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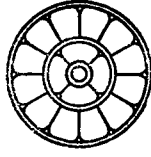
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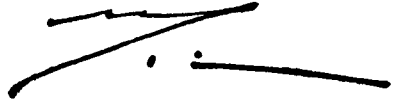


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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A TALK BY THE MOTHER

TO THE ASHRAM CHILDREN ON SEPTEMBER 7, 1955

Mother reads from *Lights on Yoga*, "Work".

"All work" is "A school of experience"?

Yes, surely. You don't understand?

No, Mother.

If you don't do anything, you cannot have any experience. The whole life is a field of experience. Each movement you make, each thought you have, each work you do, can be an experience, and *must be* an experience; and naturally work in particular is a field of experience where one must apply all the progress which one endeavours to make inwardly.

If you remain in meditation or contemplation without working, well, you don't know if you have progressed or not. You may live in an illusion, the illusion of your progress; while if you begin to work, all the circumstances of your work, the contact with others, the material occupation, all this is a field of experience in order that you may become aware not only of the progress made but of all the progress that remains to be made. If you live closed up in yourself, without acting, you may live in a completely subjective illusion; the moment you externalise your action and enter into contact with others, with circumstances and the objects of life, you become aware absolutely objectively of whether you have made progress or not, whether you are more calm, more conscious, stronger, more unselfish, whether you no longer have any desire, any preference, any weakness, any unfaithfulness—you can become aware of all this by working. But if you remain enclosed in a meditation that's altogether personal, you may enter into a total illusion and never come out of it, and believe that you have realised extraordinary things, while really you have only the impression, the illusion that you have done so.

That's what Sri Aurobindo means.

Then, Mother why do all the spiritual schools in India have as their doctrine escape from action?

Yes, because all this is founded upon the teaching that life is an illusion. It began with the teaching of the Buddha who said that existence was the fruit of desire, and that there was only one way of coming out of misery and suffering and desire; it was to come out of existence. And then this continued with Shankara who added that not only is it the fruit of desire but it is a total illusion, and as long as you live

in this illusion you cannot realise the Divine. For him there was not even the Divine, I think; for the Buddha, at least, there wasn't any.

Then did they truly have experiences?

That depends on what you call "experience". They certainly had an inner contact with something.

The Buddha certainly had an inner contact with something which, in comparison with the external life, was a non-existence; and in this non-existence, naturally, all the results of existence disappear. There is a state like this; it is even said that if one can keep this state for twenty days, one is sure to lose one's body; if it is exclusive, I quite agree with it.

But it may be an experience which remains at the back, you see, and is conscious even while not being exclusive, and which causes the contact with the world and the outer consciousness to be supported by something that is free and independent. This indeed is a state in which one can truly make very great progress externally, because one can be detached from everything and act without attachment, without preference, with that inner freedom which is expressed outwardly.

Yet this is the real necessity: once this inner freedom has been attained and the conscious contact with what is eternal and infinite, then, without losing this consciousness one must return to action and let that influence the whole consciousness turned towards action.

This is what Sri Aurobindo calls bringing down the Force from above. In this way there is a chance of being able to change the world, because one has brought in a new Force, a new region, a new consciousness and put it into contact with the outer world. So its presence and action will produce inevitable changes and, let us hope, a total transformation in what this outer world is.

So we could say that the Buddha quite certainly had the first part of the experience, but that he never dreamt of the second, because it was contrary to his own theory. His theory was that one has to run away; but it is obvious that there is only one way of escape, to die, and yet, as he himself has said so well, you may be dead and be completely attached to life and still be in the cycle of births and not have liberation. And in fact he has admitted the idea that it is by successive passing lives on the earth that one can manage to develop oneself to reach this liberation. But for him the ideal was that the world would not exist any longer. It was as though he accused the Divine of having made a mistake and that there was only one thing to do, to rectify the mistake by annulling it. But naturally, to be reasonable and logical, he did not admit the Divine. It was a mistake made by whom, how, in what way?—this he never explained. He simply said that it was made and that the world had begun with desire and had to end with desire. He was just on the point of saying that this world was purely subjective, that is, a collective illusion, and that if the illusion ceased the world would cease to be. But he did not come so far.

It is Shankara who took over and made the thing altogether complete in his teaching.

If we go back to the teaching of the Rishis, for example, there was no idea of flight out of the world, for them the realisation had to be terrestrial. They conceived a Golden Age very well, in which the realisation would be terrestrial. But starting from a certain decline of vitality in the spiritual life of the country, perhaps, from a different orientation which came in, you see... it is certainly starting from the teaching of the Buddha that this idea of flight came, which has undermined the vitality of the country, because one had to make an effort to cut oneself off from life. The outer reality became an illusory falsehood, and one had no longer to have anything to do with it. So naturally one was cut off from the universal energy, and the vitality went on diminishing, and with this vitality all the possibilities of realisation also diminished.

But it is very remarkable... I have met many people who were trying this method of detachment and separation from life, and living exclusively in the inner reality. These people, almost all of them, had in the outer life absolutely gross defects. When they returned to the ordinary consciousness, they were very much lower than one of the elite, for instance, a man of great culture and great intellectual and moral development. These people in their ordinary conduct, when they came out of their meditation, their exclusive concentration, lived very grossly. They had very, very ordinary defects, you see. I knew many of this kind. Or perhaps they had come to a stage where their outer life was a sort of dream in which they were, so to say, not existing. But one had altogether the impression of beings who were completely incomplete, totally incomplete, that is, outwardly there was nothing at all.

But if in the outer consciousness one is very low, how can one meditate? It becomes very difficult, doesn't it?

Yes, very difficult!

Then how do these people succeed?

But they came out of it completely, they left it as one takes off a cloak, then they put it aside and entered another part of their being. And this is what happened exactly, it was as though they took away this consciousness, laid it aside, and entered another part of their being. And in their meditation, as long as they remained there, it was very good. But these people, most of them, when in that state, were in a kind of samadhi, and they could not even speak; and so when they came back and returned to the ordinary consciousness, it was just where it was before, completely unchanged; there was no contact.

You see, what makes the thing difficult for you to understand is that you *don't know* concretely, practically, that there are... different planes of your being, as of all beings, which may not have any contact among themselves, and that one may very

well pass from one plane to another, and live in a certain consciousness, leaving the other absolutely asleep. And moreover, even in activity, at different times different states of being enter into activity, and unless one takes the greatest care to unify them, put them all in harmony, one of them may pull from one side, another from the other, and a third pull from the third, and all of them be absolutely in contradiction with one another.

There are people who in a certain state of being are constructive, for example, and capable of organising their life and doing very useful work, and in another part of their being they are absolutely destructive and constantly demolish what the other has constructed. I knew quite a number of people of this kind who, apparently had a rather incoherent life, but it was because the two parts of the being, instead of completing each other and harmonising in a synthesis, were separated and in opposition, and one undid what the other did, and all the time they passed like this from one to the other. They had a disorganised life. And there are more people of this kind than one would think!

There are very outstanding examples, striking ones, so clear and distinct they are; but less totally opposed conditions, though all the same in opposition to one another, occur very, very often. Besides, one has oneself the experience, when one has tried to make progress; there is one part of the being which participates in the effort and makes progress, and suddenly, without rhyme or reason, all the effort one has made, all the consciousness one has gained, capsizes in something which is quite different, opposed, over which one has no control.

Some people can make an effort the whole day through, succeed in building something within themselves; they go to sleep at night and the next morning all that they had done on the previous day is lost, they have lost it in a state of unconsciousness. This happens very often, these are not exceptional cases, far from it. And this is what explains, you see, why some people—when they withdraw into their higher mind for instance—can enter into very deep meditation and be liberated from the things of this world, and then when they return to their ordinary physical consciousness, are absolutely ordinary if not even vulgar, because they haven't taken care to establish any contact, and to see that what is above acts and transforms what is below.

That's all.

Mother, about the Buddha I have a question. You said that the Avatar comes to the earth to show that the Divine can live upon the earth. Then why did he preach just the contrary? Is he an Avatar or not?

That!... Some people say he was an Avatar, others say no, but this, to tell you the truth, it is...

I think that this first thing, that the Avatar comes to the earth to prove that the Divine can... it is not so much to prove by words as to prove by a certain reali-

sation; and I think that it would be rather this aspect of the Divine which is constructive and preservative, rather than a transformative and destructive aspect. You see, to use the Indian names known in India, well, I think they are Avatars of Vishnu who come rather to prove that the Divine can come upon earth; whereas each time Shiva has manifested he has always manifested like this, in beings who have tried to fight against an illusion and demolish what is there.

I have reasons to think that the Buddha was one. To speak more accurately, he manifested something of the power of Shiva: it was the same compassion, the same understanding of all the misery, and the same power which destroys—obviously with the intention of transforming, but destroys rather than constructs. His work does not seem to have been very constructive. It was very necessary to teach men practically not to be egoistic; from that point of view it was very necessary. But in its deeper principle it has not helped very much in the transformation of the earth.

As I said, you see, instead of helping the descent of the higher Consciousness into the terrestrial life, it has strongly encouraged the separation of the deeper consciousness, which he said was the only true one, from all outer expression.

Now, you see, this question of the Divine upon the earth: well, quite naturally those who believed in him have made a god of him. One has only to see all the temples and all the Buddhist godheads to know that human nature has always the tendency to deify what it admires.

So, there it is!

There is something else we would like to ask. There are many discussions on this subject: should we take any interest in those songs which have no meaning, usually cinema songs?

Take interest? How do you mean?

There are many who listen to these songs and sing them also.

Yes, but I don't understand "taking interest". One may like these things because one has no taste, but I don't see what is meant by "taking interest". One takes interest in a study, one takes interest in a work, one takes interest in the progress to be made, but... One may indulge in an activity of idleness, but that doesn't mean that one can take any interest in it.

If one has to sing these songs?

Has to? Why? To earn your living? (*Laughter*)

Is not it an obstacle to our progress?

But everything that brings down the consciousness is an obstacle in one's progress. If you have a desire it creates an obstacle in your progress; if you have a bad thought or bad will, it creates an obstacle in your progress; if you welcome some kind of falsehood, it creates an obstacle in your progress; and if you cultivate vulgarity in yourself, it creates an obstacle in your progress; everything which is not in keeping with the Truth creates an obstacle to progress; and there are hundreds of these things every day.

For example, every movement of impatience, every movement of anger, every movement of violence, every tendency to dissimulation, every deformation of the truth, whether big or small, every bad will, every partial judgement, every preference, every encouragement to bad taste and to... yes, to vulgarity, all this is constantly in the way. All this, every one of these movements, big or small, passing or lasting, all are like so many stones to build the wall to prevent yourself from progressing. It is not one thing only, there are hundreds of them, thousands. It is enough to have a preference in oneself, it is enough to be impatient, enough to have a little desire to conceal something, enough to feel a disgust, a distaste for effort, it is enough... anything at all is enough, which has something to do with desires, repulsions, all that, for it to impede your progress. And then, from the point of view of the intellectual being, the artistic being, the side of inner and outer culture, every lack of taste, whatever it may be, is a terrible obstacle.

This world, I must say, is a world of extremes from the point of view of taste, artistic and literary culture; on one side, it makes a great effort to discover something that's very high, very pure, very noble, and on the other, at the other end, it sinks into a vulgarity which certainly is infinitely greater than the vulgarity of the past two or three centuries. What is curious is that, going back two or three centuries, people who were uncultured were gross, but their grossness resembled that of animals, and there was not much perversion in it; there was a little, because as soon as the mind is there, perversion comes in, but there was not a great deal of perversion. But now, what does not rise to the mountain-peak, what remains on ground-level, is *absolutely* perverted in its grossness, that is, it is not only ignorant and stupid, it is ugly, dirty and repugnant, it is deformed, it is wicked, it is *very* low. And it is indeed the wrong use of the mind which has produced this. Without the mind this perversion did not exist, but it's the wrong use of the mind which produces this perversion. Well, it has become what is ugly from every point of view, now, what is vulgar and ugly.

There are things, things considered very pretty nowadays... I have seen photographs or reproductions which are considered very fine but they are *frightfully* vulgar in their perversion, and yet people go into ecstasies over them and find them pretty! It's because there is something deformed, not only without culture, not only undeveloped, but deformed, something that's much worse, because it is much more difficult to restore something perverted and deformed than to enlighten something ignorant and uneducated. Well, I think some things have been great instruments of

perversion, and among these one may put the cinema. It could have been, and I hope it will become, an instrument of education and development; but for the moment it has been an instrument of perversion, and of a truly hideous perversion: perversion of taste, perversion of consciousness, and everything with a terrible moral and physical ugliness. Yet it is something which can be used for education, progress, culture and artistic development; and from this point of view it could be a means of spreading beauty and culture much more widely and making them much more accessible to all, than the former methods could do. But it is always like this—for what can be better, if it is not better, it becomes worse. And as I said at the beginning, we are in a period of excesses—excess in every way—a thing tries excessively to perfect itself and falls into excesses of perversion which, relatively, are as great if not greater. And if one looks attentively at oneself, one becomes aware that naturally, as one lives in the world as it is at present, one shares in its vulgarity, and that unless one observes oneself closely and constantly puts the light of one's highest consciousness upon oneself, one risks making mistakes in taste, from the spiritual point of view, rather frequently.

There we are!

Now I am going to give you a meditation this evening, and I am going to see whether you are capable of taking a cerebral bath. Cleansing!

Mother, when we meditate here, on which centre should we concentrate?

Truly speaking, each time it ought to be different.

The first time I told you to meditate upon what we had read, didn't I? Well, if you like, today we could try to let a purifying consciousness enter into us, which will give us, as I just said jokingly, a brain bath, that is, a good little cleansing—a light which purifies and cleans.

(Questions and Answers, 1955, pp. 291-300)

TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of August 15, 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. Mamilal, 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 21, 1940

M: In the Gita Sri Krishna says that he knows all about Arjuna's past lives.

SRI AUROBINDO: What about it? A past life can be known.

M: Then he knew all the details of his past life?

SRI AUROBINDO: Who says that? Does Krishna say that? (Laughter)

M: He knew at least the salient features.

SRI AUROBINDO: Not necessarily; he may know only the general features.

M: Simply from general features one won't be able to make out the character and quality etc. of a man.

SRI AUROBINDO: Why not? The first impression one gets, on knowing the general features of a man's past life, is that of character.

P: He wants to say that one must be able to know what he had for his breakfast.

N: What was your point in that question?

M: I wanted to say that Krishna was *sarvajna*. (Laughter)

SRI AUROBINDO: Then that girl of Mathura who knew all the details of her past life was also *sarvajna*. When Arjuna said to Krishna, "Will you tell me again all you told me about Kurukshetra etc., etc.?" Krishna replied, "Good Lord, do I remember all that blessed lot now? At that time I was in Yoga."

M: But he was always in Yoga.

SRI AUROBINDO: He didn't say that. He said he had forgotten.

M: How could he hear Draupadi's lamentation then during *vastraharan*?

SRI AUROBINDO: His subliminal heard it! (Laughter)

M: Is that story true, Sir, and not allegory?

SRI AUROBINDO: Why allegory?

M: Of course you yourself have said in some book that all these stories are true.

SRI AUROBINDO: Where have I said that? What I have said is that the Gita was recorded as a fact in the Mahabharata, intended to be a fact of life, not an alle-

gory. But do you mean that Hanuman's taking the sun under his armpit and jumping into Lanka and burning Lanka by his tail-fire were all facts?

M: What are they then? Poetry?

(Purani narrated the story of the ex-Maharani of Porbandar who had come here. It is said she commuted the death-sentence of a criminal in her court moved by the piteous cry of his wife.)

M: Could this be called a *punya karma* or *kuta karma*, Sir?

SRI AUROBINDO: Which part of her action?

M: This pardon and release of the murderer.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is an act of mercy. Mercy is a *punya karma*.

M: But to release an arch-murderer can be called *punya karma*?

SRI AUROBINDO: How do you know he was an arch-murderer? He may have been innocent.

M: Let us take for granted he was an arch-murderer.

SRI AUROBINDO: Why should you take it for granted?

M: Suppose an arch-murderer is released under such circumstances, he may go on committing more murders. Can that be called a *punya karma*?

SRI AUROBINDO: It may be both. *(Laughter)* You are looking from the social point of view and don't see the character or nature of the act. Compassion is a virtue and an act of compassion is a virtuous act.

M: Suppose a man is asked by the hunter about an antelope that has passed his way—

SRI AUROBINDO: Oh, that old story of the yogi? A yogi was asked by some murderers if he had seen a man running away. He said "Yes", and showed the way. The man was caught and killed. The yogi after his death was taken to hell.

M: Was he right in telling the truth?

SRI AUROBINDO: There was no necessity.

M: Should one speak the truth in all circumstances?

SRI AUROBINDO: It depends on the circumstances. Every action has to be judged on its own merits.

M: But in this case?

SRI AUROBINDO: He need not have told the truth as he knew what would be the consequence of his doing so...

M: According to Jainism, one could have remained quiet.

SRI AUROBINDO: Quite so. In this case he told the truth, not for the sake of telling the truth but from ethical vanity.

N: Or perhaps for fear of his own life.

SRI AUROBINDO: That can't be a virtue either. To endanger another's life in order to save his own can't be a *punya karma*.

Evening

M: Have you read Prof. N. N. Sen's lecture at the Madras Philosophy Conference?

SRI AUROBINDO: I have waded through it.

M: *The Hindu* gives a short note on it but I don't grasp it myself very well. It says "What is mind? No matter," and "What is matter? Never mind." Something like that.

SRI AUROBINDO: It means mind and matter are not the same.

M: But one thing I can't understand, Sir, about life and existence. If a living organism consists of living cells and each living cell has a soul—

SRI AUROBINDO: A cell has a soul?

M: Yes, Sir, otherwise how could it live?

SRI AUROBINDO: It lives because of life in it, not because of soul in it. You can ask "What is life?"

M: What is life then?

SRI AUROBINDO: For that you have to read *The Life Divine*. (*Laughter*)

P: He wants a short-cut.

N: If each cell has a soul, then there are so many thousands of souls in the body?

SRI AUROBINDO: He is referring to Nigodh or Jiva. (*Laughter*) In that case one can say everything existing has a soul. A tree has a soul, a stone has a soul. That may be but it is not self-evident.

M: That is what Jainism says. (*Laughter*) J. C. Bose has shown that the tree has a nervous system.

SRI AUROBINDO: A nervous system is not soul. It is capable of response to a stimulus. If a cell dies, what happens to the soul?

M: It also dies. (*Laughter*)

SRI AUROBINDO: So body and soul are the same: both are destructible. If the one dies, the other follows? That is the Western idea which makes no distinction between body and soul and life.

M: What is your idea then?

SRI AUROBINDO: As I said, read *The Life Divine*. (*Laughter*)

M: Is there no short-cut to it? (*Laughter*) When a person dies—

SRI AUROBINDO: A person dies? You mean the body dies?

M: No, Sir! Say, when a human being dies —

SRI AUROBINDO: A human being dies? What is a human being?

M: When the Atman departs—(*Laughter*)

SRI AUROBINDO: That means the body dies. If the Atman or soul departs, it does not die, it is the body that dies. Either the body dies because the soul departs or the soul departs because the body is destroyed. According to one conception the soul is a portion of the Divine, and hence indestructible, while mind, life and body are instruments of its self-expression. It is the materialist conception that soul

and body are the same so that when the body dies existence ceases.

(Dr. Manilal was so thoroughly battered that he had no more words to utter after this. After a short while he made his usual pranam and departed.)

NIRODBARAN

(To be continued)

THE MOTHER'S MESSAGE ON THE ATOMIC BOMB

(Apropos of the article "The Pros and Cons of Hiroshima and Nagasaki" in the Mother India of August 15, we are reproducing this statement of the Mother's, made soon after the two atomic bombs had been dropped.)

The Atomic bomb is in itself the most wonderful achievement and the sign of a growing power of man over material nature. But what is to be regretted is that this material progress and mastery is not the result of and in keeping with a spiritual progress and mastery which alone has the power to contradict and counteract the terrible danger coming from these discoveries. We cannot and must not stop progress, but we must achieve it in an equilibrium between the inside and the outside.

30 August 1945

(Collected Works of the Mother, Vol. 15, p. 48.)

TWO UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SRI KRISHNA PREM TO SUNIL KUMAR DUTTA

Dutta's Introduction

CELEBRATED singer, writer and spiritual seeker Dilip Kumar Roy has said that he came to know the name of Sri Aurobindo through the advice of a foreign friend to read Sri Aurobindo's *Essays on the Gita*. This friend was Ronald Nixon who had taken the Indian name Sri Krishna Prem. Once Nixon was saved from a plane-accident and it made him experience a new consciousness. That is why he began to tread the path of Indian spirituality. He met Jasodama, who had been at one time the most sophisticated lady of Lucknow but had become a great sadhika. Taking initiation from her, he made a *kutir* (Ashram) at Almora for intense sadhana. He went to Pondicherry to have the darshan of the Master of Integral Yoga, Sri Aurobindo. Throughout his life he maintained a hard ritual of Sannyasa.

We, the average common people, move under the shadow of the lotus feet of the Divine for the sake of our future prosperity. We seek a double boon—relief in both physical illness and mental agony. There is only one in a crowd who wants the Divine for the Divine's sake. I aspired to be such. That is the reason for my writing to Sri Krishna Prem. My first letter sought a remedy for an ailing body, and the second for a troubled mind. I was simply bewildered when I received his sublime replies. They made me understand how self-dedicated a Yogi he was. One of the chief qualities of pure Vaishnavism is lit up by the proverb: "Give respect even to the undeserving." These letters provide inspiration not only for me but also for the rank and file. All their words seem to me mantras. So I am totally unfit to explain them. As he wrote from his deathbed they are the rarest gems to me. I cannot help looking at them whenever I feel pain either bodily or mental. It goes without saying that I get new vigour at once.

First Letter

P.O. Mirtola, Dist. Almora, U.P.

17.10.65

My dear Sunil Kumar,

I am sorry to hear of your ill health but I am afraid I do not have any spiritual way of healing bodily illness. If I did I would surely use it myself as I have been laid up with illness for the last six months or more. One should take whatever medical help one can get; for the rest one must try to realise that we are in the hands of Sri Bhagavan, and that peace lies in His Will, not in ours.

May His blessings be with you.

Affectionately,
Sri Krishna Prem

Second Letter

P.O. Mirtola, Dist. Almora, U.P.

My dear Sunil Kumar,

I am afraid you are under a misconception. I can only say that I am *not* what you call the 'supreme Lord among human beings.' Nor, in fact, am I any sort of lord at all. The "Lord" is one and only one, He who is in the heart of all beings including yourself. It is there that you have to seek for Him.

I am sorry that you are suffering from mental troubles. Perhaps they may be due to the fact that you are looking all the time for someone to do things for you and unwilling to face the necessity of doing them for yourself? This of course is only a suggestion but it is one which causes many people's troubles of that sort and the remedy is to face the fact that one has to solve one's own problems—it can't be done for one.

May His blessings be with you.

Sincerely,
Sri Krishna Prem

THE ROAD

I WALK alone on my burning road
Till I reach the end and the Secret is unveiled.
Let crystal-dewed grasses taunt my blistered feet,
And fairy breezes, cool playmates of green trees, tantalize.
Let friendship and security's caravans call my lonely steps
To the fixed furrows and safe ruts of trivial living.
Still shall I dare the shifting sands and fiery winds:
One day my steps will themselves evoke flowers of Eden
And each breath be the course of a mystic zephyr.

SHYAM KUMARI

POETS, POEMS, POETRY

A TALK BY AMAL KIRAN TO NIRODBARAN'S CLASS

I HAVE been given a sort of *carte blanche*—told that I should read any poem of my choice or else write one myself and explain where the poetry of it lies. Since the subject is poetry as exemplified by a poem, I may be excused a few general introductory remarks on the cause of this whole beautiful business: the poet.

There's the old Latin tag: *Poeta nascitur, non fit*. A schoolboy has made the startling translation: "Poets are nasty, but don't you get a fit!" Another intuitive youngster has the rendering: "Poets are born, but they are not fit to be!" Well, both the howlers have some sense, though far from the literal one, which is: "Poets are born, not made." The howlers are not quite off the mark because poets are often nasty. Horace has the phrase: *vatum irritabile genus*, "the irritable tribe of poets"; and it is also a fact that they are born but that many people, especially those to whom they go on spouting their verse, find they cannot be borne any more after birth.

What is forgotten in the midst of the anti-poet protest is, in the first place, that the mere man must not be mixed up with the poet-self even though both are in the same being who confronts the world. In judging the poet we must look at his poetry, the four or five or six metrical feet on which it runs, and not at the feet of clay with which the mere man walks or tries to kick. In the second place, we may attempt to understand how the presence of the poet in the composite being which contains also the mere man could make the latter over-sensitive to the common circumstances of life—circumstances so out of step with the enchanted inner tempo set by the poetic consciousness. Naturally there is a lack of rhyme between the poet-man and his prosaic fellows, resulting in his irritated response.

To revert to the literal sense of the Latin tag: it is true that in the usual course of things a poet, if not born, cannot ever be trained into poetry, but there can be true poets who are made in a way which the maker of that saying never dreamt of. This phenomenon has come about in that unusual course of things which we term spirituality. Take Nirodbaran, for instance, or Arjava (John Chadwick), two of the poetic luminaries of our Ashram. Arjava was a professor of mathematical or symbolic logic—a mind moving among abstractions: he became a first-rate bard under Sri Aurobindo's touch. Nirodbaran was a doctor, but his aspiration was towards Apollo, not Aesculapius. He wanted to write sonnets, not prescriptions. He yearned to dispense not medicines but Coleridgean "honey-dew". Here, too, Sri Aurobindo did the trick. Sri Aurobindo knew how to give a poet birth in one who was not born a poet. That is the master art of Yoga—to bring the subtle planes into re-creative action.

The example of a born poet may be given from an incident in the life of Alexander Pope, the 18th century classic. From his very childhood he made poems.

He has autobiographically written:

I lisped in numbers, for the numbers came.

But his father was extremely displeased with this waste of time, as he considered it, and so he took little Alexander to task rather severely. He often scolded him and once put him across his knees and administered a good whacking. Poor Alexander cried and cried, and promised his father he would not indulge in that waste of time. But the promise he sobbed out ran:

Papa, Papa, pity take!
I will no more verses make.

Now we have come to the subject proper that has been in my mind. It is whether verses are at all worth making. Poetry consists, as you know, of words, words in a certain rhythmic order with an intensity of vision and emotion infused in them. I shall read to you not one poem but in fact three, showing various sides of the art of poetry. Two of them are written by women.

Women are supposed to be expert at tossing words about. But here is a woman who writes against indulgence in words. She is herself a poet and in order to show the uselessness of words she writes a poem. Which is, of course, a paradox, and we shall dilate a little upon it after I have read the poem to you. The piece is called "Words":

Words—what are words? I, who have drunk my fill
Of sudden joy, of love, of youth, of spring,
I, who have stood like God upon a hill
And thrilled to see a whole sky blossoming,
Never have found one word with half the ache
And wistful wonder of a moon-swept lake,
Nor any loveliness of phrase to show
The delicate drifting miracle of snow!
Words are the fragile ghosts of things that die
In being named. I tell you that the sight
And sting of beauty are enough delight
To close the lips with wonder, and to start
A wild and wordless singing in the heart!

He squanders joy who draws back from the brink
Of beauty for some silly song. I think
God never made a single flowering tree
For poet's babblings—but for ecstasy!

The author is Stella Kobrin. What she wants to convey is that the experience which usually is made to overflow into words by poets is such that words cannot do justice to it. Not only are words inadequate to it; she says they distort it, they turn it into a thing not of true beauty. Something silly, something trivial, something superficial results if expression is given to your thrill at the sight of beauty.

In the second line she mentions the usual themes of poetry, as she conceives them. Sudden joy, love, youth and spring—they are mostly the themes of lyric poetry. And she says that when she has stood upon a hill like God she has seen things which are inexpressible in language. Her central contention is: language cannot cope with exalted inner experience. The implication of “exalted” is important, she says she has stood like God; that conveys the intensity and the immensity of the experience of which she is speaking. It is as if she saw, for the first time, something which had come out of the mind of the Supreme Creator. In the Bible, God is declared to have made the world, looked at it, found it good and then smiled. So it is a wide-ranging and completely satisfying response to the world of beauty that she is trying to communicate to us. And she also implies that whenever we see and feel great beauty we participate in an experience that is divine. Such experience falls into a category which we can consider mystic or spiritual.

There seem to be several shades of meaning in this expression, and we may note that when she says she has “stood upon a hill” the hill itself is suggestive of a height of being—a state not belonging to the common lowlands of life. And then, standing upon a hill, what does she see? She thrills to see the whole sky blossoming. There is a cosmic expanse opened up in front of a lover of beauty. How is all that to be caught in words? It is too vast, it must overflow language, it must break through expression and so poetry must prove insufficient to contain and therefore to convey the glowing plenitude of the experience of nature’s beauty.

At this point the writer makes a little shift. She is looking at the sky blossoming but when she is standing on the hill and seeing the whole expanse overhead the conviction comes to her that she could

Never have found one word with half the ache
And wistful wonder of a moon-swept lake,
Nor any loveliness of phrase to show
The delicate drifting miracle of snow!

Within the sky she is evidently thinking of the moon as well as of snow falling—two immaculate phenomena—and she thinks of the moon reflected in a lake but she doesn’t use the word “reflected” or any analogue of it: she speaks of “a moon-swept lake”, a stretch of water that itself is, as it were, washed with moonlight, stirred with moonlight, filled with moonlight and excited with something from above within its depths. That is the suggestion and she speaks of two psychological reactions or responses: ache and wistful wonder. Both of them are intended to be in the looker-

on as well as in that which is looked on. The lake itself, in being called moon-swept, is given an ache, a longing and, along with that longing, a wistfulness, the longing for something afar, and in that wistfulness there is a wonder, a startle, a surprise at such a thing happening as a moon sweeping the surface of a lake. And the very sight of this experience attributed to the lake produces in oneself also the ache and the wistful wonder. The expression is such that the preposition "of" which comes after "wonder" can apply to both the experience and the thing experienced. It's an experience of the lake as well as of its beholder. That is the skill with which the language is used. An additional conviction of the insufficiency of poetry is couched in the next two lines about snow.

You can make words as lovely as you like but they will never capture such a miracle as snow delicately drifting. In the course of telling us of both the lake and the snow the poet seems to contradict herself; of course, women are used to self-contradiction, so I don't think she has any scruple about it. She contradicts herself because the words she has used are so empathic, so expressive of the reality of nature's beauty; she has chosen not the approximate but the exact words, words which can actually catch, reflect, echo the phenomenon; you might call them intuitive words. But, mind you, she uses on both occasions the synonymous terms "wonder" and "miracle". By this she wants to convey, even while she herself is adequately giving tongue to the beauty which she sees, the surpassing quality, the transcendent attribute, of that beauty by calling in one place the thing a "wonder" and in the other a "miracle". A miracle is something which you cannot explain by natural means, it cannot be achieved even by natural means. Words she considers to be the things used by a human being, the "moon-swept lake" and the "delicately drifting snow" she takes to be things done by a Divine Being and therefore there is an incompatibility between words and nature's beauty—though, if we said "nature's beauty", it would bring in the suggestion of the natural. You might protest that, just like words which are the natural means used by human beings, a lake and snow are things which are equally natural because they belong to the same vast domain of nature to which man himself belongs. But this is a little queerness which we have to overlook; what the writer tries to say is that human beings have not the power to express the divine, the supernatural, the power that the phenomena of the physical world of beautiful things have. No doubt, this is a proposition open to debate, but as a "poetic truth" it has to depend only on the way it is rhythmically felt on our pulses.

Words are the fragile ghosts of things that die
In being named....

She means that when you try to express a thing in language the thing does not exist any more. It loses its genuine inner life, it dies, and when it dies all that you catch is only a ghost of it. By the use of names, by the use of words, you never catch the reality of a thing. You get something out of it which is not its true life, it

is just like a spectre, a phantom. And it is an obvious fact that when you say something about something what you catch is not the thing itself; it is an echo, an image, a kind of duplication of the thing. But whether to call it a ghost or to call it a soul is an important point. If you call it a soul you mean that you have somehow transmitted by your language the essential life of a thing. If you call it a ghost you suggest what is attenuated, diminished, deprived of true vitality. And I suppose the difference according to us between true poetry and mere verse lies precisely in that. Sri Aurobindo has said that the true intuitive word of poetry catches the inner life-thrill of an object, a person, a situation and embodies it in terms of sound and it is that life-thrill which gives us the true rhythm, the rhythm which is expressive and not just decorative, the rhythm which is born of an inner sympathy and gives the intuitive word which is most exemplified, according to Sri Aurobindo, in Shakespeare. The frequency of the intuitive word in Shakespeare is unsurpassed. Sri Aurobindo says there are only one or two poets who have this intuitive word in extreme abundance. He mentions Shakespeare but who the other ones may be is anybody's guess. I do not know and I cannot think of anyone else who has written like Shakespeare. In Stella Koblin's view, even Shakespeare would be a failure, capturing in the words of his poetry not a soul but merely a ghost.

She continues:

...I tell you that the sight
And sting of beauty are enough delight
To close the lips with wonder, and to start
A wild and wordless singing in the heart!

Very interesting lines, these. She asserts her conviction and in asserting it gives us two characteristics of the experience which poets endeavour to embody in verse: "the sight and sting of beauty." Poetry is most deeply definable as the harmonious self-expression of a thrilled seerhood. The "seerhood" is the "sight" that seizes "beauty". The "sting" of "beauty" corresponds to the "thrilled" state: something smites at you, even makes you suffer, but with a certain piercing to the heart which awakens you to your true being, the spark of the Divine in you. Koblin, however, declares that this double experience of sight and sting gives such an access of "delight", such a spell of "wonder", that you feel they are something impossible to express and all that they do is to create a sort of singing within the heart, a wild singing which you cannot tame, cannot order out in metrical expression; it has to be left a grand, colourful, self-fulfilled chaos, out of which no cosmos of a small song can emerge. It has to be left "wordless", but she uses the locution "wordless singing". "Singing" means the huge rapture which becomes a rhythmic experience, but that has to go on in the recess of the heart, it cannot and should not be given expression in the form of language. Language constricts its immense spirituality. As soon as language is used the true singing is marred, the presence of the infinite

is violated. Perhaps somebody might say: "What about music then? Pure music is wordless singing. Can it express all that poetry, as Kobrin holds, fails to communicate?" There is something in wordless music, according to Sri Aurobindo, which fills us with an almost immediate sense of the infinite. Poetry too can convey the infinite but not perhaps with the same directness; yet poetry is an art which carries the quintessences, as it were, of all the arts: of painting by giving us imagery and pictorial touches, of music by giving us inwardly expressive sound and patterned accords that lift the sense beyond limited definitions, of sculpture by giving us concentrated moments, carved and chiselled felicities standing out from the general flow like poised attitudes of soul with the suggestion as of archetypal mood-forms. Even quintessential architecture is there in the way these felicitous fixities combine to build up a multitudinous whole of magnificent mystery. But, for Kobrin, poetry cannot seize the wonder that is within, and I suspect she would include music too in the same category as poetry. What she is telling us is that all art-expression is not only futile but a desecration of the experience of beauty in God's world.

She continues:

He squanders joy who draws back from the brink
Of beauty for some silly song....

She means that somebody who has the idea of writing a poem cannot fully enter into the experience of beauty. He goes to the brink of beauty to drink the nectarous waters but if he has it in his mind to write a poem about it, he is divided in his experience and cannot really enjoy the full intoxication or, if he halts to write a poem and express what he is experiencing, he spoils the magic by interrupting it. The fullness of the delight will fail to be his and if that is so how is he ever going to embody his experience in poetry? Unless you have got something which brims you, you cannot give a just expression to it. But if you let it brim you, you can't at the same time stop anywhere to write anything. The author doesn't, of course, consider the case of having the full experience and then turning to poetry. Perhaps she would ask: "If you have the full experience, where the hell is the need to say anything? You've got everything, and writing is superfluous, not to speak of its being superficial." In any case, she refers to "silly song", silly because the attempt is to utter the unutterable, to attempt what was never meant to be done:

...I think
God never made a single flowering tree
For poets' babblings—but for ecstasy!

This reminds me of the end of a poem by another poet, a young man who died in the First World War: Joyce Kilmer. He has a whole poem on a tree. It concludes:

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

The same idea as Kobrin's is here, but there is in her lines the additional shade that God never made a tree for men to be foolish enough to write a poem about it. God made a tree, a flowering tree, in order that there might be an ecstasy within us, a sense of the Divine. "Ecstasy"—the word in its etymology signifies "standing outside", you are beside yourself, as we say, and when you are beside yourself you are in no condition really to do anything but be beside. You cannot write poetry in that condition: this is Kobrin's final contention.

We have come to the end of the poem. We have already made some critical comments by the way. What would one say of this piece at the close of its argument? I would say first of all that it is meant to be an argument and there lies its defect. The fact of its being an argument, something mentally conceived and put forth with a view to impress and convince us, is proved by several words in the composition itself. The most typical are "I think". The theme is thought by her, she is reflecting and making a case. If, instead of thinking about poetry, she spoke about it from the very heart of the poet in her, she would not give expression to such an idea. But the idea is correct in the sense that mostly we fail to express what we set out to. The majority of poems are failures, they fall short. The phenomenon of first-rate poetry is a very small one. It's true that there are lengthy epics, but how rare they are! Hundreds of long poems are attempted but most of them come to nothing. It is once in a thousand years that there arises a Homer. Once in another thousand years or so a Virgil comes on. Then after a millennium a Dante appears, and centuries pass before a Milton and a Sri Aurobindo work poetic miracles. The number of epic poets is such that we can count them on the fingers of one hand. Similarly, even writers of short poems, those who have written successful verses again and again, are also just a handful. Most poets who turn out hundreds of pieces succeed in creating a masterpiece just a few times. The difficulty of expressing beauty is certainly a formidable one and, if we understand Kobrin in that sense, we may say her thesis has a truth in it. But she makes her thesis a very sweeping one. It's not exactly a "moon-swept-lake" of a thesis, for it's not a very beautiful one in itself. Yet she has expressed it with a good deal of beauty and by doing so she once more contradicts herself. There is a self-refutation in the whole poem; for her to be effective in saying that poems are ineffective, she has to compose an effective poem! That is the paradox of the whole situation. Otherwise not a shred of conviction would come to us. And again and again we find in this composition memorable utterance—the empathic, the intuitive movement of what we consider to be true poetry comes in. And that is why this poem is worth reading, worth commenting on, worth drawing some lesson from. It does what she says no poet can ever do!

Q. So would you call it a wholly successful poem?

Not quite—I would rather call it a success on the whole. I wouldn't call it a poem which is equally successful in every line. And it is successful as a poem, not as a thesis, because by being a poem it confutes its own thesis. I may add that its success is only on a certain plane—a rich mental plane. The intuitive stabs are not very frequent, yet the expression is quite competent almost throughout. Of course, mental poetry can be full of inspiration. I don't see why just by being an expression of the mind a poem cannot have inspiration.

Q. Would you call it thought-out?

I would call it thought-out in the sense that it has a design on our minds. It wants to convince us, it has a theme which the writer wants to establish—rather a thesis, a proposition, which she wants to prove to us. But what it does is not done in an intellectual way. It is done in an inspired mental way. And in being done so, it proves to us that even ideas can become the springs of poetry. A poet can even be highly philosophical. Kobrin is not a poetic philosopher, she just touches the core of an argument and moves on, she makes it tremble and thrill and tingle in our minds and goes on with some suggestive phrase here and there, like that about God never making anything for us to talk about. There you have the profound implication that things have a divine content and because they have a divine content this content cannot be expressed in any form except the form which God has given it. That implication is the real argument, it is not set forth in so many argumentative words but she suggests it every now and then, and by suggesting it with some real poetic force she succeeds in making a poem. It is after all like all poetic truths, something which holds on certain occasions and for a certain number of cases and there is a general suggestion of the frequent if not constant inadequacy of language to give proper shape to that which we feel and that which goes home to our hearts from this marvellous creation of the Divine. Up to that point she sets a poetic truth vibrating in us.

I should like to mention a few technical effects. The piece is in pentameters and the base is iambic—a rising foot, the stress on the second syllable. But the first line starts with a trochaic foot, the stress on the first syllable. And this syllable answers pre-eminently to the poem's subject: "Words". It is a hammer-stroke to drive into our minds the theme. If there had been an iambic foot in this place, the poet could not have produced that specific effect. Of course, any trochee would have served the purely technical purpose of an initial push—but the push is most significant with the chosen word: "Words". And in genuine poetry, technique and significance always coincide.

The third line has again the emphasis on the opening syllable: "I". By putting that emphasis Kobrin creates in us a subtle confidence, that the person talking to us has had some definite convincing experience which we should accept. Then there is the line:

Never have found one word with half the ache...

We have the same technique, the first syllable accented to enforce the sense. Repeatedly by means of this device the poet tries to create the faith in us that there is someone who speaks with authority and the authority is of experience. The continuation of the phrase leads us to another aspect of inspired technique: alliteration. We have "wistful wonder". Close upon its heels is "delicate drifting" and finally "wild and wordless". This last alliteration, like that of "wistful wonder", plays upon the letter *w* which is always felt to give an expansive effect, the suggestion of widening out. Look at Wordsworth's

the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world.

There the sense of an immense burden which baffles the mind is clinched by those three *w*'s of "weary", "weight" and "world". And this effect comes most convincingly to us in that line of Sri Aurobindo's where the suggestion of wideness is part of the expressed content of the line:

In the wide workshop of the wonderful world.

You have four *w*'s there and the expansive effect is tremendous and it is made most acute and conscious for us by the use of the very word "wide".

(To be continued)

THE IDEALS OF LONG AGO

THE BASES OF PERMANENT PEACE ON EARTH

“Freedom, equality and brotherhood are three godheads of the soul, they cannot be really achieved through the external machinery of society or by man so long as he lives only in the individual and the communal ego.”¹ Sri Aurobindo

IN this year of International Peace, perhaps most of the thinkers and intellectuals of the world are of the opinion that all sorts of global problems that have obstructed human progress and made it difficult for human beings to survive, can be radically solved only by the unification of mankind. But their views differ in regard to the question: “How can mankind be unified and what should be the cardinal principles to follow for effectuating such unification?”

Unification of mankind, that is to say, human unity, is no doubt a great ideal, which is anyhow making its way to the front of our consciousness. As we all know, the emergence of an ideal in human thought is always the sign of an intention in Nature; but Nature does not accomplish it as soon as it emerges; on the contrary she takes up ideas, carries them out partly, then drops them by the wayside to resume them in some future era.

We know that about two hundred years ago the three ideals—Liberty, Equality and Fraternity—of the French Revolution emerged in human thought but they have remained unachieved by man till today. Why humanity, despite its ardent endeavour, cannot materialise the ideals and what is the intention of Nature behind it may be examined in the light of the principles followed by Nature as explained above.

A deeper study of Nature’s working in humanity reveals that Nature is changing, evolving and progressing, ascending from height to more elevated height, widening from limit to broader limit of her own possibilities. Yet in this changing, as Sri Aurobindo indicated, there are certain *eternal* principles or truths of being which remain the same. Our progress and perfection have to be based upon these eternal principles, because with them there lies the primary material and within them the framework of our progress and perfection.

The highest ideals which Nature wants man to realise as indicated by Sri Aurobindo are:

- a) to establish unity for the human race by an inner oneness and not only by an external association of interests,
- b) to ensure the resurgence of man out of the merely animal and economic life or the merely intellectual and aesthetic into the glories of the spiritual existence, and
- c) to receive the power of the spirit pouring down into the physical mould and mental instrument, so that man may develop his manhood to become a true

superman by exceeding his personal human-animal state.”²

Sri Aurobindo further emphasised in the same treatise:

“The salvation of the human race lies in a more sane and integral development of the possibilities of mankind in the individual and in the community.”

From these viewpoints one can easily assume that the intention of Nature in setting the triple gospel—Liberty, Equality and Fraternity—before mankind was to remind it of the highest ideals to be accomplished in its life on Earth. For it is an admitted fact that humanity has been constantly progressing and that progression is the working of a thought in life which sometimes manifests on the surface and sometimes sinks below and works behind the masks of external forces and interests. As a result of this working, progress has its ups and downs, a rhythm of alternate darkness and light, but both the day and the night help to foster progress.

In one of his speeches delivered in Calcutta in 1909, Sri Aurobindo explained very clearly the inner significance of the triple gospel. He stated:

“There are three ideas which are of supreme moment to human life and have become watchwords of humanity. Three words have the power of moulding nations and governments—liberty, equality and fraternity. These words, cast forth into being from the great stir and movement of the eighteenth century, continue to act on man because they point to the ultimate goal towards which human evolution ever moves.”

He further indicated that the liberty to which mankind was progressing was liberation out of a state of bondage. This bondage does not mean only the political, economic and social bondage of outer life, but also the bondage of matter—physical, vital and mental limitations and their obscurations—because the deepest meaning of freedom (liberty) is the power to expand and grow towards perfection by the law of one’s own nature. For the progress of the entire humanity, individual man needs freedom of thought and life and action in order that he may grow, otherwise he may remain fixed where he was—a stunted and static being. And this static condition of the individual impedes the growth and development of society.

Sri Aurobindo continued:

“Equality is the second term in the triple gospel. It is a thing which mankind has never accomplished. Our religion, our philosophy set equality forward as the essential condition of emancipation. All religions send us this message in different forms but it is one message. Christianity says, we are all brothers, children of one God. Mahomedanism says, we are subjects and servants of one Allah, we are all equal in the sight of God. Hinduism says, there is one without a second...”

Though the thirst for liberty and equality, as pointed out by Sri Aurobindo, was originally individualistic yet it is a fact that man cannot actually live as an isolated being nor can he grow by an isolated freedom. He grows by his relations with others and his freedom must exercise itself in a progressive self-harmonising with the freedom of his fellow-beings. If his relation with others is founded upon a solid basis of fraternity then there is the chance of a progressive harmonised growth and development of both the individual and the society. Here lies the real significance of the third element of the gospel—Fraternity,—as explained by Sri Aurobindo:

“It is the last term of the gospel, towards which all religious call and human aspirations rise. There is discord in life, but mankind yearns for peace and love. This is the reason why the gospels which preach brotherhood spread quickly and excite passionate attachment. This was the reason of the rapid spread of Christianity. This was the reason of Buddhism’s rapid spread in this country and throughout Asia. This is the essence of humanitarianism, the modern gospel of love for mankind... It is the nature, the *dharma* of humanity that it should be unwilling to stand alone. Every man seeks the brotherhood of his fellows and we can only live by fraternity with others. Through all its differences and discords humanity is striving to become one.”

Now we see that the ideals of the French Revolution were themselves not new; they existed in Christianity and before Christianity they existed in Buddhism. But in 1789 they came out for the first time from the Church and the Book and sought to remodel government and society. Though it was an unsuccessful attempt yet even the failure changed the face of Europe.

But why did the attempts of the individual and the society fail in fulfilling this gospel?

The human attempts failed because, as pointed out by Sri Aurobindo, the world was not ready and the attempts were imperfect and made for limited fulfilment.

Though apparently it may seem that the objective condition, that is to say, the outer world, having become so small and interdependent due to modern scientific discoveries, is ready for the unification of mankind on the basis of the three ideals, yet actually it is not ready, because mankind is yet ignorant of its high and splendid fate, and therefore the subjective condition, that is to say, the heart and mind of the race, especially the heart, is also not really ready. So, what is needed is an inner change with the external adjustment.

Humanity endeavoured to get hold of the ideals primarily intellectually and to some extent sentimentally. As we all know, with the development of physical science, the human intellect is becoming more and more mechanised and therefore humanity has been seen attempting at bringing about unification through mechanised means, that is to say, through social, political and economic adjustments. As a matter of fact, however, it is not by social, political and economic adjustments that the unity

of the human race can be enduringly and fruitfully accomplished and world-peace established.

The weakness of the intellectual idea, even if it be supported by emotional and sentimental feelings, is that it does not get at the centre of man's being. "The intellect and feelings," as Sri Aurobindo explains, "are only instruments of the being and they may be the instruments of either its lower external form or of the inner and higher man..."³

This was why the ideals which emerged in the 18th century and which have still the capability of generating inspiration to recreate human society, failed. None of them has really been realised in spite of all the progress that has been achieved.

In the words of Sri Aurobindo:

"Liberty— that has been so loudly proclaimed as an essential modern progress is an outward and mechanical and unreal liberty.

Equality— that has been so much sought after and battled for is equally an outward and mechanical and will turn out to be an unreal equality.

Fraternity—is not even claimed to be a practicable principle of the ordering of life and what is put forward as its substitute is the outward and mechanical principle of equal association or at the best a comradeship of labour. This is because the idea of humanity has been obliged in an intellectual age to mask its true character of a religion and a thing of the soul and the spirit, and to appeal to the vital and physical mind of man rather than his inner being."⁴

Yet the unity of mankind is evidently a part of Nature's eventual scheme and must come about.

But how?

Here lies the real purpose of the emergence of the three ideals in human thought; or, in other words, the unity of mankind must come about if mankind can really get them realised in accordance with Nature's will.

History shows that mankind attempted at fulfilling the ideals in its living but could not achieve the desired result, and its reasons are so finely elucidated by Sri Aurobindo in the foregoing paragraphs.

Now we are to examine how mankind attempted the fulfilment and what were the lapses and shortcomings that deprived it of success.

The lapses and shortcomings are in the very nature of man. The age which we are passing through is the age of reason. We have become rational. Reason is the governor of life. We do not take cognisance of things which our reason does not get hold of. When the life-power in us demands diversity, our reason favours uniformity. As Sri Aurobindo clarifies:

"Life differs from the mechanical order of the physical universe with which

reason has been able to deal victoriously,—just because it is mechanical and runs immutably in the groove of fixed cosmic habits. Life, on the contrary, is a mobile, progressive and evolving force,—a force that is the increasing expression of an infinite soul in creatures and, as it progresses, becomes more and more aware of its own subtle variations, needs, diversities.”⁵

Reason prefers uniformity because it is very difficult for it to realise Unity based on the oneness of existence. This is a work the reason cannot do.

Another lapse that lies in the very nature of man is his incapability of going beyond actuality to get hold of his potentiality. Sri Aurobindo has said:

“Our actualities are the form and value or power of expression to which our nature and life have attained; their norm or law is the fixed arrangement and process proper to that stage of evolution. Our potentialities point us to a new form, value, power of expression with their new and appropriate arrangement and process which is their proper law and norm. Standing then between the actual and the possible, our intellect tends to mistake present law and form for the eternal law of our nature and existence and regard any change as a deviation.”⁶

Due to these lapses and imperfections of our mentality it has not become possible for us to know exactly the meaning of Nature’s movement and her aims. Instead, we catch only a glimpse of her tendencies and objects and each glimpse we get we erect into an absolute principle or ideal theory of our life and conduct; we can see only one side of her process and put that as the whole and perfect system.

Now, if we probe into the process of human effort engineered for fulfilling the ideals with its inherent imperfections, we find that man could not develop liberty and equality at the same time. Initially, because the inspiration came from the French Revolution, man endeavoured to develop the principle of individualistic democracy to allow each individual to govern his life according to the dictation of his own reason and will, so far as that could be done without impinging on the same right in others. But in practice it was found that the individualistic democratic ideal gave birth to the rule of a dominant class in the name of democracy over the ignorant and less fortunate mass, and therefore it resulted in an increasing stress of competition and exploitation. This was so, because man’s imperfect mentality tends to treat liberty as wantonness. Naturally this wantonness of the dominant and privileged class compelled the exploited mass to find ways to get rid of the oppression of the ruling class and to assert their down-trodden right so that the pseudo-democratic falsehood might be turned into the real democratic truth. Ultimately that endeavour of the masses led to a war of classes.

The first result of the war of classes turned the rational mind from democratic individualism to democratic socialism. Thus the individual’s liberty was replaced by

the liberty of the collectivity through equality. But the collectivist idea, as pointed out by Sri Aurobindo,

“... contains several fallacies inconsistent with the real facts of human life and nature. And just as the idea of individualistic democracy found itself before long in difficulties on that account because of the disparity between life’s facts and the mind’s idea.... the idea of collectivist democracy too may well find itself before long in difficulties that must lead to its discredit and eventual replacement by a third stage of the inevitable progression... In fact the claim to equality like the thirst for liberty is individualistic in its origin,—it is not native or indispensable to the essence of the collectivist ideal...”⁷

It is the individual who demands liberty for himself, a freedom of movement of his mind, life, will and action; but the collectivist trend and the state-idea have rather the opposite tendency: they are self-compelled to take up more and more the compulsory control of the mind, life, will, action of the community—and the individual’s as a part of it,—until personal liberty is pressed out of existence.

In pointing out the defects of the state-idea, Sri Aurobindo indicated:

“The call of the state to the individual to immolate himself on its altar and to give up his free activities into an organised collective activity is, therefore, something quite different from the demand of our highest ideals. It amounts to the giving up of the present form of individual egoism into another—a collective form, larger but not superior, rather in many ways inferior to the best individual egoism... the loss of self in the state is not the thing that these high ideals mean, nor is it the way to their fulfilment.”⁸

Sri Aurobindo further emphasised:

“Man must learn not to suppress and mutilate but to fulfil himself in the fulfilment of mankind, even as he must learn not to mutilate or destroy but to complete his ego by expanding it out of its limitations and losing it in something greater.”⁹

But the swallowing up of the free individual by a huge state-machine is quite another consummation. Still Nature set the ideal of collectivism in human thought because the collectivist period is a necessary stage in social progress,

“... for the vice of individualism is that it tends to exaggerate the egoism of the mental and vital being and prevent the recognition of unity with others on which alone a complete self-development and harmless freedom could be founded. Collectivism at least insists upon that unity by entirely subordinating the life of

the isolated ego to the life of the greater group ego. Afterwards, when again the individual asserts freedom, as some day he must, he may have learned to do it on the basis of its separate egoistic life. This may well be the intention of Nature in human society in its movement towards the collectivist principle of social living."¹⁰

Now it is clear that when the ego claims liberty it arrives at competitive individualism. And when it asserts equality it arrives first at strife (war of classes), then at an attempt to create an artificial and machine-made society. A society that pursues liberty as its ideal is unable to achieve equality; a society that aims at equality will be obliged to sacrifice liberty. So, equality and liberty have not yet been achieved simultaneously through any external machinery of society, or by man because he still lives in his individual or his communal ego.

Then what about Fraternity?

Sri Aurobindo explained that fraternity was something quite contrary to the nature of the ego. The ego could never speak of fraternity. Yet, according to Sri Aurobindo, 'Fraternity' was the real key to the triple gospel, because a deeper brotherhood, a yet unfound law of love was the only sure foundation possible for a perfect social evolution. The union of liberty and equality could only be achieved by the power of human brotherhood and it could not be founded on anything else.

But brotherhood exists only in the soul and by the soul. For, this brotherhood is not a matter either of physical kinship or of vital association or of intellectual agreement. In the words of Sri Aurobindo,

"When the soul claims freedom, it is the freedom of its self-development,... when it claims equality, what it is claiming is that freedom equally for all and the recognition of the same soul... in all human beings. When it strives for brotherhood, it is founding that equal freedom of self-development on a common aim, a common life, a unity of mind and feeling founded upon the recognition of this inner spiritual unity. These three things are in fact the nature of the soul, for freedom, equality, unity are the eternal attributes of the spirit."¹¹

Through this setting of the triple gospel which covers the eternal attributes of the spirit in man's thought, Nature has kindled in him an urge for bringing about a change in himself and the society so that he can live more subjectively. This trend will ultimately usher in the spiritual age of human society when the truth of the triple gospel can be realised. Nature is striving to bring about the turning of the cycle of social development on a new upward line towards its goal; but how she will accomplish it is another question. Nonetheless it can in brief be pointed out that

"the coming of a spiritual age must be preceded by the appearance of an

increasing number of individuals who are no longer satisfied with the normal intellectual, vital and physical existence of man but perceive that a greater evolution is the real goal of humanity and attempt to effect it in themselves, to lead others to it and to make it the recognised goal of the race. In proportion as they succeed and to the degree to which they carry this evolution, the yet unrealised potentiality which they represent will become an actual possibility of the future.”¹²

Hence the unification of mankind which ensures a radical solution of all global problems and establishment of permanent Peace on earth can come about only through the accomplishment of the three ideals—though they emerged in human thought long ago. The present global situation compels us to believe that the time has come when Nature may resume the ideals so that they may be realised by mankind because *it is necessary* for its further progress towards its splendid destiny.

SAMAR BASU

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SILENCE

(Salvatore Quasimodo—Nobel Prize-Winner 1959)

I HEARD beyond these black walls
there is another sun, another land
where the Soul, free and pure,
blossoms forth and dies yet lives on.

Often an anxiety, an ardent desire
moves the Soul towards this blessed shore
and in the bosom bloom words
that mortal mouth cannot repeat.

(Translated by Subir Kanta Gupta from the original Italian)

FURTHER STUDIES IN INTEGRAL PSYCHOLOGY

PROGRESS OF FREUDIAN THOUGHT: A STUDY IN FREUDIAN REVISIONISTS

(Continued from the issue of August 15, 1986)

FERENCZI and Rank recognise that, previously, proving and disproving of certain theories was considered more important and cure was then neglected. Now the position is different. The authors say: "The theoretic knowledge, in itself indispensable, of the development of the normal mental life, the theory of dreams, the sexual theory and so forth, must be used in practice only insofar as they help to make possible the desired reproduction of the Oedipus relation in the analytic situation, or to make it easier."¹

That means that the theoretic edifice is not indispensable. However, perhaps the Oedipus and Electra complexes are. But we might observe that it is perhaps the conflict and the guilt feeling of an earlier stage that is determining and contributing to the present neurosis. To recognise it and relieve it with relative detachment and freedom under the guidance and the help of the free mind of the analyst is the essential thing. It brings about a reorientation in the patient and repression is disposed of and the patient becomes a normal person. This is perhaps the real truth of the matter, which needs to be appreciated more and more.

The authors do also affirm that "Theoretic results must be applied mechanically to the theory much less frequently than heretofore, but a constant correction of the theory should result from the new insight gained in practice."² And they recognise that "cures can be made with all psycho-therapeutic measures."³

They are conscious that in the beginning of the psycho-analytic movement they achieved wonder cures and later these became less frequent. That was due to the fact that the proper relation between theory and practice was not understood. We took certain parts of theory "too literally or too generally".

This is a fine realization even though by a few. Facts discovered by psycho-analysis under certain circumstances are not challenged. It is the generalisations based on them that cause difficulty. The foregoing position of Rank and Ferenczi represents them and their adherents, not Freud and his orthodox followers. Psycho-analysis has become vast and covers very many ramifications.

These developments of Rank and Ferenczi in psycho-analysis are happy. But the goal remains generally an 'economic balance' in personality, a socially accepted normality of life. And all the emphasis on the future, on the wholeness trend and the Self and its activation in analysis are additional trends. However, in Yoga, as we

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 74-5.

² Robert W. Marks, *Great Ideas in Psychology*, Bantam Books, New York, p. 24.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

have said before, the wholeness is not merely an imagined ideal but a fact amenable to experience in the individual as well as in existence. To turn towards them, to seek their influence, to get into touch with them is the most effective way of achieving wholeness, simplicity and spontaneity in life. Of course, the past burdens of conflicts, repressions, fixations etc. have to be got rid of. But for Yoga the will for wholeness should lead in the reconstruction of personality.

The 'cultural' schools of revisionists in psycho-analysis have tended to develop a fuller possibility of personality. Their emphasis is on "Total Personality", on "optimal development of a person's potentialities and the realization of his individuality."¹ And personality is an interpersonal or social product and adjustment to the environment is the essence of the matter. Analysis is seen as an interpersonal process, in which "the analyst is seen as relating to his patient not only with his distorted effects but with his healthy personality also. That is, the analytic situation is essentially a human relationship."²

It is said: "Freud grossly underrated the extent to which the individual and his neurosis are determined by conflicts with his environment." Freud's "biological orientation" led him to concentrate on the phylogenetic and ontogenetic past of the individual: he considered the character as essentially fixed with the fifth or sixth year (if not earlier), and he interpreted the fate of the individual in terms of primary instincts and their vicissitudes, especially sexuality. In contrast, the revisionists shift the emphasis from the past to the present, from the biological to the cultural level, from the constitution of the individual to his environment. "One can understand the biological development better if one discards the concept of libido altogether and instead interprets the different stages in terms of growth and of human relations."³

These revisionists are many and quite influential too. But they should be seen with the position represented before by Ferenczi and Rank and the group of orthodox Freudians. Anna Freud, Freud's daughter, was an eminent psycho-analyst, who collaborated with Ernst Jones in England in psycho-analytic work. Abraham was an early collaborator of Freud and a creator of the analytic theory. Jung stands in close sympathy with Freud even though his over-all standpoint is different. Adler too was an early colleague of Freud though later deviated from him and developed a different standpoint.

But the revisionists of the cultural or inter-personal schools represented by Erich Fromm, Karen Horney and Harry Stack Sullivan have adopted a new basic standpoint, a social and cultural one, in place of the biological and genetic one of Freud.

Regarding sex in life and neurosis, here is an explicit denial. Says Fromm: "Sexual problems, although they may sometimes prevail in the symptomatic pic-

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 92

² *Ibid.*, p. 229.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 226-7.

ture, are no longer considered to be in the dynamic center of neuroses. Sexual difficulties are the effect rather than the cause of the neurotic character structure. Moral problems on the other hand gain in importance."¹ The Oedipus or the Electra complex too is now interpreted as a desire to be protected, secure as a child and no more an incest wish for mother or father. Thus the 'cultural school' of revisionists are professedly revisionists, but they take up a standpoint and an approach of environmental determinism of life in place of one of the unconscious conflicts and repressions. This makes them look so different from Freud, different in the very spirit of the matter.

Psycho-analysis has been undoubtedly a powerful movement of thought, which started as a technique of cure for mental disorders, hysteria, anxiety and others. But it developed into a view of human nature and then of civilisation and culture. Its earliest formulations had their excesses and over-generalisations. Those were progressively modified by Freud himself, by his brilliant original colleagues and later by his followers. The cultural school among his followers has changed Freud's position drastically. But it is a powerful movement of thought, ever throwing up new ideas.

But it has not had an impact of yoga. Jung's Analytic Psychology has had that impact and of deeper spiritual experiences expressed in religious life and otherwise, as his thought and the work of the Jungian Analysts show. Jungian Analysis helps mental patients to recover social normality but it also shows the way to life's perfectibility. Psycho-analysis has yet to contemplate this larger dimension of life seriously. That will mean a very great enrichment of its thought and capabilities, when that comes about.

Freud wrote *An Autobiographical Study* which is a plain, matter-of-fact account of his life and work. It ends on a modest note as follows: "Looking back over the patchwork of my life's labours, I can say that I have made many beginnings and thrown out many suggestions. Something will come of them in the future, though I cannot myself tell whether it will be much or little. I can, however, express a hope that I have opened up a pathway for an important advance in our knowledge."

Surely, Freud opened up a pathway which has yielded knowledge of the antecedents of neurosis and many other facts. But its purpose not the more important thing in life and existence? And is it not relevant to the understanding of facts? Sri Aurobindo has asked, does the secret of the lotus flower exist in the mud from which it rises or the form and the beauty it embodies?

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 246.

SUPPLEMENT

Changes in Freud in His Own Words

Freud's views underwent modifications repeatedly and then there have been deviations and revisions too. Hence it is not easy to know his final position definitely. His *Autobiographical Study*, published in 1935, four years before his death, gives a clear statement of the changes, in his own words, which is extremely helpful. It is given below. Also another passage, which shows that Freud was temperamentally not given to speculation.

(1)

"There is no more urgent need in psychology than for a securely founded theory of the instincts on which it might then be possible to build further. Nothing of the sort exists, however, and psycho-analysis is driven to making tentative efforts towards some such theory. It began by drawing a contrast between the ego-instincts (the instinct of self-preservation, hunger) and the libidinal instincts (love), but later replaced it by a new contrast between narcissistic and object-libido. This was clearly not the last word on the subject; biological considerations seemed to make it impossible to remain content with assuming the existence of only a single class of instincts.

"In the works of my later years (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, and *The Ego and the Id*), I have given free rein to the inclination which I kept down for so long to speculation and I have also taken stock of a new solution of the problem of the instincts. I have combined the instincts for self-preservation and for the preservation of the species under the concept of Eros and have contrasted with it an instinct of death or destruction which works in silence. Instinct in general is regarded as a kind of elasticity of living things, an impulsion towards the restoration of a situation which once existed but was brought to an end by some external disturbance. This essentially conservative character of instincts is exemplified by the phenomena of the compulsion to repeat. The picture which life presents to us is the result of the working of Eros and the death-instinct together and against each other."¹

(2)

"I should not like to create an impression that during this last period of my work, I have turned my back upon patient observation and have abandoned myself entirely to speculation. I have on the contrary always remained in the closest touch with the analytic material and have never ceased working at detailed points of clinical or technical importance. Even when I have moved away from observation,

¹ Sigmund Freud, *An Autobiographical Study*, Hogarth Press, London, pp. 129-30.

I have carefully avoided any contact with philosophy proper. This avoidance has been greatly facilitated by constitutional incapacity. I was always open to the ideas of G.T. Fechner and have followed that thinker upon many important points. The large extent to which psycho-analysis coincides with the philosophy of Schopenhauer... not only did he assert the dominance of the emotions and the supreme importance of sexuality but he was even aware of the mechanism of repression... I read Schopenhauer very late in my life. Nietzsche, another philosopher whose guesses and intuitions often agree in the most astonishing way with the laborious findings of psycho-analysis, was for a long time avoided by me on that very account; I was less concerned with the question of priority than with keeping my mind unembarrassed."¹

INDRA SEN

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 104-5.

THE SUN-WORLD

SOMETIMES,
 Beyond the blindness of night,
 You discover symbols
 Of the new Ganges;
 You cross the land of legends;
 Limitless infinities float
 Above the summits
 That no thought or song can climb;
 A sapphire regard
 Fills your vision's widenesses.
 There, by those upper streams,
 Cattle with horns of gold
 Move in speeding delight.
 There, regurgitations of Time
 Bring not back sorrow's note.
 But like images leaping to sounds,
 Like stars winging to dreams,
 Words quiveringly hold
 The shining mass of mountains;
 And you reach the sun-world.

R. Y. DESHPANDE

TOWARDS FREEDOM

TIME laughs, its chains shimmer and in their tinkle
I hear a whisper, "Loosen, we wish to be unlinked,
Love and will—desireless—shall loosen all links
And we will happily fall away. Strive not,
Relax in Her arms, shed your sense of age,
Your sense of being time-bound. In a twinkle
You will be free and feel you always were.
Give no place to fear or to hope or to thought of morrow,
Just rest in Her lap,
Let the swell of those mighty breasts
Alter all your cells of heart and mind and even body,
Into Love; streams of everflowing crystal waters,
Expanses of never-moving fields of snow,
Ever crisscrossing beams of starlight
Shall whisper in your ear and caress your face
And tickle your lips yet leave no trace,
And if you try to catch the ever near
That is ever so distant
The beams and the fields and the streams
Will become one with the whole of you
As you would rest in full repose and peace and joy
On Her lap, in Her arms."

O my sweet Mother,
I cry like a child, without reason, without known want,
Only You know that the cry is for You,
Pick me up in Your arms and lull me to repose,
Fill me with absolute certitude
That nothing else exists but Your lap,
That nothing else touches but Your hands.

I already see the smile
On this sleeping child's lips
As it lies in You.

DINKAR PALANDE

O MY BIRD...

I

O HOMELESS hearthless lonely bird,
What song do you want to sing—
Wiping your tearful eyes?
Above, a dumb darkness assails the sky!
Below, the angry waves break the mountains high!
The earth is ablaze with the burning of corpses;
And blood-stained is the brow of the wounded dawn...

2

O homeless hearthless lonely bird,
What tale do you want to narrate,
Perching on the tar-black tree of night?
Your inmost heart pulsates with a lofty rhyme,
And your gold-blue throat trembles with a wondrous tune,
But your yearning to sing is choked at every step
By the rigid hands of time...

3

O homeless hearthless lonely bird,
What pain do you want to hide,
Pressing your wide bosom with coloured wings?
The impact of music animates
Even the inert rocks with love!
But alas! the human blood carries still
The bitter poison of hatred and strife.
Haven't your songs the magic of purifying dreams?
Then, O my bird, sing, sing on
To transform the bitter poison into nectar...

4

O homeless hearthless lonely bird,
Whose hands do you want to adorn
With the holy thread of brotherhood?
Things are topsy-turvy and the earth is in turmoil!
Weapons strive to wipe out the unruly and the outlaw...

Hasn't your music the power to produce fire
To burn outright the devil in man
And set flowing freely the spirit of unity
On the suffering soil?
Then, O my beloved bird, sing, sing on...
Knowing it well that immortal are the hymnal words
And fails not the law of the awakened soul...

CHUNILAL CHOWDHURY

THE SONG OF THE LORD

THE GITA WITHOUT COMMENT

(Continued from the issue of August 15, 1986)

Chapter XI

1. Arjuna said:
“Out of kindness to me you have spoken the Word, the Highest Mystery called the Reality of Self. Through this my confusion has gone.
2. From You I have heard in detail of the Source and Dissolution of Existence, O Lotus-eyed, and also of Your imperishable greatness.
3. You are as You have declared Yourself to be, O Parameshwara. I want to see Your Sovereign Form, O Purushottama.
4. If You think it is possible for me to see that, O Lord, O Master of Yogis, then show me Your immutable Self.”
5. The Lord said:
“See My forms divine, O Partha, by the hundreds, the thousands, diverse, many-hued and shaped.
6. See the Adityas, the Vasus, the Rudras, the two Aswins, the Maruts. Behold, O Bharata, many wonders not seen before.
7. See, now placed in My one body, this whole moving and unmoving world, O Gudakesha, and whatever else you want to see.
8. But with your own eyes you cannot see Me. I give you the divine eye. Behold My Sovereign Yoga!”
9. Sanjaya said:
“Speaking thus, O King, Hari, the Great Lord of Yoga, showed to Partha his supreme and sovereign form.
10. With numerous mouths and eyes, many mighty revelations, numerous divine ornaments and many uplifted weapons,
11. draped in divine raiment and garlands, anointed with heavenly scent, all-wonderful, resplendent, endless, everywhere facing—:
12. had the sky the splendour of a thousand suns all risen at once, it would be as the glory of that Mighty Soul.
13. And there the Son of Pandu saw the innumerably divided universe whole in the single body of the God of Gods.
14. Then, overwhelmed with awe, hair on end, head bowed and hands pressed together to God, Dhananjaya spoke.
15. Arjuna said:
“I see all the Gods in Thy body, O God, and also the hosts of diverse beings, Lord Brahma on his lotus placed and sages and all the sacred serpents.

16. With countless arms and bellies and mouths and eyes, I see Thee everywhere, of infinite form, but the end, the middle, the source I do not see, O Lord and shape of All.
17. With crown and mace and chakra—I see a mass of brilliant force shining everywhere. Thou art hard to perceive: a limitless glory from the light of a fiery sun.
18. Thou: imperishable, the supreme knowable. Thou: the resting place of all, immutable, the guardian of the Eternal Law. Thou: the everlasting Purusha, so it seems to me.
19. I see Thee without beginning, without middle, without end, of infinite strength, numberlessly armed, with Moon and Sun for eyes, the fiery light of Sacrifice in Thy mouth burning the world.
20. All between Heaven and Earth is filled with Thee alone, and the four quarters. All have seen this, Thy terrible, wonderful Form, and the triple worlds tremble, O Mighty Soul.
21. These companies of Gods, some in terror, enter Thee, praising Thee, palms joined saying, 'Let all be well.' Hosts of Rishis and Siddhas extol Thee with ardent hymns.
22. Rudras and Adityas, Sadhyas, Viswas, the Aswins, Maruts, and Ancestors, the hosts of Gandharvas, Yakshas, Asuras, Siddhas—all stare at Thee, amazed.
23. Seeing Thy Mighty Form with many mouths and eyes, O Mighty-Armed, with many arms, thighs, feet, bellies, with horrible tusks, the worlds are terrified—and so am I.
24. Seeing Thee touching the sky, shining, endlessly hued, mouths wide open, huge eyes burning, my heart quakes in terror and I find no courage or peace, O Vishnu.
25. Seeing Thy mouths awful with tusks, blazing like the fires of Death, I know not my bearings, nor do I have peace. Be merciful, O Lord of the Gods, Home of the Universe.
26. All the sons of Dhritarashtra and the hosts of kings—Bheeshma, Drona, Karna—and also our warrior chiefs
27. enter Thee rushing into Thy mouths terribly tusked and ghastly. Some are seen stuck in the gaps of Thy teeth, heads crushed.
28. As torrents of many rivers roar to the sea, so these heroes of the world of men enter Thy mouths of flame.
29. As moths with increasing haste enter the blazing flame to their destruction, so do these worlds compulsively enter Thy mouths to be destroyed.
30. Thou lickest and with Thy flaming mouths devourest everywhere all the worlds. They burn, filling this whole universe with Thy fierce rays, O Vishnu.
31. Tell me who Thou art, fierce-formed. O Praise be to Thee, God Supreme, Mercy. I yearn to know Thee, the Source, for I know not Thy workings."
32. The Lord said:

32. "I am world-destroying Time huge-risen here with intent to ravage the peoples. Even without you none shall live of all these warriors arrayed in hostile armies.
33. Arise, therefore, take fame, enjoy unrivalled kingdom after conquering your enemies. By Me have these men already been slain. Be only the occasion, O Savyasachin.
34. Drona and Bheeshma and Jayadratha and Karna and other hero-warriors have been destroyed by Me. Kill and be not troubled. Fight. You shall conquer your enemies in battle."
35. Sanjaya said:
"Hearing these words of Keshava, the Crowned One spoke to Krishna in a choked voice, trembling, hands folded, fear-struck, in salutation, prostrate."
36. Arjuna said:
"Rightly does the Universe delight and rejoice in Thy praise, O Hrisheekesha. The Rakshasas fly in fear in all directions and the companies of Siddhas bow down to Thee.
37. And why should they not praise Thee, O Mighty Soul? Greater than Brahma, the Source, Infinite, God of Gods, Home of the Universe, Being and Non-Being and what is Supreme Thou art.
38. Thou: the original God, the Ancient Soul. Thou: the Highest Refuge of this world, the Knower and that to be known and the Supreme Home. By Thee is this universe pervaded.
39. Thou art Vayu, Yama, Agni, Varuna, the Moon, the Father of All, the Ancestor. Praise and praise be to Thee and a thousand times again and again praise and praise be to Thee.
40. Salutations in front and behind Thee, salutations on all sides of Thee, O All, O Infinite Might, Infinite Power. Thou dost pervade all, thus Thou art everything.
41. Regarding Thee as a friend, whatever I said impetuously, O Krishna, O Yadava, O my Friend, not knowing Thy greatness, from carelessness or even love,
42. in whatever way I have in fun shown disrespect to Thee while playing on the couch, or sitting, or at meals, alone or in company: O Achyuta, for that I ask Thy pardon, O Immeasurable.
43. Thou art the Father of the moving and unmoving world. For this Thou art adored, the greatest Guru. None is equal to Thee. How then in the three worlds can any surpass Thee?
44. So—I bow to Thee and prostrate my body and ask Thy compassion, adorable Lord. As father to son, as friend to friend, as beloved to loved, bear with me, O God.
45. I rejoice at seeing what has never been seen before, but my mind is troubled with fear. Show me Thy other form, O God. Have mercy, O God of Gods, Home of the World.
46. I want to see Thee as before, with crown and mace, with discus in hand. Be

- Thy same four-armed shape, O Thousand-armed, O Universal Form.”
47. The Lord said:
“By Me through Grace has this Supreme Form been shown to you, Arjuna. From Self-yoga, full of Glory, universal, endless, the origin, it is that of Me which has never been seen before by any but you.
48. Not from study of the Vedas, nor from sacrifice, not from gifts or rituals or severe austerity can I be seen in such a form in the world of men by any but you, O Hero of the Kurus.
49. Be not afraid or bewildered seeing My form so terrible. Free from fear, with a happy heart, look upon My usual form again.”
50. Sanjaya said:
“Vasudeva, after speaking thus to Arjuna, showed him again his own form. Consoling him who was terrified, the Mighty Soul again became his gentle shape.”
51. Arjuna said:
“Seeing your sweet human form, O Janardana, my mind is now composed and I am restored to my own nature.”
52. The Lord said:
“This form of Mine which you have seen is extremely rare to behold. Even the Gods are ever desirous of a vision of this form.
53. Not by the Vedas, nor austerity, nor gifts, nor sacrifice can I be seen as you have seen Me.
54. But Arjuna, by unswerving devotion I can be known and seen in this way and by Truth be entered, O Parantapa.
55. One who works for Me with Me as Supreme, free from attachment, without hatred for any being, he comes to Me, O Pandava.”

OM TAT SAT

Here ends the eleventh chapter called ‘The Yoga of the Universal Vision’ in the dialogue of Sri Krishna and Arjuna in Brahman-Knowledge, in Yoga-Discipline, in the Divine Songs of the Upanishads.

Translated by DHRUVA

BULA OF OUR ASHRAM

His original name was Charu Chandra Mukhopadhyay, but he was called Bula. Born at Calcutta in 1899, he amused himself and others, saying, "My birthday counts 9.9.99." Even the 18 in 1899 adds up to 9. He studied in Santiniketan and passed his Matriculation from there and he was known to all as Charu. Rabindranath was very fond of him, his influence counted a lot in shaping Bula's character from his childhood. Bula, besides, used to sing well and at the age of 13 took part in a singing party under Dinendra Nath Tagore who had come from Santiniketan to the Jorasanko Tagore family Mansion to celebrate the Maghotsav. Bula's sweet voice added richness to the performance.

He came to Pondicherry when he was 35 to dedicate his life to the service of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. Fifty-two years of his life in the Ashram make the splendid story of an unflinching, untiring service ending in 1986 when he was 87. His departure was that of a hero-soul always cheerful, bright with the Mother's inner brightness.

What the close association of Bula's fifty-two years of Ashram life with my fifty-eight years' sojourn has shown can be summed up in one single phrase: "Service to the Divine." Bula was its living example.

In this world some people are born with the divine boon to show how to offer oneself to Him, how to conquer all difficulties for His sake, above all how to become an example of utter self-consecration. My coming to the Ashram has given me by the Mother's Grace a unique opportunity to see some of these rare sadhak-souls. Our Bula was one of them.

SAHANA DEVI

A REMINISCENCE

“THIS is the *new* India,” said the young man, leading us into a dimly lit, far from elegant coffee house, somewhere in the crowded bazaars of Calcutta. He explained to us what he meant: the men and women sitting there in couples or small groups were students or young professionals—a tiny number in the huge population of the sub-continent, but representative of all those who were beginning to move outside the tight traditional circles and structures of their backgrounds, looking out for new ideas and ideals, looking towards a tomorrow very different from the India their parents had grown up in. He knew that these people would interest us, for in the few hours that had passed since we met, my husband and I had told him much about ourselves, our ideas, our seeking, our dreams for the future. We too were in our twenties, and in search of a better, juster social system than the one we had left behind in one of the most affluent countries of the ‘developed’ world. Naïvely enough, we believed intensely in the innate reasonableness of human beings—not noticing how unreasonably we ourselves acted and decided; and we felt that all of us were somehow corrupted in the course of our growth to adulthood by being moulded and formed by social institutions, conventional patterns of thought and behaviour that robbed us of our freedom to live and act as truly reasonable beings. And we were anxious to help change all that... we even sensed a current or force on the move among the young which would enable it all to change. But how? For us, after several years of thought and political action, it had boiled down to one very simple question: “How can we educate children to be free, if the adults who are their parents, teachers and models are all slaves to the past?” The year was 1968, and it was to be another three or four years before the Mother in Pondicherry gave me a glimpse of an answer to that question—of which perhaps I shall write another time. But at that moment in Calcutta, in the first week of February, on the second or third night of our second visit to India, it was only half an hour back that we had heard for the first time of Her existence... and among many other impressions, those few words had hardly left a mark.

Our young friend... his family name, I remember, was Ghosh; his first name I struggle to recall, perhaps it began with an A... Arun, Aswin, Anand—not Arvind, surely?... was newly returned from Europe where he had been pursuing higher studies in Business Management I believe, in Great Britain and then in Germany. He told us that his prospects of getting a job appropriate to his qualifications were not bright: he was prepared to have to wait six months or more for something even remotely suitable. In Germany, he could easily have got a job and stayed there, but he had decided to return, though he knew how difficult things would be for him, for, he said, he loved his country, and thought that it was the duty of educated young people like himself to come and do what they could, however difficult it might be.

On our first visit to India, some three years before, full of our naïve idealism,

we had been overwhelmed by the problems we had seen in Bombay and Delhi. It was the post-Nehru period of war with Pakistan, Tashkent negotiations, and the death of Lal Bahadur Shastri. Enquiring, observing, discussing with Indians from all walks of life, we had at that time come to the conclusion that India's problems were insoluble. Seeing the gulf between rich and poor, the teeming thousands living in the streets, the tiny proportion of educated people prepared or able to serve, the magnitude of the task seemed too great. We were reminded of all we had read about Russia before the revolution, and indeed often felt as if we were living in a novel of Tolstoi or Dostoievsky.

But the intervening three years had brought a subtle change in our attitude. This second time we came as seekers, of a sort. We didn't really know what we were seeking, but our militantly rationalist, atheist, humanist outlook no longer seemed quite adequate. We had become aware of hidden depths beneath the surface of things, and somehow, dimly, we had felt that the clue to those depths was to be found in India. But we had no idea where to start looking. So the previous day we had gone into the tourist office and asked the clerk there to direct us to an Ashram.

He was tremendously pleased to be asked such a question, but seemed as much at a loss as we were ourselves. Obviously nothing in his training had prepared him for such a request. After some embarrassed thought he made us three suggestions: Puri, Santiniketan, and a visit to the Ramakrishna Math, somewhere north of Howrah. I remember how we walked through the crowded Calcutta streets to Howrah station, booked ourselves tickets to Puri... Santiniketan didn't sound like what we were looking for... and then we crossed over the bridge on foot and through thinning lanes in the afternoon sun to a lovely green garden on the banks of the river, where several imposing buildings stood sparsely dotted about. We were too early, there was no one to guide us or explain anything, so we wandered towards the river bank, drawn by the magnificent expanse of water and sky. There on the banks of the Ganges, we met Mr. Ghosh.

I have only the dimmest remembrance of the tour around the Math, and wonder whether indeed we went with it or not. But the other things we did are among the clearest and finest of my early impressions of India. For our new friend took us in a boat across and up the river to Dakshineswar, to Ramakrishna's temple. The trip itself was memorable—to be out in a little boat on that wide smooth grey water under the westering sun; and it was just before sunset when we arrived at the ghat... a picture never to be forgotten. With the crowd of worshippers carrying garlands and incense we went up the steps into the temple, stood in the spacious cloistered courtyard in the twilight, came at last before the Mother. My mind was quite unprepared for this black, staring-eyed figure, decked in tinsel, her red tongue hanging out of a grimacing mouth.

That such an image should inspire devotion, stir deep feelings of worship, was incomprehensible to me at the time; but though I have since seen many images of deities, some crude, some of rare beauty, Hers has remained clear in my mind's eye,

though others have not. I remember too that we visited Ramakrishna's bare little room, and that we purchased a couple of small books about him from a stand in one corner of the cloister—hoping for some enlightenment, no doubt! We were stunned, dazzled, moved by the warmth and colour and intensity of the temple atmosphere at this hour of *arati*. Like a master musician or dramatist, Mr. Ghosh now modulated the mood. He led us outside the temple to a row of primitive tea-stalls. "Let's have a pilgrim's tea," he said. So we sat on crude wooden benches and drank strong sweet tea out of disposable clay cups while he told us more about Ramakrishna, and his disciple Vivekananda, and the love of the Bengali people for Mother Durga, and many other things which have faded now.

After our tea we felt fortified for further initiation: we would ride back into town by bus. Our friend shoved and pushed and manoeuvred us in among the evening rush-hour throng. When we were squashed against each other in the crowded bus he told us, "Usually I travel first-class, but you ought to have this experience once." Only then did we realise that the buses were linked in twos: one packed to overflowing with ordinary people, the other more moderately filled with those who could afford to pay more. Deep in the bazaars of northern Calcutta we got off and followed our guide through narrow lanes, some bright with cloth-shops and sweet-stalls, others darker, lined with the doorways of tenements. And into one of these dark doorways he led us, up countless stairs and through winding corridors. "I want you to meet a friend of mine," he said. "He is a very great scientist... here is his laboratory."

The series of small dark rooms we entered was quite unlike my imagination of what the laboratory of a great scientist should look like, although there were, I think, some cages with animals, and some strange-shaped boxes and pieces of furniture... but really it was too dark to make out anything much. And I'm afraid I have totally forgotten the great scientist's name, if indeed I ever caught it. But when we came to where he sat, there was no doubt at all that here indeed sat a great man. Out of the past the stillness and light that radiated from the fair-skinned, dark-dressed elderly man who sat there and made *namaskār* to us is still shining. He spoke to us about J.B.S. Haldane, who had been his friend; he told us about a birth-control method he was trying to develop, for, he said, "Overpopulation is the problem we have to solve above all others; but it will have to be done in an Indian way... all these Western pills won't do." And when we told him of our search, of our wish to visit an ashram, he immediately responded, "Oh, you should go to Pondicherry!"

Now, actually we had wanted to visit Pondicherry already in 1965, but for quite different reasons. On that occasion, although we had passed quite close, travelling by train from Madras to Trichy, we had not managed it. Now we were astonished, "Is there an ashram there?" Oh, yes, he told us, there had been a very great yogi there, an Indian, but now he was dead; and in his place the guru was a French lady "a very old lady," he said, "perhaps she is 92." We asked him if he was a follower of that guru, and he told us "no", I think; actually he was a follower of Ramakrishna.

“But,” he said, “for people like you Pondicherry is a very good place.” We told him that we had just booked tickets for Puri, and he said, almost doubtfully, “Yes... yes in Puri you will find peace.” And that is all I remember—that and his stillness and the way his face shone as he made *namaskar*.

We emerged again into the bustling lanes feeling impressed, and somehow blessed—on the right track. And then, to round off our initiation into India, our friend Mr. Ghosh took us into the coffee house where the young intellectuals, men and women, sat together and explained to us what an extraordinary phenomenon that was. I don’t remember what else was said... after we had drunk our coffee he put us in a tram and took us back to the Salvation Army Hostel where we were staying—a dismal relic of British India, a survival from another era.

We went to Puri, and had a very pleasant stay there in a hotel by the sea where we met many interesting people. We made an outing with some of them to Konarak and Bhubaneswar and other places one should see. But in Puri foreigners may not enter the temple. And, as it happened, we never entered the Ashram either—I don’t remember whether we ever found out where it was, or perhaps we were just too shy to enter the gate. I have lovely memories of Puri—indeed we found a kind of peace there... but not for long. And we didn’t go on to Pondicherry. If we had, we would have been present perhaps, at the Foundation Day of Auroville, which took place that month. We would have seen the Mother, perhaps, and all our questions would have found their answer... perhaps; perhaps we would even have stayed there for good and spared ourselves a great deal of trouble and misery in the following few years. But our seeking had not yet become strong enough or clear enough; too many other things still looked as if they were important. So we had to wait a little longer for the imperative call—at what cost, who can tell?

By pure Grace, the call came, eventually... not long after; and came so imperatively that it could not be denied. And when we had come at last to the Mother’s feet I remembered the face of the old man who first told us, “But you should go to Pondicherry!”

Now I often think of the young man who came back to serve his country, and who was able to show us some of its many colours in such a sensitive and understanding way that day. The more I think of him the greater my gratitude and respect grows. I hear his pleasant voice saying warmly “And this is the *new* India...”

SHRADDHAVAN

DR. K. R. SRINIVASA IYENGAR ON SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS AND K. D. SETHNA

Last April, that excellent new monthly Heritage (a little more than a year old at the time) published with fine literary fanfare by its many-talented editor Manoj Das Dr. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar's review of K. D. Sethna's book, "Two Loves" and "A Worthier Pen": The Enigmas of Shakespeare's Sonnets—An Identification through a New Approach (Arnold Heinemann, New Delhi: 300 pp., 1984: Rs. 90). A month later appeared Sethna's comment on the review. As pressure on space dictated a somewhat shortened version of either contribution, it has been suggested that Mother India should bring out both in full. Although the abbreviation meant no loss of the essential qualities of the two pieces, readers will find extra pleasure in perusing them as originally written. Admirers of Dr. Iyengar's writings will especially be glad to see his genius at extensive play.

DR. IYENGAR'S REVIEW

REALLY, another book on the *Sonnets*?

But this volume is so attractively produced, and the portrait of Shakespeare on the jacket is so irresistible; and the author, K. D. Sethna, wears such a benevolent smile backgrounded by his well-stocked book-shelves. This is clearly no routine publication churned out by an 'academic' and funded by the U.G.C. No doubt, the book had its beginnings in one of Sethna's two quatercentenary tributes in 1964 at the Annamalai University, but its present impressive proportions embody decades of reading, thinking and re-structuring. Sethna has been a sadhak in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, for almost 60 years. He is scholar, poet, critic, Yogi and also the historian of prehistoric India. When this master of divers languages and knowledges turns his intent gaze on Shakespeare's Sonnets, it is surely something of an event.

Four decades ago, surveying the literature on the subject during the earlier 150 years, the Variorum editor arrived at the gloomy conclusion that the Sonnets had "encouraged and fostered world-wide folly"; and since then more and more folly would appear to have been generated. Certainly the Sonnets seem to provoke critics by a fateful compulsion to break out into superlatives of one or another kind. Dover Wilson would like us to see the whole sonnet-sequence "as the greatest love-poem in the language", while for M. M. Reese the Sonnets "ultimately... are not love poems at all". For C. S. Lewis, "in certain senses of the word 'love', Shakespeare is not so much our best as our only love poet"; for A. L. Rowse, the Sonnets pose "the greatest problem in literature" and are "the most autobiographical ever written"; and for Walter Raleigh, the Sonnets constitute "the most tangled problem of Shakespeare criticism."

Generations of scholars, critics, biographers, historians and literary sleuths have laboured in what has become the dark Serbonian bog where whole armies have disappeared. The 'Sonnets'—numbering 154—weave a tantalising web of relationships between Shakespeare and a young Friend, a dark Mistress and a rival Poet: 'Two Loves' and 'A Worthier Pen'! But who were these three, and what was the time-span of this intriguing and exasperating drama? For an answer, thus M. M. Reese:

“Perhaps it is best to admit that the problem of the *Sonnets* is insoluble, if indeed there is, artistically, a problem at all.”

Reese seems to say with a touch of resignation: Read the Sonnets, and forget all else—why look beyond the poetry to the poetolatry, beyond the verbal icon to the characters in flesh and blood?

On the question of identification, too, Reese feels that all such attempts are marked by “total lack of finality”. About the young Friend, T. M. Parrott concedes that “it is no doubt wiser to renounce any attempt at identification”; as for the Dark Lady, “the less said of her, perhaps, the better”! And even the near-omniscient Rowse remarks: “We do not know, and are never likely to know, who she was.” And we are no wiser in terms of certainty about the rival Poet either.

Next only to the Almighty, Shakespeare is credited with the creation of the largest number of men, women and children: “775 distinct characters,” says Sethna. Some of them—Hamlet, Lear, Othello, Macbeth, Falstaff, Cordelia, Cleopatra—are darlings of infinity. But these three—the Friend, the Mistress, the Rival are in a Trisanku Swarga; although they figure in Shakespeare's writing, they were not creatures of his imagination. They were real persons in their time, yet they tease us with their anonymity. We ask and ask: When did the drama unfolded in the *Sonnets* actually take place, and who were the protagonists? It is thus a question of dating-cum-identification. As I said in 1964 in my book, *Shakespeare: His World and His Art* (p. 320):

“All discussion tends to be vitiated because the identifications depend on the dating, and *vice versa*; it is the spectacle of the cat chasing the tail, and the tail the cat.... Critics start tentatively with either the dating or the identification, and then look for—and generally find—corroboration in the Sonnets themselves.”

Among the commentators and literary detectives, there is also a lunatic fringe made up of Baconians, Oxfordians, multiple-authorship faddists, acrostics-maniacs and the slaves of fantasy. On this Kurukshetra the Dronas and the Drishtadyumnas are apt aggressively to part their beards and range themselves in battle formation: the Southamptonites *vs.* the Pembrokeians, the Mary Fittonists *vs.* the Lucy Morganites, and the Marlovians *vs.* the Chapmanists. But this is no 18-day war; it is a continuing and endless frustration.

I have said all this only to show that it needed a lot of courage on Sethna's part to embark on one more voyage of discovery in seas known to be tricky and perilous beyond reckoning. And this, in spite of W. H. Auden's warning to which Sethna makes reference in the Preface. The difficulties are doubtless there, but while a mere scholar may be daunted, a Yogi ought to be able to take everything in his stride, for he is always ready to dare and walk on the razor's edge and defy the consequences. And one day even an Everest is conquered, and hopefully even the tangle of the Sonnets may be resolved at last. And so, meeting the challenge squarely, Sethna mobilises to his task a singular contingent of powers: a hard-headed scholarship, a feel for the nuances of the English language as it was spoken in the Elizabethan age, a single-minded concentration, a tireless industry and perseverance, and above all a Yogic determination to seek, explore and arrive.

Knowing his way, between the alternatives, Sethna opts for the dating first, to be followed presently by the identifications. After expatiating on the inadequacies of the earlier approaches—literary interrelations, Beeching's "repeated expression", comparative psychological similitudes, and the method of historical (or external) chronology—Sethna forges his own acid test of "internal" chronology, in other words finding "concrete terms in the Sonnets themselves". This is breaking new ground in such a much trodden field as Shakespeare criticism, and it calls for close reading and construing of the text of the Sonnets, and intuitive flashes of understanding. In the result, Sethna's findings are that, for Shakespeare, 60 years made the full span of life and 30 the threshold of ageing; when near 35, he felt he was already in the autumn of his life; and the time-bracket of the Sonnets was "almost certainly from 9 April 1598 to 9 April 1607", *i.e.* from his 34th to 43rd year.

The crux of the matter is that one has to choose between the earlier and the later dating, and the shorter and the longer time-span. Sethna is most convincing in opting for the later dating, thus eliminating Southampton and tilting the scales definitely in favour of William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke. But need the time-bracket comprise 9 years? The two sonnets (139 and 144), included by Jaggard in 1599, "involve the whole story" (in Raleigh's words); and allowing for the intensity of the emotion and passion—"the poignancies of the triangle of Shakespeare, his Mistress and his Friend", as Sethna describes the situation (p. 69)—it seems more reasonable to prefer a shorter to a longer duration, which means reading the time-span indicated in Sonnet 104 as 3 years, and not 9 (as Sethna does on p. 41, with distant support from J. W. Mackail). I should think that the episode, beginning in the spring of 1598, ended in 1601, the Dark Lady having by then left both Shakespeare and the Friend for good, and the poet and his aristocratic Friend returning to their former relationship though in a more subdued key.

In 1964, I thought that between Southampton and Pembroke, the former had a slight edge over the latter, and accordingly felt inclined towards the earlier dating. After Sethna's convincing demonstration, I now opt for Pembroke and the later dating, but I still feel drawn to the view that the vast bulk of the Sonnets was written

between 1598 and 1601, though the fall-out may have gone on for a few more years. Harnessing all dialectical expertise and interpretative ingenuity, Sethna persuasively makes out a convincing case for equating W. H. of T. T.'s dedication (1609) and the Friend-Patron of the Sonnets with William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke. It looks as if there is nothing more to be said on this question.

As for the Dark Lady, the fog persists, notwithstanding Sethna's flair for reading closely and reading between the lines. While the elimination of Mary Fitton, Jane Davenant, Lucy Morgan and Emilia Lanier is achieved with little fuss, it is a more tricky and even unsavoury business to sustain a thesis in favour of the unknown 'Anastasia Guglielma'. For all the earnestness behind the plea, I am unable to think of 'Anastasia' as anything more than an algebraical symbol, who is yet to grow into a creature of flesh and blood with a name and room of her own.

Lastly, the rival Poet. There were, in fact, a major Rival and some minor ones. Sethna's identification of the latter with Francis Davison and Samuel Daniel seems reasonable enough, and hence acceptable. As for the chief rival poet, the earlier dating squared with Marlowe and the later dating with Chapman. The former being now eliminated, Chapman remains, and Sethna devotes a whole excellently executed chapter to prove that, for all the considerations in his favour, he couldn't have been the rival Poet wielding "a worthier pen". Not Marlowe, then, nor Chapman either!

It is just here that Sethna comes forward with his own candidate, Ben Jonson. There is a hint, of course, in Sir Edmund Chambers's remark quoted by Sethna on p. 202 about the availability of more Shakespeare-Jonson "give and take of offence and retort" than between Shakespeare and Chapman. But full credit should nevertheless be given to Sethna for his painstaking advocacy, although his attempt to read references to Ben (Jonson) in words like "*bent*", "*bending*" and "*benefit*" may seem a bit bizarre. But even with all this apparatus of identification, the proposition remains unproven and lacks the stamp of total finality. All the same it was almost a stroke of divination on Sethna's part to have equated the rival Poet with "rare Ben Jonson".

To conclude: The Quest implied in the title of Sethna's book—the identification of 'Two Loves' and 'A Worthier Pen'—is by no means completed, for there is no definitive proof yet regarding either 'Anastasia' or even Ben Jonson. 'Anastasia' is no more than an exotic incantation with neither a habitation nor a real name, but Jonson as the rival Poet is an astonishing guess that seems to verge, although lacking in documentary corroboration, on certainty. This is probably Sethna's major contribution to the solution of the tangle of the *Sonnets*. And, indeed, the entire demonstration spread over 300 pages that has fully exercised the researcher, rasika, psychologist, resourceful counsel and intuitive seer makes it one of the most illuminating books on the *Sonnets* fit to stand beside the classics of Beeching and Alden, Tucker-Brooke and Seymour-Smith, Leslie Hotson and Dover Wilson. Sethna's fascinating study starts no doubt as an inquiry into the dating of the Sonnets, but as it gathers momentum it becomes a study of Shakespeare's inner and outer life set in

the colourful background of the Elizabethan Age. Although packed with scholarship, subtle and sustained argumentation, the book reads like a Holmesian detective yarn, and the entire presentation is vivid and alive. I have little doubt that this book will in coming years be deemed essential reading for all serious students of Shakespeare and the *Sonnets*.

K. D. SETHNA'S COMMENT

I am indeed grateful for Dr. Iyengar's fine review, a piece of literature in its own right—both lively and penetrating. Especially dazzling to a newcomer in the field is his estimate of this tyro's equipment for the work and of the book's general creative value. But if it will not look churlish on my part to pick out his points of passing disagreement in the midst of his over-all appreciation, I should like to make a few remarks.

Dr. Iyengar says: "...it seems more reasonable to prefer a shorter to a longer duration, which means reading the time-span indicated in Sonnet 104 as 3 years, and not 9 (as Sethna does on p. 41, with distant support from J. W. Mackail). I should think that the episode, beginning in the spring of 1598, ended in 1601..." I have not cashed in only on the arguable possibility of the line of interpretation Mackail has allowed. I have tried to show how 9 years are far more probable than 3. No doubt, 3 strike one as a more natural reading at first sight, but just consider the life-circumstances presented in the three-times repeated reference to 3 years, with variations on the theme.

By all tokens, when Shakespeare started sonneteering to his boy-friend, the latter was no older than the age Samuel Schoenbaum—authority on the poet's life—hints at in his judicious summary: "Most of the Sonnets are addressed to a high-born young man, 'beauteous and lovely', of around twenty." Now see the opening terms in which Shakespeare casts his reminiscence at the end of his sonneteering career:

To me, fair friend, you never can be old,
For, as you were when first your eye I eyed,
Such seems your beauty still...

Then Shakespeare mentions the years that have done their work in different seasons

Since first I saw you fresh, which yet are green.

I have argued that Shakespeare's sense of the persisting youthfulness of his friend as if it were a marvel of unageing good looks call—almost shout—for a longer duration than a mere 3 years to have some possible effect on the "fresh" face and form. Would there be cause for amazement if a youngster of about 20 stayed youthful-looking at about 23? Were he to appear the same—still "green"—at 29 or so, one

might justifiably stand wondering. A span of no more than 3 years would reduce a deeply felt poem to a piece of excited hollow hyperbole.

As for my Italian "Anastasia", with a likely second name "Guglielma", filling the role of the Dark Lady, she does at present lack documentary substantiation. She therefore seems to Dr. Iyengar nothing save "an exotic incantation with neither a habitation nor a real name" in spite of his generously granting that I have eliminated with "little fuss" all the existing claimants: Mary Fitton, Jane Davenant, Lucy Morgan and Emilia Lanier. But she has not been found to be a creature of flesh and blood simply because no scholar yet has set himself to go through the old records of foreigners residing in London at the time Shakespeare wrote his Sonnets. One can be sanguine that her name will turn up, provided one is sure that my probing of the sexual suggestion of the line—

But, rising at thy name, doth point out thee—

in Sonnet 151 is correct. What is crucial is to judge whether the name "Anastasia" which in Greek embodies the sense of "rising" is apt to Shakespeare's innuendo. Here—in line 7 of the Sonnet—the words "thy name" occur for the one and only time for the Dark Lady in the whole series of 154 poems. If "rising" points to her name, there is no escape from the appellation I have proposed. I have attempted to show the context of the Sonnet to lead variously to this appellation. Criticism of "Anastasia" is to be focused just there. To adapt a phrase from the Sonnet itself, I "rise or fall" by the rightness or wrongness of my reading. All other considerations are secondary.

Apart from Dr. Iyengar's reservations about my Dark Lady, there is no hesitation on his side to back my choices. Apropos of the earlier and later dating of the Sonnets, he writes: "Sethna is most convincing in opting for the later dating, thus eliminating Southampton and tilting the scales definitely in favour of William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke." But what I regard as the greatest compliment to me are his observations: "Jonson as the Rival Poet is an astonishing guess that seems to verge, although lacking in documentary corroboration, on certainty. This is probably Sethna's major contribution to the solution of the tangle of the Sonnets." The extensive research and analysis with which I have endeavoured to dismiss Chapman, the current favourite of scholars, for the title of "a worthier pen" are amply rewarded by Dr. Iyengar's recognition of them as successful.

However, there is one little touch that grates slightly. While giving me "full credit" for my advocacy on behalf of "rare Ben Jonson", he demurs *en passant* that my "attempt to read references to Ben (Jonson) in words like 'bent', 'bending' and 'benefit' may seem a bit bizarre". Although Dr. Iyengar does not mean to suggest that I wish to base my brief partly on tracking such allusions, the manner of his mention of this short section of my book is likely to misguide readers. Actually I attach no importance to the search for "ben" and the reader must not make capital

out of the success or failure of my venture to spot the Rival Poet's name. I clearly say at the very outset; "there is no logical reason why it should be found. Shakespeare might choose not to put it anywhere. But considerations of symmetry [with "Will" and "Anastasia"] may lead us to expect it and it will be profitable to our case to look for it though failure to spot it can spell no loss." May I dare to think that in view of the very minor role I give to the point and yet considering Shakespeare's habitual punster ingenuity the verdict "a bit bizarre" is rather exaggerative? From private communication with the author I learn that he would prefer to say only "far-fetched", but the explanation I have offered of my procedure remains still necessary.

When all is said, nothing can detract from the merit of Dr. Iyengar's review. A master of the subject has been at work and what more can an author hope for than to be told at the end of the review: "I have little doubt that this book will in coming years be deemed essential reading for all serious students of Shakespeare and the *Sonnets*"?

After reviewing the review I should not forget that the Editor of *Heritage* has introduced not only Dr. Iyengar as "a literary celebrity" but also myself in glowing terms. So my thanks go to him as well for his appreciation of my labour.

A DAWNWARD ASPIRATION

SOURCE of light, source of life
 So bright, so brilliant—the sun.
 But it was foiled and failed to kill
 That hardened darkness crusted in my mind.
 Stifled and suffocated is the one
 Who lives locked within;
 A lonely segment of my being
 Lodged in the farthest recess of the heart
 Waits and waits for the feather-soft
 Touch of a heatless glare,—
 A reviving touch that flows
 From the finger-tips of a mother.
 Clamour it does not nor complain,
 It bears the pain with sighless submission.
 Bubbles of disharmony surface indeed
 Only to break up in serene quietude.

DEBANSHU

IDEAL PARENT

“Once again Nature feels one of her great impulses towards the creation of something utterly new, something unexpected. And it is to this impulse that we must answer and obey.”

The Mother

Ideal Parent is a booklet compiled from the Mother's writings in logical sequence to *Ideal Child*. Rather the *Ideal Parent* is needed most for the *Ideal Child*. We have already received some letters including one from a member of the National Council of Education, Research and Training (NCERT), which express the need for the booklet *Ideal Parent*. The writers will be pleased to know that their long-standing need has been fulfilled. We do not want to say anything more about the booklet at present. Let the booklet speak for itself.

Suggestions are welcome for translation and distribution of this booklet to all the citizens of the world.

Now it is available only in English. Translations in other languages will be printed as soon as we receive sufficient orders. Each child must receive the booklet *Ideal Child* and every parent the booklet *Ideal Parent*, so that the ideal parent is ready for the ideal child.

Ideal Child has been printed in 7 European and 14 Indian languages and 1.6 million copies have been distributed to children all over the world. This project will be continued till all the children of the world get one copy each. Your co-operation is solicited in this endeavour. Contribution for 1,000 copies of the booklet *Ideal Child* is Rs. 400/- including postage in India, and U.S. \$ 80 outside India by surface mail. Bank drafts for *Ideal Child* should be made payable to Sri Aurobindo Ashram Pondicherry.

Contribution for 1,000 copies of the booklet *Ideal Parent* is Rs. 500/- including postage in India, and U.S. \$ 100 outside India by surface mail—for 500 copies Rs. 300 and U.S. \$ 60. Bank drafts for *Ideal Parent* should be made payable to Sri Aurobindo Society, Pondicherry. But, like orders and enquiries for both *Ideal Child* and *Ideal Parent*, these drafts should be sent to Keshavji, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry-605 002.

Now we are seeking your whole-hearted support and co-operation for this new project of *Ideal Parent* and for distributing the booklet to all the citizens of the world.

Students' Section

TWELVE PLANETS

WHEN the ancient Greeks first began to observe the sky systematically, they found that certain "stars" did not maintain their positions fixed in various constellations; instead, they turned up in different places at different times of the year. Therefore, the Greeks called these objects "planets", or the heavenly wanderers. They found that these planets, although wanderers, had regular motions and believed that they orbited around the Earth. The 7 planets they knew at the time were: the Sun, the Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. Ptolemy, the Greek astronomer of the 1st century A.D., explained the motions of these planets using epicycles and deferents.

For a long time the Ptolemaic system of astronomy was accepted without any dispute as it also satisfied the aesthetic taste of the time, viz. the earth being at the centre of the universe. But the Polish astronomer Copernicus (1473-1543) was not happy with it, as the geo-centric system was too complicated to explain the observations. It was he who began seriously thinking in terms of the alternative helio-centric system. At first the idea appeared to be rather absurd, but as it resulted in a simpler and better system he worked on it and finally became convinced of its truth. Many astronomers of the time did not accept this new idea but it was Kepler (1571-1630), a German mathematician of the following century, who took it further and, basing himself on observations made by Tycho Brahe, established three laws of planetary motion.

As a result of this change, the concept of planets also changed. The moon and the sun were excluded from the list of planets leaving Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn as the then known 6 planets of the solar system.

A few years later, the well-known British physicist Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727) derived Kepler's laws of planetary motion theoretically by postulating his famous Law of Universal Gravitation. In course of time, this Law proved to be a handy tool for astronomers and mathematicians in quest of new planets. In 1781 William Herschel discovered Uranus. In an attempt to explain the irregularities of motion of Uranus, two contemporary mathematicians, John Couch Adams in England and Urbain LeVerrier in France, proposed that an eighth planet must exist in the solar system. Using Newton's Law of Gravitation, both of them studied the problem and more or less simultaneously finished calculating the position of this proposed planet. However, it was Le Verrier who published his report first. Based on the predictions of the Frenchman, the German astronomer Johann Galle began scanning the sky for the new planet. He sighted it on the 23rd of September 1846 within 1° of where LeVerrier had predicted it. This was a great triumph for physicists as well as astronomers. The new planet was named Neptune.

But the discovery of Neptune did not suffice to explain the irregularities of Uranus's orbit. Moreover, Neptune's orbit itself presented some irregularities. Quite logically, therefore, the astronomers supposed that there should be yet another undiscovered planet beyond Neptune. This was only a supposition which, in 1905, Percival Lowell made rigorous after a great deal of theoretical calculations. However, owing to the faintness of the planet and the difficulties that cropped up in making the observations, 25 years elapsed before Clyde Tombaugh ultimately discovered it in March 1930, exactly as was predicted by Lowell. The planet was named Pluto.

For a long time after this planet's discovery, nothing new turned up and people became convinced that the solar system has no more than 9 planets. But very recently, sometime in 1985, two Russian theoretical astro-physicists seem to have predicted the existence of 2 more planets. If discovered, they would take the total number of planets to 11. Then the question that can be raised is, "Are there only 11 planets or is there yet a 12th planet waiting to be found?"

In this context Sri Aurobindo's passing mention of twelve planets may be pertinent. His letter dated 15.4.1934, in reply to the question of a disciple, is reproduced below:

Q: I have been frequently thinking of the Mother's symbol of "Chakra" and its significance. I have understood it as follows:

Central circle—Transcendental Power.

Four inner petals—Four powers working from the Supermind to Overmind.

Twelve outer petals—Division of four into twelve powers from Overmind to Intuition and mind. Do you think I have understood the significance correctly?

A: Essentially (in general principle) the 12 powers are the vibrations that are necessary for the complete manifestation. These are the 12 seen from the beginning above the Mother's head. Thus there are really 12 rays from the sun not 7, 12 planets etc.

As to the exact interpretation of the detail of the powers, I see nothing against the arrangement you have made. It can stand very well.¹

SHANTI RAMANATHAN
(School, Level Five)

¹ *Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library* Volume 25, page 359.

THE INFRARATIONAL STAGE IN ART: MODERN ART

(Continued from the issue of August 15, 1986)

We have already seen that all human activity evolves through three stages, namely, the infrarational, the rational and the suprarational. We will illustrate this through beauty, as it expresses itself in art. Let us begin with the infrarational stage:

Perhaps more than at any other period, western art became overwhelmingly infrarational during the two world wars. Modern art sprang up as a revolutionary movement against the preceding periods of neo-classicism and realism. It began with Impressionism, a movement which broke loose from past traditions, but still "reflected the mirage of reality". Later, modern artists, feeling the need for further freedom, began a series of movements, such as Fauvism and Cubism, which totally uprooted and destroyed conventional artistic values, going back for inspiration to the art of the primitive people. In his book *Modern Art* René Huyghe, the French art critic, writes that by rejecting the reality of the senses and the order of reason, and by casting off tradition and all conscious control of the will, modern artists have returned to their starting-point; they have reconstructed a situation analogous to that of prehistory when man still grappled with the then total enigma of the universe.

Should the modern artists have taken recourse to the past to derive their inspiration? According to Sri Aurobindo, it does seem at first that the shortest way would be to return to the original ideas, "to rescue the kernel of their truth from the shell of convention in which it has been encrusted." And this is exactly what the modern artists attempted to do; they wanted to do away with "futile embellishments of aesthetics" in order to "record some underlying truths which aesthetic skills and traditional vision have obscured." But Sri Aurobindo goes on to say that the need of an evolving humanity is not to go back to the past, but to progress to a greater fulfilment, in which if the old is at all taken up, it must be transformed and exceeded. And here the modern artists failed. They could not raise to a higher fulfilment the primitive spontaneity of vision and expression that they sought to revive. Most often they did not possess the sincerity and genuine aspiration that marks some of the early artistic creations. They followed only the primitive man's ignorance of an enlightening and guiding reason, his first crude vital desires and instincts untrammelled by the mind. Instead of manifesting the "sweetness and light" of primitive art, they expressed "a real love of the savage". The modern artists wanted to rid themselves of the yoke of dominating reason of the preceding periods which had stifled the artist's creative and imaginative faculties. It was no doubt necessary at that stage to bring back to perspective the importance of reason in art, to assign it the role of guide and not the law-giver. But instead of giving reason its rightful place, the modern artists swung to the other extreme by rejecting it altogether. And so they fell to an infrarational level in which they found inspiration from their vital instincts and desires. According to the Mother, we have passed from a world that had attained its perfec-

tion and was declining. (She may be referring to the realistic movement of the 19th century.) But in passing from that creation to a new creation, there was a fall into a chaos.

This chaos resulted largely from a total rejection of aesthetic standards and techniques of all "acquired means", so much so that sometimes paintings looked like the daubings of a child. There were often no distinguishable forms, no harmony of colours. In his book *Primitivism in Modern Art* Robert Goldwater mentions that a modern artist, Dubuffet, who wanted to "carry the human image... immediately into the range of effectiveness without passing through aesthetics, discarded all traditional means (perspective, proportion and fine drawing) and traditional concepts of the artistic (conventional beauty and accepted subjects) and instead chose to draw the simplest frontal and profile views, and crude bodies with enlarged heads, in the manner of a child.

Modern Art disintegrated and reached the abyss of crudeness and ugliness during World War I, when two movements, Dadaism and Surrealism, came into being. Dadaism was the supreme destroyer of past traditions; its anarchic desire to demolish, its cult of the irrational and its extreme hostility to logical, moral and aesthetic values, all coincided with post-war disillusionment. Surrealism, on the other hand, not only negated past traditions, but brought in a new movement in art, the exploration of man's subconscious planes by artistic means. But in the discovery of the subconscious, the surrealists gave unbridled expression to the dark and ugly movements of their lower natures. Surrealism claimed kinship with Freudianism and not only embraced but embellished it. Dreams and erotic fantasies took on a major importance.

Describing some modern art-pieces he has seen as "unbearably painful, convulsive and strident," René Huyghe further says that most of the artists, who had renounced the past entirely, seemed overwhelmed and crushed by the new situation. On a warning note he adds that our epoch must attain a "constructive phase" if it is not to commit "artistic suicide."

According to the Mother, the love of some modern artists for all that is ugly, foul, incoherent and absurd, was a direct consequence of the war. People were forced to put aside all refined sensibility, the love of harmony and the need for beauty to undergo it, and to forget the horrors they had suffered. And so they sank very low. She adds that with every war, "there descends upon earth a world in decomposition which produces a sort of chaos." The whole atmosphere gets vitiated and obscured.

But though modern art is often chaotic, crude and ugly in its expression, does it not have *in essence* any genuine aspiration? According to the Mother it has. She says, "I don't know, perhaps in ten years I shall tell you whether there is something in modern painting. Because I'm going to tell you something curious: for the moment.... I can't manage to have a very clear notion of beauty in what modern painters do, I confess that... but what is curious is that they have succeeded in taking away from me all the taste for the painting of old, except some very rare things, the rest seems to me pompous, artificial, ridiculous, unbearable. Now this means

that behind this incoherence and chaos there certainly is, there must be, a creative spirit which is trying to manifest.”

So, even at the infrarational level of vital instincts and impulses, we find an unconscious urge towards some form of truth and beauty.

(To be continued)

ANURUPA NAIK
(Higher Course, 3rd Year)

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

SIXTIETH SEMINAR: 27 April 1986

WHAT IS THE SECRET OF SUCCESS IN SADHANA?

SPEECH BY ILA JOSHI

AMONG the many qualities required for success in sadhana, aspiration can be said to be the most essential. So it can be called the secret of success in sadhana. But, one may ask, what does aspiration mean? In sadhana, aspiration means an intense yearning for the Divine, a dynamic urge for a spiritual life of union with the Divine. Without aspiration one cannot proceed on the path; even if one starts, one will fall and stumble and will be unable to progress. This movement of aspiration starts centrally from the soul, the psychic being, then gradually it spreads to all the parts of the being, mental, vital and physical. Integral Yoga requires the aspiration not only of the soul but also of the mental and vital nature and even of the physical consciousness; all should turn single-pointedly towards the Divine and give up all other seeking and attachment.

There is a great difference between aspiration and ambition. Ambition is a movement arising from the vital egoistic nature. The ego wants to aggrandise itself, it wants to become big and powerful in the world by possessing wealth, by having name and fame, etc. This movement has the tendency of pulling us downwards. It does not help but ruins our sadhana. Aspiration, on the contrary, always lifts us upward, towards the higher consciousness and calls down its greater powers of Truth, Love, Beauty and Ananda. It is a pure and spontaneous flame always burning upwards without any egoistic desire in it.

There is also a difference between aspiration and prayer. Prayer is always addressed to a personal God or Deity. It is conveyed in words. But aspiration does not depend on belief in a personal God. It can be impersonal. Also it needs no words or thoughts to express itself. It is a spontaneous, straightforward, inner movement rising upward to the Divine.

The Mother says that aspiration needs a great courage, "A real aspiration", she says "is something full of courage."¹ It is "a courage that has the taste of a supreme adventure."² This is because aspiration always carries in itself a push that requires a radical change in the present way of life. Only an adventurous spirit, which has the indomitable courage to leave behind all the standards of life, can nourish this fiery flame of aspiration in its heart. We have so often seen that even on a smaller scale whenever we want to achieve something, the worldly-wise minds whisper in our ears saying, "Don't go after new things, after your fancy and imagination, they

¹ *Collected Works of the Mother* (Cent. Ed., Vol. 1, 1956), p. 37.

² *Ibid.*, p. 36.

are illusions; you will not gain anything; don't risk your life for them; they are dangerous and harmful and you will lose what you have gained and get nothing in return. Be contented with what you have got. Don't try for uncertain things." These are enemy voices trying to break your ideal and prevents you from making any progress. But courageous heart says, "I'll not give up, I'll reach my goal and my destiny, come what may. I will have a rock-like faith in the Divine; it is He who leads me and I will not rest unless I get Him." Cowards shrink and are held back by their "bourgeois-mind", as the mother calls it. They prefer to remain quite safe and secure in the narrow bounds of their petty selfish existence. Only a few have the real spirit of adventure which makes them break through the bonds of ordinary life and take a leap in the great vistas of the future. They have no fear of what may happen on the way, they never cast a lingering look behind. They are prepared to risk everything if need be for the thing they aspire for.

There are people who have a bargaining attitude. They always hesitate, calculate, are afraid to take any risk. They always think for their own safety and security, they are not prepared to unfurl their sails into the uncharted ocean of the future. But if one asks what is going to happen before starting, one never starts, one remains stuck to the ground, solidly planted. Sri Aurobindo's Yoga is the greatest and toughest of all the adventures. It needs the most indomitable and unflinching courage. Those who wish to take a leap in this adventure should never turn back nor hesitate to move forward. The attitude of the sadhak of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga must be the same to which Sri Aurobindo himself adhered in his personal sadhana. He said, "Let all men jeer at me if they will or all Hell fall upon me if it will for my presumption,—I go on till I conquer or perish."¹

I conclude my speech with a few illumining words of the Master.

"There are two powers that alone can effect in their conjunction the great and difficult thing which is the aim of our endeavour, a fixed and unflinching aspiration that calls from below and a supreme Grace from above that answers."²

¹ *On Himself* (Cent. Edition, Vol. 26), p. 144.

² *The Mother* (Cent. Edition, Vol. 25), p. 1.