess where, shut or dead to the outer, we wait in a pure anticipation. It may be long or short but some day at some hour the inspiration that joins the inner to the higher may streak in—

“Oft inspiration with her lightning feet,  
A sudden messenger from the all-seeing tops,  
Traversed the soundless corridors of his mind  
Bringing her rhythmic sense of hidden things.” (38:08)

With the help of this divine Inspiration the sadhak can unravel the secrets of her moods and revel on the heights—

“Amid magic dramas of her sudden moods  
And the surprises of her masked Idea  
And the vicissitudes of her vast caprice.” (68:31)

Thus one can go higher and higher to the very source of creation and meet the Divine face to face, the Formless in Form—

“As if the invisible Beloved had come  
Assuming the sudden loveliness of a face  
And close glad hands could seize his fugitive feet  
And the world change with the beauty of a smile.” (290:28)

There is an infusion of an ethereal personality and its qualities in our being. The Divine Truth becomes the cherished companion of the human thinker:

“She has invaded him with her sudden bliss,  
An exhaustless marvel in his happy grasp,  
An allurement, a caught ravishing miracle.” (274:32)

Though the action of this Grace is beyond the grasp of understanding, its gifts are marvellous. It can touch our mortality with the torch of the immortals—

“Grace of the unknown and hands of sudden surprise  
And a touch of sure delight in unsure things...” (173:21)

Then the whole earth is filled with a longing for the things not yet achieved.

“There expectation beat wide sudden wings,  
As if a soul had looked out from earth’s face.” (389:15)

One who was enclosed in a narrow spiritual rut may find his efforts rewarded and new vistas opened—as with the coming of Savitri—

“The mild ascetics of the wood received  
A sudden greatening of their lonely muse.” (532:21)

Hemmed in by our animal humanity we may yet be precipitated into other spheres peopled with other presences—

“while man’s slow life  
Leaped hurriedly into sudden splendid paths  
By divine words and human gods revealed...” (652:04)

In his upward orientation man may renounce the finite and be projected into the Vasts—

“He meets the gods in great and sudden hours,  
He feels the universe as his larger self,  
Makes Space and Time his opportunity  
To join the heights and depths of being in light,  
In the heart’s cave speaks secretly with God.” (659:13)

There are ups and downs but in our parched deserts are hidden the potencies and possibilities of the Gods, for—

“Always the power poured back like sudden rain.” (35:21)

Man’s yearning heart tries to grasp the Divine but falls back defeated and unsuccessful. When his efforts fall mute then She comes:

“The Presence he yearned for suddenly drew close...” (312:10)

And when the soul wanders or rests in the Void not wanting to stop there but not being able to advance then the Supreme descends:

“Then suddenly there rose a sacred stir.  
Amid the lifeless silence of the Void  
In a solitude and an immensity  
A sound came quivering like a loved footfall  
Heard in the listening spaces of the soul;  
A touch perturbed his fibres with delight.” (334:01)

Our first sacred reversal, the turn inward, the finding of the soul may take a long time. The intermediate zone may seem to be interminable but hope, O hearts, for that moment of supreme discovery does come.

“And crossing a wall of doorless living fire  
There suddenly she met her secret soul.” (526:02)

The Divine assures us that one day

“The frontiers of the Ignorance shall recede,  
More and more souls shall enter into light,  
Minds lit, inspired, the occult summoner hear  
And lives blaze with a sudden inner flame...” (710:18)

SHYAM KUMARI

# FURTHER STUDIES IN INTEGRAL PSYCHOLOGY

(Continued from the issue of July 1986)

## PROGRESS OF FREUDIAN THOUGHT: A STUDY IN FREUDIAN REVISIONISTS

FREUD was a strict theorist, even though he modified his positions a few times when new facts obliged him to do so. He was a scientist and a realist to the core yet idealistic trends of life were not ignored altogether.

He was as though born to justify the claims of instinct against morality and religion. In his neurotic cases he was led to see by his teacher Charcot the hidden working of sex. Thus repression was discovered and it became a pillar of the psycho-analytic structure of thought. Pleasure-seeking and instinct were identified and then all pleasure-seeking was turned into sexual activity. The thumb-sucking of the child became sexual activity and the whole concept of Infantile Sexuality came into being: Repression, Sex, Infantile Sexuality, tracking back conflicts to childhood. Free Association Method became the salient feature of Freudian working. During waking hours social inhibitions are more effective. But during sleep and in dreams repressed elements can play up better directly or in disguised form to evade the action of the inner censor or the unconscious superego. Thus dreams and their interpretation to detect the repressions and resolve secret conflicts also becomes an important process in psycho-analysis.

Freud then became or at least acquired the reputation of an advocate of 'Free Living', a life without 'Repressions' and without a sense of guilt in life. 'The sense of guilt' is an uncomfortable feeling and it is a common fact of life and all due to the inhibitions imposed by Morality and Religion. Morality and Religion, therefore, come in for severe strictures at the hands of Freud. So does Civilization which is essentially determined by these.

But can life do without morality, religion and civilization? Can life be all a matter of pleasure-seeking or instinct uninhibited by an 'ought' of morality, religion or civilization? Freud came to recognise the force and value of these forces and then modified his original positions. His writing *Jenseits des Lust-Prinzips* (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle*) was virtually a bombshell for Freud's disciples, as it changed his basic stand. Pleasure was no longer the all-governing basic position. And, while discussing education, he propounded that wisdom consists in discovering the 'optimum' for an individual i.e. when, by what means and how much to repress and suppress. He thus admitted that repression and suppression were necessary to life, that pleasure and instinct could not be given free play, but they must be dealt with discreetly.

And while discussing in the *New Lectures* in the chapter entitled "The Ana-

tomy of Personality” the mutual relations of Ego, Id and Superego, the ordinary externally adjusted personality, the untamed passions conscious and unconscious, and the moral and religious controls and the directives of morality and religion, he affirms that psycho-analytic treatment aims at an “economic balance” among these three factors of personality. However, he admits that mystic practices may possibly be achieving more, a greater harmonisation among them.

This is psycho-analysis as it was with Freud. But Freud’s colleagues and followers have, in different countries, under varying historical situations and the experience of psycho-analytic practice and individual thinking, modified Freud and a wide literature of deviant and revisionist thought has come into being. And to understand Freud today one must consider along with his original thought the thought of the Deviants and the Revisionists too.

But before we venture upon other facets of Psycho-analysis we may consider it in relation to the major deviant trend of Jungian thought in particular. Jung affirms an inherent trend for wholeness in the human psyche. This is the essential function of the ‘Centre’ on the ‘Self’ in personality. The Jungians, his followers, appear to be, as it were, tapping in their therapy an experience of the self. However, they yet seek “to come to terms with the unconscious” in and through their therapeutic processes, which are different though in essential approach allied to those of Freud. Jung’s attitude is all turned to the unconscious and its contents of the archetypes, as Freud’s is all turned to childhood memories and complexes. Jung has a futurist orientation towards a wholeness which is not just a working balance. Yet the racial archetypes, which are things of the past, figure prominently. Will a clear and whole-hearted futurist attitude be not more helpful for the realisation of the wholeness possible in a case? The contents of the unconscious will unavoidably come up and seek harmonisation under the will for wholeness and they will have to be brought under a scheme of conscious reorientation. But that is different from a conscious approach of directly coming to terms with the unconscious. In a full futurist approach we would intensify our will for wholeness and let the unconscious contents come up as they may and get readjusted. The unconscious is largely a field of autonomous formations and they are disorderly. Should one not let them take their time for entering into a scheme of harmonisation?

Even in Freud’s Free Association, if the patient gets indulgent in his recollections, a release does not come about. Recollections should afford a progressive detachment, an objectivity, then alone a relative freedom from repressions can result, not otherwise. This implies a will for health and well-being coming to its own more and more.

These points are of value for appreciating the true character of the curative process.

The Indian Yoga in its various forms directly aims at a conception of perfection, a wholeness, a well-being. This is pursued through all the practices of a discipline and the recalcitrant elements get progressively harmonised. There is no doubt that



some disciplines of yoga take a suppressive and repressive attitude towards the recalcitrant elements. That is not helpful. These elements should be welcomed for disposal and harmonisation, but not hustled in the process. It is more helpful to attune oneself to the futurist possibility of wholeness, perfection and well-being of life.

With this little digression of reference to Jung and Yoga, we may return to Freud and his revisionist colleagues and followers.

Jung was at one time a disciple and colleague of Freud and so was Alfred Adler. But they ceased to be so and developed their independent approaches, independent therapies and independent views of human nature and of life generally. They are, therefore, not Freudian revisionists, they deviated from him rather radically. Freudian revisionists are those who continue to be Freudians, but have sought to reinterpret him or have differed from him in certain ideas or theories of his.

Freud died in 1939 in London. He was born in 1856 and lived and worked in Vienna all his life. His *New Introductory Lectures* published in 1933, a few years before his death when he was ill, embody his own revisions and expansions. His two series of lectures, the early and the new, taken together give a fine exposition of the psycho-analytic thought in original form and in later development in Freud's own words. His two followers and colleagues, Ferenczi and Rank have given the development of psycho-analysis, which embodies the revisions which generally came about. More recently a cultural or interpersonal school of revisionists, which is influential, has formed. This has much changed Freud's position. Besides these there is much of eclectic character, which shows how widely some ideas of Freud have spread out in the fields of psychiatry and psychology. But in the midst of all this there are orthodox Freudians everywhere who seek to remain close to Freud's thought.

*Great Ideas in Psychology*, edited by Robert W. Marks, presents in original words modern psychology and it represents well the contemporary position of psycho-analysis. Freud's own later modifications are given here in a chapter "The Dissection of the Psychic Personality" taken from his *New Introductory Lectures* "written in 1932, which are critical revisions of earlier lectures and enlargement of the field" (Mark). "*The Development of Psycho-analysis*" by Ferenczi and Rank give the development of the movement, its present position and the future trend. This will give us an authentic idea of the subject to enable us to appreciate that psycho-analysis has been an actively growing doctrine from the very beginning and it continues to be so and that it is more than a technique for handling neurotic cases, it is rather a view of human nature, an interpretation of life as a whole. We have referred to some of the modifications which Freud made in his theories. To those we may add here that with Adler he had agreed to recognize that "non-sexual factors might produce an unconscious conflict".<sup>1</sup> And the experience of war neuroses had obliged him to accept that "his earlier theories were not sufficiently developed to deal with all the facts."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Robert Thomson, *The Pelican History of Psychology*, p. 252, Penguin Books.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 253.

Here we want to understand, in particular, the later developments of psycho-analysis.

Says Mark, the editor, regarding Freud that "his critical approach to his own thought was dynamic and extensive; consequently, each period of his activity contained revisions of earlier developed thought, or a change in emphasis on specific issues".<sup>1</sup>

Now Ferenczi and Rank represent the development of the psycho-analytic technique in this that a mere unwinding of libido and its phases is not the objective. That is unnecessary. Through active intervention the patient should be led to relieve the Oedipus situation (the situation of the Oedipus complex or the Electra complex, of the son's or daughter's incest-wish for the Mother or Father and the guilt and conflict involved in it) and to get enlightened on all his neurotic situation of the present. This much shortens the treatment. The book sums up the present position of the working of the psycho-analytic technique as follows.

Psycho-analysis, starting from a purely practical point of departure, under the impression of the first surprising insight, reached a phase of understanding. The cures so startling in the beginning became, with the rapidly increasing knowledge of the common mental mechanisms, comparatively less satisfactory so that one had to consider how to bring the therapeutic ability into harmony with the newly acquired knowledge, which had progressed so far ahead.

Our own presentation, described from this point of view, represents the beginning of a phase which we should like, in contrast to the previous ones, to call the phase of experience. Whereas formerly one tried to obtain the therapeutic result as a reaction to the enlightenment of the patient, we now try to place the knowledge obtained by psycho-analysis directly in the service of our therapy, by directly provoking the corresponding personal experience on the basis of our insight, and explaining to the patient only this experience which is naturally directly evident to him also.

The knowledge on the basis of which we are able to intervene at the right place, and in the requisite degree, consists essentially of the conviction of the universal importance of certain fundamental early experiences—as for example the Oedipus conflict—the traumatic effort of which in the analysis, like a provocative treatment in medicine, is kindled again and, under the influence of living through the experience consciously for the first time, is brought to a useful ending!

*(To be continued)*

INDRA SEN

<sup>1</sup> Robert W. Marks, *Great Ideas in Psychology*, p. 33, Bantam Books, New York.

# THE SONG OF THE LORD

## THE GITA WITHOUT COMMENT

*(Continued from the issue of July 1986)*

### Chapter X

1. The Lord said:  
“Once again, O Mighty-armed, hear My Supreme Word which I will speak to you for your delight, for your well-being.
2. Neither the multitudes of the Gods nor the high Sages know My Origin, for I am the absolute Source of the Gods and Sages.
3. One who knows Me as unborn, beginningless, as the Lord of the World, he, undeluded of mortals, is released from all evil.
4. Intelligence, knowledge, clarity, forgiveness, truth, control, calmness and pleasure, pain, birth, non-existence, fear and fearlessness,
5. non-injury, equanimity, contentment, austerity, giving, honour, infamy—all these aspects of being arise from Me alone.
6. The Seven Great Sages and the Four Ancient Manus are also my Creation, born from my mind. From them come all these creatures in the world.
7. One who knows essentially these instruments of My Yoga is unshakably one in Yoga, of this there is no doubt.
8. I am the Source of all. From Me all proceeds. The wise who understand this adore Me with the fullness of their being.
9. Thinking of Me, living in Me, enlightening each other and speaking always of Me, they are content and delighted.
10. To them always united, adoring in the delight of love, I give the Yoga of Discrimination by which they come to Me.
11. Indeed, out of compassion for them, I, lodged in the soul, destroy the darkness born of ignorance with the shining light of Knowledge.”
12. Arjuna said:  
“The Supreme Brahman, the Supreme Abode, the Supreme Purity, you are Man eternal and divine, the original unborn God, all-pervading.
13. They have all acclaimed You: the Rishis, the god-sage Narada, and Asita, Devala, Vyasa and also You Yourself tell me.
14. I think that all You have said is true, O Keshava. In fact neither the Gods nor the Titans know Your true form.
15. You alone know Yourself through Yourself, O Purushottama, O Source of Existence, Lord of Becomings, God of Gods, father of the World.
16. Would you tell me without omission of your divine agents by which You remain pervasive in the world?
17. How shall I know You always, O Yogin?

- By concentrating on what shall You be thought of by me, O Lord?
18. Minutely describe again Your Yoga of Self-manifestation, O Janardana, for I am never tired of hearing this deathless nectar."
  19. The Lord said:  
"Very well. I will proclaim to you by prominence My divine powers, O Best of Kurus, for there is no end to My abundance.
  20. I am the Self placed in the centre of all beings, O Gudakesha. I am the beginning, the middle, the end of all existence.
  21. Of the Adityas I am Vishnu, among lights the radiant Sun, of the Maruts Marichi, of constellations the Moon.
  22. Of the Vedas I am Sama, of the Gods I am Vasava, of the senses I am Mind, of beings I am consciousness.
  23. Of the Rudras I am Shankara, among Yakshas and Rakshasas I am the Lord of Wealth, of Vasus Pavaka and I am Meru among mountains.
  24. Among the high priests know Me as Brihaspati the Chief, O Partha. Among generals I am Skanda and of lakes I am the sea.
  25. Among the great Rishis I am Bhrigu, of words I am AUM, of sacrifice, Japa and of that which is stable I am the Himalayas.
  26. Of all trees Ashwattha, among god-sages Narada, of the Gandharvas Chitraratha, among the perfected ones the sage Kapila.
  27. Among horses know Me as nectar-born Uchhaishravas, Airavata of king-elephants and the Monarch among men.
  28. I am the thunderbolt among weapons, Kamadhuk among cows and of progenitors I am Kandarpa. Of serpents I am Vasuki.
  29. Among Nagas I am Ananta, Varuna of the beings of the sea. I am Aryama of the Ancestors and Yama of the maintainers of Law.
  30. Among Daityas I am Prahlada and Time among measures. The Lion among beasts am I and Garuda among birds.
  31. I am the wind among purifiers, Rama among warriors and the shark among fish. Among rivers the Ganga am I.
  32. Of creations I am the beginning, the middle, the end, O Arjuna, the study of Self among sciences and the logic of debators.
  33. Among letters I am 'A' and the dualness of compounds. I am Eternal Time, the all-faceted dispenser.
  34. I am Death, the all-devouring, I am the rise of those to be prosperous. Of the feminine I am Glory, Wealth, Speech, Memory, Wisdom, Firmness and Forgiveness.
  35. The great Sama among Sama Hymns, the Gayatri among metres am I. I am Margashisha among months and the time of flowers among seasons.
  36. I am gambling in the deceptive, the splendour of the glorious. I am Victory. I am Resolution. I am the balance of the poised.
  37. Among Vrishnis I am Vasudeva, of the Pandavas Dhananjaya. Also, among

- sages I am Vyasa and among poets I am Ushana, the poet-sage.
38. I am infliction among punishers, politics for those who seek victory and silence among secrets. I am the Knowledge of the wise.
  39. Indeed, that which is the seed of all beings am I, O Arjuna. Nothing, moving or unmoving, could exist without Me.
  40. There is no end to My divine radiations, O Parantapa. This brief has been offered by Me of some parts of My Manifestation.
  41. Whatever is eminently glorious, rich and powerful, know that to be a spark of my splendour.
  42. But Arjuna, why do you need all these facts? I firmly support this whole world with but a point of Myself."

### OM TAT SAT

Here ends the tenth chapter called 'The Yoga of the Divine Manifestation' in the dialogue of Sri Krishna and Arjuna, in Brahman-Knowledge, in Yoga-Discipline, in the Divine Song of the Upanishads.

*Translated by* DHRUVA

## DHYANA WITH THE MOTHER

*(Continued from the issue of March 1986)*

We have discussed the different mental, vital and physical conditions that are essential for meditation and we have seen that concentration is the main thing even on ideas for simple meditation. Technically, how to concentrate?

We have already seen that there are mainly six subtle physical centres and one above the head in the human being. The main places where one may concentrate as suggested by Sri Aurobindo are the heart centre, the centre between the eyebrows and the centre above the head. One may concentrate alternatively in the heart and above the head but concentration is not done on the place only but on the Divine in a particular spot. This may be done with eyes open or shut.

By concentrating on the heart centre one opens that centre and by the power of love, devotion, surrender the veil that covers the soul, the psychic being, is removed and the psychic being then governs the mind, life and body. It is called the psychic transformation. By concentration above the head one brings down peace, silence, liberation from the body sense. By this the higher power descends from the head downward opening, purifying, and illumining various centres and raising the lower parts to the higher source. This is unlike the Tantric process of beginning from the *mūlādhāra*, the lowest centre, going through various cumbersome processes, thus giving rise to every occasion of pitfall. By beginning from above the head with full surrender and consecration one may achieve the same result as a Tantric achieves after a very long series of vital-physical exercises. To explain better we quote one of the Mother's experiences as recorded by her in her notes.

“There was no longer any body, no longer any sensation; only a column of light was there, rising from where the base of the body normally is to where usually is the head, to form there a disk of light like that of the moon; then from there the column continued to rise very far above the head, opening out into an immense sun, dazzling and multicoloured, whence a rain of golden light fell covering all the earth.

“Then slowly the column of light came down again forming an oval of living light, awakening and setting into movement—each one in a special way, according to a particular vibratory mode—the centres above the head, in the head, the throat, the heart, in the middle of the stomach, at the base of the spine and still further down. At the level of the knees, the ascending and descending currents joined and the circulation thus went on uninterruptedly, enveloping the whole being in an immense oval of living light.

“Then slowly the consciousness came down again, stage by stage, halting in each world, until the body-consciousness returned. The recovery of the body-consciousness was, if the memory is correct, the ninth stage. At that moment the body was still quite stiff and immobile.” (21-7-1914).

This above-the-head concentration effect helps to what has been called spiritual transformation.

Concentration between the eyebrows is to open the centre there, liberate the inner mind, vision and knowledge. That centre is termed the third eye. From here also one may go upwards and act on the lower centres with the higher forces. "But the danger of this process is that one may get shut up in one's mental spiritual formations and not come out of them," said Sri Aurobindo.

But there obviously come difficulties on the way to meditate properly. We are normally carried away by a stream of thought; the mind is never at rest, not even during normal sleep except, it may be, for a very short while of which we may not be always aware. This continuous thought process perhaps has been misconceived by some as 'stream of consciousness.' Actually thought is only a part of consciousness. Now, when one tries to concentrate these thoughts attack him more and it seems as if he now becomes more aware of them.

Sri Aurobindo has suggested three methods. The first, following Swami Vivekananda, is to observe the thoughts, not taking part in them, and allow them to run down. After some time such thoughts may cease to occur. The second is to draw back and observe the thoughts as something alien to one's true self—*Puruṣa*—and regard them as the work of *Prakṛti* and give no sanction to them. At one point the mind divides itself, one part clamouring thought and the other silent witness self, and slowly the former ceases to operate in the absence of sanction by the self. The third is to detect the thoughts as they come to the head from outside, not originating in one's own being, and throw them out. This is the most difficult but most time-saving and accurate in result. By this process Sri Aurobindo himself achieved so much of silence in just three days that he realised Nirvana at the beginning of his yoga. One may practise all these methods alternately as required.

There is the tendency to go inward in a deep inner consciousness but the mind goes to sleep at the beginning and the whole process turns to a *tāmasic* exercise very much disliked by the Mother. By constant practice this turns to *yoga-nidrā*, and one may come to enjoy bliss during meditation. One has to constantly make efforts all the time to keep awake inwardly in order to record all inner realisations, experiences.

After the thoughts have vanished, sleep is transformed.

"In Peace and Silence the Eternal manifests; allow nothing to disturb you and the Eternal will manifest... No haste, no inquietude, no tension, Thou, nothing but Thou, without any analysis or any objectivising, and Thou art there without a possible doubt, for all becomes a Holy Peace and a Sacred Silence". (5-12-1912)

This much about *dhyāna*. As one proceeds, a regular meditation may or may not be necessary. As one follows the path, all barriers go.

"A sincere consecration of all you are and all you do is for the Sadhana much more effective than meditation."

“True love and consecration lead much quicker to the Divine than an arduous Tapasya.”

“The best meditations are those that one has all of a sudden because they take possession of you as an imperative necessity. You have no choice but to concentrate, to meditate, to look beyond the appearances.”

And if we remember two great things and act inwardly and outwardly accordingly as quoted earlier from Sri Aurobindo's *The Mother* and as echoed by the Mother in her *Prayers and Meditations* as two independent realisations—

“It is Thou who wert the motive and the goal; Thou art the worker and the work.

“The personal existence is a canticle, perpetually renewed, which the universe offers up to Thy inconceivable Splendour.”(2-11-1915)

And—

“There is a Power that no ruler can command; there is a Happiness that no earthly success can bring; there is a Light that no wisdom can possess; there is a Knowledge that no philosophy and no science can master; there is a Bliss of which no satisfaction of desire can give the enjoyment; there is a thirst for Love that no human relation can appease; there is a Peace that one finds nowhere, not even in death.

“It is the Power, the Happiness, the Light, the Knowledge, the Bliss, the Love, the Peace that flow from the Divine Grace.” (28-12-1928)

Then we slowly go towards perfection. Meditation and non-meditation, work and sleep all come closer and we grow and grow, proceed and proceed, towards our goal through a constant Godward journey.

This is the process of Integral Meditation—a synthesis of all systems and yet imitation of none, a state unique.

At last, however much we proceed, we have to remain ever-vigilant—

“Let us understand that however great may have been our efforts, our struggles, even our victories, compared with the distance yet to be travelled, the one we have already covered is nothing; and that all are equal—infinitesimal grains of dust or identical stars before Eternity.”(8-1-1914)

(To be continued)

AJU MUKHOPADHYAY



## BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

**Sri Aurobindo : A Biography and a History** by *Dr. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar*.  
Published by Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, Pondicherry.  
Fourth (revised) edition: pp: 812. Price: Rs. 150/-

“It was raining heavily on that day. As we could not stir out, we fell to target-shooting to beguile the time. My wife proposed that Sri Aurobindo should be given the rifle so that he might also have a try, but Sri Aurobindo refused, saying that he had never handled a rifle. We had only to show him how to hold the rifle and take aim. The target was the black, tiny head of a match-stick, hung at a distance of ten or twelve feet. Sri Aurobindo took aim, and lo and, behold! the very first shot flew slick into the target, and the first hit was followed by the second, and the second by the third! It took our breath away.” So reminisced Charu Chandra Dutt, an I.C.S. officer. Astonished at Sri Aurobindo’s capacity for concentration he remarked to his friends: “If such a man doesn’t become a *siddha*, who would?”

Sri Aurobindo was arrested in connection with the Manicktolla bomb case and put behind bars as an under-trial prisoner. The trial at last began. Chittaranjan Das—the ‘Deshabandhu’ of a later day—appeared for Sri Aurobindo and “masterfully demolished what must have initially appeared to be a piece of damning evidence against Sri Aurobindo,” and made a unique appeal to the judge:

My appeal to you is this, that long after the controversy will be hushed in silence, long after this turmoil, the agitation will have ceased, long after he is dead and gone, he will be looked upon as a poet of patriotism, as the prophet of nationalism and the lover of humanity. Long after he is dead and gone, his words will be echoed and re-echoed, not only in India, but across distant seas and lands. Therefore, I say that the man in his position is not only standing before the bar of this court, but before the bar of the High Court of History.

We cannot but marvel at the prophetic words of Dutt and Das that proved true in the life of Sri Aurobindo, who, in addition to being a dynamic Nationalist came to be recognised as “a great thinker and a great yogi, a versatile poet and dramatist in English and a supreme master of English prose with a ‘global’ style uniquely his own.”

No doubt the service rendered by this many-faceted personality to the society fascinates us and at times awes us. Hence when it comes to writing about his life, naturally a sense of fear grips anyone who desires to do so, for Sri Aurobindo himself is reported to have said: “To write my biography is impossible... Not only in my case but in that of poets, philosophers and yogis it is no use attempting a biography, because they do not live in their external life... It is different with men of action like Napoleon or Julius Caesar.” If such is the case, who will kilt his

dhoti and plunge headlong? A few dared and Sri Aurobindo had to say: "I shall have to write (my biography) just in order to contradict the biographers. I shall have to title my book 'What I did not do in my life!'"

Then there came a veteran teacher whose mind and heart were akin to Hercules, and no Hercules failed in his labours however arduous they were. And in February 1945 came a reliable first introduction to Sri Aurobindo's life and work, authored by Dr. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar, Godfather of Indo-Anglian Literature. It was very much appreciated and it remains to this day (to quote the publishers) "the standard work on the subject". The third edition brought out in March 1972 was "entirely recast and largely re-written and brought up-to-date, and enlarged to about three times the original size."

About the present fourth revised edition (August 1985) Dr. Iyengar writes in his Preface: "...the text is substantially the same as the third edition. Nevertheless several minor or verbal alterations have been made so as to rectify errors or conform to recent findings of the Archives and Research Library of Sri Aurobindo Ashram. But the basic structure, ordering and amplitude, the unfolding narrative and argument, and the sustained fullness of detail remain unaffected."

Dr. Iyengar conveniently divides his book into four parts. In the first part HUMANIST AND POET he takes for discussion Sri Aurobindo's early days. His childhood, boyhood and youth in England where his guardians were entrusted with the strict instruction that he "should not be allowed to make the acquaintance of any Indian or undergo any Indian influence." His aversion to games, his liking for classical and modern European literature, his attempts at translating Greek verse into English, Laurence Binyon's encouragement that launched him on his career as a poet find place here. Sri Aurobindo's return to India (his cultural heritage), his poems on Indian themes, his memorable thirteen years in the Baroda state service where he began his career as an apprentice in the Survey Settlement Department and rose to the post of Principal are remembered here.

It was at Baroda that Sri Aurobindo published his first volume of verse, *Songs to Myrtilla & Other Poems* (1895) for private circulation. And here follows a lovely comment by Dr. Iyengar: "A poet's first essays in verse are akin to promissory notes; they have some value, no doubt,—their 'face value' as we might call it; but what is even more important is that they give the reader a foretaste of the future, open up vistas of possibility when the promissory notes would be fully redeemed at last. Sri Aurobindo's early adventures in English verse were thus the promissory notes of a millionaire confident of his credit."

The rest of the sections in Part I are devoted to the detailed discussions of the bulk of Sri Aurobindo's output both in prose and in verse during the Baroda period—translations, Epic and Romance, minor poems and his plays both finished and unfinished. Almost every work is furnished with its history—the date of its composition, the journal in which it appeared and the date of its publication and when it was reprinted in book form—which is of immense use to scholars.

PATRIOT AND PROPHET, the second part of the book, throws light on Sri Aurobindo's "decisive plunge into the maelstrom of Indian politics and his tempestuous involvement in it." To say that Sri Aurobindo's involvement in the evolution of India's destiny was a life-long process is not far from the truth. Yet his active and open participation in Indian politics spanned only three and a half years, that is "from August 1906 when he joined the National College as its Principal to February 1910 when he left for Chandernagore in French India. Of this period, again, a whole year (May 1908 to May 1909) was spent in jail at Alipur when Sri Aurobindo was an under-trial prisoner in connection with the Manicktolla bomb case. Barely thirty months of active politics, yet Sri Aurobindo was destined to change the whole character of political activity in India and set the freedom movement firmly towards the goal of complete national independence." Dr Iyengar covers this short period of paramount importance a little more leisurely and with even greater attention to detail.

One of Sri Aurobindo's three mighty convictions or three "manias" is the madness of his relationship with the country of his birth, Mother India. No better words than the following excerpt from the letter to his wife can picture his patriotic zeal and strong-willed determination: "...I know my country as the Mother, I worship her and adore her accordingly. What would a son do when a demon, sitting on his mother's breast, prepared to drink her blood? Would he sit down content to take his meals or go on enjoying himself in the company of his wife and children, or would he rather run to the rescue of his mother? I know I have the strength to uplift this fallen race; not a physical strength, I am not going to fight with a sword or a gun, but with the power of knowledge..."

Sri Aurobindo's innumerable contributions to the columns of the *Bande Mataram* and *Karmayogin* and his power of exhortation earned him the name of enemy no. 1 from the bureaucrats. Everything he said, everything he did was news. His articles were "read between the lines and sinister meanings were discovered that were never intended..." The impending arrest and the subsequent inner command "Go to Chandernagore" and later "Go to Pondicherry" form the beginning of Part III—PILGRIM OF ETERNITY. He reached Pondicherry as a political exile only to pursue his yogic Sadhana undisturbed by political action or reaction. Monsieur and Madame Paul Richard's contact with Sri Aurobindo, their decision to launch a philosophical magazine *Arya* which had a two-fold object and in which Sri Aurobindo wrote his philosophical works are discussed here.

Separate chapters are devoted to the discussions of the Mahayogi's *The Life Divine* and *The Synthesis of Yoga* which contain what he has realised and experienced, *The Secret of the Veda* and *Essays on the Gita* which throw light on Indian scriptures, *The Human Cycle* and *The Ideal of Human Unity* that examine the problem of 'collective man', but in political rather than in sociological terms, in the global rather than in the narrower context of group or region, and *The Foundations of Indian Culture* which makes one wonder how Sri Aurobindo brought up in an alien

culture was able to write so perceptively and vividly about Indian culture.

ARCHITECT OF THE LIFE DIVINE, the last part of this monumental work, gives importance to Sri Aurobindo's yoga and his Ashram. Dr. Iyengar discusses how as a lighthouse Sri Aurobindo with his "detached greatness, disinterested largeness, limitless compassion and sweetness", attracted the wandering boats in the shape of human beings in search of ports and how he made the Ashram a hallowed area and a unique spiritual laboratory where one can hear the accent of many languages. Dr. Iyengar's recounting of the circumstances under which the Sadhaks joined the Ashram makes gratifying reading here. Had Sri Aurobindo not established his Ashram at Pondicherry, this speck on the map of India would have remained an insignificant fishing village. How true was Professor Tan Yun-Shan who remarked: "It is not the Ashram that is in Pondicherry, no, Pondicherry is in the Ashram."

Sri Aurobindo's 400-page book *The Future Poetry*, "an unconventional but truly prophetic work of criticism embodying the manifesto of the new 'overhead aesthesis'", and *Savitri* in twelve books of 49 cantos "perhaps the most powerful artistic work in the world for exapanding man's mind towards the Absolute" are introduced in separate chapters. The final chapter in this part is devoted to the last days of Sri Aurobindo who was said to be ailing from uraemia. Was he really ailing? One wonders, for when asked what the trouble was, Sri Aurobindo said simply: "Trouble? Nothing troubles me. And suffering? One can be above it." Such was the power of this Mahayogi.

Finally, the Epilogue speaks of Sri Aurobindo's action in the world. Details regarding the various developments of the Ashram, the founding of Auroville, the City of Dawn, meant to be the City of Human Unity, the various activities both intellectual and physical are supplied here.

It was the poet John Keats who wrote: "A man's life of any worth is a continual allegory—and very few eyes can see the mystery of his life... a life like the scriptures, figurative." This biography serves as ample proof of the fact that Dr. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar, well-versed in Scriptures, had the power to see the mystery of Sri Aurobindo's life. Exactly researched and well-weighed in its judgements, this is a book rich in observation. A lively, engrossing and authoritative biography, as well as the best available introduction to "the greatest spiritual voice from India", it is an indispensable work for all students embarking on the study of a great man and his worthy works.

P. RAJA

# STORIES FROM TAMIL LITERATURE

*(Continued from the issue of July 1986)*

## 31. PAARI AND THE THREE CROWNED KINGS

PAARI was the ruler of Parambu, a small state within the Tamil country. We already know of his loving friendship with Avvaiyar and of his compassionate heart which made him leave his royal chariot as a support to the jasmine vines. Though a ruler of a small kingdom consisting only of three hundred villages, he towered far above his contemporaries, greatly exceeding them all in valour and largeness of heart.

In those days, the Chera, Chola and Pandia kings were the three sovereign rulers of the Tamil country, who alone had the right to wear crowns. However, there were many small states and principalities within those kingdoms, which enjoyed full independence so long as they did not disturb or provoke the crowned kings.

Paari being a fine soldier and a man of noble qualities, his fame spread far and wide. Poets sang highly of him and minstrels and singers all over the Tamil land flocked to his court. This stirred up envy in the hearts of the three big kings. Generally, the kings of the three Tamil dynasties were noble-minded and good, but occasionally there were exceptions. The three contemporaries of Paari were such exceptions and they came together in their hatred towards Paari. They decided to get rid of him by defeating him in battle. They gathered a mighty army and marched against his kingdom. They laid siege to the fortress on the Parambu hill which was Paari's capital. The whole mountainous region was covered with that fortress and the area inside the fortress was fertile and self-supporting. There was no necessity for people to get supplies from the outside. So, while the siege went on, the people inside the fortress never bothered. With great confidence the soldiers of Paari defended their fortress.

Kapilar, one of the fine Tamil poets, lived in those days. He was a very close friend of Paari. He did not like the siege to continue and so he went and met the three kings in his private capacity as a friend of Paari. He confronted them with a poem:

“Do you think it is possible for you three to conquer Parambu so easily with all your drum-beating armies? Do not dream of it. For we will withstand your siege without much difficulty. We don't need any food from the outside. Our hills produce very good food-stuff without any farming. We have a variety of bamboo growing wild all over the place, which yields a good crop of seeds. We have jack-fruit in abundance. Sweet-potatoes grow everywhere. And we have a copious supply of honey from the giant-size honeycombs hanging from the cliffs. Our hills are vast as the sky and the springs thereof are myriad like the stars. You may have a large army of elephants and war-chariots. But you cannot take our land by force. Nor can you vanquish Paari in single combat. But may I tell you how to win this land?

Come like minstrels tuning your harps and singing his praise. Let your women accompany you dancing and beg for the land. He will give it away together with the hills."

The three kings felt mortified by the mockery in the words of the poet. However, they could not do anything. They realised that their siege would never succeed. They withdrew their army and went away in shame.

(But the story goes that the envious kings who could not reconcile themselves to the greatness and fame of Paari plotted secretly against him and killed him in a treacherous manner, thus sullyng their names in the annals of Tamil history.)

### 32. OTTAKOOTHAR AND PUKALENDI

Ottakoothar was the chief court poet of Kulothungan, the Chola king. When Kulothungan married the Pandian princess, Pukalendi, a gifted poet from the Pandian court was sent to the Chola court to act as a personal adviser to the princess who had now become the Chola queen. Pukalendi stayed at the court and with his brilliant wit and poetic talent began to enjoy great respect among the other poets. He also won much acclaim from the king. Ottakoothar did not like this. He was full of envy for the new poet. Pukalendi was of course the greater of the two and this made Ottakoothar still more angry. There were frequent clashes of wit, poetry contests and heated arguments between them and Pukalendi always came out successful.

And then it happened that Pukalendi wrote an epic poem. In those days any new work of a poet was placed before the academy of learned poets and was closely examined by them before it was given approval. The author must read out his work and all the other poets would listen to him. They would question him on doubtful points, criticize him and draw attention to any serious flaw in the poem. The author should correct himself or offer his own explanations. Only when the examiners were satisfied fully was he allowed to proceed further.

Thus when Pukalendi began reading his poem, Ottakoothar had the chance of his life-time. He criticized him on every small point and refused to accept even the correct explanations. Pukalendi knew that Ottakoothar was doing this out of ill-will and was irritated beyond measure. However, for all his harsh criticism and the malice he showed towards Pukalendi, Ottakoothar could not go against his own sensibilities. In fact, he was able to see the fine points in Pukalendi's work and admired him in secret. It was his own inability to write like Pukalendi that made him cynical.

One day it went beyond endurance for Pukalendi. In desperation he decided to put an end to his tormentor and regain his peace of mind. So on a dark night he went to Ottakoothar's house. He picked up a large piece of rock and managed to get into the house stealthily. He made his way into the bedroom and hid himself behind a cupboard. After some time Ottakoothar came there and lay down on the bed. He seemed tortured and was groaning with dissatisfaction. Pukalendi was waiting

for him to doze off before he could smash his head. But within minutes, Ottakoothar's wife followed him into the bedroom reprimanding him for not taking his food. Ottakoothar said that he had no appetite and that he did not like to be disturbed. She replied that she had special sweets for him to kindle his appetite. Ottakoothar said that he was in no mood to eat sweets and that any amount of sweets made by her would not be half so sweet to him as the poetry of Pukalendi. Pukalendi who was overhearing the conversation was swept off his feet at this unexpected compliment. He waited to hear more. Then Ottakoothar told his wife about the reading of Pukalendi's epic poem at the court and frankly admitted to her how greatly Pukalendi exceeded him in poetic talent and how he was wantonly criticizing him in court. Pukalendi could not wait any more. He gave up all intention of killing Ottakoothar. He emerged from his hiding place and greeting Ottakoothar with loving words embraced him warmly. Ottakoothar stood aghast with wonder. Pukalendi told him how he came there with the intention of killing him and how his heart was changed when he overheard the conversation between Ottakoothar and his wife. He begged Ottakoothar's forgiveness and expressed his sincere desire to become his friend. Ottakoothar also was moved by Pukalendi's words, asked him in turn to forgive him for his despicable behaviour in court. They laughed at the ironic turn of events, forgave each other and from that moment became very good friends.

M. L. THANGAPPA

## *Students' Section*

### THE VALIDITY OF AN IDEA IN PHYSICS

MODERN science has made tremendous progress because it has fruitfully combined abstract ideas and theories with experiments. The ideas that everyone has about things will not always do as either these are inadequate or turn out to be conflicting with each other. There are ideas and ideas, and generally our acceptance or rejection of their consequences in no way proves or disproves their validity. By what criterion do we then judge an idea to be right or wrong? This was the problem that existed in the early Greek speculative philosophies which had failed to arrive at any definite conclusion. Modern science has overcome this difficulty by putting these ideas to experimental tests.

The genius of Newton (1642-1772) grasped the problem correctly by giving an empirical foundation to natural philosophy. His contributions have earned him an immortal place in the annals of science. Take, for example, his Law of Gravity, published in 1686, which states that between any two objects there is a force of attraction which is directly proportional to the product of their masses and inversely proportional to the square of the distance separating them. This law introduces the concept of the inverse square force. After having stated it, it is easy to visualise that the force should be proportional to the quantity of matter present in each object. Also, it is clear that if the objects are farther apart, the force will be weaker. But it needed a Newton to state it. But why is the proportionality of the form  $1/r^2$  and not of the form  $1/r^n$  where  $n$  could be any positive real number or a fraction?

The reason is, this force is not derived from any theory but is in itself a theory and a concept. But we see it as a perception of truth only when its justification comes from experiments or observations; its validity is empirical in nature. The fact that it explained all the planetary data that were then available, and also predicted correctly new observations, illustrates its success. The important point is, all theories of physics must be finally subjected to such experimental verification. Experiment becomes the supreme arbiter in this method of approach.

But can an idea not exist on its own without being made a subject of experimental tests? For instance, there can be no experiment to prove the statement of Leibnitz, the famous German mathematician and philosopher and Newton's contemporary and opponent, that life in plants is sleeping, in animals is dreaming and in man is awake. Still, it seems to be an idea which harbours some truth and therefore just for the want of an experiment it may not be logical to reject it. Is then the idea, by itself, valid?

Until an idea, in the methodology of science, is proved to be valid for a given set of tests, it may not be possible to say anything about it. But the fact that we do at all wait for an experiment to prove it either way indicates that we attach considerable weight to the idea itself; we do put our belief in it until it comes out successfully or reject it summarily after the experimental test disproves it. The notion of absolute



time and space is one such example. Paradoxically, Newton himself held this notion. But it is now an experimental fact that absolute uniform motion in terms of absolute time and space does not exist in the physical world.

Take another example. In 1905 Einstein proposed, on theoretical grounds, that a given amount of mass can be considered to be equivalent to a certain quantity of energy. He gave a precise mathematical relationship for this:  $E=mc^2$  in which  $E$  is energy,  $m$  mass, and  $c$  the velocity of light. At the time this was proposed there was no possibility of putting it to experimental tests. Only around 1940 when it was experimentally proved was it accepted by the scientific community. What was the fate of this beautiful idea during the intervening period of 35 years when the crudeness of minds demanded an experimental justification for it?

Take yet another example. In 1927 Schrodinger, an Austrian mathematical physicist, expressed the physical behaviour of the hydrogen atom in the form of a differential equation. He had arrived at this equation purely by mathematical intuition. While the consequences of this idea explain completely the experimental observations, we must admit that the intuition by which Schrodinger arrived at the equation was far superior to its being made a subject of such tests. In it we see the entire development of Quantum Mechanics.

A valuable consequence of this idea has been the discovery of anti-matter. In 1928, by extending the Schrodinger equation relativistically, Dirac, an English physicist, predicted the existence of a particle whose mass is that of the electron but whose charge is the same in magnitude but opposite in sign—the antielectron or the positron. And lo! this particle was indeed discovered in 1932 with all the properties predicted by the equation. Because of this experiment, our respect and confidence, even our faith, in the entire formulation became tenfold.

But when such triumphs are taken out of their context and a whole philosophy of life is suggested to be based upon them, then they look somewhat ridiculous. To say that the leaping of a frog or the evolution of man is contained in the Schrodinger equation is stepping out of the boundaries of physics. A considerable amount of present-day discussion that attempts to see mysticism in physics falls in this category. Therefore, by making experiment the supreme arbiter in science, these unnecessary, or even irrelevant, extensions can be arrested. A flood of useless ideas is stopped, the undesirable tares and weeds are removed.

In conclusion, it may be stated that the most valuable tool in physical science is experiment. It may restrict or even reject a number of good and profound new ideas; in this process many truths may even get lost. But the most important gain is that science establishes itself on a firm and solid base, a base made up of ideas that have been proved to be true, and from which new ideas can be similarly elucidated. What is necessary is that the ideas be realised on a material plane. To bring Intuition to Matter in this way is something marvellous.

HARSHAVARDHANA  
Higher Course, 1st Year

# THE THREE-STAGE ASCENSION OF MAN'S MULTIPLE BEING

## INTRODUCTION

ACCORDING to Sri Aurobindo, the various parts of man's being evolve through three stages. We shall illustrate this evolution in the aesthetic (the part in man's being that seeks for beauty), taking examples from the fields of art and poetry.

Through all his activities, man gives expression to the various parts of his being: the rational (knowledge), the aesthetic (beauty), the ethical (good), the religious (worship) and the vitalistic (life-desire). All human activity is an expression of one or more of these five parts; they cover the entire being. While through science and philosophy, for example, man expresses his perpetual quest for knowledge, through art, literature and music he seeks to enjoy and manifest beauty. But each part of his being is also aspiring towards some absolute which will bring it to its highest and ultimate fulfilment. Each part is "striving to express an infinite which it feels to be its real truth," as Sri Aurobindo puts it.

Though the absolutes of Truth and Beauty vary in aspect and expression, they are in their essence one and the same; they are different facets, different projections and forms of one Absolute: the Divine. According to Sri Aurobindo a universal principle and law in regard to all human activities, "a truth on which the sages have always agreed though by the intellectual thinker it may be constantly disputed", is the truth that "all active being is a seeking for God." Thus "the truth which we glimpse through religion lies concealed behind all life." Hence all the parts of man's being seek God, consciously or unconsciously, directly as in religion or through the aspects of Truth and Beauty as in science and art. He is their ultimate aim and fulfilment. Religion seeks for God as a spiritual presence, the ethical part of man strives to express His nature of light, love, strength and purity, the aesthetic part seeks to enjoy and express His aspect of beauty and delight.

In its quest for the absolute each part of our being evolves through three stages: the infrarational, the rational and the suprarational. The evolution begins at the infrarational level as an instinctive urge and impulse. It proceeds to the rational level in which reason comes in to correct and enlighten the first crude instincts. Finally it transcends mind and moves into the suprarational stage where it attains its highest fulfilment. According to Sri Aurobindo, "*The spiritual or suprarational* is always turned at its heights towards the Absolute;... living in the luminous infinite, its special power is to realise the infinite in the finite." At the suprarational stage in his evolution, man strives to find the absolute in all relatives and attempts to reconcile the eternal reality with the finite appearances that seek unconsciously to express it, but in doing so distort and obscure it. This reconciliation can be effected only by the highest—the suprarational—faculties in man, because they alone can grasp the eternal reality in direct knowledge and experience. On the other hand, "*The*

*infrarational*," says Sri Aurobindo, "has its origin and basis in the obscure infinite of the Inconscient; it wells up in instincts and impulses, which are really the crude and more or less haphazard intuitions of a subconscious physical, vital, emotional and sensational mind and will in us." The infrarational struggles to find some definite form in its vague, obscure tendencies and a finite order in its confused knowledge. Yet it has also the force of its origin, the infinite in the Inconscient from which it emerges, and hence strives blindly to grasp at the absolute and bring some touch of it into its action. But it can never achieve this, because its source is in the ignorance and inconscience, and not in knowledge. *Reason* stands between the infrarational and the suprarational, the lower and higher infinities. On the one hand it corrects and enlightens the obscure and crude tendencies of the infrarational and helps it to find on a higher plane the finite order that it blindly seeks. On the other hand, it looks up towards the suprarational, but without being able to seize intimately its truth. Itself finite, relative and definite, it is unable to grasp the absolute. According to Sri Aurobindo, "These *three powers of being*, the *suprarational*, the *rational* and the *infrarational* are present, but with an infinitely varying prominence in all our activities."

So it should be possible to take up any human activity and find out at what stage it was, at a certain period in history. We must be careful, though, not to label off any period or individual as absolutely "infrarational" or "rational", because man is a complex being and cannot be any of these things exclusively and absolutely. He may be predominantly at one stage, but will also contain elements of the other stages, for they arise out of one another, and may also develop partly in each other. Even the infrarational man, that is to say man at his animal lowest, is not entirely infrarational, but possesses to some degree, however trivial, an element of the reasoning mind and a more or less crude suprarational element. As it is misleading to distinguish rigidly the action of the three stages, so it will be wrong to suppose that the order of evolution is fixed, and that a higher stage inevitably follows a lower. The evolution through the three stages is not always constant nor forwards. At certain periods there may be a regression, a relapse from a higher stage to a lower. A truth may shed its light awhile, and men rise to suprarational heights, but if unable to preserve that truth, they will relapse into the rational or even infrarational levels. Hence, the various stages may co-exist in different parts of the earth at the same time.

We shall illustrate the psychological evolution through the three stages in the realm of beauty. At the infrarational stage, man, searching for beauty, finds satisfaction in the beauty of form, which appeals to his *physical* senses and his *vital* instincts and desires. But when *reason* intervenes these no longer suffice him; he now seeks for a higher satisfaction in the beauty of ideas, the beauty that lies in perfect process and harmonious combination, qualities that appeal to his reason. But again these do not satisfy the *soul of beauty* in man, that part in him which seeks the highest, the absolute Beauty in things. Absolute Beauty is not directly accessible to the physical senses, vital instincts or reason, because they are finite and relative. Hence that

absolute is something suprasensuous and suprarational, something that the soul, the highest part in man, aspires towards. Sri Aurobindo says, "When it can get the touch of this universal, absolute beauty, this soul of beauty, this sense of its revelation in any slightest or greatest thing, the beauty of a flower, a form, the beauty and power of a character, an action, an event, a human life, an idea, a stroke of the brush or the chisel, or a scintillation of the mind, the colours of a sunset or the grandeur of the tempest, it is then that the sense of beauty in us is really, powerfully, entirely satisfied."

*(To be continued)*

ANURUPA NAIK  
Higher Course, 3rd Year

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## MOTHER

In the calm wideness of physical sleep  
The body grew one with the cosmic earth,  
A searchlight gaze upon some boundless deep  
Set aflame a new immortal birth:

A stilled energy charged with magnetic force  
A warming aura around the body's sheath,  
Wafting through stellar spaces and atomic pores—  
A conscious-power awakening in the realm of death.

An unfathomed prayer's lightning hue  
Rose from the heart in a vast sunlit surge,  
Above the brows and crown cerulean grew  
An unseen Sun's gold-showering urge.

I felt upon my cheek a touch  
And beheld a smiling Face of light,  
My Mother whom I had loved so much  
Now held me in Her arms of radiant might.

I knew a fresh morn-burdened Peace  
God's magic spell that earthward had escaped:  
A deliberate stress of deep infinite ease,  
In sunlight my trembling being it draped.

Hand in Hand we entered my human home,  
No more a place of darkened plight,  
Stranger no more She bade me welcome  
In every touch and sound of earthly sight.

ARVIND HABBU