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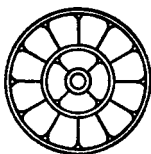
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.

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"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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SOME DEFINITIONS BY THE MOTHER

COURAGE

COURAGE is the total absence of fear in all its forms.

LOVE

Love is self-giving without asking anything in return.

MEANNESS

Meanness is a weakness that calculates and demands from others the virtues it does not itself possess.

SELFISHNESS

Selfishness is to put oneself at the centre of the universe and to want everything to exist for one's own satisfaction.

NOBILITY

Nobility is to refuse all personal calculations.

GENEROSITY

Generosity is to find one's own satisfaction in the satisfaction of others.

15.12.1969

(Bulletin, Feb. 1972, p. 57)

THE MOTHER'S COMMENTARIES ON SRI AUROBINDO'S *THOUGHTS AND GLIMPSES*

COMPILED FROM HER TALKS TO THE ASHRAM CHILDREN,
1956-1957, IN A NEW TRANSLATION BY SHRADDHAVAN

(Continued from the issue of September 1987)

Chapter 13: THE CHAIN, Part One

The whole world yearns after freedom, yet each creature is in love with his chains; this is the first paradox and inextricable knot of our nature.

Man is in love with bonds of birth; therefore he is caught in the companion bonds of death. In these chains he aspires after freedom of his being and mastery of his self-fulfilment.

Man is in love with power; therefore he is subjected to weakness. For the world is a sea of waves of force that meet and continually fling themselves on each other; he who would ride on the crest of one wave, must faint under the shock of hundreds.

Man is in love with pleasure; therefore he must undergo the yoke of grief and pain. For unmixed delight is only for the free and passionless soul; but that which pursues after pleasure in man is a suffering and straining energy.

Man hungers after calm, but he thirsts also for the experiences of a restless mind and a troubled heart. Enjoyment is to his mind a fever, calm an inertia and a monotony.

Man is in love with the limitations of his physical being, yet he would have also the freedom of his infinite mind and his immortal soul.

And in these contrasts something in him finds a curious attraction; they constitute for his mental being the artistry of life. It is not only the nectar but the poison also that attracts his taste and his curiosity.

Mother, what does 'the artistry of life' mean?

FOR most human beings, what they call 'artistic' is just contrast. Artists say, and feel, that shadows create highlights, and that if there were no contrasts they could not make any pictures. It is the same thing in music: the contrasts

between 'forte' and 'piano' are one of the greatest charms of music.

I have known poets who would say, "It is my enemies' hatred that makes me appreciate the affection of my friends" and "It is the almost inevitable likelihood of unhappiness that gives all the savour to happiness," and so on. And people can only appreciate repose in contrast to the daily bustle, silence because of the general noise. And some people will even tell you, "Oh, it is because diseases exist that we love good health." It goes so far that people can only appreciate a thing after they have lost it. And as Sri Aurobindo says here: when this fever of action, of movement, this restlessness of the creative mind is not there, they feel that they have fallen into a state of inertia. Most people fear silence, calm, tranquillity. They don't feel alive unless they are restless.

I have seen many cases in which Sri Aurobindo gave calm to someone, silenced his mind, and the person came back to him in a kind of despair, saying, "But I have become stupid!"—because the mind wasn't restless any more.

What he says here is terribly true. Men want freedom, but they are in love with their chains, and when you try to remove them, when you try to show them the way to true liberation they are afraid, and often they even protest.

Almost all human works of art—literary, poetic, artistic—are based on the violence of life's contrasts. When you try to get people out of their daily dramas, they really have the feeling that it is inartistic. If they tried to write a book or a play without any contrasts, in which everything were harmoniously pure and beautiful, without any shadows in the picture, it would probably seem very dull, very monotonous and lifeless; because what men call 'life' is the drama of life, its anxieties, the violence of its contrasts.

And perhaps if there were no death any more, they would get terribly tired of living.

30.1.1957

Chapter 14: THE CHAIN, Part Two

In all these things there is a meaning and for all these contradictions there is a release. Nature has a method in every madness of her combinings and for her most inextricable knots there is a solution.

Death is the question Nature puts continually to Life and her reminder to it that it has not yet found itself. If there were no siege of death, the creature would be bound for ever in the form of an imperfect living. Pursued by death he awakes to the idea of perfect life and seeks out its means and its possibility.

This seems to be a big enough subject, so that we don't need to read any further. This is a question that everyone with a slightly awakened consciousness has wondered about at least once in his life. In the depths of our being there is such a great need to perpetuate, to prolong and develop life, that as soon as one has

a first contact with death—a contact which may be entirely accidental, but which is unavoidable—there is a kind of recoil in the being.

Some sensitive people feel a kind of horror; others feel indignant. People tend to ask themselves, “What is this monstrous farce we take part in without wanting or understanding it? Why are we born, if only to die? Why all this effort for development, for progress, for extending our capacities, if it only leads to a decline which ends in degeneration and decay?” Some people feel a sense of revolt; others, who are weaker, feel despair; and always this question is there: If there is any conscious Will behind all this, it seems to be something monstrous.

But here Sri Aurobindo tells us that this was the only way to awaken in the material consciousness a need for perfection, a need for progress; that without this catastrophe beings would have rested content in the condition they were in. Perhaps.... It is not certain. But in any case we have no choice but to take things as they are and tell ourselves that we must find a way out.

The fact is that everything is in a state of perpetual progressive development; which means that the whole universe is moving towards a perfection which seems to recede as we move towards it, for what seemed perfection at a given moment is no longer perfect after a little while.

The subtler states of being in the consciousness can follow this progression as it occurs; and the higher up the scale we go, the closer is the rhythm of the advance to the rhythm of the universal development. But the material world is by nature rigid; there the transformation is slow, very slow, almost imperceptible to the human time-sense; and so there is a constant imbalance between the inner and the outer movement. And it is this imbalance, this inability of the outer forms to follow the movement of the inner progress that leads to the need for the dissolution and change of forms. But if we could infuse into this matter enough consciousness to achieve the same rhythm, if this matter became plastic enough to follow the inner progression, this loss of balance would not happen, and death would no longer be necessary.

So, according to what Sri Aurobindo tells us, Nature found this rather radical way of awakening in the material consciousness the aspiration and plasticity that are needed.

It is obvious that the predominant characteristic of matter is inertia; and if it were not for this violence, perhaps individual consciousnesses would be so inert that they would accept a life of perpetual imperfection rather than change. It is possible. In any case, this is the way things are, and for us who know a little more, it only remains to change all this, as far as we can, by calling on the Force, the Consciousness, the new Power which has the capacity to infuse material substance with the vibration that can transform it, make it plastic, supple, progressive.

It is clear that the greatest obstacle is attachment to the way things are. But even Nature as a whole finds that those who have the deeper knowledge want

to go too quickly. She likes her meanderings, she likes her many attempts, her checks and fresh starts, her new inventions. She likes the fantasy of the path, the unexpectedness of the experience. One could almost say that for her the longer it takes, the more she enjoys it.

But one gets tired even of the best games. A time comes when one needs to change the game; and one could dream of a game in which there would no longer be any need to destroy in order to progress, in which the urge for progress would be strong enough to make us always try to find new ways, new forms of expression, in which the drive would be impelling enough to overcome all inertia, weariness, lack of understanding, fatigue and apathy.

Why is it, when we are in this body, that as soon as we have made some progress, it needs to sit down? It is tired. It says, "Oh, wait... give me time to rest." This is what leads to death. If it could feel within it the urge to achieve more and more, to be clearer, more beautiful, more luminous, eternally young, we could escape from Nature's macabre joke.

For her, it doesn't matter. She has the overall view, she sees the whole; she sees that nothing gets lost, that it is only a matter of mixing together again lots of countless tiny, unimportant elements, that get put back in a pot and after a good stir out comes something new. But that game is not fun for everybody. And if we managed to be as vast in consciousness as she is, to be more powerful than she is, why shouldn't we do the same thing in a better way?

This is the problem that has been set us now. With the addition, the new help of this Force that has descended and is manifesting itself, that is at work, why shouldn't we take up this tremendous game and make it more beautiful, more harmonious, more true?

It only needs brains that are powerful enough to receive the Force and formulate a possible course of action. It needs consciousnesses that are powerful enough to convince Nature that there are better methods than hers. That sounds like madness. But all new things have always seemed like madness until they became realities.

The time has come for this madness to get realised. And since we are all here, for reasons which may be unknown to most of you, but which are nevertheless very conscious reasons, we may set ourselves the task of achieving this madness — at least that will be worth living for.

6.2.1957

A TALK BY THE MOTHER

TO THE ASHRAM CHILDREN ON 31 OCTOBER 1956

Mother, someone has asked me to request you to explain one of your sentences. You have said somewhere that one must become divine before one can bear the pressure of Divine Love. It is in the "Diary".

Oh! you are repeating it a little freely!
Well, what does he want to know?

He is asking whether man must first become divine before Love can spread over the earth.

I don't think this is what is meant. Surely what you mean is that Divine Love cannot manifest until man becomes divine. Is that what you mean?

That is what we understand.

Oh! that's how you understand it!... But I don't think this is what is meant.

First of all, we are going to take the historical fact, if there is one. That is to say, through the action of the forces of separation, Consciousness became inconscience and matter was created such as it is, on a basis of inconscience so total that no contact seemed possible between the Origin and what was created. And this total inconscience made a direct descent necessary, without passing through the intermediate regions, a direct descent of the divine Consciousness in its form of Love. And it is this descent of Divine Love into matter, penetrating it and adding a new element to its composition, which has made possible the ascent, slow for us, but an uninterrupted ascent, from inconscience to consciousness and from darkness to light. Therefore, one cannot say that Love can manifest only when the creation becomes divine, for it is *on the contrary* because of its manifestation that creation can become divine once again.

What I said there has nothing to do with this.

I was speaking not of the world in general but of human consciousness in particular; and certainly, I was alluding to the fact that this Divine Love which animates all things, penetrates all, upbears all and leads all towards progress and an ascent to the Divine, is not felt, not perceived by the human consciousness, and that even to the extent the human being does perceive it, he finds it difficult to bear—not only to contain it, but be able to tolerate it, I might say, for its power in its purity, its intensity in its purity, are of too strong a kind to be endured by human nature. It is only when it is diluted, deformed, attenuated and obscured, so to say, that it becomes acceptable to human nature. It is only when it moves

away from its true nature and essential quality that man accepts it, and even (*smiling*) approves of it and glorifies it. This means that it must already be quite warped in order to be accepted by the human consciousness. And to accept it, bear it and receive it in its plenitude and purity, the human consciousness must become divine.

This was what I meant, not anything else. I was stating that a human being, unless he raises himself to the divine heights, is incapable of receiving, appreciating and knowing what divine Love is. Love must cease to be divine to be accepted by man.

But that is a phenomenon of the outer, superficial consciousness; it doesn't prevent Love in its form of Grace from being at work everywhere and always, and from doing its work in an unknown but constant way, to put it thus; and I think, in fact, that it never works so well as when it is not known... for even the so-called human understanding is already a deformation.

That is the meaning of the sentence, and nothing else. I was not speaking of a cosmic phenomenon.

Mother, you said, on one of these Wednesdays: "The experience begins for you only when you can describe it. Well, when you are able to describe it, the greater part of its intensity and its capacity for action for the inner and outer transformation has already evaporated."

Talk of 17 October 1956

So?...

So what should be done with the experience? If there is an experience without the power to express it, what happens?

There too, what I meant was that the experience precedes and transcends by far the formulation you give it in your mind. The experience comes before, often long before the capacity to formulate it. The experience has a fullness, a force, a power of *direct* action on the nature, which is immediate, instantaneous. Let us take as an example that in certain circumstances or by an exceptional grace you are suddenly put into contact with a supramental light, power or consciousness. It is like an abrupt opening in your closed shell, like a rent in that opaque envelope which separates you from the Truth, and the contact is established. Immediately this force, this consciousness, this light acts, even on your physical cells; it acts in the mind, in the vital, in the body, changes the vibrations, organises the substance and begins its work of transformation. You are under the impact of this sudden contact and action; for you it is a sort of indescribable, inexpressible state which takes hold of you, you haven't any clear, precise, definite idea of it, it is... "something that happens". It may give you the impres-

sion of being wonderful or tremendous, but it is inexpressible and incomprehensible for you. That is the experience in its essence and its true power.

Gradually, as the action is prolonged and the outer being begins to assimilate this action, there awakens a capacity of observation, first in the mental consciousness, and a kind of objectivisation occurs: something in the mind looks on, observes and translates in its own way. This is what you call understanding, and this is what gives you the impression (*smiling*) that you are having an experience. But that is already considerably diminished in comparison with the experience itself, it is a transcription adapted to your mental, vital and physical dimension, that is, something that is shrunken, hardened—and it gives you at the same time the impression that it is growing clearer; that is to say, it has become as limited as your understanding.

That is a phenomenon which always occurs even in the best cases. I am not speaking of those instances where this power of experience is absorbed by the unconsciousness of your being and expressed by a more and more unconscious movement; I am speaking of the case in which your mind is clear, your aspiration clear, and where you have already advanced quite considerably on the path.... And even when your mind begins to be transformed, when it is used to receiving Light, when it can be penetrated by it, is sufficiently receptive to absorb it, the moment it wants to express it in a way understandable to the human consciousness—I don't mean the ordinary consciousness but even the enlightened human consciousness—the moment it wants to formulate, to make it precise and understandable, it reduces, diminishes, limits—it attenuates, weakens, blurs the experience, even granting that it is pure enough not to falsify it. For if, anywhere in the being, in the mind or the vital, there is some insincerity which is tolerated, well, then the experience is completely falsified and deformed. But I am speaking of the best instances, where the being is sincere, under control, and where it functions most favourably: the formulation in words which are understandable by the human mind is *necessarily*, inevitably, a restriction, a diminution of the power of action of the experience. When you can tell yourself clearly and consciously: "This and that and the other happened", when you can describe the phenomenon comprehensively, it has already lost some of its power of action, its intensity, its truth and force. But this does not mean that the intensity, the power of action and the force were not there—they were there, and probably in the best cases the utmost effect of the experience is produced before you begin to give it a comprehensible form.

I am speaking here of the best cases. I am not speaking of the innumerable cases of those who begin to have an experience and whose mind becomes curious, wakes up and says, "Oh! what is happening?" Then everything vanishes. Or maybe one catches the deformed tail of something which has lost all its force and all its reality.... The first thing to do is to teach your mind *not to stir*: "Above all, don't move! Above all, don't move, let the thing develop fully without

wanting to know what is happening; don't be stupid, keep quiet, be still, and wait. Your turn will always come too soon, never too late." It should be possible to live an experience for hours and for days together without feeling the need to formulate it to yourself. When one does that, one gets the full benefit from it. Then it works, churns the nature, it transforms the cells—it begins its real work of transformation. But as soon as you begin to look and to understand and to formulate, it is already something that belongs to the past.

There we are.

(Questions and Answers 1956, pp. 339-43)

GOLCONDE

On 10 October 1987 the special Guest House of the Ashram, named "Golconde", completes its fifty years of service. We are happy to publish some relevant writings to celebrate the occasion.

A LETTER FROM SRI AUROBINDO

As regards Golconde and its rules—they are not imposed elsewhere—there is a reason for them and they are not imposed for nothing. In Golconde Mother has worked out her own idea through Raymond, Sammer and others. First Mother believes in beauty as a part of spirituality and divine living; secondly, she believes that physical things have the Divine Consciousness underlying them as much as living things; and thirdly that they have an individuality of their own and ought to be properly treated, used in the right way, not misused or improperly handled or hurt or neglected so that they perish soon or lose their full beauty or value; she feels the consciousness in them and is so much in sympathy with them that what in other hands may be spoilt or wasted in a short time lasts with her for years or decades. It is on this basis that she planned the Golconde. First, she wanted a high architectural beauty, and in this she succeeded—architects and people with architectural knowledge have admired it with enthusiasm as a remarkable achievement; one spoke of it as the finest building of its kind he had seen, with no equal in all Europe or America; and a French architect, pupil of a great master, said it executed superbly the idea which his master had been seeking for but failed to realise; but also she wanted all the objects in it, the rooms, the fittings, the furniture to be individually artistic and to form a harmonious whole. This too was done with great care. Moreover, each thing was arranged to have its own use, for each thing there was a place, and there should be no mixing up, or confused or wrong use. But all this had to be kept up and carried out in practice; for it was easy for people living there to create a complete confusion and misuse and to bring everything to disorder and ruination in a short time. That was why the rules were made and for no other purpose. The Mother hoped that if right people were accommodated there or others trained to a less rough and ready living than is common, her idea could be preserved and the wasting of all the labour and expense avoided.

Unfortunately, the crisis of accommodation came and we were forced to house people in Golconde who could not be accommodated elsewhere and a careful choice could not be made. So, often there was damage and misuse and the Mother had to spend 200/300 Rupees after Darshan to repair things and restore what had been realised. Mona has taken the responsibility of the house and of keeping things right as much as possible. That was why she interfered in the hand-bag affair—it was as much a tragedy for the table as for the doctor,

for it got scratched and spoiled by the handbag—and tried to keep both the bag and shaving utensils in the places that had been assigned for them. If I had been, in the doctor's place, I would have been grateful to her for her care and solicitude instead of being upset by what ought to have been for him trifles, although, because of her responsibility, they had for her their importance. Anyhow, this is the rationale for the rules and they do not seem to me to be meaningless regulation and discipline.

February 25, 1945

SRI AUROBINDO

RULES FROM THE MOTHER

1

Not to take care of material things which one uses is a sign of inconstancy and ignorance.

You have no right to use any material object whatsoever if you do not take care of it.

You must take care of it not because you are attached to it, but because it manifests something of the Divine Consciousness.

THE MOTHER

2

Circumstances have made it necessary for residents to be reminded that they should not leave

MONEY OR VALUABLES

in their rooms unlocked or in any way accessible to the workers.

In any case, keys of the cupboards, etc., should not be kept in the drawers or elsewhere in the rooms, but should be carried by the residents.

The workers are very poor. It is not at all fair to place such temptations before them.

THE MOTHER

THE MOTHER ON GOLCONDE

As Recollected by Udar

1

Someone wrote to The Mother asking for accommodation in the Golconde Guest House. When She received this letter She expressed Herself very forcefully: "Golconde is NOT a Guest House. It is a dormitory (*dortoir*) in which those who reside there can meditate and do their Sadhana in beautiful surroundings, in very fine rooms and with many of the little daily jobs done for them, to keep them more free for their Sadhana." Then The Mother added: "In the old days, the Rishis used to live in the mountains and their disciples lived in caves in these mountains. Golconde is the modern equivalent of the caves for the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo."

In connection with the building work and the furnishing of Golconde, here are some things said by The Mother to me in my work there.

The architecture of Golconde is a masterpiece but on the engineering side it was almost disastrous. George Nakashima admitted as much to me on his last visit here. Particularly with regard to the louvres and the brass fittings. In the original design for the louvres, they were to be made from imported zinc sheets, as was done in the model room. But this would have been disastrous as the zinc sheet would not stand up to the corrosion of the sea air. Also it would be impossible later to import the sheets. When The Mother was informed of this, She meditated for quite some time on it and then said that some other material should be used and suggested asbestos cement. Fortunately I had good friends in the Asbestos Cement Factory at Coimbatore, where the Trafford Roofing sheets, etc. were made. I was able, with The Mother's Force behind me, to get them to make the louvres specially to our design. These louvres are perfect and have served wonderfully.

The biggest problem was with the brass fittings and the nuts and bolts, etc. There were beautiful drawings of all these, in great detail, but they existed only on paper.

All had to be made and when I told this to The Mother, She said: "Well! make them then. You are an engineer." She gave me the Harpagon place to set up my workshop for this. There was nothing there but a tumble-down country-tile roofed shed and part of it was occupied by the Sanitary Service. Why is it called Harpagon—a name that to the French signifies a miser as this is the classical name of the miser in Moliere's play *L'Avare* (*The Miser*). I asked The Mother why and She explained that this place belonged to a very rich Chettiar who could have given it as a gift to The Mother without any sense of loss, but as he knew that She wanted the place, he asked for double the current rate and would not budge. So finally The Mother said: "All right, I will pay

him the price he asks and name the place after him.” And the great paradox is that in this place named after a miser, The Mother put to work a man to whom Sri Aurobindo had given the name of Udar—which is the very opposite of miser.

Anyway, there I was at Harpagon to make all the brass fittings for Golconde. These had to be cast in brass so we first had to set up a foundry. I had been given some workmen, very good ones indeed, with a traditional competence, who turned their hands well to modern machine parts. The Mother gave me a large heap of old brass vessels which had to be broken down and melted and cast in the foundry and then machined. I asked Her for some machines and She turned to Pavitra who was present and he said he could spare a handdrill. That is all the machine I started with. But Pavitra was indeed most helpful as he did all the machining work very, very well indeed in his Atelier in the Ashram Main Building.

Then I told The Mother that I would need some money to buy certain tools, etc. She went into Her room and brought out one rupee which she gave me saying with a smile: “Here is money.” Though I was fairly new at the Ashram, I did not protest and understood at once what a great gift She was giving me and such a wonderful compliment.

It was a challenge and given by The Divine Mother to me who, She felt, could rise to it. Most foreign-trained engineers are desk workers and give orders. I had no desk and no one to give orders to and so had to do most of the work with my own hands—and with one glorious rupee from The Mother as a channel of Her Force into me.

Then about the brass bolts and nuts. There were thousands needed and every architect or design engineer first selects the sizes suitable from the vast array of lists of different specifications of brass bolts and nuts. But not so here. The architects made drawings even of the bolts and nuts so these also had to be cast, toughened and machined. And as for the threads of these bolts and nuts there are a large number of standards to choose from for which screw taps and dies are available. But not here. There were pretty drawings which conformed to no standards at all. All this I explained to The Mother and told Her that I could choose something very close to the drawings for manufacture. But the Mother was adamant. “Not even a fraction of a millimetre must be changed. If taps and dies are not available for these drawing sizes, then make your own!” So we had to make our own—and for all this I worked about 14 hours a day and was very happy with it. It was truly a most wonderful gift.

Then about the tea at Golconde. When we were working there we were so engrossed in our work that we did not even think of taking a tea-break or whatever. But The Mother, in Her marvellous Sweetness, though She Herself did not drink tea, knew our habits and our likes, so She asked Mona to see that we got tea at 3-00 p.m. every day. This was the start of the Golconde Tea Ceremony.

Why the name GOLCONDE? To set up such a large building required

quite a lot of money and, in those days, much money was not available. So The Mother spoke to Sir Akbar Hydari about it and as he was the Dewan to the Nizam of Hyderabad he was able to get from the Nizam a donation of one lakh of rupees for this building through the Finance Department which was under Raja Shamraj. Today, one lakh does not seem much, but, in those days it was indeed quite a large sum as its buying power was over twenty times what it is now. Especially at Pondicherry where things were remarkably cheap. A ton of cement, good Japanese cement, cost only around Rs. 25/- and steel about Rs. 200/- per ton. Pondicherry was then a free port and there were absolutely no Customs or Import charges or restrictions. And as we had then a good off-loading pier, shipments from Japan could come directly to Pondicherry.

Hence with this large sum of money the building work was taken up.

Now, because the first money came from Hyderabad, The Mother wanted to give a name to the building which had some connection with Hyderabad and so She chose the name GOLCONDE, the French rendering of Golconda, the famous mine in Hyderabad.

When Antonin Raymond, the famous Czechoslovakian architect, equal in renown to Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier, came here, the Mother, whose friend he had been in Japan, asked him to take up the work of designing and starting the building of Golconde. The area available was quite small for a building of any large size to be built in. Nevertheless, Raymond took up the challenge. As the length of the land lay, from east to west, this suited him very well and he designed the building oriented very strictly, east to west—with all the openings only on the north and south—and he designed that both faces should be openable fully, so that it could get the fullest current of air, which is south to north in summer and north to south in winter. He also arranged that the sunlight should not enter any room directly and bring its heat directly with it. So the rooms were always cool.

To further the cooling current of air in summer, as often there is no movement of air at all, Raymond very ingeniously arranged that on the south side of the building, in the garden space available, there should be many trees and shrubs and lots of greenery and shade; whereas on the northern side, the garden area was left rather bare. So with the sun shining fully on the northern area, the air over it became much hotter than that on the southern side and so the hot air rising up drew in the air from the cooler and shaded south and thus set up a convection current of air. By these means, the rooms at Golconde are always cool and do not need any fans, etc., as other rooms do.

The lines of the building were so beautifully designed with the roof made of large curved cement concrete tiles, that the whole is truly a masterpiece of architecture. In fact, it is perhaps the best piece of modern architecture in India today fifty years after the building was commenced, and it is listed in JANES as being one of the important buildings in the world.

Mr. Raymond brought with him his team of architects, consisting of George Nakashima, a Japanese, and Franchicheck (François) Sammer, a Czechoslovak. George Nakashima made the first drawings of Golconde and even made a model of a room. Work was started on 10th October 1937. Later George Nakashima went to the U.S.A. and established himself there at New Hope, Pennsylvania as one of the foremost furniture designers in America. François Sammer stayed on for several years and attended to the building and the finishing work of Golconde. I had the very happy opportunity of working with him and learning so much from him. François was a perfectionist and, very much in the manner of The Mother, believed in "Perfection in detail". The perfection of the work done at Golconde added to the fame of this building.

Here are two outstanding examples of this approach. Normally, in reinforced concrete work where large areas are cast in form work, when the form work is removed, the faces of the cast areas are plastered over and made level and smooth. But for this work at Golconde, François insisted that the surfaces be left as they were, after the form work was removed and only smoothed over with a carborundam stone. In this way, the quality of the work could be seen and so the work had to be done very carefully. There should be no holes and blank spaces and this was done by having the concrete vibrated at the time of casting. This was quite a new technique to us. The details of the form work could be seen, the joints of the planks, the screw heads and even the grain of the wooden planks. All this was part of the aesthetic detail in the architecture and those who visit Golconde are impressed with it.

The other example was in the use of the wooden planks for the staircase hand-rails. François insisted that the planks should be left with all the defects in them, defects which all planks have and which are normally covered over. These small defects add to the beauty of the wood and show its intrinsic value.

In every single thing, François insisted on the utmost perfection and, to me, this was a wonderful training and such a great help in my own sadhana. I informed The Mother about all this and She was very pleased with such a way of working.

Another fine approach was how beauty and utility were combined. Around the building of Golconde there are water tanks and water canals connecting these tanks, with the use of underground canals from one side of the building to the other. This makes a very beautiful boundary for the building as if it were tied with a silver ribbon. In the tanks and also in some of the canals there were water plants, water flowers, gold fish and such things. All this is so very beautiful. Also, these canals serve well in watering the garden. One does not have to carry the water from a distance. A pail is just dipped into the canal and the garden area nearby watered. Thus is utility combined with beauty.

Now for all this we needed a good supply of water, in addition to the town supply. So The Mother asked us to drill an artesian tube well and She indicated

where it had to be done. When we were drilling this well, generally clay and sand were extracted; but once some black material came up which was quite intriguing. As I then had free access to Sri Aurobindo I took a handful of this stuff to show it to Him and He asked me what it was. I said that it looked to me like half formed coal. On hearing this, Sri Aurobindo smiled sweetly and said: "Ah then! you want to pull down Golconde and have a coal mine there?" It was truly wonderful to hear him joke and smile. One would, perhaps, expect such a great Mahayogi to be serious and ponderous; but He was always ready with a joke and a smile. He once said that one could be serious about a few small things, but about the rest, one should always laugh at them.

Years later we learnt that this black stuff was Lignite and that it stretches over a wide area and forms the reason for the Neyveli Lignite mining.

Another happy thing happened at Harpagon. When digging for the foundation for a drilling machine, we came across some globules of red material that were also intriguing as they seemed to be perhaps precious stones. These also I took to Sri Aurobindo and again He asked me what I thought they were. I said that as they were red in colour, they might be rubies and again Sri Aurobindo smiled His beautiful joking smile and said: "Rubies? Go on digging; perhaps you may find diamonds." Years later I found that these were garnets, a stock of uncut ones, presumably left there by the Romans whose presence had been found by Sir Mortimer Wheeler and by the Archaeological Department of India at Arikamedu, near Ananta's Island. They made excavations and found among other things a stone-cutting set-up, run by the ancient Romans, with cutting wheels and half-cut stones—all garnets. So this is another curious thing about Harpagon—in the land owned by a miser we find a quantity of semi-precious stones.

HOW MONA CAME TO TAKE CHARGE OF GOLCONDE

Mona was a model housekeeper. Dutta (Miss Dorothy Hodgson) was very much impressed by her spotless house. When the Mother was looking for somebody to look after Golconde Dutta told the Mother, "I have been to Mona Pinto's house. She keeps her house spotlessly clean. She may be the one to look after Golconde."

Thus Mona was asked by the Mother to look after Golconde. In fact at that time Mona had a problem in climbing staircases and wondered how she would manage this three-storeyed building. But when the Mother gives some work she gives the necessary power with it and the problem didn't trouble Mona any more.

Golconde's exceptional upkeep and maintenance impressed an engineer so much that he remarked, "I have never seen a building so excellently maintained."

VIGNETTES OF THE MOTHER AND SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of September 1987)

Without Medicine

X DIDN'T believe much in medicines. She tried to avoid the use of them as far as possible, and employed only home remedies. Once her daughter had a fever which didn't come down even after three or four days. She took the child to Dr. Nripendra who prescribed antibiotics. X took the prescription to the Mother who said, "Since you have gone to the doctor you must obey him, but your children are so receptive that they can recover even without medicine.

X came back to find that her daughter's temperature had come to normal.

*

X, an Ashramite, had gone to Calcutta for some work. He developed severe pain in the right leg. The doctors took an X-ray and said he had either a tumour or an abcess in a bone which would have to be operated upon. X told them that he would have to get permission from the Mother. The doctors were surprised: "Who is the Mother?" Anyway X sent a telegram to the Mother. Meanwhile the doctors started extensive investigations.

As soon as the telegram reached the Mother, X's pain which had been unbearable lessened suddenly to an appreciable extent. Still he was unable to move. The doctors wanted to X-ray his chest. Since it was not possible for him to go to the hospital an X-ray machine was brought to his residence. After taking the picture of his chest the doctors thought: "Since we are here it will be useful to take another picture of his afflicted leg." When the X-ray plates were developed it was found that the tumour or the abcess had disappeared.

Encephalitis

X prayed to the Mother to give a name to her new-born son. The Mother gave the name "Tanay"—a Sanskrit word meaning "Son". When the boy's aunt asked Nolini-da, "Does it mean the Mother's son?" Nolini-da replied, "Yes, the Mother's son."

When Tanay was eight years old he had an attack of encephalitis. The doctors told the stricken parents and family that there was no hope for recovery; in case he recovered his brain would be so damaged that he would live as a vegetable. In such cases death seems more kind than life. Who can describe the anguish of the mother, the torment of the father? Their only son lay totally unconscious for a week on a bed, tubes sticking out of his body. His mother sat like an image of stone. Only from her two eyes flowed a constant stream of silent tears.

A blessing packet was sent from the Ashram which the family strapped on the boy's naked chest with scotch tape. Eight or ten days passed. The doctors had asked the numerous family members not to crowd the emergency room in which Tanay lay. So only one person—his grandmother—was with him when Tanay suddenly opened his eyes. The family was torn between the dilemma of a choice between death or a brainless life. His grandmother could not rejoice. Anxiously she held out her fingers and asked him, "Tanay, how many fingers are these?" Tanay replied, "Three." Still apprehensive about his intelligence she repeated her question—"Tanay, how many fingers are these?" A little irritated Tanay replied, "Why do you repeat the same question?"

Jubilation, the thanks-giving is difficult to describe. For the family it was a case of the Grace of the Mother.

The doctors found it hard to explain the cure. Tanay had been examined by all the eminent physicians of that medical college. Everyone had diagnosed it as a very bad case of encephalitis. Doctors do not believe in miracles of Divine Grace, so they said, "Maybe he didn't have encephalitis."

"I do not Perform Miracles"

X was a very active member of our gymnastic groups. One day during a dive she got hurt. Intense muscular pain assailed her. Doctors told her there was no cure for the disease. The only hope lay in the Divine Grace. X wrote all these things to the Mother.

One day she went to the Mother for Pranam and prayed to be cured of the disabling and excruciatingly painful disease. The Mother replied, "I am only an instrument of the Divine. I do not perform miracles." Then she asked X, "When you get pain, do you pray to me?" X replied emphatically, "Yes, Mother, always." The Mother told her, "When you get pain tell yourself, 'It does not belong to me, it is somebody else's.'" Then the Mother told her that during sickness she should think of a beautiful realisation, not material or earthly but something high and spiritual.

Then she asked X if she liked to read. X said her pain was so much that she could not read. The side-effects of the accident were becoming alarming, her arm was getting swollen and the pain spread to the arms. She asked the Mother, "Will it go?" The Mother replied, "Yes, if you have faith. It is doubt which annuls the Grace."

Then the Mother asked X to show her arm. X extended her arm and pointed out the swelling to the Mother. The Mother gently caressed her arm.

X had gone for one minute of pranam, her visit lasted twenty-five minutes. The next day the swelling started subsiding. Within a week it disappeared, never to return.

Compiled by S

HOW THEY CAME TO THE ASHRAM

3

X WAS married young as was the custom in those early decades of this century amongst high-caste Hindus. But, a rare soul of purity, marriage didn't seem to suit X. Every time she went to her father-in-law's place she invariably got a fever which inexplicably vanished on her returning to her parental place. Her father-in-law thought that the girl might be feeling stifled in their house which was not well ventilated. So he constructed a new spacious house for his cherished daughter-in-law, with a pond for her to swim in. Alas, all this labour and expenditure seemed futile since the girl's fever continued even after shifting to the new airy house. In this house she saw the photograph of a Sanyasin whom she didn't know. He was none of the known saints. She was intensely attracted by the splendour of the unknown face, morning and evening she did pranam before it. Then one day, as she turned to go, she saw the Sanyasin in the photograph turn to look at her. The fourteen-year old young wife stood arrested at this strange phenomenon. Her heart beat fast. Who was this Mahapurusha whose eyes attracted her like a magnet, followed her and who could even turn in his photo to look at her?

She asked her husband who the Sanyasin was. Was he still alive? The husband told her that it was a photograph of Sri Aurobindo who lived in his Ashram at Pondicherry. From that day her whole life changed. Her feelings and thoughts revolved round Sri Aurobindo. Later, her husband, when he wrote a letter to Sri Aurobindo, suggested that she should also write. She wrote, pouring out her aspiration for the Divine. In his answer Sri Aurobindo wrote four things. The first of them was that his Yoga was not for married people. Secondly, what would she do if her husband disapproved of her turning to a Yogic life? Thirdly, would her parents agree to keep her? Fourthly, would she be able to face all the trouble her husband would give her? Sri Aurobindo suggested that she should separate from her husband. Later, if he found it impossible to live a life of celibacy, he should remarry. She decided to go back to her parental place since her husband was not ready to give up conjugal life.

There was a great upheaval in both the families. Sri Aurobindo himself wrote and asked her parents, "Can you keep your daughter?" Her mother replied, "I have lost one daughter to death, I do not want to lose another." She sent her brother to bring X back to the parental house. It was an act of deep love on her mother's part for it required an exceptional courage because in those days it was unimaginable for a girl to leave her husband for whatever reason; even if he were a criminal, he was her god. Society required that a woman should live and die for her husband.

X's maternal uncle reached her husband's house and asked for her. Her

husband made the stipulation that she should go to Calcutta with him for a medical check-up to find out why she was always ill. After examining her the doctors said that she was pregnant. Another examination confirmed the pregnancy. X told her husband plainly that henceforth if she lived she would live for the Divine. Even the thought of her pregnancy, this new permanent linking of their destiny, didn't make any difference to her when she refused to go home with her husband. Her maternal uncle took her to the station. While they waited for the train her husband turned up with policemen. The police detained and interrogated X and her uncle—

“Where are you going, leaving your husband?” X replied firmly, “To my mother's place.” “WHY?” demanded the police. “I am going to my mother, there is no why.” X replied so forcefully that her husband was taken aback. He had never known the strength hidden in that mere slip of a girl. The police found no ground to detain her and let her go.

After seven months when a daughter was born to X at her mother's place, again she refused to go back to her husband. He was then only thirty-two years old and it was a final shock to him. He left his job and became a Sanyasin. He went to Rangoon to visit his younger brother who pointed out that his Sanyasa was premature and persuaded him to renounce it. This brother came to X to plead on his elder brother's behalf. X's husband was very angry with Sri Aurobindo, and spoke against him vehemently. X, a firebrand of devotion, coming to know of it, could not bear this insult to Sri Aurobindo. She told X's brother, “I will kick the mouth which abuses my Guru.” She assured her brother-in-law that she had no objection to her husband's remarriage.

X's family was also in trouble. People of their community raised a great hue and cry. How can a Hindu woman leave her husband? A husband may leave a hundred wives but a wife had no right to leave her husband. They threatened to boycott the family socially. X's uncle replied, “Due to the presence of this god-child our house is full of light and purity—for her I can renounce the whole of society.” At his firm stand the pundits relented and by Sri Aurobindo's Grace there was no social boycott.

Now X yearned to have the Darshan of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. Three times Sri Aurobindo agreed to her pleas but each time the Mother said that her daughter was too young to be separated from her mother. When the daughter became older X again wept and pleaded with her father to send her to Pondicherry. Her father, a successful businessman in Burma, had been connected with Tagore's Shantiniketan and Prabartak Sangha of Motilal Roy of Chandanagar. He had been disappointed with those two experiments in spirituality, so he was reluctant to let his daughter go to Pondicherry. He thought of diverting his daughter by taking her to Burma and building a palatial house for her just outside Rangoon. Meanwhile at home her mother and aunt took great care of X's child knowing very well that one day she would leave her with them to go to

Pondicherry. X also kept aloof from the child so that she might not miss her too much when she was gone.

X's husband who had remarried asked her parents to send her to train the new bride who, still a child, didn't know how to cook. X's mother wrote to Sri Aurobindo to ask for instructions. Sri Aurobindo answered that X's husband was not yet free from attachment to her. It would be better for her to wait some more time before coming to Pondicherry. Thus two more years passed.

When the question of the education of X's daughter arose, her father wanted to send her to Shantiniketan but Sri Aurobindo instructed them to send her to the Sister Nivedita school of Calcutta, where she studied till the time it was closed due to the Japanese bombing during the Second World War. Thus Sri Aurobindo guided X through his letter.

In spite of X's frantic weeping and pleading, X's father would not allow her to come to Pondicherry. When the new mansion in Burma was ready he took X and her brother there. From Pondicherry Sri Aurobindo wrote to her father—"X's soul is here, why do you keep her body there? Let her come here for Darshan." When the letter reached Rangoon X wept bitterly the whole night. Despairing of her father's consent she requested her brother to take her for the approaching August 1933 Darshan. Inexplicably X's father became ill, running a temperature of 106° but X thought only of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo and finally persuaded her brother to accompany her. He agreed for he could not stand her anguish. Leaving their father they started for Pondicherry.

After Darshan X's father wrote and asked Sri Aurobindo to send back his children. He demanded who would look after him now that he was so sick. Sri Aurobindo replied, "X is permanent here, Y (her brother) will stay too for sometime." Sri Aurobindo didn't even tell X and Y about their father's letter and his own answer. X was very apprehensive about her future. Had she been accepted or not by the Mother and Sri Aurobindo? She dared not ask. Would she have to go back? Then her father wrote to her lamenting about his fate and about their acceptance by Sri Aurobindo quoting from his letter, "X is permanent and Y will also stay for sometime." X was immensely relieved, her aspiration was fulfilled at last, her destiny was secure at the Divine's feet.

At the importunities of her parents X's brother left the Ashram after four years. X told him, "Brother, our father is a worldly man, do not listen to him, do not go." But the call of duty took Y back to the outside life while X never deviated.

Due to bombings by the Japanese the Sister Nivedita school was closed. X's daughter was shifted to the house of a lady connected with the Ashram. She wrote a very poignant letter saying that she would rather that the earth engulf her than live outside. Nolinida, who was then secretary of the Ashram, wrote to the young girl that she could come for the Darshan but should not ask to stay here permanently.

The fourteen-year old daughter of X came to the Ashram with the lady with whom she had been staying. She was given work in the dining room which she did with such great enthusiasm that many people wrote glowing letters to the Mother about her. She was accepted as an Ashramite, never to turn back.

Shortly after, X was down with fever, so her daughter started helping stitching and looking after the Mother's wardrobe. Later her name was suggested for the Ashram school but the Mother cut out her name saying, "Those who are doing my personal work, school is not for them." The Mother herself gave French lessons to the young girl.

During the Japanese occupation of Burma X's father had to run away leaving all his property and business behind. With his hard-earned wealth and property going up in flames he escaped only with a suitcase full of gold and currency. He buried the rest of his wealth in the ground. Still the suitcase was so heavy that he had to throw it away to save his life.

A few days before he was a millionaire; now he came to the Ashram a ruined man. While doing pranam he clung to the Mother encircling her ankles with his arms and wept uncontrollably. X became apprehensive that the Mother might be inconvenienced by his clinging and weeping. But the Divine Mother was all love to him. Later she told X, "He has a nice soul." When X later on asked her father why he had wept, he answered "Because I had nothing left to offer the Divine Mother."

He was given some work which he did with enthusiasm and efficiency and he was very happy here. After the allied victory the Burmese Government declared that those who had left their property behind could claim it. X's father decided to go to salvage something of his fortunes.

The Mother was surprised at this move. She asked X why her father wanted to leave since he was so happy here apart from being useful to the Ashram. X enquired and her father disclosed his aspiration. He wanted to offer lots of money to the Divine Mother. When X informed the Mother of this she laughed heartily.

Alas, on the way to Rangoon X's father died. From that time X and her daughter have lived sheltered in the Divine's arms.

Compiled by K

MY MOTHER

BY HUTA

“Death’s grip can break our bodies, not our souls.”

—SRI AUROBINDO, *Savitri*

SHE was born on 12th May 1892 and left her body on 1st August 1987. Her name was Zaver—meaning jewel. She lived up to her name.

It was she who among our family was the first to visit the Sri Aurobindo Ashram—on 13th June 1953.

After I came to stay here on 10th February 1955, her visits were frequent.

She met the Divine Mother many times. She could not speak English, so whatever she wanted to say she said in Gujarati. The Divine Mother said to me:

“I understand your mother but I can’t speak Gujarati. My child, she is full of love and devotion. I like her. She has an ethereal light on her forehead which you and Laljibhai have inherited.

“Your mother’s soul comes to me every night—whether she is here or elsewhere.”

I quoted the Divine Mother to Champaklal on 3rd August 1987 when I went to him. Champaklal observes silence but he made me understand by his gestures: “Yes, I know the Mother said so.”

In one of the interviews my mother asked the Divine Mother through me: “Should I worship you and Sri Aurobindo or Lord Krishna?” The Mother smiled and answered:

“All are the same.”

Indeed her soul possessed the “Aristocracy of beauty”—she was noble, considerate and warm-hearted. Throughout her life she thought of other people. She went out of her way and helped numerous people without reserve. She even delivered babies of her friends in emergencies when she was in East Africa. People still remember and appreciate her kindness, generosity and good will. She suffered, sacrificed herself for the sake of her children. We can never repay the debt. She was even compassionate towards birds, animals and ants!

She was a lover of beauty. Her work was precise, meticulous. She had a very developed aesthetic sense. Her characteristic nature was that she never carried tales from one person to another. She would not betray anybody’s trust.

Her advice to her daughters was:

“Never be selfish—be happy in giving. Do not let everything go into your stomach—Be generous.

“You must be like a mango tree—the more it blossoms the more it bows. Be humble. Do not be like a palm tree stiff and proud, which breaks in a cyclone—while the mango tree stands its ground—do not be egoistic. In all circumstances remember Lord Krishna, for He is our Eternal Companion.”

Years rolled on. She came from Rajkot to stay at the New Horizon Sugar Mills—twelve miles away from Pondicherry.

Two years elapsed. Then gradually everything took a turn—her health started failing. She was admitted on 30th October 1985 in the Ashram Nursing Home for six days. She had tremendous endurance, patience and will power. Even in her agony and pain she never cried, made any fuss or troubled anybody.

After that she felt that she would not last long. So she confided in my nephew, Suresh, Laljibhai's eldest son, her last wishes regarding charity and the religious ceremony to be carried out. She was extremely attached to him. He loved her dearly. As a matter of fact, he was brought up by my mother.

In 1955 the Divine Mother gave my mother her own symbol in gold to wear on a chain round her neck. My mother wore it as a pendant on a chain of tulsi-beads inlaid with silver. In 1985, when her health was very poor she put this chain round my neck, saying:

“Since this is the Mother's symbol you are the right person to receive it.”

My mother expressed her wish to me to call my fourth brother—Maganbhai—from East Africa. He is her youngest son and she was very fond of him. He came with his wife. My mother was content.

One full year passed with ups and downs.

On 27th May 1987 she went to stay for almost a fortnight at the house of my maternal uncle who lives in Pondicherry. She told me that she felt happy. Then she returned to the Factory. Afterwards her health started deteriorating rapidly.

From June onwards she remained completely indrawn losing all interest save in Lord Krishna.

I used to visit her every now and then.

On Thursday the 23rd July 1987 I went to her and felt for sure that her death was not far, because she had practically stopped eating. As always, I took for her from my meditation room a small garland of tuberose and other fragrant flowers which Minakshamma receives from the Divine Mother's room, Sri Aurobindo's room and from the Samadhi and invariably sends me.

With great effort my mother sat against pillows and asked for her glasses so that she might see my face. I sat on her bed—very near to her. First she

ooked at me for a few moments with a smile, then caressed my head, cheeks, arms and embraced me warmly. She kissed my cheeks several times. She inhaled the scent of the garland, pressed the flowers against her heart and then against my heart. She went on doing this for a few minutes. She also pressed the garland against my whole body. Finally she pressed it against her heart once more and set it by her side, stretched her arms, placed her both hands on my head, then on her own head, and bent her palms so that all the fingers gave a sound of cracking. This is a typical Gujarati custom. It symbolises taking away all difficulty and suffering. Yes, she blessed me thoroughly. I was amazed and touched by her gesture, because this was quite different from what she usually did when I went to her: she only hugged and kissed my cheeks. I sensed that it was her last blessing to me. I embraced her and kissed her cheeks with all my love.

That day she specially got sweetmeat made for me, but I could not eat it, because she did not eat anything.

She was constantly worried about my welfare. But I assured her time and again that the Supreme Lord and the Divine Mother were with me who would lead me to my destination unfailingly. Eventually she was convinced.

A week passed in suspense and foreboding. I went to her again on Thursday 30th July 1987 and found her unable to open her eyes, leave aside talking.

The next day I went to her with flowers and a blessing-packet from the Mother's room. I placed them against my mother's heart. All human devices like oxygen, drip, injection were given to her, but she was sinking deeper and deeper into semi-unconsciousness. Despite her ailment she in broken words asked Suresh's wife to give money to certain temples in Saurashtra. She also asked her to give grass to cows and feed pigeons.

God! what determination!

The following morning her situation became worse. She ate very little. Towards 1 o'clock clear signs of approaching death were seen. Now she became fully conscious, drank "holy" water from the hands of all who were present, opened her eyes wide and her soul flew smoothly on a greater journey at 1.22 p.m. She passed away peacefully in the Divine's atmosphere.

Unfortunately, Laljibhai, his second son Ashok, his wife, my maternal uncle, his wife and myself failed to reach in time. Her soul did not wait!

Suresh, his wife and Mrs. Laljibhai were there.

A few days earlier my mother told her lady-attendant who had been with her for more than forty years:

"Soon I will be going to heaven—to my Lord Krishna."

I was so happy that my mother's body was brought to Laljibhai's house. The whole night I was near her body. I could not sleep a wink. Silently I prayed to the Divine Mother and Sri Aurobindo to give my mother a brilliant birth next

time in the Divine's Consciousness, because in our body alone can we do sadhana to reach the Supreme Lord.

Here I recall two incidents. One was when the Mother said to me in 1956:

“Child, your soul is ready for the higher realisation—Nirvana—and I can give it to you just now, this very instant (*she snapped her fingers*), but I do not want to do so because I really wish that your whole being should reach perfection and then attain that blissful state of union with the Divine along with the soul. Such is your soul's aspiration also. That is why I am trying to organise your whole being.”

Much later in the sixties when we were doing the paintings of *Savitri*, Book Two Canto Fifteen, one of them was concerned with Nirvana and the Transformation. The verses were:

“On the last step to the supernal birth
He trod along extinction's narrow edge
Near the high verges of eternity,
And mounted the gold ridge of the World-dream
Between the Slayer and the Saviour fires.”

I could not make out from the Divine Mother's sketch what exactly she had wanted. Nevertheless I finished the painting showing a white Slayer fire below and a gold Saviour fire above.

When she saw the picture, she remarked: “Ah, no, this is not correct—alter the painting—show the two fires side by side, for both of them are equally powerful.”

After a moment or two, she looked at me with a smile and asked me:

“My child, which fire do you choose? You see, Tamasic people always choose extinction—Nirvana—the Slayer fire—while Sattvic people choose the fire of Transformation—the Saviour fire.”

I answered; “Mother, you'll choose for me whatever is best.” She laughed softly and said happily:

“Transformation.”

It is the same thing that I aspire for my mother's future.

As the night slid my mother's face seemed to become more and more luminous. Three times I went to my apartment upstairs to drink water. Each time while climbing the stairs I distinctly felt somebody was following me and I heard a subtle voice saying in Gujarati:

“Daughter, don’t despair. I am with you—protecting you.”

Twice I thought it was my own imagination, but when I heard this said a third time in a more emphatic voice, I had to believe.

The following morning—on Sunday the 2nd August 1987—my mother was given a grand send-off according to the Ashram tradition. She was as if one of the Ashramites!

Never before in my life had I seen anybody cremated. Now, of all people I saw my own mother cremated. My tears were frozen, my heart and mind became numb. It was the Mother’s Presence and Force that made it possible. Otherwise I knew I would faint....

The corpse was put on pieces of wood and sandalwood which were surrounded by cow-dung cakes. Then ghee was smeared all over her body by my nephew Suresh, Behram, Devaranjan, Saket and Puru. I was holding in my hands three small garlands from my meditation room. Behram was kind enough to ask me whether I wanted them to be put under my mother’s head. I gave them to him, he put them there. I was deeply satisfied. Next, sandalwood powder was sprinkled by all of us. Then the entire body was covered with cow-dung cakes. The middle part of the pyre was sealed with red mud. Then on top the flowers from the Divine Mother’s room were arranged. Then we all strewed the flowers of “New Creation,” tuberoses. After this, incense sticks were given to whoever were present. We all put them in the middle where the mud had been put and on the sides. A big cube of camphor which had come from the Divine Mother’s room was placed in the centre where my nephew lit the fire.

The next day only small pieces of bones were found, which were immersed in the sea.

This was the cremation-method of the Ashram—neat and clean, fully approved by the Divine Mother.

My mother was a fortunate soul. The Divine Mother and Sri Aurobindo saw her through, and will surely see to everything in the life after.

For me, the gap left by the passing away of the Divine Mother and my mother will never be filled. But in subtle forms they are always with me.

“My hidden Presence led thee unknowing on.”

—SRI AUROBINDO, *Savitri*

LIFE-YOGA-POETRY

SOME LETTERS

1

I WONDER what disturbed you so much. Earthquakes should be out of place in your life now unless they can bring up a Himalaya out of nowhere. Perhaps the meeting with a sadhak who can leave everything to the Mother was a Himalayan discovery. But can one really call this chap's condition Mount Everest? "Total reliance" on the Divine can be assessed only if an Ever-rest is felt towering within one while a veritable Kanchenjunga of calamity looms in front of one's nose. In the common run of events a naturally optimistic temperament, when turned to Yoga, can become opti-mystic with no great difficulty. The true test arrives when everything goes crashing about one's ears. Can one in such deafening circumstances still say—

Ever we hear in the heart of the peril a flute go before us?

This line from Sri Aurobindo's *Ahana* has been a great favourite of mine both as a guide in the spiritual life and as an example of poetry fulfilling one of its basic functions. As you must know, poetry is hard to define with one single formula. We have to approach it from several viewpoints. Its intrinsic nature may be considered at least fivefold. It is:

1. Not only sight but also insight.
2. At the same time light and delight.
3. Passion building up peace.
4. Intensity held within harmony.
5. Magic leading into mystery.

The last definition is perhaps most applicable to the work of Sri Aurobindo and the line I have quoted is a striking instance of it. That "flute" is surely a mysterious entity. To us Indians it is suggestive of Sri Krishna, the soul's magnet, the love-lord of a divine hide-and-seek. To the Westerner it will be the touch of a baffling beauty—the elusive hint of some enchanting power of protection and direction in the midst of life's constant uncertainties. Essentially it should bring home to us the sense that ahead of us, as if knowing the path which is vague and fraught with danger and as if guiding us through it to a distant goal, an unseen friend and lover asks us to follow him with happy faith.

Technically, there is a special point in the words "heart" and "peril". Particularly through perils the flute is intended to sound clearest and sweetest. The very phonetics of "peril" are flutelike. While the *r* and *l* have a trill and roll at once rousing and lulling, the *p* with its demand on our lips closing and opening

to articulate it conjure up the act of managing a wind-instrument with the mouth. The noun "heart" bestirs us to feel that there is a secret depth in each danger, a centre where a concealed life has its steady rhythm which can take all seeming disorder and disruption to an harmonious end.

To end my own comments harmoniously I should draw your attention to the hexametrical mould of Sri Aurobindo's line. The hexameter, with its 17 possible syllables at its fullest (5 dactyls and 1 spondee or trochee), has not only given the poet his best chance to complete his complex play of idea, emotion and image at one stretch but also helped him convey to us the sense of a long sustained continued movement through time and space, a life's journey of repeated risks with yet the Divine's presence subtly assured as being with it. And both the companion and the risks are hinted at as constant by the *r*-note running from start to finish—5 times audible—across the line. (6.5.87)

2

I received your card some time back. Thanks for taking so gallantly what you call my "fine mounted attack". You have asked me to send a poem of Sri Aurobindo's which you promise to consider without prejudice. More than two months back I posted you by sea-mail a typed copy of the first 380 lines of Sri Aurobindo's *Ilion*, an epic in quantitative hexameters. The hexameter in English, with a movement and a quality like those of this grand measure in Greek and Latin, has been a problem for centuries. There is no sustained hexametrical creation in English coming anywhere near the work of Homer and Virgil or even lesser Classical poets. Part of the lack is due, in Sri Aurobindo's eyes, to the absence of a true conception of the form a genuine English hexameter should have. All attempts have either transferred into English, with unreadable effect, the rules of "quantity" (that is, the speaking time taken by the vowel on which a syllable is built) natural to the ancient languages, or else worked exclusively by accent, ignoring quantitative values altogether in spite of the fact that they do play a subsidiary yet subtly telling role in English verse and that the quantitative spirit cannot come into its own unless the unstressed intrinsic "long" is counted in constructing the metre. Perhaps Wordsworth's great line—

Voyaging through strange seas of thought, alone—

will serve as a good illustration of some important points. What a let-down it will be if the long "through" is replaced by the short "in" or if "through" were given not a full but only a transitional inflexion which a monosyllabic preposition as the second component of an iambic foot would normally have! Again, there would be some loss in the sound-suggestion of the sense if the unstressed "a" in "Voyaging" were slurred into an "i" as in commonly spoken English instead

of being given a value approximating to the “a” in the words “age” and “aging” to make it a significant part of a line which supports its sense of a subjective adventurous launching-out with a run of intrinsic longs, stressed or unstressed. Mark the skilful metrical structure starting with a plunging trochee and having in the middle an alliterative spondee whose consecutive stresses fall on a couple of intrinsic longs (“strange seas”). Then there is a loosening forth into the suggestion of an on-and-on with two clear iambs (“of thought, alone”), where also we have natural voice-lengths under the ictus.

In a detailed essay Sri Aurobindo has examined the whole theory of quantity and its various applications and arrived at what a true English quantitative metre would be like, neither neglecting the vertical voice-weight of stress nor overlooking the horizontal voice-stretch of the intrinsic long. I am sure anybody interested in prosodic questions would be glad to read this exposition. But finally it is not exposition but illustration that will count—illustration putting life into the guiding theory and employing this theory with inspired tact and flexibility and diversity in the development of a theme not out of tune with the genius of the measure exploited.

Some day I'll send you the essay I am speaking of. In the meantime there will be before you those 380 lines which begin *Iliad*. Please read them with an open mind and let me know whether they strike you as poetry or not. I shall be happy to have for the first time a critical appraisal instead of summary random opinions which give me, as I have already told you, nothing to bite on but simply “vague sarcasms” not at all befitting the poet and critic you have been taken to be. (9.7.87)

3

One of the basic calls of the Yogic life on us is to understand that while being omniscient and omnipotent can wait we have to lose no time in being, in a certain preparatory sense, omnipresent. The drift of this rather cryptic pronouncement will be caught if you take as your purchase-point the word “time” in the preceding sentence. “Omnipresent” theologically means existing everywhere at the same moment. It is impossible for us to have such an existence—as Sir Robert Boyle, a scientist of the 17th century, realised when he protested in a particular situation: “Sir, how can I be in two places at once? I am not a bird!” Not as referring to God but as referring to man, “omnipresent” has to do with “time”, not “place”. We must learn to live always and altogether in the present. As Jal-al-u-din Rumi put it long ago:

Past and future veil Him from thy sight—
Burn them in fire.

Omar Khayyam, whose Sufi light was transcreated by Fitzgerald into Epicurean

delight, gets through to us a similar message though with a smiling sadness in English rather than with the original Persian inward laughter:

Come, my beloved, fill the cup that clears
 Today of past regrets and future fears—
 Tomorrow? Why, tomorrow we may be
 Ourselves with yesterday's seven thousand years.

Khayyam's cup and Rumi's fire indicate the same wonderful secret of true life: the soul, the psychic being, hidden within, like a golden key to liberate us from the leaden room locking us up with obsession by what has been and what is to be. The inner cup waits to be filled with our ever-flowing outer consciousness and give us happy security in an immortal remembrance of the Eternal Now. The concealed fire, lifting ever upward and tasting at all times with its thrilled tongue a perpetual paradise, is ready to shrivel up the veil of miserable memories and anxious anticipations which keep us away from the sun of Supreme Truth that neither rises nor sets but is always poised over our fluctuant universe. Not looking backward, not looking forward—forgetting the flicker of the days that have gone, getting rid of the quivering hopes for the nights that are ahead, we must gather all our thoughts and feelings and dreams in the living moment, make it an outward-inward offering to the Divine Mother.

An offering to her, made with full absorption in the sense of her luminous beauty, will wipe off the script of karma and render us new-born and, if we let the offering keep out the worry about the uncertainty of the future with faith in her care for us, all such forebodings as you have will take flight. When you think how tied down you are by past happenings and how choked up you are by the mist and fog of whatever threatens to happen, hold on to the Mother's revelation that the long dragging chain of events which appear to make our present a vanishing link between an unchangeable past and an ineluctable future is just a superficial impression. According to her, the universe is re-created every second, so that we are essentially free. There is an appearance of sameness and continuity, for a line of sequence has been established, antecedents and consequents run on as if bound together in a succession of instants, but within this scheme of what seems law and logic the Divine's perpetual freedom keeps smiling, ready to act with those secret "incalculables" that are the despair of the historian or else on rare occasions with inexplicable turns that flash in our faces the impression of miracles which, try as we may, we cannot absorb into our scientific minds.

A clue for us at all times to the Mother's revelation of what a phrase in Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* calls the Divine Magician's freedom pacing in the same step with law and thus leaving for us also a breathing-space, as it were, of liberty is our intuition of "freewill". Without knowing the reason—namely, that the world emerges fresh and new all the while from the Divine's depth—we have

continually the awareness that we are somehow never completely constrained by any hang-over from the past nor wholly affected by concern for the future but can choose our line of action as we want, in however limited and momentary a measure. This intuition has always been a puzzle in a cosmos of causality in the scientific view, a cosmos of fore-knowledge and fate in the spiritual vision. But, if each instant there is no determination from either the past or the future and the cosmos is born straight out of eternity, an utter freewill, an absolute liberty to choose would be just the thing expected. We humans are small consciousnesses: so the utterness and absoluteness are in a miniscule form, nothing more than the pigmy power of the inner Watcher, the back-standing Purusha, to say "Yes" or "No" to what seems to be the flux of inward and outward Nature, Prakriti. But this power is a mysterious pointer to the truth the Mother has surprised us with. And I may venture to suggest that the strange disclosures modern physics goes on making—Heisenberg's principle of indeterminacy about position and velocity, the replacement of the old calculus of certainty by the "wave"-mathematics of probability—are also a vague index to the same truth.

If you hold fast to this truth and make your mind and heart detach themselves from preoccupation with what old Khayyam in another quatrain terms

Unborn tomorrow and dead yesterday

and, steeping your being in the rapt felicity of the Soul that is both child and sage, live in its attunement to that truth, you can repeat to your own tingling ears the line following the one on "tomorrow" and "yesterday",

Why fret about them if today be sweet?

Here is the "new value-system" you have to recognise and establish in the strange philosophising mixture of laughing Democritus and weeping Heraclitus which names itself You. Let this letter be the "blessing" you desire from your less mixed-up friend. (13.6.87)

4

Appropos of the small sample you have put before me of your way of translating Mallarmé, may I say a few personal words on the "how" of translating this super-symbolist poet, as if I were penning a postscript to my book on him?

In the work of modern translators of old writers, there is a tendency to adopt a style with vivid appeal to current cleverness and with a phraseology answering in present-day terms to expressions thought apt in a past period. Here the question is not only of what Mallarmé might have written if English had been his native medium: the question is also of the kind of English which would have echoed his particular sensibility, his peculiar mentality. Thus the line in *Brise Marin*—

Sur le vide papier que la blancheur defend—

which I have translated

On the empty paper guarded by its own white

has been rendered by you:

On the blank veto of an empty page.

This is a fine example of transposing Mallarmé's suggestive utterance into a speech combining forceful explicitness as in "veto" with imaginative wit as in "blank", which hints at the old French "blanc" (= "white") as well as means "unrelieved, sheer". Though there is the danger that the ordinary reader may find "empty" tautologous after "blank" a keen scanner will get something of the Mallarméan feel of the purity which would be violated by the act of writing. But the sense of the profanation likely to be caused by inscribing anything in ink on what seems to represent a sacred Ineffable which is void of all world-stain and which inwardly inhibits the attempt to penetrate it—does such a sense waft to us with the breath of a sacred presence haunting the blank sheet of paper? The boldness of your rendering, though more in keeping with contemporary idiom, misses the delicacy always going with Mallarmé's audacity.

Carried over into another age no less than into another language, Mallarmé should still preserve his characteristic temper and tone—provided he is saved from the unconsciously awkward or the deliberately archaic in our effort to be faithful to his unique past. A certain amount of liberty is unavoidable and even desirable in transferring his individuality from French into English, but we should avoid the temptation to rewrite him and preserve only what we may consider his substance. We should keep in mind, in a slightly adapted sense, his little dig at Degas when that painter complained that although he had plenty of ideas he couldn't write poetry: "My dear friend, poetry is not written with ideas—it is written with words." The kind of words Mallarmé used, the kind of connection he made between them, the kind of expressive whole he aimed at have to be conveyed from one language to another with, of course, whatever little alterations are syntactically demanded. The Platonic archimages glimmering out of a Buddhist "néant" which is a white voicelessness—this double-aspected essence has to be mirrored in a special turn of phrase in order to achieve, in the Mallarméan mode,

Pour la Rose and le Lys le mystère d'un nom.
(For Rose and Lily the mystery of a name.)

Tiny linguistic shades, small image-nuances have a crucial say in this matter.

A sensitive faithfulness, both to the way Mallarmé makes the solid world disappear towards subtle secrecies by means of words and to the manner in which the symbol-charged words relate to those secrecies so that *le mystère du nom* becomes *musicienne du silence*, is of capital importance. And I may add, wherever Mallarmé has cast his symbolist creations in a rhymed poetic form, the English version should have, however flexibly, rhyme as well as metre. Else the typical effect of the *ensemble*—

Une agitation solennelle par l'air
De paroles—
(A solemn agitation in the air
Of words—)

will be missed.

(21.6.87)

5

I would have enjoyed overhearing the talks you and your daughter had about the young poets who went to war in 1914-1918 and got killed. I personally think Rupert Brooke had the greatest promise, though none of his once-famous sonnets had the grim heart-break of Owen's "Anthem for Doomed Youth", which some critics rank as one of the finest in the English language. Brooke was more inclined to be romantically sentimental. But he had a gift of crystallised phrase, as we may see from "The Great Lover", and once he achieved a wonderful piece of half-symbolist half-mystic suggestion that is unforgettable. It is the sestet of his sonnet "The Dead". To appreciate it sharply you have to read the octave first:

These hearts are woven of human joys and cares,
Washed marvellously with sorrow, swift to mirth,
The years had given them kindness. Dawn was theirs,
And sunset, and the colours of the earth.
These had seen movement, and heard music; known
Slumber and waking; loved, gone proudly friended;
Felt the quick stir of wonder; sat alone;
Touched flowers and furs and cheeks. All this is ended.

Here Brooke is at his level of normal felicity of phrase, semi-romantic semi-sentimental, with two or three outstanding expressions: "washed marvellously with sorrow", "gone proudly friended", "sat alone". Then comes a sudden burst of sheer vision in the next six lines:

There are waters blown by changing winds to laughter
 And lit by the rich skies, all day. And after,
 Frost, with a gesture, stays the waves that dance
 And wandering loveliness. He leaves a white
 Unbroken glory, a gathered radiance,
 A width, a shining peace, under the night.

The passage from life to death by the young soldiers could not have been poetically immortalised with keener sight and subtler insight. If it stood by itself, it might even conjure up a Yogi's trance, a Nirvanic world-transcendence and would be a Mallarméan poem in a more fluid, more open pattern than the interplay of the obscure and the mysterious, the complex and the cryptic which was Mallarmé's typical Symbolist art. (22.6.87)

K. D. SETHNA

EVENING HOUR

EVENING hour so calm and clear—
 Deep-shadowed meditative copse
 And peaceful wide whispering turf—
 Crescent moon of a subtle grace,
 A faithful steady silver star
 And restless wind returning home.
 My heart is with devotion stilled
 Like the mystic silent eventide.

JAYANTILAL

HUMOUR IN THE PLAYS OF SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of September 1987)

Part 2: THE VIZIERS OF BASSORA

Editor's Note

By an oversight this instalment which should have appeared in the September issue is appearing now. We hope its fund of humour will lead our readers to forget and forgive the break in the sequence—humour which is equally a-flow in all instalments.

NUREDDENE, through the tricky manipulations of Doonya, wins “what all would covet!” and this incarnate mischief, mother of intricate plots, advises her cousin and Anice like a grandmother:

“Be good and kind, dears, love each other, darlings.”¹

Now this sweet madcap, who by her innocent manipulations changes all the well-laid plans of her uncle, calls Ameena predicting “a gentle storm.”

Here we meet a hilarious character—a eunuch named Harkoos, who sleeps while on duty and to Ameena’s surprised reproach at finding him asleep answers with a straight face,

“Sleep! I! I was only pondering a text of the Koran with closed eyes, lady. You give us slaves pitiful small time for our devotions; but ’t will all be accounted for hereafter.”²

Doonya in her inimitable way takes the blame on herself so that no burden may fall on the blissful lovers. To Ameena’s question whether she also has a part in this she answers—

“Part! you shall not abate
My glory; I am³ its artificer,
The auxiliary and supplement of Fate.”³

On Ameena’s demanding an explanation from her of her falsehood, the unashamed and impenitent Doonya answers, with ingenuity, almost making a philosophy out of falsehood

“No falsehood, none, purchased she was for him,
For he has got her. And surprise! Well, mother,

¹ *Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library*, p. 680.

² *Ibid*, p. 606. ³ *Ibid*.

Are you not quite surprised? And uncle will be
Most woefully. My cousin and Anice too
Are both caught napping,—all except great Doonya.
No falsehood, mere excess of truth, a bold
Anticipation of the future, mother.”¹

Doonya’s act may seem wilful, yet this slip of a girl with one godlike impulse brings about the fall of a tyrant. Doonya and Nureddene seem to be utterly irresponsible, spoilt and self-seeking pleasure-lovers. Yet is it so? As the story unfolds we see the greatness that blossoms out in both, the steel in their souls, the courage to laugh in the face of ruin and death. Bravery, fidelity and self-sacrifice replace their seeming self-indulgence. Nureddene is not far behind Doonya in his generosity. While Doonya exonerates him by taking the total blame on herself Nureddene gallantly comes forward with—

“I did not know of this. Yet blame not Doonya;
For had I known, I would have run with haste,
More breathless to demand my own from Fate.”²

That gentle incarnation of motherly love, Ameena offers to take it all on herself rather than that her child should face the wrath of her husband—asking the culprit to:

“Absent yourself awhile and let me bear
The first keen breathing of his anger.”³

Here the giant slave Harkoos adds greatly to the humour of the general situation by his gibberish which also has its own philosophy:

“Tis all one to Harkoos. Stick or leather! Leather or stick! ’Tis the way of this wicked and weary world.”⁴

His ingenious plea is best quoted in his own words—

“The way of the world. Where peg’s loose? Beat Harkoos. Because my young master would climb through the wrong window and mistake a rope ladder for the staircase, my back must ache. Was the window-sill my post? Have I wings to stand upon air or a Djinn’s eye to see through wood?”⁵

This tomfoolery and buffoonery are an added stroke of laughter. One suspects that this slave has a special brush to colour things with mirth. In the 2nd scene of the 3rd act he makes ludicrous what would otherwise be pathetic, as if his being a slave and having nothing to lose further gives him a right and faculty to laugh at things and situations to which we would generally react with sadness

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 611. ² *Ibid.*, p. 612 ³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.* ⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 613-614.

or anger. Nureddene besieged with creditors sends Harkoos to his friends for help, those friends who have sucked him dry. Harkoos describes their 'no' with an ironic jocularitv worth recounting.

Nureddene:

Ghaneem?

Harkoos:

Has broken his leg for the present and cannot see anyone for a long fortnight.

Nureddene:

Gafoor?

Harkoos:

Has gone into the country—upstairs.

Nureddene:

Zeb?

Harkoos:

Wept sobbingly. Every time I mentioned money, he drowned the subject in tears—I might have reached his purse at last, but I can't swim.

Nureddene:

Omar?

Harkoos:

Will burn his books sooner than lend you money.

Nureddene:

Did all fail me?

Harkoos:

Some had dry eyes and some wet, but none a purse."

This succinct way of describing the reaction of Nureddene's friends is hilarious.

Following Harkoos's own robust brand of ridicule we have wandered a little too fast leaving some of the fun and comicality behind. It pertains to Nureddene's chastisement proposed by his parents. The good vizier sincerely feels that he has been too indulgent to his son and if due to this indulgence the latter has grown reckless it would be tyranny to punish him. Yet punished he must be for his own good, for his own soul. But in the words of Dr. Seetharaman—

"Even his most determined attempt to be serious ends as roaring farce—the rehearsal of the old comedy of 'The tyrant and his graceless son!'"¹

"The hypocritical and mock-serious"² attempts and their semi-comic and semi-pathetic plots to chastise Nureddene are so transparent that he can see through them easily and we have a chance to laugh and look forward to some more

¹ *Studies in Sri Aurobindo's Dramatic Poems*, p. 25.

² *Ibid.*, p. 17.

fun. But the picture changes. The indulgent father is replaced by a wise minister who at once seizes all the perils of the situation and makes suitable arrangements for the year he will be away, leaving half his wealth in the hands of his son, who he suspects might fritter it away—which he does.

There are some rills of humour flowing from another source—the slave-girl Balkis and the love-lorn Ajebe, who recounts:

“She plays upon me as her lute,
I’m as inert, as helpless, as completely
Ruled by her moods, as dumbly pleasureless
By her light hands untouched...”¹

In the small 3rd scene of the 3rd act we have a truly rollicking scene of lovers’ quarrels where clever Balkis who is a gem of rare quality, affronted and angry that Ajebe would not sever relations with his wicked uncle, tortures him by being aloof and moody:

“Ajebe:

Sing, I entreat you.

I am hungry for your voice of pure delight.

Balkis:

I am no kabob, nor my voice a curry.”

Now sobbing now teasing she leads him a merry dance. But the acme of this side-story, its most amusing and ludicrous scene, full of lovers’ nonsense comes in the scene of the 3rd act where both the lovers are dying for each other, yet do not know how to make up or bend. Both appeal to Mymoona to intercede on their behalf. Balkis complains of being sick. Mymoona mocks her for her simulated illness,

“Sick? I think both of you are dying of a galloping consumption.
Such colour in the cheeks was never a good symptom.

Balkis:

Tell him I am very, very ill, tell him I am dying. Pray be pathetic.

Mymoona:

Put saffron on your cheeks and look nicely yellow; he will melt.

Balkis:

I think my heart will break.

Mymoona:

Let it do so quickly; it will mend the sooner.”²

¹ *SABCL*, Vol. 7, p. 629

² *Ibid.*, p. 647.

The funny pretences of these childlike lovers who are pulled to each other inexorably cause rollicking laughter. Ajebe, dying to make up with Balkis, pretends that he came to seek Mymoona while Balkis pretends that she came to look for the barber's woman. It is a sweet interlude; it gives us a glimpse of the comical problems of young love of these youngsters who are uncertain of each other. Mymoona who is wise beyond her years joins their hands in spite of their sham resistance. Here Sri Aurobindo's pen with its masterly touch makes us aware of the laughable twists and turns of teenage love:

"Balkis:

She's stronger than me,
Or I'd not touch you.

Ajebe:

I would not hurt Mymoona,
Therefore I take your hand.

Mymoona:

Oh, is it so?
Then by your foolish necks! Make your arms meet
About her waist.

Ajebe:

Only to satisfy you
Whom only I care for.

Mymoona:

Your hands here on his neck.

Balkis:

I was about to yawn, therefore, I raised them.

Mymoona:

I go to fetch a cane, look that I find you
Much better friends. If you will not agree,
Your bones at least shall sympathise and ruefully."¹

On the strength of his love, guided by Balkis, later Ajebe will dare to contradict his dreaded uncle in front of the Sultan. Fair Mymoona will take up a sword and Balkis will trip Fared to save Doonya. We can only say that love makes a fool of the wisest of men, while these two are youngsters only, having been helped

¹ *Ibid*, p. 649.

by Mymoona to make up, they quarrel in this pleasant and entertaining way. None is ready to sink his or her pride.

“Ajebe:

I kiss you, but it is only your red lips
So soft, not you who are more hard than stone.

Balkis:

I kiss you back, but only 'tis because
I hate to be in debt.”¹

At last Ajebe promises to renounce his hateful uncle in lieu to Balkis's smile. Having won her point, now fully reconciled she promises to laugh like a horse. When Ajebe seeks a reassurance from her that in future she will be less adamant, more pliable she promptly shouts back—

“If you are good,
I will be. If not, I will outshrew Xantippe.”²

One wonders how this naughty slave girl knows of Xantippe.

(To be continued)

SHYAM KUMARI

¹ *Ibid*, p. 650.

² *Ibid*.

IN MEMORY OF NOLINI-DA'S WIFE INDULEKHA-DI WHO PASSED AWAY ON 12th AUGUST

To be the wife of some great person is a great challenge, to be the wife of a Yogi is much more so. Though a priceless privilege, at the same time it is a heavy cross for a frail woman's shoulders. After his marriage Nolini-da visited his home once a year, later even these visits stopped. Young Indulekha was left to bring up her three sons. She started to study and she who was not even a matriculate became a graduate and also a B. T. Simultaneously she became a teacher in addition to bringing up her children. Hers was a life of sustained effort and bravery.

Years passed and one by one her grown-up sons gravitated towards the Divine Mother and found shelter in Her Ashram and paved the way for Indulekha-di's coming here too. For sixteen years she taught at our Centre of Education. When she became too weak for this, she did beautiful embroidery for the Mother's Embroidery Department.

In the last few months I watched her grow thinner and thinner day by day but her skin took on a golden hue. I was struck by her poise and dignity. Her eye-sight failed till she could not see at all. Yet to all queries about her failing health she answered cheerfully, "I am perfectly all right." No depression, not a trace of melancholy or self-pity marred her last days. There was a royalty in her bearing. The days before she passed away I asked her whether she could see the Mother and Nolini-da. She nodded a vigorous "Yes, always"

Once a young girl asked Nolini-da, "Why did you choose Indulekha-di as your wife?" To which Nolini-da replied, "Because I knew she would stick to the last."

The Mother once painted a picture which she called, "Goddess of the Moon." She told Nolini-da that this goddess was the presiding deity of his life. It is interesting to note that the name Indulekha means "light or ray of the moon."

Here is an important page from her diary, recording an interview with the Mother on 22.4.55—her birthday.

THE MOTHER—"Now it is time for you to grow into your psychic being."

INDU-DI—"Yes, Mother, in one of the Wednesday classes you spoke about the Psychic Being. It seems to me so strange that I don't know it."

THE MOTHER—"You understand French?"

INDU-DI—"Just a little."

THE MOTHER—"Yes, now it is time for you to grow into your psychic being. Let this happen to you this year. Then all your difficulties will go away and you will be truly happy—Bonne Année."

Indulekha-di noted further, "My heart was so full of gratitude at such unlimited Grace as She showered on me that I could not speak a single word after this."

SHYAM KUMARI

DOES IT MATTER ?

How does it matter now,
that once I deviated
from the sunlit path
leading to thy Abode?
And in search of momentary shade,
not being able to bear the consuming glow
that fed on me,
afraid of being nothing,
I covered my soul,
and moved to the jungle
where desires climbed up
the stately trees of action,
and will's brook
tried to water them,
hoping that the fruit of happiness
would satisfy and justify
the vain search.
Oh how vain!
The roots of these trees
went so deep,
that many a life I lost
trying to untie the knots
and unravel the tangles.
Today—what does it matter—
the blistered hands,
the aching feet,
the bent back,
the sad loss of innocence,
and a trusting generous heart
turned wiser and worldly-wise?
For you hold me now
much more firmly,
knowing I am not to be trusted
and left out of sight.

SHYAM KUMARI

TAWFIQ AL-HAKIM

HINDUISM-TINTED CRITIC OF ARAB AND WESTERN "MATERIALISM" IN EGYPT

The Hindu of Tuesday, July 28, 1987, carried the news from Cairo: "Egypt's best-known author, Tawfiq Al-Hakim, died on Sunday at the age of 88 after a long illness." Here is a timely article by an Australian Ph. D. Candidate in Arab Nationalism on this author who was a nominee in the current year for the Nobel Prize in Literature.

TAWFIQ al-Hakim (b. 1899, Alexandria, Egypt) is regarded as the most outstanding Arabic dramatist of the century. He was born into a well-to-do family, his mother being of aristocratic Turkish descent. After studying law at Cairo University, he went to Paris to continue his legal studies but instead devoted most of his time to the theatre. On his return to Egypt four years later (1930), he worked for the Ministry of Justice in a rural area as well as for the Ministry of Education in Cairo. However, in 1936 he resigned to devote himself entirely to writing.

After some early efforts, Tawfiq al-Hakim won fame as a dramatist with his *The People of the Cave* (1933), ostensibly based on the story of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus but actually studying man's struggle against time. This introduced a series of "dramas of Ideas", or of "symbolism". They include *Shahrazad* (1934), based on *The Thousand and One Nights*; *al-Malik Udib* (1939); "King Oedipus"; *Pimaliyūn* (1942, "Pygmalion"); and *Sulaymān al-Hakim* (1934; "Solomon the Wise"). His output of more than 450 plays includes many on Egyptian social themes such as "the Secret of the Suicide Girl" (1937), and *Rasasah fi al-culb* (1944; "A Bullet in the Heart"). His autobiographical novel, *Yawmiyāt, nā'ib fi al-aryaf* (1937; Eng. trans., *The Maze of Justice*, 1947), is a satire on officialdom in the Egyptian countryside.

For all his career as a radical intellectual and playwright, Tawfiq identified and resisted two forces as threats to Egypt's spiritual potential: (a) The West's imperialism and atheistic materialism, and (b) the narrowly neo-traditional Arab-Islamic orientation. Both Westernizing and Islam-sustained Arabist orientations Tawfiq denounced as aimed to eliminate Muslim Egypt's distinctive identity, defined by its pagan Pharaonic golden age. When al-Hakim matured as a thinker in the 1920s, several Theosophical lodges were active in Egypt. The writings of Madame Helena Blavatsky strongly impressed upon Tawfiq al-Hakim and like-minded Pharaonist liberal writers such as Muhammed Husayn Haykal that Hinduism and ancient Egyptian Pharaonic "paganism" were congruent and had been in contact. As they again seized ancient Pharaonic religion to supplement modern secular Western thought and the Arab-Islamic tradition's

insights, Muslim Egyptians at the very same time had to seize Hinduism and the Gita, so Tawfiq and Haykal argued in the 1920s.

It was not that al-Hakim ever strove to eliminate Islam from Egypt or even from Egyptian public life. Islam he saw as an element inwoven into Egypt's history that—like Arabism—should have an honoured place. But he criticized fundamentalist Muslim forces in Egypt as wanting to make a totalistic interpretation of Islam and exclude any other sources of spirituality or culture or identity for the Egyptian nation.

We now turn to a Hinduism-influenced open letter to the Westernizing-Arabist Dr. Taha Husayn that Tawfiq al-Hakim published in *al-Risalah* magazine (Cairo) for 1 June 1933 (pp. 5-8). The letter of Tawfiq was a striking critique of perceived "materialism" in both Western civilization and in classical Arab civilization.

The Attitude to Islam

In the Pharaonist writings in the 1930s and 1940s, Tawfiq al-Hakim vocally urged Egyptians to distinguish indigenous organically Pharaonic elements linked to India from Arab elements. He wanted Egyptians to eliminate many Arab elements from current culture while nourishing the Pharaonic elements. To what extent were these Pharaonic stances directed to cut out Islam or some aspects of Islam from Egyptian life? This period was not one in which it would be easy for Arab Egyptian liberal intellectuals to publicly criticize Islam. The 1920 had been a period for fresh discussion. But the 1930s were a period of Islamic reaction against the West even among the very Westernising-educated Muslim Egyptians for whom al-Hakim and similar intellectuals wrote. In this climate, it would have needed great courage to discuss issues of Islam and Egyptian national identity frankly. On any interpretation of Middle East history, the Arabs had been Islam's initial custodians and in at least some periods of their history they had tried to live Islam completely even if in other periods Islam had sat lightly on them. When al-Hakim criticized classical Arabs as "materialist" and lacking in spirituality he definitely implied that Islam was incomplete or inadequate by itself for the "spiritual" Egypt. Thus, he wrote: "It is impossible then for us to see in all of Arab civilization any inclination to matters of the spirit and thought in the sense in which Egypt and India understand the two words spirit and thought."

It was implicit, then, that al-Hakim's criticisms of the classical Arab elements in Egypt entailed some rejection of insular interpretations of Islam.

The main weight of Tawfiq al-Hakim's drive in 1933 to articulate a spiritual national Egyptian identity was directed against the traditional Arab and Muslim elements. He only wanted to eliminate some of these elements from Egyptian culture while keeping other Arab or Muslim elements that he felt could be synthesized with enriching Indic and Pharaonic spirituality. But he also applied

Indic and Pharaonic spirituality to mount a constructive critique of Western civilization much of which, he charged, was dogged by a materialism that ran parallel to the materialism that, he perceived, limited the classical Arab sensibility.

The totalistic Westernizers such as Taha Husayn wanted to implant the whole Western culture in Egypt, including the literature and philosophies of the ancient Greeks who had launched Western civilization. In his 1933 open letter to Dr. Taha Husayn Tawfiq al-Hakim also treated Western civilization as a continuity, the base of which was the ancient Greeks. Accordingly, Tawfiq directed most of his analysis to the ancient Greeks' literature and religion. His tone was generous and sympathetic as he applied the sharp compassion of the healing surgeon to the sick Western civilization. Al-Hakim no more wanted to eliminate Western culture *in toto* than he did classical Arab culture, but he was intent to discover where early Western civilization had taken its wrong turning towards materialism after its reasonably promising beginnings. The important thing for Arabic-speaking Egyptians was that they accept from the West only those more creative elements that fitted in with Indic and Pharaonic spirituality. They had to cut away ruthlessly any materialistic Western elements they had borrowed.

For al-Hakim, early Greek life and culture had the potential to develop into a spiritual civilization later because Vedic insights coming from India stimulated it strongly; only later Greek philosophers sent Western thought in a direction that made much of it desiccating and sterile. Examination of the art of the Parthenon brought home to al-Hakim that some Greeks had caught glimpses of the spiritual dimension beyond but binding the material world. This intermittent spirituality in the generally materialistic Greek culture was possible because some Greeks had originated from India or from near India. "I remembered that the origin of the Greeks derived from two different races: the Greeks coming from Asia known to the Indians as 'the Yavanas' and the martial barbaric Dorians who came down from the North [of Europe]. The god of the Ionians was Dionysus and that of the Dorians Apollo. [This dichotomy] explains the Greeks: this struggle between Dionysus the symbol of of the spirit and ecstasy, and Apollo the symbol of individualism and consciousness, the struggle between Spirit and Matter, between heart and intellect, between ecstasy and consciousness. I fancy Dionysus to be an Asiatic god undoubtedly brought from India. He became the source of Music among the Greeks. Thus I appreciated the failure of al-Farabi to develop Arab music, for Arab music is the product of a conscious mind because the Arabs are the nation of individualism and consciousness and intellectual logic and the palpable visible." Arabs and Westerners alike could never understand the early Greek and Indic ability to achieve unity with "the spiritual light" (*al-nur al-ruhi*) binding man and nature and all time-periods together.

How could Arab-speaking Egyptians (whom al-Hakim would define as

essentially non-Arab) recover union with the spirituality in nature? Western civilization offered no guide lines because Socrates' logic had destroyed the Spirit Homer articulated, extinguishing real Greek civilization and engulfing the world in materialism. The best hope for Egyptians, Tawfiq al-Hakim mused in 1933, was for them to seize the guidance offered by Rabindranath Tagore, the thinker who now most highlighted the unity between man and Nature, the possibility of raising the barrier separating private individuals from the larger life that transcended the Universe. Tagore had hammered far beyond India the "love" that can bind man to seemingly inanimate things.

Tawfiq al-Hakim closed this 1933 article with the observation that "Greece, then, did not succeed to the required extent in synthesizing Spirit with the Material. Can Egypt hope to reach this aim one day?" The Greeks' failure had sentenced all succeeding Western civilization to sterility: rationalistic perception had overcome the spiritual sensibility and "all modern Europe inherited from Greece were her treasures of intellect and logic," leaving the spiritual treasures of Dionysus shrouded in darkness.

The spiritual incapacity of Europe from the Greeks to the predatory twentieth-century imperialists now placed, for al-Hakim in 1933, responsibility for articulating a spiritual alternative on neo-Pharaonist (although Arabic-speaking) Egypt and Hindu India. Common Easternism was the frame for Egypt and India's collaboration to save humanity. However, al-Hakim did not take into much account either Islam or Europe-based Christianity as contributors to a new spirituality.

Tawfiq al-Hakim's 1933 critique of the materialist West was reminiscent of the Cairo-based "Eastern League" and Muhammed Husayn Haykal's *al-Sivasah* in the 1920s. The Eastern League and *al-Sivasah* then had tried to synthesize Vedic teachings and the almost lost Pharaonic spirituality as the answer to the plight in which the West had placed humanity.

Al-Hakim's speculation that the Ionian Greeks could have been a conduit through which Vedic spirituality could have reached Greece prior to its formative period is not to be dismissed out of hand. Iranian inscriptions had used the word "Yauna" in reference to the Ionians of Asia Minor whom Cyrus the Great conquered in 545 B.C. Its earliest attested use in India is by the grammarian Panini (c. 5th century B.C.) in the form of Yavanani, taken by commentators to mean Greek script. At that date the name probably referred to communities of Greeks settled in the Eastern Achaemenidian provinces. Thus, Greek-speaking Ionians based in West Asia were in direct contact with Sanskritic India from which they could take religious elements and transmit them to the Greek heartlands. India probably was the source of the areas of creativity in Greek civilization and subsequent European thought and civilization descended from it.

Clearly, though, Greek thought early took a wrong turning that doomed most of Western civilization to materialist obtuseness in spiritual matters.

Al-Hakim argued in 1933 that the classical Muslim Arabs had similarly suffocated Egypt's Pharaonic spirituality for a millennium. "No doubt the Egyptian mentality has in some measure changed today... But how far has it changed?—that is the topic for discussion... Until a little before the appearance of the present generation, intellectual concerns in Egypt were confined and restricted to imitation and tradition—the limitation of Arab thought and restriction to its model... We were in a kind of coma; we were unfeeling of our real being... We could never perceive ourselves, all we saw was the long departed Arabs... We had no sense that we existed; all we could feel was *their* existence.... The word 'I' used to be unknown to the Egyptian mind, and the concept of Egyptian personality had yet to be born. Then came the new generation and behold, it spearheaded a new spirit and a new course of action. No more was literature the mere observance of a tradition or continuance of ancient Arabic literature in its spirit and form but instead an act of original creativity."

By 1933, then the Egyptians, led by thinkers like Tawfiq al-Hakim, had detonated their struggle for cultural and spiritual liberation from the Arab conquest.

DENNIS WALKER

FOR YOUR EARS ONLY

9. SHE PRAYS FOR ME

“BEHIND every successful man, there is a woman. I quite often hear people say so. I do not know who said it. Nor do I know how far I am successful. But what I certainly know is that a woman is responsible for whatever success has approached me.

She knew me even as a child. Born in the same year we were playmates. I do not remember any folk game that we didn't play together.

She trapped butterflies for me. I noosed dragonflies for her. She brought down mangoes for me. I dug out edible roots for her. Together we watched the goods-train pass through the rice-fields and counted the waggons attached to the engine, sometimes wrongly and picked a quarrel.

I had my own way of putting an end to quarrels by making the best use of my hand. A slap... a rap... a punch... a pinch.

Even today I can't resist myself from the temptation of at least a pinch. But she receives it with a smile. “You have not changed in all these years,” is her only comment.

Even as a boy I longed for summer holidays, for they brought her to my home. She came from a distance of twenty-two kilometres accompanied by her mother who stayed for a couple of days or so and left her under the care of my affectionate parents.

Both mother and daughter were welcome guests in our household. My father was very fond of her mother. To my grandparents my father was their first son and her mother their last daughter....

When my grandpa died, her mother was muling and puking in my grandma's arms. Since the responsibility of shouldering the entire burden of the family fell on my father, her mother found in my father a father and not a brother.

As time passed my father got married. Since it took ten years for my parents to produce me, they found in her mother a daughter. Hence my father's loving sister, my affectionate aunt, and later my mother-in-law (Poor woman! She didn't live to see me get married to her daughter) was always welcome with her brood.

One day she and I planned to go to the lake in our village. It was very far from the backyard of my home. Yet the pleasure of crossing the rice-fields and then the dark wood to reach the lake was so irresistible that we gave life to the plan.

“Don't tell anyone,” I warned her. “If our parents come to know of the the plan, they will not allow us.”

She nodded her head in approval.

We made our presence felt in the backyard, before we disappeared.

Hand in hand, we marched across the rice-fields and entered the wood. On we marched and marched... But the wood extended like the mythological Hanuman's tail.

The lake was nowhere in sight.

We were tired and exhausted. Hunger added itself to our agony.

"I'm sure we have lost our way," she said. "Have you ever been to the lake before?"

"Oh, yes," I said with confidence. "Once I went with my father to buy *veral* fish."

"Ah, me!" she cried. "Now that we don't know the way to the lake, it is useless to proceed further. Do you know at least the way back to our home?"

I blinked. "Till somebody comes to our rescue, I think we have to roam in the wood."

"No! We shouldn't roam. Let's sit here and pray to God to send us a rescuer," she suggested.

"I never pray. But I'll not stand in the way of your prayer," I said.

She knelt down, closed her eyes, brought her palms together and supported her chin with her thumbs. I watched her pray in silence.

A couple of minutes later she stood up, and opening her eyes she smiled at me.

"This is how the Christians pray. But we are Hindus," I said with a sly smile.

"True. But this is how we pray at school," she said. "God is not deaf to sincere prayers. We were taught during the prayer session."

I laughed in my sleeves.

"Do you have ghosts here as we have in the wood at Cuddalore?" she asked.

"What? Ghosts! Don't frighten me. I have heard blood-curdling stories about ghosts in this wood," I said with a shiver.

Just at that moment, we heard footsteps. They sent a chill down my spine. The crumpling sound of fallen dead leaves under the heavy feet added to my fear. As the sound of footsteps moved towards us, I yelled: "Oh! Run. It must be a ghost! Run! Run."

She didn't budge.

I had no mind to run away leaving her to the mercy of the ghost. I caught her by the arm and dragged her to run.

"No!" she retorted. "God is not as merciless as you think. He will not send a ghost to frighten us when I have prayed to him for a rescuer."

"Don't be foolish. It is only a ghost. Let us run for our lives, before it drinks our blood," I said in a hurry.

"Don't be frightened, children. I'm no ghost." A voice stopped us.

We turned. We saw a lean and tall man with only a loin-cloth on to cover his nakedness coming towards us. He balanced a heavy load of firewood on his head and an axe rested on his shoulder.

"There are no ghosts in this world. A few men make them and convince the fools to believe in them," the wood-cutter sermonized.

We listened to him in rapt attention. We knew for certain that without him we wouldn't be able to get out of the wood.

"Go home," said the wood-cutter. "The sun is about to set. It will be completely dark and you will not find your way home."

"We have already lost our way," she said. "Can you help us in finding our way home?"

"Oh, sure. Follow me," he said and began walking. To cope with his speed we ran behind him.

"Do you know our home?" I asked him.

"What do you mean? You are the grandchildren of *bangalakaran*. My wife supplies firewood and cowdung cakes to your house." He said and beamed with a smile.

"Will you please tell my father that we have lost our way in the wood and that we are not fit for any punishment?" I requested the wood-cutter.

"Oh, yes. I'll tell your father. But when did you leave your home?"

"As soon as we finished our breakfast," she replied.

"What?" the wood-cutter called a halt to his steps. He turned and looked at us. His eyes were filled with pity. "Aren't you hungry?"

"Yes," we said in unison.

By the time we reached the village, it was dark. A big crowd had collected in front of our home. After a thorough search in the village and in the rice-fields, the womenfolk jumped to the conclusion that we had been kidnapped by child-snatchers.

From a distance we could hear her mother and my mother wail over our loss. The crowd was helplessly watching the scene created by them.

When the wood-cutter presented us before the crowd and briefed them how he found us in the wood, my father came rushing towards us with a raised fist. As usual he was gnashing his teeth.

"They are hungry, Sir. Feed them before you beat them," the wood-cutter recommended our case to my angry father.

My mother fed us. We ate in silence, all the time listening to the volley of chidings hurled at us.

When calm returned and the incident was forgotten, my little friend whispered into my ears: "Thank God. We are back home safe. My prayer is answered."

Even today she prays for me. And that's why I don't pray. Nor do I go to any temple. Yet she drags me to temples and once in a while I accompany her. She prays for me while I eat the blessed coconut and banana.

The result of the Pre-university course examination was a blow to me. I secured just the minimum marks for a pass in all the science subjects. Not even

a third class Government College would admit a third-class student like me in any of its degree courses in science. I was in a fix.

I had no way but to choose one of the many arts subject offered in the college.

My father suggested to take up Economics as the main subject, for he was informed by his friends that it was the only subject on earth one can get through without any difficulty. My sister suggested that I study Commerce.

I was not interested in either of these subjects. When I told my friend of my dilemma she said without a moment's hesitation: "Why don't you study English Literature when you have a liking for the English language? And you have secured high second-class marks in English at the Pre-university course Examination."

Her words found a solution for me. Had I listened to my father's or my sister's advice, I would have been rotting as a clerk either in a post office or in a bank.

It took six years for me to thank her for her words of suggestion. I thanked her profusely by marrying her.

While I am at work she keeps the children away from my study for she knows pretty well that pay-cheques are on the way. She goes through all the fan-mail I receive for fear of losing me to any other woman. Of course, she is a jealous woman. But a wife's jealousy springs out of deep affection for her husband.

Affection and love are the roots of life. She has enough of them for me.

If there is life after death, I'd like to have her as my wife there too. I can't afford to part with a good wife, a fine mother and the best cook.

P. RAJA

TRAVELOGUE

JAPAN—1

WE call by the name "Japan" a state comprising four big and some small islands. The Japanese call their country Nippon, Land of the Rising Sun. The northernmost island Hokkaido is within the latitudes of 40° and 43°. Honshu the largest island curves like a bow just south of Hokkaido. Then there are the two smaller islands Shikoku and Kyushu. Japan hugs the Eurasian land's end in the East as the British Isles do in the West. Latitude 40° cuts Japan into two, the British Isles are a little to the north and latitude 60° runs just above "the farthest Hebrides." This shows that Japan is slightly warmer than the British Isles. And the warmth helped Nature to create on the Japanese Islands a wonderful garden country that has no parallel on the globe. Brought up in these surroundings the Japanese naturally developed an admirable aesthetic sense, a keen eye for colour. It is a toss who will win the prize. Nature's own creation or improvement brought about by man on Nature by pruning and cutting or developing when these are necessary. National parks abound in Japan, in fact the whole country is a national park. The Islands are mountainous, and tillable land is rare. Japan forms one section of the circum-Pacific orogenic belt which is part of the Great Cordillera. The result is that although far away the Japanese mountains are relatives of the American Rockies and Andes. Japan has three monsoons; the winter monsoon brings snow; there is an early summer with rains that brings the Cherry Blossom; then comes the autumn rains that bring in another festival of colours, the Chrysanthemums, as the whole country bursts into a panorama of these flowers as in the Cherry Blossom period a few months earlier.

This unique eye for colour and sense of beauty, the mind open to harmony and measure have all been reflected in Japanese painting. There was a time when the European market was flooded with prints of Japanese paintings. Even notable European painters found it worth while imitating them. In India we were very much acquainted with things Japanese. Willow pattern tea-sets and dinner-sets were thought to be assets in any Europeanised household. Japanese men went about hawking Japanese silk and other embroidered Kimonos and duchess-sets and tea cosies and all sorts of ready-made wear. I remember in summer the ladies and even the children of the house wore Kimonos instead of regular dressing gowns. And how wonderful they were, huge dragons embroidered on the back or on the collar. So alive-looking were the dragons with their feelers and tails, they seemed actually to emanate fire with their nostrils quivering. Huge big Japanese porcelain we had acquired at tremendous prices to adorn our drawing rooms, vases and jugs that actually came from Japan. Japan produced exquisitely beautiful porcelain. There were various types: Arita, Seto, and Kutani and these reached their perfection during the Kanakura period. We had Makies too, Japanese laquer objects

decorated with gold, silver and mother-of-pearl, curtains all reflecting the wonderful Japanese country-side. Grand uncle came back from Japan bringing me a Samisen and for the household red and gold and white and black fishes. We were the first family in town to possess these. Even today gold fish are a tremendous Japanese export. The Indian market used to be flooded with cheap but very attractive toys. We bought our toys from Whiteway-and-Laidlaws and Hal-Andersens but ninety nine per cent of Indian children went to the Hog Market, where cheap Japanese toys used to be sold. It is a credit to the Japanese genius that where everything in the shape of raw material has to be imported Japan could produce such things and so cheaply. Anything that Europe could invent or produce from cameras to locomotives and internal combustion engines Japan could imitate. Today Japan has the fastest train and it does not exactly run on the rail but is held close to the line by magnets. Now they have floating temples. Japanese hawkers offered us even saris with willow-patterned prints and other Japanese motifs with bridges and kiosks and temples, hanging and whispering willows on water-fronts, tales of unknown lands mysterious and beautiful. For everyone in the family grand-uncle brought Japanese dolls, dainty ladies exquisitely dressed, fan in hand and wearing topees that looked like frying pans upside down, and also laughing Buddhas.

Like any country Japan too has a wide variety of dances. Classical and folk, puppet and rag-doll, etc. Grand-uncle spoke of Noh which he liked very much and which required classical music. Bunkraku, the puppet show, had a narrator and the semisen accompanied it. Then there is the Kabuki, a performance with beautiful girls. This style got a great impetus after Buddhism was introduced into Japan. The dance has a religious overtone and the girls are like our Devadasis, the temple dancers. Then there are the Dojoji and Buyo: these are also very artistic and some dancers hold a fan in one hand waving it coquettishly.

In history we get the political division of time but the Japanese are also very clear about their culture periods. Thus there is a clear chart. From 588 to 707 is the Asuka period, from 708 to 793 the Nara, then the Heian and Kamakura and there are at least another six or seven more.

Gardening requires a little more elucidation. There are mainly three types of gardens in Japan. In moss gardens everything is green, every conceivable green is there to soothe the eye, bottle, time-myrtle, sage, emerald, lincoln paris, nille celadon, chrysoprase, chlorophyll, pea and sea; there could be another ten more. Sufficient rain automatically brings unnumbered kinds of plants and creepers, plants growing on the trees and sometimes hanging down in a most enchanting manner. The second type of garden is the pond-and-plant type with kiosk and temple, hot houses and bowers, and cascades, and rivulets, perhaps a statue here and there and artificial-fountain love-lane groves. It is quite an experience in life to wander aimlessly in such a garden for an hour. Finally there are the rock-gardens; these are utterly fantastic.

The most famous rock-garden is the Ryoanji in Kyoto. This type was developed during the Muromachi period. The story runs that during the Asuka and Nara periods when Buddhism was introduced from India, gardening became a fad in Japan but odd as it may sound we find no archetype of these Japanese gardens in India. They were developed by the Japanese though the religion was borrowed; it was the Japanese genius, Japanese technique and Japanese aesthesis at work. What lay behind creating such beautiful gardens was the wish to give men peace and contentment and induce them to meditate on the Buddha and his sayings, to contemplate his status and try to get to him. Zen gave them a further impetus. The Saihoji garden in Kyoto is a garden that no tourist should miss. This type of garden found favour specially during the Kamakura period and used to be called Buke-shoin. Another kind of garden I must mention here is the Bonsai. Here the plants and trees are treated in such a way that they do not grow more than a few inches, yet they keep all the characteristics of the bigger species. Huge Japanese trees can be seen dwarf-like on a drawing room table. Miniature landscape created under the Bonsai method is known as suiseki. Growing small animals was known to the Chinese. In the Chinese Royal Palace after the Boxer War were found tiny dogs that could be carried in a handbag. One of these dogs was presented to Queen Victoria who prized it very much.

Ikebana, the flower arrangement, is another Japanese speciality. There are schools to learn how to arrange flowers. It is an art for the Japanese, not an activity of just making rooms beautiful. The container, the flowers, the leaves are all selected very carefully. As there are schools there are competitions and prizes given to the best arrangements. Flower-decoration is no joke for the Japanese. Even hanging pictures on the walls is an art and done very artistically and much care is taken to see that a picture really enhanced the beauty of the wall and is in harmony with the general surrounding.

Tea we drink whenever we are thirsty but for the Japanese it is a very serious ceremony. One has to learn to serve tea. As with Ikebana there are schools to teach one. There are masters holding certificates and people go to such men to know the art of serving this beverage. This religious overtone came from the time when people not knowing what to offer to the image of Lord Buddha offered him tea. The cup is called Chawan, the exquisite caddy Natsume-tea leaves Natcha. Like Ikebana, Chanoyo is no joke, any mistake in the set procedure is unpardonable. The perfection shows the culture of the lady or the gentleman who may be serving tea. Those who drink too have to follow the rules set some 400 years ago. The stylization of movements is formalised from of yore. There came a time when tea houses were reformed and became universally uniform so that a set pattern might be followed by all. Tea to the Japanese is not just a drink to quench thirst. It brings peace and understanding and sympathy and forbearance for all. This is how they look at it. They have set rules for every movement from dawn till night. How to receive a guest, what you do when the parting time comes, how to sit, how

to get up are all regularised. Therefore the tea gardens are not for the Japanese just leaves grown for a beverage. Minute care is taken and they are adorned with bridges and arches and groves and a particular style has grown up with intensive tea-growing.

Japanese calligraphy needs a few lines too. It is called Shodo. The characters are called Kanji, the syllabary Kana is written with Indian ink known as Sumi. The art of writing, they say, came from China. But the artistic Japanese have developed it into something their own. They developed three styles: Kaisho, the most beautiful for an outsider, then Gypcho and Sosho. Our Mother learnt the Kaisho. Her writing can be seen from some pages published some time back from a notebook of hers.

(To be continued)

CHAUNDONA S. BANERJI

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

The English Language and the Indian Spirit—Correspondence between Kathleen Raine and K. D. Sethna. Published by K. D. Sethna, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry - 605 002, India. Pages: 70, Price: Rs. 35/-

It all began with William Blake's *Tyger*. Mr K. D. Sethna, historian, critic and above all the Captain of Sri Aurobindonian School of poetry, who has several published books to his credit wrote a long essay on this poem. Sir Geoffrey Keynes was kind enough to read and then pass it on to the eminent English poet and critic Miss Kathleen Raine for scrutiny. The discussions began. Unfortunately the readers are not blessed with the privilege of reading those letters, as Sethna thought that they would be out of place here since his essay on *The Tyger* still remains unpublished. Hence "only a few remarks have been included to serve as a sort of *mise en scène*".

"A letter shows the man it is written to as well as the man it is written by," remarked Lord Chesterfield in one of his letters addressed to his son. Since the present correspondence was between two literary figures of repute, it went beyond the strict subject. The correspondents exchanged not only their collections of poems—Miss Raine her *Collected Poems* and Mr. Sethna *The Secret Splendour*—but also the insights into each other's poems.

In her letter dated 5.8.1961, Miss Raine after giving general remarks on the poems of Mr. Sethna, concludes thus: "Only one thing troubles me: Why do you write in English? You write of the land of India, subtilised, in an almost physical sense, by the quality of life that has been lived there; is not the same thing true of language? Have you not, in using English, exiled your poetic genius from India, to which it must belong, without making it a native of England, for English learned as a foreign language can never nourish the invisible roots of poetry. I feel this even about Tagore, and so did Yeats. I do not believe that we can—or if we could, that we have the right to—write poetry in a language other than our own."

Miss Raine's comment sparked off the discussion on whether Indians can write genuine poetry in English. The result is this beautiful slim volume.

While furnishing his reasons for writing in English K. D. Sethna proves that English is now one of the natural languages of India, briefly discusses the Indo-Anglian consciousness, finally disagrees with the words of Miss Raine and foretells, "... the possibility of an Indian succeeding is ever present and is bound to get actualised some time or other." Miss Raine is not ready to leave K. D. Sethna at that. She comments: "I have read no poetry by an Indian that does not seem to an English reader to be written by a foreigner. Thus I find even with Tagore, certainly with Sri Aurobindo, and also with most of your poems." To refute her words, K.D. Sethna calls to his help the favourable words of H.O.

White and Herbert Read on Sri Aurobindo's poetry. The lengthy discussion that follows serves as illustration of the resonance of Vedantic utterance from Wordsworth and his relation to the Indian soul. He argues that if one must have English blood in one's veins for writing poetry, no pure Irishman can be an English poet, not to talk of Dante Gabriel and Christina Rossetti who were Italian. He opines, "What evidently is necessary for poetic success in English is an intimacy somehow won with the language." Finally, he counter-argues: "If you didn't see an Indian name under a poem, would you *infallibly* know that its English was not by an Englishman?"

If Miss Raine can point to something locally and typically English about Shakespeare and Wordsworth, K. D. Sethna can equally quote from the same writers and pose her a difficult question. Here again he opines, "If a notable command of the English language and a thorough knowledge of English poetical technique could be at the disposal of Indian inspiration, I see no reason why memorable English poetry should fail to be produced." Then there peeps a crucial question: "Do competent Englishmen find any Indo-Anglian work authentic poetry?" K. D. Sethna musters all the English opinions to make the question baseless and to cap them all he quotes Marjorie Boulton from her *Anatomy of Prose*: "English people who will not trouble to write their own language well ought to be shamed by reading the English of such Indian writers as Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, his sister Krishna Nehru, Rabindranath Tagore, Mulk Raj Anand, D. F. Karaka, Professor Radhakrishnan, and a number of obscure Indians to be met with in British universities."

Outwitted, Kathleen Raine withdraws from the discussion by saying: "Of course if India is determined to adopt the English language nobody can stop you. The blame lies with the English, who as a 'ruling race' for two hundred years impressed India with the power and prestige of our brief moment of material supremacy."

K. D. Sethna gives Miss Raine the impression that he liked her *Collected Poems* and that he had made elaborate marginal notes. Hence she urges him again and again to write something on her poems. And here is K.D. Sethna in the last letter found in the book "...But repeatedly I wonder why you want my views. Am I not as an Indian whose mother-tongue is different from yours, unfitted in your eyes to appreciate a creation like English poetry, which is your language at its subtlest?"

It is quite clear from the arguments and counter-arguments that it is dangerous to argue with K.D. Sethna. Boswell's remark about Dr. Johnson may be true of him if modified a little to show a multiple resource. He can use his pistol not only to fire but also to knock you down with the butt-end of it.

P. RAJA

(Courtesy: *The Times of India*, Sunday, July 5, 1987)

Students' Section

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

SIXTY-SECOND SEMINAR

26 April 1987

WHAT IS THE RIGHT WAY FOR INDIA TO DEAL WITH THE INVASION OF THE INFLUENCES OF MODERN EUROPEAN CULTURE?

Introductory Speech by Kishor Gandhi*

INDIA has been repeatedly subjected to foreign invasions of short or long duration from Asiatic as well as European countries during several centuries of her long history. Though most of them were military aggressions, they had their cultural consequences also, especially when the invaders settled down as rulers and tried to impose their religion and language and their social customs and political institutions over the conquered parts of India. But very often, in doing so, they themselves got equally or more influenced by the religion, language, socio-political customs and other elements of Indian culture.

The last and most effective of these foreign intrusions was from England, culminating in the conquest of India by the British. During their rule for over a century and a half not only did they forcibly impose their cultural forms and values upon the Indians but even the Indians themselves, especially the educated upper classes, accepted them as a superior race and with a servile mentality tried their best to imitate their ways in every sphere of life, forgetting altogether the great value of their own ancient culture.

Then in the first decade of this century, when the Nationalist movement started, there was a violent reaction to this servile attitude and under its powerful influence an increasingly large number of Indians not only started clamouring for complete political independence from the British rule but also tried vehemently to reject all the influences of English culture, treating them as something most injurious to the purity and sanctity of India's own intrinsic spiritual culture. That was a type of the Swadeshi movement which propagated the view that if there is to be a true renaissance of Indian culture after a long period of decline, it could only be accomplished if she remained completely aloof and separate, shutting herself off totally not only from the British but from all other foreign influences. Thus from the earlier attitude of complete servile imitation there was a swing to the other extreme of complete rejection.

* Revised and enlarged.

Sri Aurobindo, who was himself the most prominent leader of the Nationalist movement until he retired to Pondicherry in 1910, advocated a view quite different from both these extremes. He has very clearly and forcefully stated this view in his essay "Indian Culture and External Influence" which first appeared in the *Arya* in March 1919.¹ While rejecting radically the imbecility of the servile attitude of indiscriminate imitation of external influences, he made it clear that their total rejection too was not called for, provided we learned to receive them by subjecting them to the process of what he called "creative assimilation"², which would in no way endanger the intrinsic spirituality of Indian culture but, on the contrary, enrich it by casting the foreign influences into the characteristic mould of its own dharma or essential law of nature.

The Nationalist movement took a different turn during its later development when under the leadership of the Indian National Congress it was almost wholly preoccupied with the attainment of political freedom and the larger cultural issues either receded in the background or were given a secondary importance. Then, nearly forty years ago when, after a prolonged and bitter struggle, we succeeded in achieving our political independence we got a real opportunity to rebuild our national life in all its spheres in complete freedom without any political encumbrance from the British rule.

But though the pressure of the political authority and the cultural imposition of the British rule has been removed, we have been subjected to another, and perhaps a more perilous pressure, and that is the tremendous pressure of the influx of all varieties of influences—economic, political, social as well as cultural—from all European countries, especially the American and the Russian, which are insistently flooding our national life in all spheres in innumerable ways. The impact of the invasion of these influences is enormously enhanced because of the speedy removal of all physical barriers by the phenomenal development of the means of transport and communication between the nations, so much so that someone has said that the whole world has now become like one village in which everyone is thrown in direct physical contact with every other person.

The grave danger in this situation lies in the fact that if we do not deal with this swiftly swelling flood of European influences and, lured by their false glamour, allow ourselves to be helplessly swamped by them, then we may possibly become one more prosperous and powerful nation similar to some of the modern affluent dominant nations of Europe, but in doing so we may lose our most precious spiritual heritage acquired after long millenniums of sustained endeavour.

According to Sri Aurobindo, in the present world-situation to reject totally these external influences, even if it is necessary and desirable, is not at all possible. But it is not necessary to shut ourselves off from them if we learn how to deal with

¹ Published in *The Foundations of Indian Culture* (Cent. Ed., Vol. 14), pp. 385-94.

² *Ibid*, p. 24.

them in the right manner of "creative assimilation" to which I have already referred earlier. And if we do so we will derive from them immense benefit for the enrichment of our culture. But if we fail to deal with them in the right spirit and with the right vision then the resultant danger would be formidable, since it will have catastrophic consequences not only for our national life but for the whole world because, if it happens, India will not be able to fulfil her destined role of being the leader in the future evolution of humanity.

Here I would like to read out to you a very significant extract from a message of Sri Aurobindo in which he has drawn our pointed attention to this possible danger facing India at the present hour. Please note that this message was not written during his leadership of the Nationalist movement in the first decade of this century but as late as December 1948, and even though we are now nearly four decades ahead, it has a direct and special relevance to the contemporary situation in our national life. The message was given to the Andhra University on the occasion of the presentation of the Sir C. R. Reddy National Prize to him on 11 December 1948. I will read from it an extract pertaining to the present situation in India:

"In this hour, in the second year of its liberation the nation has to awaken to many more considerable problems, to vast possibilities opening before her but also to dangers and difficulties that may, if not wisely dealt with, become formidable.... There are deeper issues for India herself, since by following certain tempting directions she may conceivably become a nation like many others evolving an opulent industry and commerce, a powerful organisation of social and political life, an immense military strength, practising power-politics with a high degree of success, guarding and extending zealously her gains and her interests, dominating even a large part of the world, but in this apparently magnificent progression forfeiting its Swadharma, losing its soul. Then ancient India and her spirit might disappear altogether and we would have only one more nation like the others and that would be a real gain neither to the world nor to us. There is a question whether she may prosper more harmlessly in the outward life yet lose altogether her richly massed and firmly held spiritual experience and knowledge. It would be a tragic irony of fate if India were to throw away her spiritual heritage at the very moment when in the rest of the world there is more and more a turning towards her for spiritual help and a saving Light. This must not and will surely not happen; but it cannot be said that the danger is not there. There are indeed other numerous and difficult problems that face the country or will very soon face it. No doubt we will win through, but we must not disguise from ourselves the fact that after these long years of subjection and its cramping and impairing effects a great inner as well as outer liberation and change, a vast inner and outer progress is needed if we are to fulfil India's true destiny."¹

¹ *On Himself* (Cent. Ed., Vol. 26), pp 412-13.

Friends, what I have said is enough to indicate the great importance of the subject of our Seminar at this crucial hour of India's destiny. There is only one more point which I would like to clarify because it has been a source of great misunderstanding and confusion. Some Indian as well as European thinkers and writers hold the view that humanity is now moving forward towards a future in which the different cultures of the world, which have so far mostly remained divided and hostile to each other, will get unified into a new single world-culture in which the essential elements of all will get fused and therefore there is no need for any national culture to preserve and retain its separate identity. Some of the protagonists of the synthesis of East and West advocate this view because according to them in the future world-unity Eastern and Western cultures will shed their differences and diversity and get amalgamated into a uniform world-culture in which whatever is valuable in both for the future needs of humanity will remain and the rest will disappear.

But I want to make it clear that though Sri Aurobindo's vision of the future humanity necessarily includes a synthesis of Eastern and Western cultures, his view of this synthesis is not that of a uniform world-culture in which all diversities will disappear but rather of a harmonious integration of all cultures in which each will retain its diverse and distinctive features. It will be a synthetic unity in a mutually enriching diversity and not a uniform oneness without any variation. For this reason Sri Aurobindo very strongly emphasises the necessity for India to defend the uniqueness of her ancient spiritual culture against the dangerous onslaught of European influences which has tremendously increased in recent times. This he considers necessary not only for the survival of Indian culture but for the future evolution of humanity because, as I have already mentioned, it is India's destined role to be the leader of the world in its evolution from the present rational to the future spiritual and supramental stage. This role she cannot fulfil if she allows her great spiritual heritage to succumb and perish under the devastating deluge of modern European influences to which she has now widely opened her doors in all spheres of national life. Sri Aurobindo was very acutely aware of this danger and he has repeatedly warned against it. I have already quoted one passage from his Andhra University message containing this warning. Here is another, equally emphatic, which we must clearly note and remember if we are to save ourselves and fulfil our role to lead humanity in the New Age:

“Either India will be rationalised and industrialised out of all recognition and she will be no longer India or else she will be the leader of a new world-phase, aid by her example and cultural infiltration the new tendencies of the West and spiritualise the human race. That is the one radical and poignant question at issue. Will the spiritual motive which India represents prevail on Europe and create there new forms congenial to the West, or will European rationalism and

commercialism put an end for ever to the Indian type of culture?"¹

Judged in the light of these warnings by Sri Aurobindo, the contemporary situation in India seems most disheartening. There is such a tremendous upsurge of unprecedented violence and corruption and the whole national atmosphere is so surcharged with dark disruptive and chaotic forces that we seem to be plunging headlong into what the Mother once called "the abyss". And the most dangerous factor in this situation is the utter bankruptcy of our national leadership. I need not elaborate this point any more, for the daily newspapers are chock-full of the most tragic events which show no signs of subsiding.

But it would be wrong on our part to take this situation at its face value and allow ourselves to lose faith in India's greatness and her capacity to fulfil her destined role as the leader of humanity's future. The present dark situation, according to Sri Aurobindo, is no more than a passing phase; it is only the darkest hour before the dawn which is preparing behind the darkness and will soon burst out. Here I will read one assurance of Sri Aurobindo's given in most decisive terms which we must always remember, even if the present darkness becomes still darker for sometime to come, and remain unshaken in our faith in India's great destiny:

"India of the ages is not dead nor has she spoken her last creative word; she lives and has still something to do for herself and the human peoples. And that which must seek now to awake is not an anglicised oriental people, docile pupil of the West and doomed to repeat the cycle of the occident's success and failure, but still the ancient immemorable Shakti recovering her deepest self, lifting her head higher towards the supreme source of light and strength and turning to discover the complete meaning and a vaster form of her Dharma."²

CROSSWORD

Clues Across

1. The major part of the work done in the universe is accomplished without of desire, it proceeds by the calm necessity and spontaneous law of Nature. (3, 12)
10. Prep. (2)
11. Conj. (2)
12. The difference between knowledge and ignorance is a grace of the Spirit; the breath of divine Power blows where it lists and fills today one and tomorrow another with the word or the puissance If the potter more perfectly than another, the merit lies not in the vessel but the maker (6, 3, 3)
13. Pron (2)
14. It is not the executive forms taken by Nature in us that are ourselves or the abidingly constant and expressive shape of ourselves, it is the spiritual being in us — and this includes the soul-becoming of it — that persists through . . . in the universe (4)
16. To participate in that divine work, to live for God in the world will be the rule of the Karmayogin; to live for God in the world and therefore so to act that the Divine may more and more himself and the world go forward by whatever way of its obscure pilgrimage and move nearer to the divine ideal (8)
17. All existence in the world is work, force, potency, and has a dynamic effect in the whole by its . . . presence, even the inertia of the clod, even the silence of the immobile Buddha on the verge of Nirvana. (4)
19. After the removal of the veil of ego, the removal of the veil of Nature and her inferior modes that govern our mind, life and body As soon as the limits of the ego begin to . . . , we see how that veil is constituted and detect the action of cosmic Nature in us, and in or behind cosmic Nature we sense the presence of the cosmic Self and the dynamisms of the world-pervading Ishwara. (4)
20. Prep. (2)
21. Prep (2)
22. The Gita declares that the action of the liberated man must be directed not by desire, but towards the keeping together of the world, its government, guidance, impulsion, maintenance in the path appointed to it This injunction has been interpreted in the sense that the world being an illusion in which most men must be kept, since they are unfit for liberation, he must so act outwardly as to cherish in them an attachment to their customary works . . . down for them by the social law (4)
25. But in the last state of the soul's infinity and freedom all outward standards are replaced or laid aside and there is . . . only a spontaneous and integral obedience to the Divine with whom we are in union and an action spontaneously fulfilling the integral spiritual truth of our being and nature (4)
26. Even man constantly does work of various kinds by a spontaneous impulse, intuition, instinct or acts in obedience to a natural necessity and law of forces without either mental planning or the . . . of a conscious vital volition or emotional desire (4)
27. Perfection is demanded of us, but not the perfection that can exist only by confining its within narrow limits or putting an arbitrary full stop to the ever self-extending scroll of the Infinite. (5)
28. Prep (2)

Clues Down

1. Only when we cross the border into a larger luminous consciousness and self-aware substance where divine Truth is a native and not a stranger, will there be revealed to us the Master of our existence in the imperishable integral truth of his being and his powers and his workings Only there, too, will his works in us the flawless movement of his unfailing supramental purpose. (6)

2. In a Yoga lived entirely on the spiritualised mental plane it is possible and even usual for these three fundamental aspects of the divine — the Individual or Immanent, the Cosmic and the Transcendent — to stand out as separate realisations Each by itself then appears sufficient to satisfy the of the seeker (8)
- 3 For in reality, no man works, but Nature works through him for the self-expression of a Power within that proceeds from the Infinite. To know that and live in the presence and in the being of the Master of Nature, free from desire and the illusion of personal impulsion, is the one thing (7)
- 4 Every man is knowingly or unknowingly the instrument of a universal Power and, apart from the inner Presence, there is no such essential difference between one action and another, one kind of instrumentation and another as would warrant the folly of an pride. (8)
5. Always we must repeat to the doubting intellect the promise of the Master, "I will surely deliver thee from all sin and evil, do not grieve." At the end, the flickerings of faith will cease; for we shall see his face and . always the Divine Presence (4)
- 6 Only when the small ego-sense is out from the nature can the seeker know his true person that stands above as a portion and power of the Divine and renounce all motive-force other than the will of the Divine Shakti. (6)
- 7 A universal Peace, Light, Power, Bliss is ours, but its effective expression is not that of the Truth-Consciousness, the divine Gnosis, but still, though wonderfully freed, uplifted and illumined, supports only the present self-expression of the Cosmic Spirit and does not transform, as would a transcendental Descent, the ambiguous symbols and veiled mysteries of a world of Ignorance. Ourselves are free, but the earth-consciousness remains in bondage; only a further transcendental ascent and descent can . heal the contradiction and transform and deliver (8)
- 8 For the supramental Transcendence is not a thing absolutely apart and unconnected with our present existence It is a greater Light out of which all this has for the adventure of the Soul lapsing into the Inconscience and emerging out of it, and, while that adventure proceeds, it waits superconscious above our minds till it can become conscious in us. (4)
9. Prep. (3)
15. Pron. (2)
- 17 The first step on this long path is to consecrate all our works as a sacrifice to the Divine in us and in the world, this is an attitude of the mind and heart, not too difficult to imitate, but very difficult to . absolutely sincere and all-pervasive (4)
18. An ascent into the supramental Truth not only raises our spiritual and essential consciousness to that height but brings about a descent of this Light and Truth .. all our being and all our parts of nature (4)
- 20 Adv. (3)
- 21 Conj (2)
23. Adv (2)
24. The Master of our work and our Yoga knows the thing to be done, and we must allow him to . it in us by his own means and in his own manner. (2)

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SOLUTION: Refer *The Synthesis of Yoga*—Part I Chapters 11, 12 & 13