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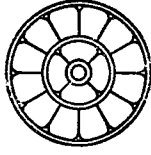
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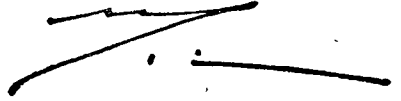


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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All correspondence to be addressed to:

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MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XL

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"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
"ROSE OF GOD"	
SRI AUROBINDO'S ANSWERS TO PARICHAND'S QUESTIONS TO THE MOTHER	... 191
THE MOTHER'S COMMENTARIES ON SRI AUROBINDO'S <i>Thoughts and Glimpses</i> (Compiled from Her Talks to the Ashram Children, 1956-1957, in a New Translation by Shraddhavan)	... 192
PRAYER (Poem)	<i>Vikas Bamba</i> ... 196
TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO	<i>Nirodbaran</i> ... 197
VIGNETTES OF THE MOTHER AND SRI AUROBINDO: WORSHIP AND VISION OF THE DIVINE	<i>Compiled by S.</i> ... 202
THE STORY OF A SOUL	<i>Huta</i> ... 203
LIFE-POETRY-YOGA	
SOME PERSONAL LETTERS TO A SADHAK	<i>Amal Kiran</i> ... 209 (<i>K. D. Sethna</i>)
THE SEA AND I (Poem)	<i>Debanshu</i> ... 215
A VISION OF VARUNA	<i>X</i> ... 216
HUMOUR IN THE PLAYS OF SRI AUROBINDO	
I. <i>The Maid in The Mill</i>	<i>Shyam Kumari</i> ... 220
SWEET MOTHER (Poem)	<i>Shyam Kumari</i> ... 226
JUNG'S RELEVANCE TO INDIA	
PSYCHOLOGY AND PERSONALITY	<i>Indra Sen</i> ... 227
THE SONG OF THE LORD:	
THE GITA WITHOUT COMMENT	<i>Translated by Dhruva</i> ... 231

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
SAVITRI'S INITIATION INTO YOGA	<i>R. Y. Deshpande</i> ... 234
A WEEK IN COURTALLAM	<i>Shraddhavan</i> ... 242
FOR YOUR EARS ONLY:	
3. VISITORS TO MY LIBRARY	<i>P. Raja</i> ... 245
STORIES FROM TAMIL LITERATURE	
35. THE GIFTS THE POETS ASKED FOR	... 248
36. HOW HE TAMED THE NASTY HORSE	<i>M. L. Thangappa</i> ... 249

STUDENTS' SECTION

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION:	
TWENTY-THIRD ANNUAL CONFERENCE, 17TH AUGUST 1986	
SPEECH READ BY ILA JOSHI:	
"WHAT IS NEW IN SRI AUROBINDO'S YOGA"?	... 251
THE EPIC OF THE UNIVERSE	
8. SHADOW MATTER	... 254
9. WILL THE UNIVERSE END?	... 255
10. EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITIES	<i>Sharan and Subroto</i> ... 256

“ROSE OF GOD”

SRI AUROBINDO'S ANSWERS TO PARICHAND'S QUESTIONS TO THE MOTHER

Mother,

Two questions have arisen in the mind in connection with Sri Aurobindo's poem "Rose of God".

1) Does the rose of all flowers most perfectly and aptly express the divine ecstasies or has it not any symbolic allusion in the Veda or the Upanishad?

THERE were no roses in those times in India—roses came in with the Mahomedans from Persia. The rose is usually taken by us as the symbol of surrender, love etc. But here it is not used in that sense, but as the most intense of all flowers it is used as symbolic of the divine intensities—Bliss, Light, Love etc.

2) Are the seven ecstasies referred to there the following: Bliss, Light, Power, Immortality, Life, Love and Grace?

No, it is not seven kinds, but seven levels of Ananda that are meant by the seven ecstasies.

2.1.1935

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

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

(Continued from the issue of March 1987)

Chapter 5: THE GOAL, Part Four: Impossibility

What I cannot do now is the sign of what I shall do hereafter. The sense of impossibility is the beginning of all possibilities. Because this temporal universe was a paradox and an impossibility, therefore the Eternal created it out of his being. Impossibility is only a sum of greater unrealised possibles. It veils an advanced stage and a yet unaccomplished journey.

STRAIGHT away we plunge into the greatest difficulty! I think that this one paragraph will be enough for this evening.

Do you know why this sounds paradoxical to you? It is simply because Sri Aurobindo has left out the mental signposts that lead you step by step from one thought to the next. It's nothing but that. It is so simple—almost elementary!

And I am just going to ask you one question (but I don't really expect an answer!), to ask you one thing: "When does a thing appear impossible to you?"—When you try to do it. If you had never tried to do it, it would never have seemed impossible to you.

And how is it that you have tried to do it? Because it exists somewhere in your consciousness. If it weren't in your consciousness, you would never have tried to do it. And from the moment that it exists in your consciousness, very obviously it is something that you will achieve. The only thing you cannot achieve is what does not exist in your consciousness. It's as simple as that! Only instead of saying it to you like that, Sri Aurobindo puts it in a way that strikes your thought like a whirlash; that is the virtue of paradoxes: they force you to think.

So then, Sweet Mother, what does 'impossible' mean?

Nothing in the world is impossible, except what lies outside your consciousness. And since your consciousness can widen, what is not in it today may be in it after a while—because consciousness can increase; so in the eternity of time, nothing is impossible.

In the present moment, at a particular time, in the given circumstances there are impossibilities. But from the eternal point of view, in the infinity of time, there are none—there is nothing that is impossible. And the proof of it is, that everything

will exist. All things, not only those that are conceivable now but all those that are now inconceivable, all of them are not only possible but will be realised.

For what we call the Eternal, the Infinite, the Supreme, the Absolute—we call it by many names, but it really is eternal, infinite, absolute—contains within itself not only all that is, but also all that will be, eternally, infinitely; it follows that nothing is impossible. Only, for the consciousness of the temporal objective being, things are not all possible at the same time. We have to conceive of space and time to make them possible. But beyond manifestation *everything exists*, simultaneously, eternally, in possibility, in potentiality. And this Everything—which is inconceivable because It is unmanifest—manifests itself and becomes conceivable.

And what Sri Aurobindo is telling us is this: that this temporal universe, this universe that is unfolding, since it does not exist all at the same time in the same place beyond time and space... such a universe of space and time that is becoming, that is successive, must be, to That which is beyond manifestation, really an absurdity and a paradox: the very contradiction of Itself.

To a temporal consciousness, That is unthinkable and incomprehensible; and for That, which is incomprehensible to the temporal consciousness, the temporal consciousness is incomprehensible! We are unable to conceive of something that does not exist in time and space, because we ourselves are inside time and space. We attempt an approximation in order to reach some understanding of a 'Something' which is inexpressible and which is everything at the same time, eternally and beyond time. We can try, can't we? And we use all sorts of words; but we can't manage to understand it unless we get outside time and space.

So, to reverse the problem, for That which is beyond time and space, time and space are something paradoxical and incomprehensible: it doesn't exist, it cannot be. And Sri Aurobindo says, "*Because this temporal universe was a paradox and an impossibility, therefore the Eternal created it out of His being.*"—that is, he has changed his non-existence into an existence... if you want to put it humorously, in order to find out what it is! Because until He has become time and space, He could not know what they were!

But if we return to the first part... that becomes something extremely practical, concrete, and very encouraging. Because we are saying this: "In order to have a sense of impossibility, that something is 'impossible', you have to have tried it." For example, if just now you are feeling that what I am telling you is impossible to understand (*laughing*), that means that you are trying to understand it. And if you are trying to understand it, that means that it is within your consciousness, otherwise you could not be trying to understand it; just as I am within your consciousness, and my words are within your consciousness, and what Sri Aurobindo has written is also within your consciousness—otherwise you wouldn't have any contact with it at all. But for the moment it is impossible to understand, because some little cells are missing from the brain—only that, it's very simple. And since these cells develop through attention, through concentration and effort, if you have listened atten-

tively and made an effort to understand, well, after a few hours or a few days, or a few months, some new convolutions will have got formed in your brain and it will all become quite natural. You will feel surprised that there could have been a time when you didn't understand—"But it's so simple!" But as long as those convolutions are not there, you can make an effort, you can even give yourself a headache, but you will not be able to understand.

This is very encouraging, because, in fact, all that is required is to want the thing, and to have the necessary patience. What is incomprehensible to you today will be absolutely clear to you after some time. And note that you don't need to give yourself a headache every day and all the time by trying to understand! One very simple thing is enough: to listen as well as you can, to have a sort of will or aspiration, or you can even say a desire to understand, and that's all. You make a little opening in your consciousness to allow the thing to enter; and your aspiration makes that opening, like a little dint in it, a little hole somewhere in what is closed, and you let it enter. It will do its work. It will construct within your brain the elements that are needed for it to be able to express itself. You don't need to give it another thought. You can try to understand something else: you work, you study, you ponder, you think about all sorts of things; and then after a few months, or perhaps a year, perhaps less, perhaps more, you open the book again and read the same sentence, and you find it as clear as crystal! Just because what was needed for the understanding has got constructed in your brain.

So never come and tell me, "I am no good at this subject, I shall never understand philosophy," or "I shall never be able to do mathematics" or.... It is ignorance, pure ignorance. There is nothing that you cannot understand if you give your brain time to grow and become more complete.

And you can pass from one mental structure to another (for they correspond to different fields of study), from one field of study to another (for each field of study is just a kind of language), from one language to another, and construct one thing after another within yourself and hold all that and many other things too very harmoniously, if you do it with care and take the time for it. For each of these kinds of knowledge corresponds to an inner formation, and you can go on multiplying these formations indefinitely, if you take the time and the trouble.

I don't believe there is any limitation that cannot be overcome.

But I can see people's mental formations very clearly, and there is a sort of laziness about the effort that is required. And this laziness and these limitations are like illnesses. But they are illnesses that can be cured. Unless you have a real defect in the formation of your brain, if something is missing, if something has been 'forgotten' when you were formed—then it is more difficult. It is much more difficult, but it is not impossible. There are beings like that, who are really incomplete, like a badly-made object. Logically speaking, it would be better if they did not continue to exist, but after all (*laughing*), that is not the custom, it contradicts the ordinary human notions. But if you are a normal being, if you take the trouble and know the

method, your capacity for growth is practically unlimited.

There is the idea that each individual belongs to a type; for example that the fir-tree will never become an oak, and that the palm-tree can never be maize. That is obvious. But that is something else. That means that the truth of your being is not the truth of the next man. But within the truth of your own being, your own individual framework, the progress you can make is practically unlimited. It is limited only by your belief that it is limited, and by your ignorance of the right procedure; otherwise

There is nothing that you cannot do, if you know how to go about it.

12.12.1956

Chapter 6: THE GOAL, Part Five: Thought

If thou wouldst have humanity advance, buffet all preconceived ideas. Thought thus smitten awakes and becomes creative. Otherwise it rests in a mechanical repetition and mistakes that for its right activity.

To rotate on its own axis is not the one movement for the human soul. There is also its wheeling round the Sun of an inexhaustible illumination.

Be conscious first of thyself within, then think and act. All living thought is a world in preparation all real act is a thought manifested. The material world exists because an Idea began to play in divine self-consciousness.

Thought is not essential to existence nor its cause, but it is an instrument for becoming; I become what I see in myself. All that thought suggests to me, I can do; all that thought reveals in me, I can become. This should be man's unshakable faith in himself, because God dwells in him.

What does 'Thought awakes and becomes creative' mean? No, Sri Aurobindo says, 'Thought *thus smitten* awakes....' What he is saying is that, in order to make progress, we must break up old constructions, buffet or demolish all preconceived ideas. Preconceived ideas are the habitual mental constructions that we live in; they are rigid, they become like fortresses without any plasticity, and they cannot progress because they are rigid. Nothing that is rigid can progress. So his advice is to buffet, to destroy all preconceived ideas, all fixed mental constructions. That is the way to give birth to new ideas, or to the *active* thought that is creative.

And further on, Sri Aurobindo says that we must first become conscious of ourselves, *then think and then act*. The vision of the inner truth of the being should precede all action. First the vision of the truth, then this truth formulating itself in thought, then the thought creating action. That is the proper process.

And Sri Aurobindo gives this as the process of creation. In the Unmanifest a

thought began to play—that is, awoke and became active; and because the thought became active, the world was created. And in conclusion Sri Aurobindo states that thought is not essential to existence, it is not the *cause* of existence, but it is the process, the means of becoming; for thought is a principle of exact formulation that has the power to create form. And as an illustration Sri Aurobindo says that whatever you think about yourself, by the very fact of thinking it, you can become.

This knowledge, that everything you can think, you can become, is a most important key to the development of the being, not only from the point of view of the potentialities of your being, but also from the point of view of control, and of the choice of what you will become, of what you want to be.

This makes us understand how necessary it is not to allow within ourselves any thought which would destroy our aspiration or hinder the creation of the truth of our being. It shows the great importance of never allowing what you do not want to become, or what you do not want to do, to get formulated in thought within your being. For as soon as you think about these things, they begin to get realised.

From every point of view, it is harmful to concentrate on what you do not want, on what you must reject, on what you refuse to be; for the very fact of thinking about these things that you want to drive away gives them a sort of right to exist within you.

This explains why it is so important not to allow any destructive suggestions to enter into you, any thoughts of ill-will, hatred, destruction. For the mere thought of them already gives them some power of realisation.

Sri Aurobindo says that thought is not the cause of existence but an intermediary, the instrument for the shaping of life, of creation; and the control of this instrument is of primary importance if we want disorder and all that is anti-divine to disappear from creation.

You should not admit wrong thoughts into yourself on the excuse that they are only thoughts. They are tools of realisation. And you must not permit them to exist within you if you do not want them to carry out their destructive work.

19.12.1956

(To be continued)

PRAYER

Suffuse me all with Thy pure light,
 Make me a torch so beauty-bright
 That in this forgetful part of Thee
 There may exist but one sole He!

VIKAS BAMBA

TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of March 1987)

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

January 3, 1941

(Dr. André and we are all puzzled about Nishtha's case. She is rapidly going downhill and no definite diagnosis has been arrived at. Dr. André called Dr. Manilal for consultation. Dr. Manilal saw her and said it was gout and she has been asked to take chicken and fish. But the difficulty about the arrangement of cooking meat and fish couldn't be solved; when it was solved some other difficulty cropped up and Nishtha was much upset. I had to spend a lot of time speaking with the Mother about how things were to be managed.)

SRI AUROBINDO (hearing the report): Vichy negotiations finished? (Laughter)

N: Yes. It is all about the arrangement of cooking. Nishtha finished about half of one chicken given yesterday, though the chicken was very tough.

SRI AUROBINDO: So it is anorexia carnivora? (Laughter)

M: Whenever I prescribe a meat diet to patients, I am not easy with my conscience, Sir. So I avoid giving it whenever possible, saying that meat is not good for health. Is it the voice of conscience, Sir?

SRI AUROBINDO: Samskara!

M: I thought it was my inner voice, Sir. (Laughter)

N: Like Gandhi's?

M: Is not meat injurious to the body, Sir?

SRI AUROBINDO: Depends on the person. Of course it makes the body heavy, I mean the subtle body. The other objection to meat diet is taking conscious life.

M: Isn't it tamasic? But Vivekananda used to recommend it.

SRI AUROBINDO: He said it is rajasic.

N: It is rajas-tamasic.

M: Is it good for the spiritual life?

SRI AUROBINDO: Again it depends on the person. Vegetable is of course better. If there is no attachment to meat, it does not do any harm. I was very much attached to meat. In order to get rid of it, I used to give it up for a long period, then take it

up again and again give up until I got rid of it.

M: Why are there so many diseases now in the Ashram?

SRI AUROBINDO: The Inconscient!

N: But surely not all are ill?

SRI AUROBINDO: Some have illness, others other things.

N: Are we promised a better time after the Inconscient is conquered?

SRI AUROBINDO (*laughing*): I don't promise anything. It may be as bad.

Evening

M: Purani's cold still persisting! (*To Purani*) Why don't you apply the Force on yourself when you speak of it to others?

P: I am applying it. I am already better.

SRI AUROBINDO: Applying Coué diligently!

M (*laughing*): Nishtha seems to have been completely metamorphosed, Sir! She was actually running.

SRI AUROBINDO: The Divine Force is great but the force of chicken seems to be greater! (*Laughter*)

M: She is doing very well with her chicken and fish. Now she waits eagerly for her meal. After finishing half of a chicken, she kept the other half for the next day!

M: Gouty people are usually good eaters. The Maharaja Sayajirao was also like that. He knew which things were forbidden to him but when they were served on the table, without looking this way or that, he would go on eating all. Afterwards somebody used to say: "Sir, you shouldn't have taken those things!" "Oh, why didn't you tell me?" (*Laughter*)

(Then Dr. Mamlal began to tell some stories of the Maharaja.)

M: I remember once he lost his wallet. It was dropped in the bathroom. He suspected somebody and charged him with the theft. When the wallet was found, the man came to the Maharaja and gave him a bit of his mind: "You are great people, I am your poor, small officer. So you could charge me with the theft. Even when I denied it you didn't believe me," etc. etc. The Maharaja heard all that very calmly, didn't utter a single word.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, but he would take his revenge afterwards.

M: Yes, that of course. But to listen to the abuses so calmly is unusual for a Maharaja. He was a great man except for one or two defects.

SRI AUROBINDO: More than two! (*Laughter*)

(A case of pox had broken out in the Ashram. Dr. Mamlal said after hearing the symptoms that it might be small-pox. Dr. André saw the case and said, "Chicken-pox".)

SRI AUROBINDO (*after asking Dr. Manilal about the period of infectivity*): I also had a mild attack of small-pox in Baroda. It was given to me by a Bombay Judge who had come to Baroda. Nobody knew that he had small-pox and in Baroda at that time there was no such illness. The Judge prepared some mango drink and asked me to take it and transferred his small-pox too. The Maharaja asked me to go to Mussouri but the illness prevented me. When I got cured, I went there but the Maharaja sent me quickly away.

(*Somebody, named Ananda, about 60 years of age, has written to Anil Baran that he has taken up Sannyasa, is suffering from many ailments and wants to come for the Darshan.*)

M: He will increase Nirod's work.

SRI AUROBINDO: How old is he?

P: 60.

SRI AUROBINDO: He can postpone it for the next life. (*Laughter*)

M: There are some who wear the sannyasi dress here. So he will be one of them.

Dilip also puts on a sannyasi garb.

SRI AUROBINDO: But he is not Ananda unless you call him Dilipananda. (*Laughter*)

M: You have yourself given the name Ananda to people—to that Japanese¹.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, I gave him the name but not sannyasa. (*Laughter*)

January 4, 1941

M: What type of diseases does the Inconscient bring out, Sir?

SRI AUROBINDO: No type! Any type. It doesn't select. Each person may have a personal selection, *e.g.* Nirod has a predilection for a cold.

M: And I have for shoulder-pain, gall-bladder trouble, angina, B.P.—a walking museum of diseases, Sir.

SRI AUROBINDO: Then you must be a big yogi. (*Laughter*)

M: How?

SRI AUROBINDO: Barin used to say that all the big Brahma preachers used to have a lot of ailments. So they must have been big yogis....

N: What comes after the Inconscient?

SRI AUROBINDO: Nothing. The Inconscient is the basis of matter.

N: I mean: what will be the next phase of the working?

SRI AUROBINDO: Development of Supermind or of the higher planes.

N: Will the troubles be less?

SRI AUROBINDO: For whom?

N: General.

SRI AUROBINDO: Oh, open your Inconscient first.

N: I thought it was open.

¹ Sundarananda—the name given to the Japanese architect of Golconde, George Nakashima

SRI AUROBINDO: Manifest it at any rate.

M: What really is the Inconscient, Sir?

SRI AUROBINDO: Absence of Consciousness. (*Laughter*) The world is inconscient. Consciousness grows there but along with its development the Inconscient also remains like a crust so that the development is always limited. This Inconscient has to be broken in order that consciousness may enlarge. Your shoulder, for instance, is conscious of pain but is unconscious of the Force. (*Laughter*)

M: What should the shoulder do, Sir?

SRI AUROBINDO: Not the shoulder but the Inconscient in the shoulder or else the shoulder itself can become conscious and open to the Force. The Inconscient is the last obstacle.

M: Have you heard of Ralph Waldo Trine, Sir?

SRI AUROBINDO: No, who is he?

M: He is an American writer and mystic. His method is like Vedanta.

SRI AUROBINDO: In tune with the Infinite—something like that?

M: Yes, Sir. He says that one should imagine oneself as the Brahman and try to feel the force running through all the fibres of the body.

SRI AUROBINDO: Like Coué. You had any result by it?

M: For a time.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is the same thing as the descent and action of the Force, only it is an unconscious process, done by the power of the idea of the mind. It may help but I don't know if it goes the whole way. It may affect the mind, but after the mind, there are the vital, the physical and the Inconscient. The Inconscient has ideas of its own, as it were. If the opposite ideas are strong enough and have power over them, then a cure may result.

M: You have written in the *Bases* that one should say to oneself in any trouble, "I am a child of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo."

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, it is the same power of the idea, a question of fundamental faith not only in the mind but in every part of the being, even in the Inconscient.

M: Will it take a long time, Sir, to finish the Inconscient?

(Sri Aurobindo with such a smile and tone said: "Yes!" that we all roared with laughter).

Evening

(Champaklal forgot today to give the cloth to Sri Aurobindo for wiping and I did it instead. We laughed over it. Sri Aurobindo asked why we were laughing. When we said that Champaklal had forgotten to give the cloth he said, "The Inconscient?")

N: Is the Inconscient the last?

SRI AUROBINDO: I have told you many times that it is the last but I must

remind you that the work is not short and not individual; it is the principle of the Inconscient that is being worked out.

(Sri Aurobindo now took up Dara's Radio news. Dara had written wrongly something like Lord Garlic. Sri Aurobindo remarked: "Lord Garlic and Lady Asafoetida!") (Laughter)

N (after the news was over): I don't quite understand the working of the Inconscient. If it is concerned with the general Inconscient, then we ought also to be benefitted by it.

SRI AUROBINDO: Indirectly... *(After a while)* What I want to discourage in you all is the idea that you will get the Supermind or be on the way to it as soon as the work in the Inconscient is over.

N: No, I am not asking with that motive; neither have I that ambition.

SRI AUROBINDO: You may not, others have.

M: They will be at the feet of the Supermind. *(Laughter)*

SRI AUROBINDO: Not even at the tail.

M: But one thing is certain, Sir, that when the Supermind is established, there will be a control over diseases.

SRI AUROBINDO: All over the world?

M: Not that way, Sir; I mean mastery over disease.

SRI AUROBINDO: Whose disease?

N: In the Ashram.

M: Among the sadhaks. *(Laughter)*

N: If in the Ashram only, he will be left out, so he says sadhaks.

M: Even among those outside who have faith.

SRI AUROBINDO: You bring in the faith-condition now.

(Champaklal and Purani gave instances where even without any faith people had been cured by a flower from the Mother.)

SRI AUROBINDO: So you see *(looking at Dr. Mamilal)*, the problem is very complex.

M: Yes, Sir, but how to explain it? *(Laughter)*

(To be continued)

VIGNETTES OF THE MOTHER AND SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the joint issue of January-February 1987)

WORSHIP AND VISION OF THE DIVINE

X HAD the poetic aspiration always to offer flowers at the Mother's feet. The Mother graciously allowed her to worship to her heart's content. One day X went to the Mother full of emotional joy with a tray of flowers. But the Mother suddenly became very severe and asked Champaklal to tell the lady who knew neither English nor French—"You want to win my heart by offering flowers. That is not sufficient. You will have to give me your heart." Saying this the Mother took the tray of flowers and dumped it on the table. The lady whom the Mother had kissed and embraced tenderly many a time was dumbfounded by this unexpected rebuke.

She never took flowers and offerings to the Mother again—these she gave to Nolini-da. But herself she went to the Mother only to offer her heart.

In her quaint way this lady after her first darshan of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo in the early forties decided that she belonged neither to her husband nor to her family. So once when she went to the Mother she took a diamond ring with her and asked permission to put it on the Mother's finger. The Mother said (maybe playfully) that she might hurt the finger. The lady said through the attendant of the Mother that she would put it on very gently. On the Mother's granting permission she did so with great care, telling in Hindi to the Mother, "Now you are my husband, this is our wedding." Ever after this she told her husband that she belonged to the Mother and he was only a brother to her. She lived apart from him up to the time he died.

Once he tried to dominate her. She answered back, "I am not under any obligation to you for either food or shelter. My Mother and Sri Aurobindo look after me." Disgruntled, the husband complained to the Mother and asked her to scold his wife. The Mother simply replied, "I cannot. She is my friend."

Although X is old and infirm now and the Mother is physically no longer with us, she prefers to live alone in the Ashram rather than with her loving wealthy children outside.

Once she offered a silver image of Sri Krishna playing on a flute to the Mother, explaining that she saw him often in her dreams and visions in the same form. The Mother later told one of her attendants that actually the lady had been seeing the Mother herself. The attendant asked the Mother how she could be Krishna who was a man and, besides, she never carried a flute like him. The Mother is said to have remarked, "These things do not matter."

Compiled by S.

THE STORY OF A SOUL

BY HUTA

(Continued from the issue of March 1987)

The Mother's Message

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



Volume Three: 1959

5

DORIS came to my hostel and took me to Mercury House in Swiss Cottage, 43 Lancaster Grove N.W. 3.

This vegetarian guest house was run by three English ladies. Mrs. English, Mrs. Snowdon and Miss Jarret. They told us that they could give me temporarily

a very small room till the bigger room was vacated. They added: "Miss Hindoka, if you'll come after a week or so, it will be fine."

I said with a smile: "My surname is pronounced with a 'cha' and not 'ka'. I wish to move immediately from the present place." They responded: "O.K., we have no objection."

I settled the bills with my landlady and came to stay at Mercury House which had three storeys. The front part was covered with thick creepers which had newly unfolded leaves.

There was a wooden gate with a fence on either side. I opened it and ascended a few steps and rang the bell. Miss Jarret received me cordially. I walked across a corridor. In one corner there was a telephone with a slot—a little further on the right I entered a lounge furnished with sofas, chairs, a desk, a piano, rugs and a grate where the logs burnt during the winter. There was a big French window opening on to the garden in which various flowers had started blooming. Birds trilled from tall trees to hail the Spring. The small house with its small garden seemed to attract many birds in the vicinity.

On the left side of the corridor was a big stand with pigeon-holes where the residents' post and messages were kept according to the names.

I climbed to the second floor and saw my tiny room—there was hardly any space for another person to stand. Close to it I admired a spotlessly clean bathroom with hot and cold water twenty-four hours.

To my relief there was a key to my room. The ladies also gave me a key for the front door.

In the house I would have breakfast and dinner. There was a rule that if one did not want to have dinner one must write it on a cardboard hanging on a wall by the dining room in the basement near the kitchen. When somebody wished to invite their friends they should also write it. The ladies charged 10s extra for a guest.

I found this guest house very welcome, although the rent was high: 6 guineas per week. There were eight people here including myself: an old Jewish man and his son, a young lady (Mary), an old lady, two gentlemen and an English student, Mr. King. They were good and friendly.

*

A week passed uneventfully. The ladies gave me a bigger room as promised, on the third floor. There was no facility of a wash-basin so I had to do all washing in a bathroom a few steps outside my room. There was a small gas-ring to make tea. Also an electric heater. A shilling was to be put in a slot to get heat going for an hour or two. But now I hardly needed it. Sometimes I used it before I went to sleep to warm up the room.

The window looked upon the same little garden which was in the rear part of the house.

Miss Jarret asked me how many bottles of milk I required. I said that one was enough. She inquired whether I wished to have the bottle with a silver cap which was to be without cream or with a golden cap which was to be with cream. The charges also differed. I chose the one without cream.

It was amazing to see bottles lying unstolen in front of the doorsteps of private houses.

Sudha and I, while buying a newspaper, had only to leave money in a kiosk and pick up a paper. Nobody was seen around. We were perplexed, then appreciated the honesty, sincerity and trust of Londoners.

Mrs. Snowdon and Miss Jarret were almost six feet tall. Mrs. Snowdon was rather glum with a round apple-red face. She was not always amicable. Miss Jarret whose name sounded like "Miss carrot" to me was happy-go-lucky and readily helpful. They often used these words: "Right-ho! Goodness gracious me!" Mrs. English, mother of Mrs. Snowdon, was of a middle height—her head covered with grey-blond curls, her skin once fine and fair had faded. Around her mouth and eyes was a network of lines but her eyes were sharp and a sparkling blue. She was knitting most of the time in the seclusion of her room in the basement. Her plump cat stretched lazily, dreamily beside her on a couch or played with a ball of knitting wool.

The ladies were hard-working. Cleaning the whole house along with a "daily" was quite a job. Their bed-making was an art: they tucked in sheets firmly, pummelled pillows and smoothed down the coverlet.

Mrs. Snowdon and Miss Jarret cooked food and ran the place efficiently.

If I went early for my breakfast I would get hot toast which was brought in a rack by Miss Jarret or by Mrs. Snowdon. But I was in no hurry, because the vacation was still on and I enjoyed my leisure.

*

Sudha had arranged to go to Pitman's College where there was co-education.

We met practically every day at Marble Arch where she was staying. She was lucky to get a good bed-sitter room with cooking facilities. Occasionally we tried out some recipes.

Many a time we rambled in the parks resounding with the voices of many birds. A pale sun shone out of a clear blue sky and a soft breeze rippled the grass and caressed the delicate flowers which quivered in sheer gladness. Butterflies fluttered from flower to flower absorbedly. A few water-fowls waddled across the road ready to slide into the water.

We sat on a bench near the lake and watched the birds coming out from the foliage and wheeling around to pick up bread-crumbs which they appreciated by twittering. This refreshing atmosphere gave us peace and repose.

In Hyde Park we were shocked to see men and women hugging and kissing each other in the open.

We moved further. It was impossible to avoid peeping in show-windows which were arranged artistically with innumerable items.

We were enchanted by women's wear which was exquisitely, cunningly cut, designed and embroidered. The display of transparent silk and nylon stockings, wispy suspender belts, frothing silks, satin and chiffons fashioned into filmy negligés, nightdresses, slips, fragile lace briefs and bras, gorgeous gowns, frocks in irised hues, flamboyant house-coats—startlingly sophisticated, slinky.

Also there were sumptuous, glittering jewellery and many other eye-catching things like hand-bags, shoes, furs and cosmetics. When we glanced at their price-tags, they simply made us swoon.

Sudha told me: "It seems every second the expensive couturières bring out novelties and the next moment they are out-of-date. What a strange world!" I said: "It is true. Fashion has become the main mania in this crazy world."

We strolled on and entered a News Theatre nearby after buying packets of popcorn and chocobars.

Frequently we saw News-reels in the News Theatres, which were shown continuously.

*

Our favourite eating place was Lyons. In the basement we went either to self-service or to a serviced restaurant. We preferred the self-service counter where we could pick and choose.

One day I saw Sudha quite different-looking. I could not check my mirth. I asked her: "Why did you cut your hair short? It doesn't become you. Besides it is not set rightly. It really looks funny." She said: "Oh God—now what am I to do? Are you sure it looks odd?" I said, "Positive. Now the only thing to do is to brush back your hair and tie it like a pony-tail with a ribbon. Gradually your hair will grow." She did so.

Several times she came to Mercury House but she insisted that I should go to Marble Arch—the central part of the city so that we could go anywhere we liked.

Indeed, Swiss Cottage was in a very quiet area. The only sound I could hear was the occasional swish of a car going in a far lane when I was in my room.

Sometimes the three gentlemen—Mohansingh, Jayantibhai and Ramesh—joined us at Lyons. Mohansingh teased me: "Huta, you say 'Milk with a dash of coffee'. How does it taste, eh?" I said: "Well, you should try yourself." He sampled the cup and relished it.

When I returned at night the house was absolutely quiet. As a matter of fact, during my stay there I never heard anybody talking noisily, playing transistors loudly or loitering or chattering.

At night I met the furry golden-brown cat. Its large yellow eyes were flashing and it was the pampered pet of the ladies. The creature was a character in every sense of the word—almost human I should say. Then I remembered the many stories

which the Mother had told about cats.

I called it "Goldy." It took to me straight away—brushed around me and nuzzled against my sari and purred contentedly. I stroked it. It was impossible not to love Goldy.

*

One Sunday I invited Doris, Sudha, Mohansingh, Jayantibhai and Ramesh to dine with me at Mercury House. I introduced them to Doris who asked them to attend the meeting at her place. I said: "I am sure they will enjoy it. Will it be on 24th April? If so, we shall come together." Doris said: "Please do."

All of them liked the simple food and thanked me.

Three times a week we had soup, salads, brown bread, butter and a sweet dish. Salads consisted of asparagus, parsley, watercress, lettuces, cucumber, tomatoes, onions, shredded carrots, radishes, green peppers and so on with dressing or mayonnaise.

The rest of the days soup, casserole dishes, pies, bread, butter and dessert. Finally the inevitable cheese, biscuits and coffee.

We had self-service except the coffee served by the ladies.

In the morning cornflakes, bread, butter, marmalade or honey, tea or coffee.

All the meals were nourishing and well prepared. Paul C. Bragg writes:

"A woman is a beautiful sight to behold, in the act of preparing and cooking dinner for those she loves. She is even more beautiful when she takes into consideration that in her hands lies the power and ability to have a healthy and happy family, if she is nutritionwise."

In the evening either Mrs. Snowdon or Miss Jarret was at the head of the table. They kept vigilant eyes on the diners. There were strict table-manners and rules of etiquette.

One day I put my elbow on the table and Miss Jarret hinted by only saying: "Miss Hindocha...." Immediately I changed my position. Also one should be expert in using knives and forks and know the correct way of eating soup.

There was a lot to observe and learn in the English life-style.

I learnt to say often: "please", "excuse me", "thank you", "may I?" Londoners were famous for their politeness. I am glad I have not forgotten the lesson.

Mercury House was a very respectable and refined place where a number of guests came to dine. Also there were visitors from other countries and the continent, who stayed here for a few days.

*

The Mother sent me beforehand the message of 24th April with her love and blessings. It ran in Sri Aurobindo's words:

“The divine perfection is always above us; but for man to become divine in consciousness and act and to live inwardly and outwardly the divine life is what is meant by spirituality; all lesser meanings given to the word are inadequate, fumbling or impostures.”

I pondered over the message. My soul must have understood but my mental being groped in vain.

On 24th April Mohansingh, Jayantibhai, Ramesh, Mary and I went to Doris's place. In fact, our meeting was always held in the apartment belonging to her friend who travelled extensively all over the world: her antiques, souvenirs and valuable oriental pieces of art were the proof. During this time she was not in London.

As always we had readings from Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's books, discussion, meditation and finally tea and delicacies.

From a French window I could see sparrows swooping and picking with their little beaks the eatables in a terrace garden. They fluttered and flew here and there, and chirruped gaily welcoming the summer.

My friends were extremely happy with the spiritual session. They came several times afterwards and became very friendly with Doris.

*

More often Doris invited me to her tiny cosy flat for tea or dinner which I enjoyed enormously, because I learnt a great deal from her including how to cook a variety of omelettes. I liked the Spanish omelette the best.

Even if she noticed a little slip in my English she did not find fault with it but told me politely without changing the expression of her face so that I might correct my speech.

The arrangement to enter her apartment was such that when I would ring the bell, she would not come down; instead she would ask from her room through a kind of instrument (inter-com), “Who is it?” Then I would answer through the extension of the same instrument attached to the door. Afterwards automatically the door opened and closed itself.

Her sitting room-cum-kitchenette and dining room was full of God Ganpati. For she adored him. She gave me a small cute statue of the God. Its trunk turned on the right side which is considered the most auspicious. I have still kept and cherished the idol.

I felt it was a good omen.

(To be continued)

LIFE-POETRY-YOGA

SOME PERSONAL LETTERS TO A SADHAK

(Continued from the issue of March, 1987)

QUITE a number of notes you have struck in your recent letters. But three in particular are felt as tones and undertones and overtones.

There are light and joy on the surface—that is the poet responding to the magic and mystery of the world, the touch of bright nearnesses, the call of hazy distances. All these are what I name “tones”, the varied spectrum of waking life.

But at one end of the spectrum is the infra-red and at the other the ultra-violet. The former I point to as “undertones”, the hidden cries and gropings, the restlessness of a dream-life which glimpses elusive idealities. You have caught a sense of it with impressive originality in the poem entitled “Lonely Restlessness”. Usually the sea is described as full of turmoil and agitation on the surface and the depths are said to be calm. You have reversed the scene. A happy swaying rhythm rather than unrest is your sea’s outer being, a kind of calm that is sun-shot and a-glimmer. Below is the great unease, the ever-searching solitariness. Not that pleasure is absent, not that the thrill of beauty is lacking. The Divine is felt here at diverse play no less than in the many-coloured outer appearance, but here are subtle and secret ways that do not lead to tangible goals, the lurings of what you designate “the touch that hurts and delights”, the more-than-human which is not easy to bear because of its strange enrapturing excess of loveliness. You get scattered sips of nectar which set you always seeking: the full sweetness cannot be drained. The only solution is to go from the dreaming inner to the tranced inmost, where hides

the petalled fire
Rooted in godlike rest.

What I have labelled as “overtones” is not the Divine below or behind or within: it is the Divine beyond—to us a superconscious sleep, not just the sweet essence of things that is found in the soul but the vast heaven of honey overflowing to infinity. None of us has made his home there but all of us have known vague drippings, through some tremulous opening in our heads, from the golden charity pouring at all times out of the spiritual empyrean whose physical image is “that inverted bowl we call the sky.”

Now to your personal problem. It has two aspects. You are restless because you are lonely—a great gap made by the loss of a companion to your mind and heart not only on the human level but also on the level of the pilgrim of Eternity is still acutely felt. Then there is the second aspect. You are lonely because you are restless. The unrest comes essentially for a more fundamental reason than the loss you

have suffered. It comes of not having found permanent habitation in—or at least lasting neighbourhood to—the tranced inmost which does not depend for its happiness on circumstances, objects, beings, but is pervaded, permeated, perfumed by an Ineffable which is simultaneously Person and Omnipresence. Often the human heart is taken up into that profound paradise when it echoes incessantly that Christian prayer:

Change and decay in all around I see—
O Thou who changest not, abide with me!

(3.6.1986)

You must be ready for the operation or else the operation has taken place and you are on the way to a painless-knee'd existence. Somebody should devise an operation to make all movement through life painless. In a fundamental sense it has already been devised by Sri Aurobindo M.D. (Master of Divinisation) and Mira M. R. C. S. (Mother of Rapturous Caressing and Smiling), but none of us wants to be "patient" enough for the long process of being re-made. Their ability for the all-changing operation is hampered by our inability for all-changeable co-operation.

I suppose their supramental surgery has come to earth precisely to deal with people like us who lack the power to put ourselves in their hands and can only pray to them to exercise their power to pick us up. Your appeal at the Samadhi is characteristic of the practitioner of the Integral Yoga: "*Make* me surrender fully and *make* me quickly your excellent instrument." After all, this is a Yoga of Grace and what has been brought to us is the Supreme Light and Love, the Omnipotence of the Truth-Consciousness which is not only world-formative but also world-transformative. I remember what the Mother told me when, before going on a visit to Bombay for the first time after six and a half years, I said to her: "I have only one prayer—'Never let go your hold on me'." She answered, "I am like a fairy godmother. I can grant whatever you want. If you tell me, 'Let me go away', I can do so. But if you ask me never to let go my hold on you I shall hold you to myself always." And indeed she has done this and dragged me through hell and hot water to her holy feet.

I remember also what I said to her when there was a talk of the Supermind's descent: "I want to know only one thing. When the Supermind descends, can it transform us in spite of ourselves?" The Mother replied: "I should think so." I cried out: "Then there is hope for me!" The Avatars of the Supermind have come with hope for all of us weaklings. Paradoxically, they want us to be weak—to be soft wet clay in their hands to be moulded as they wish. Somebody once said to the Mother: "How wonderful it would be if a Yogi like Vivekananda could come to you instead of poor stuff like us!" She paused for a moment and said: "People like Vivekananda would come with strong moulded beings. I may not be able to do anything with them. I want people who are not formed at all—whom I can turn into any form I like."

Down memory-lane comes another occasion to my mind. I quoted to the Mother with great admiration an epigram of Meredith's: "Men fall from God because they cling to Him not with their strength but with their weakness." She exclaimed: "This is clever rubbish. It is egoistic to think that one can show strength to God. One has to go to Him with one's weakness, with one's dependence on Him." •

Now a last reminiscence. There was a complaint to the Mother that enough justice was not done in the Ashram: that is, the strength of people's merits was not fully attended to. The Mother remarked: "The Ashram is not a place of Justice. It is a place of Grace. If justice were done, who would deserve to be kept here?" All of us are allowed to be in the Ashram because the Divine Love overlooks our weaknesses. There can be no claim in this Yoga: we have to surrender ourselves to gain everything. Hasn't the Mother often declared: "Let me do your Yoga for you. All I am asking is: 'Don't stand in my way. Give up and I shall do all that is needed'." The only thing we have to do is to open ourselves to the Grace constantly—a persistent attitude of being a simple child in the arms of the Divine Mother. From the little that I know of practical sadhana I would call this attitude a state of never-stopping flow of spontaneous warmth from the heart-centre to the Truth that is Sri Aurobindo and the Beauty that is the Mother.

All this should throw some light on the inner meaning of Ashish's cryptic-mystic rejoinder to the Catholic Sister's sympathetic observation that patients in European hospitals are very alone and that he should go with you to talk to you. Ashish's words—"Someone will always be with my father"—must have meant to the Sister that you are a very chummy sunshiny fellow who will surely attract friendly contacts. What the Sister must have understood is true, but did Ashish or, for that matter, do you realise that what is wanted goes beyond even his meaning of the words? The Mother is always with us and in that sense we are never alone. But are we always with her? This is the heart of the issue. We have to see that she is never left alone. Unfortunately, the Divine, in spite of his omnipresence, is generally left thus because the world forgets him and is preoccupied with other faces than those into which he has moulded his formless glory time and again. Not that we should shut our eyes to other faces, but we should have both sight and insight. Let the Divine look out at us from these faces and let us not be over-attached to their aspect of sur-faces. Human exchanges of affection and understanding we all require, but a glow in our depths should lead us to see—as that famous Yeatsian couplet wants—

In all poor foolish things that live a day
Eternal Beauty wandering on her way.

(3.6.1986)

Your estimate of my poem "At Last" is very gratifying, but I am unable to pin down its "plane". Perhaps I am too close to it for critical appraisal. Apart from the metaphors it is a straight transcript of an inner condition and its antecedents. So at a venture I should say that it breaks out from the psychic realm through the inner

mind which gives it most of its expression with just a halo of the source haunting the words. The metaphors are partly traditional partly imaginative but selected by a spontaneous sense of the details of the pervasive experience.

Your tracing of "disharmony-restlessness" to various centres is good Yogic analysis. I suppose you go by the nature of the state as felt at different places. From the solar plexus would come a powerful ache which is often at a loss to know why the knife is turning and turning there. No *rasa*-taking of the pain and the turmoil in that spot, no glint of insight except rarely the feeling of inevitable fate and a dumb resentment, *à la* Housman in a rebellious mood, against

Whatever brute or blackguard made the world.

When the heart-centre is pierced, there is either the exquisite Virgilian cry, as passed through Amal Kiran's translation (or transcreation):

Haunted by tears is the world and our hearts by the touch of things mortal—

or else the melancholy-mystic profound truth-seizure by St. Augustine, which is the motto of my labyrinthine life: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee." With the forehead-centre involved, Housman's mood of noble-practical stoicism is at play:

The troubles of our proud and angry dust
Are from eternity and shall not fail.
Bear them we can and, if we can, we must:
Shoulder the sky, my lad, and drink your ale.

A more visionary stoicism too can find voice. I think it is best caught in a juxtaposition I once made of lines culled from two contexts in *Savitri* to make a sequence in which the last word of each line is picked up by the beginning of the next:

To know is best however hard to bear.
Bear: thou shalt find at last thy road to bliss.
Bliss is the secret stuff of all that lives.

The centre at the top of the head is, as you say, incapable of restlessness. The utterance that comes from there is that superb invocation by Sri Aurobindo:

Rose of God, great wisdom-bloom on the summits of being,
Rose of Light, immaculate core of the ultimate seeing!
Live in the mind of our earthhood; O golden Mystery, flower.
Sun on the head of the Timeless, guest of the marvellous Hour.

What you suddenly felt at the moment of referring to the crown-centre was surely an efflux from there but it came not wholly through the mind but to a considerable extent through the psychic presence at the back of the mind. That is why you experienced, along with the sense of fullness, "a kind of soft play of Her fingers". The combination of the full and the soft is typical of the Inmost transmitting the Upmost:

A flame that is All,
Yet the touch of a flower—
A Sun grown soft and small.

I shall end with these lines which are themselves the end of a poem of mine.

(4.7.1986)

I quite understand your dichotomous condition—the inner being clear and calm and enveloped by the Mother, the outer being confused, hurt and restless. As long as the inner is not lost in the outer's turmoil, you are basically safe and the shore is in sight across the swirling surge. But a quicker home-coming is promised by the fact that side by side with the inner's prayer for the outer's safe arrival the outer itself desires to be prayed for. There is no real conflict in you. There is only a passing disturbance. Within the heart of the disturbance is a smile, a faint upward curving of the lips answering to the broad Godward grin of the soul secure in Sri Aurobindo's hands. A game is being played with the mobile, many-turned, sensuous, imaginative, love-hungry, liberally self-giving, dream-pained, reality-searching Dinkar of day-to-day by the Dweller of the Depths in order to shape him into a true image of the Aurobindonian soul. You may ask: "Why is the game necessary?" The answer is simple: "The slow, intricate process of evolution." A comparative short-cut is possible if, instead of the outer self merely desiring to be prayed for, this self takes to praying on its own. When we turn to the Divine in that act of self-consecration which is Yoga and even the body seems to pray, it is not actually the body's prayer that goes forth; it is the inner being who is praying through the body and not only for the body. The outer self is affected, even occasionally pervaded in the midst of its frailties by the inner's light: it joins its palms in supplication to the Supreme, but what it is doing is transmitting the inner's appeal. This is indeed fine, but there comes a phase when the palms grow aware of their intrinsic existence and want to let it stream out like rays through their ten fingers to touch the Invisible and draw aside its veil and caress the immortal Beloved. That is what I understand by the opening line of Sri Aurobindo's Mantra of mantras:

Arms taking to a voiceless supreme delight,
Life that meets the Eternal with close breast,
An unwall'd mind dissolved in the Infinite,
Force one with unimaginable rest.

When the arms are not transmitters but originators, the hidden psychic element in matter has awakened. The awakening is not always a very pleasant one. A great disturbance seems to happen to the equilibrium one has attained by the co-operation of the outer with the inner. One often feels at a loss, as if one's contact with the free-flowing psyche of the depths is endangered and one is thrown out on the outer's own resources, but if one persists in the new consciousness and lets the awakened "material" psyche take its course all difficulties in the way of the Yogic life get fundamentally solved and one's home of perennial happiness is in the deep heart. This is a subject not easy to write about, but the key to a spontaneous God-centred living is there. (14.8.1986)

Your letter of 13th August is a very significant one. You have passed through the abyss of pain and found the Mother even there. That is why you have come out of the darkness with a command from the Divine ending in a way which goes most home to me because I have always tended to do what the Mother says in it:

Feel yourself within me,
Live contentedly within my heart.

You may remember how I once told the Mother: "When I kneel at the Samadhi, I feel that Sri Aurobindo is too big to be kept in my heart. I feel that I am within him. His immense heart holds tiny me. People always talk of his being in their hearts. What do you say?" The Mother answered: "Both the experiences are valid, but perhaps yours corresponds more to the truth of things." The advantage of my experience is that one can never lose the Divine. Even if one's heart is clouded over and does not sense the Divine within it, one is still aureoled with the Divine, the whole circumambient universe is the embrace of the Supreme. Sri Aurobindo sky-high, the Mother horizon-wide enfold atomic Amal and, however blindly, he has the sense of being carried along their path of secret light to the hidden gold of their future.

Of course, this sense of their enveloping largeness does not fill the need which both of us very acutely have for the Divine's "eyes and lips and face". Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, having taken particular names and forms, can never lose them for us; but these are what Sri Aurobindo describes in his account of the young Savitri as being

A golden temple-door to things beyond.

Your other poem is full of the double aspect of the Divine, though with a greater stress on the individual side. From this stress the ending again fans out, as it were, into a sort of saviour largeness, the small Dinkar himself flowering forth into a universal radiance, with his own personal pain turned into a Christ-like sacrifice:

Let the flame of my pain
 Warm all hearts
 And remove darkness from everywhere.

A very original, even if a slightly abrupt and unprepared, close. (17.9.1986)

(To be continued)

AMAL KIRAN (K. D. SETHNA)

THE SEA AND I

LIKE love—it was friendship at first sight.
 I remember the day—a curious look through the window—
 And she was there—the inviting expanse of swelling emotion
 Sending wavy beacons to come and embrace,
 Be drowned in cool companionship for ever.
 Then on, my looks often slip out beyond the window bars;
 A newer picture unfolds unfailingly—
 To feast my eyes on the delectable novelty;
 Then again I find the clouds feign snow-clad mountains
 Resting immobile on the rim of the horizon.
 In another breath, the magic mountain melts
 To flocks of sheep, their fleece a silver shine.
 A renewed gaze reveals the sea and sky framed together—
 Landscape of idyllic lakeland of sylvan beauty
 Where the rustling of leaves or a lilting birdcall
 Is a part of nature's close-guarded seclusion
 To woo and win that virgin unspoiled sweetness.
 But you withhold the best of pictures in your album
 For a magical unveiling under the mid-day sun.
 You open your heart to bask and lap up
 The brightest sunshine in your troubled soul,
 Horizon-kissed waterspread steeped in a colour
 Not blue, not even green—pigment yet unknown
 To the poets and painters of past and present:
 A phenomenon of absolute surrender—a sea of ecstasy's tears.

DEBANSHU

A VISION OF VARUNA*

ON the morning of 12th July 1986 I awoke from a deep refreshing slumber with a clear memory of distinct events. They are here chronologically recounted as they occurred.

I was wandering about on a bright sunny day in a small city in ancient India; it was clean, templed, uncrowded. I recalled that I had already visited here in earlier dreams, and traced my way to an imposing temple I remembered. As I crossed the forecourt and entered through the arched doorway, I saw once again that huge exquisitely sculptured statue of Ganesha. He stood on one leg, the other raised in dancing, atop a massive finely carved pillar of red sandstone. This column rose on the right side at the head of a flight of 20 or 30 wide stairs (each about 8 metres across), rising up from where I was, also cut from red stone. The statue was about 3 m tall, of a slightly lesser circumference around the belly, sprightly nonetheless for all its tonnage, and had it not been for the stone its intelligent and alive eyes would have blinked. In that well-lit free space, under the high vault of the roof, dwarfed by the superbly wrought Ganesha, I felt not overawed by the fabulous grandeur, but warmly accepted by the Presence that there reigned. How natural it all was!

When I walked out I was soon joined by P who began leading me to another temple with which I was not entirely unfamiliar. As we proceeded he spoke to me of the God Varuna who presided there, and was known to grant prayers made to him. As we walked, I noticed that we were dressed, like most Ashram boys, quite simply in light shirts and shorts, and had a spring in our step.

To enter the sanctum sanctorum, we descended a flight of not very wide stairs, about 8 or 10 in all and 2 m across. We were on the deity's right as we stepped onto the grey granite floor worn smooth by the ages. The central statue in front of us was flanked on either side by others; this middle idol P pointed out to me as Varuna, and we knelt before its man-sized height. Hips resting on heels as I looked up to take in its features, I could not help feeling slightly odd that P should keep referring to it as Varuna. Indeed, once awake from the dream, I had no difficulty matching its traits with those of Garuda, for the statue had stood with folded hands, its wings neatly gathered vertically behind its back, its very distinctive beak aquiline in lieu of nose and mouth. Nor, when awake, did the symbolism of it all escape me. However, in the dream, I uncomfortably accepted what P described.

P was at it again, asking me to pray for favours! I have never prayed for anything, for since a young age I had always averred that what I had been given was more than adequate, I had never got beyond this stage to educate the Lord about my needs, likes and dislikes, and why bother anyway? At the risk of seeming complicated to P, I told him that I was not exactly in a hurry to go along with him. Thus, hoping to discourage him with mischievous petulance, I turned leftward to P and

* As the author of this article wishes to be anonymous, the editor requests not to be embarrassed by questions from his readers

said, "Look here, my friend, it really doesn't interest me, but as you are importunate let me tell you that I shall pray to Varuna only on two conditions: first, he should give me a vision of the Supreme Lord Himself, of His Knowledge; and secondly, it is Varuna who should himself ask me to undertake the propitiation."

Hardly were the words out of my mouth when the stone image of Garuda dissolved into a living Being. There was nothing distinctively godly about him; he had a not-so-dark subcontinental skin, his long hair fell in ringlets to his shoulders in the fashion of ancient Indian hairdos, nor was there a particular radiance. But the voice that spoke to me belonged to a living god. We conversed for not exactly a short length of time, during which I was instructed in the art of the yagna. Of this crucial dialogue, I now recall the gist and certain phrases. Varuna told me that he was quite willing to take me to the Supreme Lord, but said he, "I cannot take you to the Reality without Form", which was okayed by me. (I think I heard the last three words echo in French "Réalité sans Forme".)

He then turned to his left and indicated 2 m away a shallow circular depression in the granite pedestal of the shrine. This hollow was perhaps 30 cms in diameter and 15 cms in depth, and at that moment held water and many flowers: several sprigs laden with white New-Creation blooms (tuberose), many large bright yellow and orange Plasticity blossoms (marigold). In this depression he asked me to light the Fire of the Sacrifice. Thereupon I watched him withdraw, the vacancy being instantaneously filled up by the rapidly reappearing stone image of Garuda.

This ingress, this materialisation and dematerialisation had come about so naturally, nay, spontaneously, that it didn't strike me in the least bit as surprising even as it verily happened before my eyes. Therefore, taking for granted all the occurrences, I turned once more to P as we rose for a closer look at the spot designated for the Fire, and said in Hindi, "Kar léte hain." "(Let's do it"—in the sense of a "no harm doing it, what?" sort of casualness.)

Let me mention here that beyond the circular depression, about 2 more metres away, stretched a fence of iron bars, separating the shrine from the large temple courtyard (at least 20 m wide). The fence itself was fixed to the pillars of the sanctum's archway which gave onto the yard. The vertical bars did not touch the floor, but were welded to both top and bottom horizontal strips at a height-interval of about 1.8 m or so, whereas both strips were embedded on either side in the archway pillars which were about 5 m apart. In this fence, then, was a hinged door, a kind of postern.

As P and I stepped towards the flowers, a chocolate-coloured Maruti car raced into the adjacent courtyard and drew up near the fence. And who should step out but MCK with her infant daughter in her arms. She half-entered through the postern and told me that the yagna had to be performed in the presence of a young girl whose name should end in "ā". I was nonplussed at this new turn of events! However, MCK had a solution even as she had brought a problem! She turned back to someone who had just alighted from the car, and sent for the little girl, Sushamā.

It is at this point that I returned to my body with a lucid memory of all happenings; my eyes physically felt fresh as if I had been standing in an invigorating breeze on a mountain-top. The repose had been profound.

I must say that I was quite astonished by this dream-vision. Its message was rather unmistakable nonetheless, although I had still to penetrate into the symbolism of its minuter details. Quite instinctively, I reached for Sri Aurobindo's *Secret of the Veda* for the first time in my life. I needed to discover Varuna's personality, role and significance. I was quite uncertain if this book would enlighten one such as I who have been more than ignorant of the characteristics of those who people the Hindu or Vedic pantheons! If this was the result of an Ashram education, it had been well worth the negligence, for the Daemon himself had made it his business to make contact!

Must I really confirm that *The Secret of the Veda* more than helped fathom the purport of this encounter? It deepened too the experience, what with a later tête-à-tête with Agni, and a hi and bye look-in-the-eye acquaintance with both Narad and Indra thrown in for good measure. It is interesting to note, however, that Agni, too, like Varuna, was most ordinarily dressed. The latter's upper body had been bare except for an angavastra, with the lower half clad in dhoti. Agni, on the other hand, was not dissimilar to a contemporary electrician at some State Electricity Board in India! He even had two wires, one of them blue, which he placed on my heart and arced to measure the potency of the Fire there! I had been very anxious about the slow pace of my progress, but the Fellow simply touched me with those little wires and pronounced me in the best of health...a wholly unsatisfactory diagnosis, to say the least! The outcome being that I am closer to proving Agni's Bengali origin, since we conversed spontaneously in that tongue! Such disagreement aside, I saw in both Indra and Narad the regal splendence the Vedas invest gods with—the calm brilliance of immortality.

The day I awoke from the encounter with Varuna, I needed no second advice to take up seriously *The Secret of the Veda*, and am today just a hundred or so pages from the back cover. Every sentence has borne out the unified symbolism and profundity of these skirmishes, erasing quite the superficial Puranic notions most Indian children develop about these Deities. For example, my vague conception of Varuna as a Rain God, Sea God, even Wind God or something of the sort had been at variance with the Genius of the dream; so had been Narad's dignity and godliness compared to the divine prankster's antics in our grandmothers' stories! Sri Aurobindo's Vedic interpretations completely and independently corroborate the substantiality of these unsought audiences with the King-Guardians of the Truth-Light.

Even as I looked up Sri Aurobindo's book, I also consulted the Sanskrit dictionary which defines "Sushamā" as "exquisite beauty". Put two and two together, and it is easy to establish in "Sushamā" (who, incidentally, must have arrived on the scene in the vision after I had woken up on earth), and the flowers, the

water, the hidden hint of Mitra's presence, for Mitra is that Godhead who harmonises the elements of vast Varuna's Pure Power of Truth. To state a not inappropriate analogy, Mitra is to Varuna what Mahalakshmi-Mahasaraswati are to Maheshwari-Mahakali: that harmonising source of rich sweet entrancing Love, Beauty and exquisite Joy which is the *raison d'être* of the world's heartbeat, and the triple light-stream of the Supreme's Ananda.

For readers who are moved by this deep communion and eager to establish their own contact with these Truth-Powers, it is naturally recommended that *The Secret of the Veda* be read from cover to cover. However, a more specific accelerated approach would be to read chapter VII of the same book, as well as the chapter entitled "The Guardians of the Light" (page 421), succeeded by the Mitra-Varuna hymns (up to page 488). The love hymn (pp. 531-535) also provides a powerful insight. This may be followed up with a more contextual reading of the book from beginning to end, the better to create in oneself the Vedic spirit.

It would not be irrelevant to quote from my correspondence with the Mother, when some time in 1972 I wrote to Her in French, as usual, of my aspiration: "... and so, to say it in two words: become Divine." On this prayer She set Her seal of assured realisation, for She wrote back: "Persevere in your aspiration and your effort, and you will succeed. Blessings." I was fourteen then.

There seems to be every reason to believe that a huge awakening will overtake the world before the end of this year, and God shall have need of heroes. "...it is the hour of the unexpected, the incalculable, the immeasurable.... But most keep thy soul clear, even if for a while, of the clamour of the ego. Then shall a fire march before thee in the night and the storm be thy helper and thy flag shall wave on the highest height of greatness that was to be conquered." (*The Hour of God*—recent revision).

HUMOUR IN THE PLAYS OF SRI AUROBINDO

1—THE MAID IN THE MILL

“HUMOUR is the salt of life. Without it the earth would have gone to blazes long ago.” Thus wrote Sri Aurobindo the Master Yogi. His realisation of the Ananda Brahman, the Supreme as Bliss, seems to have created the most prominent facets of some of the characters in his comedies. In these plays an irrepressible urge to gaiety surfaces again and again, even in the face of disaster, doom and annihilation. These projections of the Divine Humourist are like dancing sunlit waves on a mighty ocean of laughter. Nothing can check them, be it rebellion or torture, impending destitution or certain death. The combined strengths of the furies unleashed by man’s ambition and ill-will are foiled by the living swords of delight such as Cydene and Diomedes of *Perseus the Deliverer*, and Nureddene, Doonya and Anice Aljalice of *The Viziers of Bassora*.

These delicate yet adamant, soft yet strong, lovable yet formidable, pliable yet unyielding creations of Sri Aurobindo are like echoes of the frolics of gods, an overflow of the Ananda that, according to Sri Aurobindo, is the substance of the universe. Happy in their speech these high-staking players are too irreverent to be awed by the pomposities of kings or the wrath of ignorant commoners. Who can imprison a smile? Or deny the waves their right to surge in uproarious joy? Let us lighten as well as enlighten our moments by a passing survey of feminine moonbeam beauties and their sunbeam male counterparts.

These women in Sri Aurobindo’s plays are no mere playthings of men. They are free human beings playing their sublime roles in the arena of life with a total disregard for decorum and norm, and the twin evils of seriousness and gloom have been banished from their hearts forever.

Most delightful amongst these luminaries, these roman candles of humour are Brigida, a cousin and companion of Ismenia, the heroine of the play *The Maid in the Mill*—an incomplete work of Sri Aurobindo’s—and her adversary, the whetting-stone for her razor-sharp wit Basil, cousin and comrade of the hero Antonio. Though this piece of fun and frolic and felicity remained incomplete yet there is enough to bring a glow to the gloomiest face. Brigida’s tongue is a veritable sword of Saraswati which annihilates by its nimble flame-thrusts the monumental ego of the renowned Basil who describes himself thus—

“... whom men call the witty and eloquent Basil? Did I not laugh from the womb? Was not my first cry a jest upon the world I came into? Did I not invent a conceit upon my mother’s milk ere I had sucked of it?”¹

In the second scene of Act I we see these two delightful and formidable adver-

¹ *Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library*, Vol. 7, p. 854.

saries come face to face. Their humour and wit clash and clang, sparks fly and side-splitting laughter leaves us weak and gasping. With consummate skill the author first makes Basil brag of his mental prowess, his sure technique that can drive beautiful maids to abject surrender, his flamboyant foolproof devices and schemes to subjugate them. The playwright gives him enough rope to hang himself a hundred times over. To the incredulous query of Antonio he answers,

“Flat treason! was not man made
 Woman’s superior that he might control her,
 In strength to exact obedience and in wisdom
 To guide her will, in wit to keep her silent,
 Three Herculean labours. O were women
 Once loose, they would new-deluge earth with words,
 Sapiently base creation on its apex,
 Logic would be new-modelled, arithmetic
 Grow drunk and reason despairing abdicate.
 No thunderbolt could stop a woman’s will
 Once it is started.”¹

He further elaborates to Antonio his method:

“Basil—First I would kiss her.
 Antonio—What, without leave asked?
 Basil—Leave? Ask a woman leave to kiss her! Why what was she made for else?
 Antonio—If she is angry?
 Basil—So much the better. Then you by repetition
 Convince her of your manly strength, which is
 A great point gained at the outset and moreover
 Your duty, comfortable to yourself.
 Besides she likes it. On the same occasion
 When she will scold, I’ll silence her with wit.
 Laughter breaks down impregnable battlements.
 Let me make her smile and there is conquest
 Won by the triple strength, horse, foot, artillery,
 Of eloquence, wit and muscle. Then but remains
 Pacification, with or else without
 The Church’s help, that’s a mere form and makes
 No difference to the principle.”²

Carried on by the force of his words he gives further free rein to his tongue—

¹ *Ibid*, p. 844.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 845-846.

"I'll teach that also. 'Tis but making her
 Realise her inferiority.
 Unanswerably and o'erwhelmingly
 Show her how fortunate she is to get you
 And all her life too short for gratitude;
 That you have robbed her merely for her good,
 To civilise her or to train her up:
 Punish each word that shows want of affection.
 Plague her to death and make her thank you for it.
 Accustom her to sing hosannas to you
 When you beat her. All this is ordinary,
 And every wise benevolent conqueror
 Has learnt the trick of it. Then she'll love you for ever."¹

After such high-sounding bragging it is but natural for the more reticent Antonio to challenge this "pen and paper strategist". The challenge is thrown and Basil picks up the gauntlet, and just then enters Brigida. For a moment her beauty and personality daunts even the supremely self-confident Basil and common sense tells him not to try his wild scheme on her. But he had gone too far in his bragging and with Antonio gently egging him on, it is too late for retreat. In his foolhardy confidence he thinks he will break this butterfly on the wheel of his satire, being innocently ignorant of the genius of this vivacious virago awaiting him in the wings. He proceeds to hang himself to the eternal delight of the readers. Brigida steps on the stage as if on cue. The duel is on, the adversaries seem well-matched, for isn't Basil the renowned wit and wisecracker of the town?

Basil little knows that what he has taken for a frail and pretty holiday-berge is the admiral's armed flagship itself. He fires the first exploratory shell by asking Brigida rather familiarly and patronizingly if the letter she had brought was for him,

"To me sweetheart?"

To this innocent-seeming query which is yet full of innuendos Brigida answers with a full broadside,

"I have the inventory of you in my books, if you be he truly. I will study it. Hair of the ordinary poetic length, dress indefinable, a modest address,—I think not you, Señor,—a noble manner,—Pooh, no! —a handsome face. I am sure not to you, Señor."²

Here in a few sentences Brigida reduces Basil to nothingness. He reels under this deadly fire from this most unexpected quarter. He fumes and fumbles and when Antonio laughing at his discomfiture asks him to open his batteries he begs for

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 846.

² *Ibid.*, p. 848.

a moment of respite. Meanwhile Brigida takes on Antonio and makes him ludicrous for his simple query—"...Fair one, from whom comes this?"—by answering "Why, Sir, I am not her signature; which if you will look within, there I doubt not you will find a solution of your difficulty."¹ She mocks with gentle solemnity the exaggerated emotional love-sickness of Antonio—

"Sir, you pale,
Extremely. Is there no poison in this letter?"²

While Brigida is thus laughing at the expense of Antonio, who is lost in the wordy missile of his lady-love, Basil wakens to the fact that his adversary though so young is a very clever one. He collects his scattered wits, recharges his batteries and newly loads his cannons with badinage, and lets go:

"Basil—Your face seems strangely familiar to me. Have I not seen you in some place where I constantly resort?"³

To this veiled innuendo Brigida at once answers with a hundred-dollar shot making a travesty of his own character by an equally seemingly innocent answer, "O! Sir, I hope you do not think so meanly of me. I am a poor girl but am honest."⁴

This whip-lash not only throws doubt on the character of Basil but also makes his companions and their haunts seem questionable. Poor Basil is left spluttering and stuttering "How, how?" Now the reader is treated to some superbly jocular word-play—

"Basil—You have a marvellously nimble tongue. Two words with you.

Brigida—Willingly, Señor, if you exceed not measure.

Basil—Fair one—

Brigida—Oh Sir, I am glad I listened. I like your two words extremely. God be with you.

Basil—Why, I have not begun yet.

Brigida—The more shame to your arithmetic. If your teacher had reckoned as loosely with his cane-cuts, he would have made the carefuller scholar.⁵

Basil is baulked at each step. Brigida makes him look like an uncouth village buffoon. He loses his temper and swears: "God's wounds, will you listen to me"?

Brigida—Well, Sir, I will not insist upon numbers. But pray, for your own sake,

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 849.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, p. 851.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 851-852.

swear no more. No eloquence will long stand such draft upon it.”¹

Thus with the help of jestful nonsense, waggery and wisecrack, pun and satire, Brigida brings down the edifice of the monumental ego of Don Basil. To this laughing sunbeam no flower is sacrosanct, no person too high. In the flame of her laughter are burnt to ashes all the comically grandiose schemes of Basil. He discovers that compared to this arc-light of the heavens, his brightness and sparkle are faint rays of an earthen lamp. Now he decides to put into action the “artillery of muscle power” by trying to kiss Brigida. Though his ego is tottering a little at the recent blows it has received, yet his male sense of superiority is still intact. He believes no girl can resist his macho personality and his fancy methods. He decides to seal Brigida’s lips once for all and put her in her proper womanly place, a willing slave to male strength. So without much fanfare he announces—

“Basil.... I will kiss you.

Brigida— Oh, Sir, that’s a prophecy. Well, death and kissing come to all of us, and by what disease the one or by whom the other, wise men care not to forecast. It profits little to study calamities beforehand. When it comes, if I cannot do better.

Basil— By my life, I will kiss you and without further respite.

Brigida— On what ground?

Basil— Have I not told you, you are beautiful?

Brigida— So has my mirror, not only once but a hundred times, and never yet offered to kiss me. When it does, I’ll allow your logic. No, we are already near enough to each other. Pray, keep your distance.

Basil— I will establish my argument with my lips.

Brigida— I will defend mine with my hand. I promise you it will prove the abler dialectician of the two.

Basil— Well.

Brigida— I am glad you think so, Señor.”²

Brigida’s words are a joyous and supremely self-confident mind’s nimble laughter-darts which unfailingly reach their mark, to penetrate and shatter the armour of Basil’s quick intellect. He seems to fumble for repartees which even if they come are too late and totally inadequate to parry the brilliant raillery of Brigida. She reduces Basil to abject defeat leaving him in impotent fury and futile regrets. But, while sailing away in victorious regalia just out of habit Brigida fires a parting salvo or two at the love-sick Antomo, an indirect barb at his over-effusive and gushing wordy torrent—

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Ibid.*, pp. 852-853.

“Hold, hold, Señor. You may tell her all this yourself. I would not remember the half of it and could not understand the other half.”¹

Yet she does not depart before giving a further pulverizing blow to the vanquished and annihilated Basil—

“Sir, if your sword be half as ready and irresistible as your tongue, I would gladly have you there with him, though St. Iago grant that neither proves necessary. You look sad, Sir, God save you for a witty and eloquent gentleman.”²

Thus she puts the seal of completeness on her victory and on Basil’s defeat. By the use of pun and parody, burlesque and word-play, the author weaves a romance of delight. The reader is left gasping like the out-classed and out-manoeuvred Basil at the quick wit, rapier-sharp repartees, dexterous turning and twisting of words, deadly irony, ambiguity, and witticism of this girl who is “but eighteen or a miracle.”³

Though in all fairness to Basil we must remember that Brigida knew of his reputation and so came fore-armed, yet Basil did not even dream that maids could encroach on the domain of intellect which he thought was the divine prerogative and exclusive privilege of males. Now he realises to his own cost that Brigida is an arrow shot from the bow of the god of wit and humour. He is dazzled, dashed, cowed and is left bemoaning.

“God grant that I am not bewitched also! Saints and angels! How is it? How did it happen? Is the sun still in heaven? Is that the song of a bird or a barrel-organ? I am not drunk either. I can still distinguish between a tree and a squirrel upon it. What, am I not Basil? whom men call the witty and eloquent Basil?... Death! And have I been bashed and beaten by the tongue of a girl? silenced by a common purveyor of impertinences? It is so and yet it cannot be. I begin to believe in the dogmas of the materialist. The gastric juice rises in my estimation. Genius is after all only a form of indigestion, a line of Shakespeare the apotheosis of a leg of mutton and the speculations of Plato an escape of diseased tissue arrested in the permanency of ink. What did I break my fast with this morning? Kipperred herring? Bread? Marmalade? Tea? O Kipperred herring, art thou the material form of stupidity and is marmalade an enemy of wit? It must be so. O mighty gastric juice! Mother and Saviour! I bow down before thee. Be propitious, fair goddess, to thy adorer.

“Arise, Basil. Today thou shalt retrieve thy tarnished laurels or be expunged for ever from the book of the witty. Arm thyself in full panoply of allusion

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 854

² *Ibid.*, p. 854.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 849.

and irony, gird on raillery like a sword and repartee like a buckler. I will meet this girl tonight. I will tunc her with conceits, torture her with ironies, tickle her with jests, prick her all over with epigrams. My wit shall smother her, tear her, burst her sides, press her to death, hang her, draw her, quarter her, and if all this fails, Death! as a last revenge, I'll marry her. Saints!"¹

(To be continued)

SHYAM KUMARI

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 854-55.

SWEET MOTHER

LIGHT-drops dewing their beauty's edge,
 Flowers blossom for Thy eyes' delight.
 Myriad hearts beat incessantly to animate matter
 With the immortal rhythms of Thy life divine.

Flamboyant arrows shot from some fathomless depth
 Blaze outbursts of Thy casual glance.
 These diamond star-lamps, held up by an ardent sky,
 Witness Thee walk a few moments on our earth-ways.

In midnight's soft hush I lie in the dust
 Hoping to find there an exalting trace of Thy touch,
 To glimpse the wonder of Thy universal Face,
 To drown in the oceans of Thy all-sustaining Love.

SHYAM KUMARI

JUNG'S RELEVANCE TO INDIA

PSYCHOLOGY AND PERSONALITY

(Continued from the issue of March 1987)

JUNG was primarily a psychiatrist and psychologist concerned with neurosis and later with human nature as such. But his approach to human nature was bold and free and he sought to understand it entirely and therefore went far and wide into it in search of its truth. His search was unhampered and he accepted no assumptions or postulates as is normally done by the science of psychology. He thus was able to build up a view of personality and exercised influence on other contemporary psychologists.

Jung's "Reflections" on 'psychology' and 'personality' would be specially valuable for those interested in psychology or engaged in personality studies.

At first, his observations regarding psychology.

"Pure Observation"

"We can see colours but not wave-lengths. This well-known fact must nowhere be more seriously held in view than in psychology. The operation of the personal equation has already begun in the act of observation. One sees what one can best see from oneself. Thus, first and foremost, one sees the mote in one's brother's eye. No doubt the mote is there, but the beam sits in one's own—and may somewhat hinder the act of seeing. I misdoubt the principle of 'pure observation' in so-called objective Psychology, unless one confines oneself to the eyepieces of the chronoscope, or to the ergograph and such 'psychological' apparatus. With such methods one also insures oneself against too great a yield of experimental psychological facts. But the personal psychological equation becomes even more important in the presentation or the communication of observations, to say nothing of the interpretation and abstraction of the experimental material. Nowhere, as in psychology, is the basic requirement so indispensable that the observer and investigator should be adequate to his object, in the sense that he should be able to see not the subject only but also the object. The demand that he should see only objectively is quite out of the question, for it is impossible. We may well be satisfied if we do not see too subjectively."¹

Validity of Different Points of View

"Every psychologist should first and foremost be convinced that his point of view is primarily his own subjective prejudice. This prejudice is however as good as

¹ C. G. Jung, *Psychological Reflections*, pp. 163-4, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London.

another, and can very probably serve as a basic assumption for many other people. It is therefore usually worthwhile applying such a point of view as widely as possible. It will doubtless bear fruit of a certain usefulness. But under no circumstances should we indulge in the unscientific illusion, only a belief whose shadow-side is impatience and fanaticism. Contradictory views are necessary to the birth of a science; only they should not be set up in opposition to each other, but should be synthesized as soon as possible."¹

Many Psychologies and Many Philosophies

"I believe there are as many psychologies as philosophies, for there is also no one single philosophy, but many. I mention this for the reason that philosophy and psychology are linked by indissoluble bonds which are kept in being by the interrelation of their subject-matters. Psychology takes the psyche for its subject-matter, and philosophy—to put it briefly—takes the world."²

*

"Until recently psychology was a special branch of philosophy, but now we are coming to something which Nietzsche foresaw—the ascendancy of psychology in its own right. It is even threatening to swallow philosophy. The inner resemblance of the two disciplines consists in this, that both are systems of opinion about a subject-matter which cannot be fully experienced and therefore cannot be comprehended by a purely empirical approach. Both fields of study thus encourage speculation, with the result that opinions are formed in such variety and profusion that heavy volumes are needed to contain them all, whether they belong to the one field or to the other. Neither discipline can do without the other, and the one always furnishes the implicit—and frequently even unconscious—primary assumptions of the other."³

The Individual and the Herd

Jung's 'Reflections' on 'Personality' too are a great many. Here are a few of them.

"The development of personality from its germinal state to full consciousness is at once a charisma and a curse. Its first result is the conscious and unavoidable separation of the single being from the undifferentiated and unconscious herd."⁴

"At the beginning, the personality is never that which it becomes later. Therefore, at least in the first half of life, there is the possibility of an increase in persona-

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

² *Ibid.*, p. 171.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 170-71.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 275.

lity. This can happen as the result of addition from without, through new and vital contents streaming into the personality from without and being assimilated by the latter. In this way a considerable growth of personality can be experienced. Therefore we readily assume that this growth only comes from outside, and base on this the assumption that we can become a personality if we succeed in cramming in as much as possible from outside. But the more we follow this recipe, and the more we believe that all additional growth comes from without, the poorer we become inwardly. Therefore, when a great idea takes hold of us from without, we should realize that it only grips us because something within us comes to meet it half way and corresponds to it. The possession of psychic readiness is what signifies riches, not the piling up of hunting trophies. Everything which comes from without becomes our own only when we are capable of an inner spaciousness which corresponds to the size of the outer increase. The actual increase in personality is the becoming conscious of a widening, which flows from inner sources. Without the inner breath we are never related to the size of our object. It is therefore right to say that a man grows with the size of his task. But he must have within him the ability to grow, otherwise the most difficult task will be no use to him; at the most he will break himself upon it."¹

"Personality is a germ in the child that can develop only by slow stages in and through life. No personality is manifested without definiteness, fulness, and maturity. These three characteristics do not, and should not, fit the child, for they would rob it of its childhood."²

"Everything good is costly, and the development of the personality is one of the most costly of all things. It is a question of yea-saying to oneself, of taking the self as the most serious of tasks, keeping conscious of everything done, and keeping it constantly before one's eyes in all its dubious aspects—truly a task that touches us to the core."³

"Personality can never develop itself unless the individual chooses his own way consciously and with conscious moral decision. Not only the causal motive, the need, but a conscious moral decision must lend its strength to the process of the development of personality."⁴

Concluding Remarks

Jung's observations on Psychology are interesting. He insists that there will always be many Psychologies. But about this the psychologists feel worried. It is because of the subject-matter of Psychology, which is the human Psyche or personality, a field indefinite and undefinable.

Philosophy's subject-matter too is vast, the world or existence. And the Philo-

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 276.

² *Ibid.*, p. 277.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 279.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 279.

sophies have always been many and will always be so.

On 'Personality' Jung's observations are even more interesting. To be conscious of oneself, more and more, of each act and thought, is the secret of it. But that is only the process. Personality comes to its own when one, through such increasing consciousness, comes to discover the central fact, which commands the wide complexity of life, the 'centre' or 'self' as affirmed by Jung.

INDRA SEN

THE SONG OF THE LORD

THE GITA WITHOUT COMMENT

(Continued from the joint issue of January-February 1987)

Chapter XVI

1. The Lord said:
“Without fear, of pure heart, firm in Knowledge and Yoga, generous, controlled, who sacrifice and contemplate, who are austere and direct,
2. not harmful, true, without anger, surrendered, peaceful, without slander, compassionate to all, without greed, gentle, modest, not restless,
3. who have bright vigour, forgiveness, fortitude, cleanliness, not hateful, not arrogant: such are those born into the godly state.
4. Vanity, pride, conceit, anger, harshness, ignorance, O Partha, go to those born into a demonic state.
5. The godly condition is thought to be for liberation, the demonic for bondage. Grieve not, O Pandava, you are born with a godly nature.
6. There are in this world two sorts of people: godly and demonic. The godly have been fully described. Hear from Me of the demonic, O Partha.
7. Demonic men know neither action nor inaction, purity nor right conduct, nor is truth known to them.
8. ‘This world is not founded on Truth,’ they say. ‘Godless, created by contacts, it can have only lust for cause.’
9. Holding this view, these ruined souls with small minds come forth as enemies of the world, acting violently for its destruction.
10. Living for insatiable desire, filled with hypocrisy, pride and arrogance, holding untrue ideas from delusion, they work with impure motives.
11. Given to unending worries which only end with death, they are sure that the highest is the enjoyment of desire and that this is all.
12. Tied by a hundred expectant bonds, given to lust and anger, they strive by unscrupulous means and accumulate things to sate desire.
13. ‘Today I have gained this, this I wish to obtain. This is mine and, further, that wealth shall also be mine.
14. I have killed that foe. Others I shall kill. I am a Lord, I enjoy, I am accomplished, I am strong, I am fortunate.
15. I am rich and high-born. Who is my equal? I will sacrifice and be generous. I will rejoice.’ Deluded by ignorance,
16. with an agitated mind, caught in the tangle of confusion, addicted to the satisfaction of desire, they fall into a foul hell.
17. Conceited, stubborn, drunk with the pride of wealth, they perform sacrifices only in name, through vanity, disregarding precepts.
18. Given to egoism, power, lust and anger, these spiteful people hate Me in their own and in others’ bodies.

19. Those who hate, who are cruel in the world, the worst of men, impure, I cast continually into demonic wombs.
20. Pulled into demonic wombs birth after birth, deluded, never reaching Me, Kaunteya, they go to yet lower conditions.
21. Threefold is this gate of hell, the ruin of a soul: lust, anger and greed. Therefore, these should be abandoned.
22. The man who is free of these three gates to darkness follows the good of his soul and arrives at the Supreme Goal.
23. One who disregards the knowledge of the Shastras and acts from the impulse of desire, he reaches not perfection, nor happiness, nor the Supreme Goal.
24. Therefore, the Shastra is the authority for what to do or not to do. Knowing the precepts of the Shastras, you should act in the world.

OM TAT SAT

Here ends the sixteenth chapter called 'The Yoga of the Godly and Demonic' in the dialogue of Sri Krishna and Arjuna, in Brahman-Knowledge, in Yoga-Discipline, in the Divine Songs of the Upanishads.

Chapter XVII

1. Arjuna said:
"Those who disregard the scriptural precepts, yet sacrifice with faith, what is their condition, O Krishna; Sattvic, Rajasic or Tamasic?"
2. The Lord said:
"Threefold is the faith of the incarnate soul, born of its nature: Sattvic, Rajasic and even Tamasic. Hear now of these.
3. Faith accords with the nature of each person, O Bharata. Man is made of faith. As is his faith, so is he.
4. Sattvic people sacrifice to the Gods, Rajasic people to demons and fiends. Others, the Tamasic people sacrifice to ghosts and nature-spirits.
5. Those who exert themselves in violent austerities not ordained by scripture, men harnessed to conceit and egoism, filled with the power of passion and desire,
6. tormenting the integrity of the body, unconscious of Me placed within the body, know them as demonically resolved.
7. Even the food of each person is liked in a threefold way as also sacrifice, austerity and generosity. Hear the differences.
8. Foods which give life, purity, strength, health, happiness, good appetite and are tasty, soft, substantial and agreeable are liked by Sattvic people.
9. Bitter, sour, salty, too hot, pungent, dry, burning: these foods are desired by Rajasic people and produce pain, grief and disease.
10. Food spoiled, tasteless, putrid, left overnight, left by others and impure is liked by Tamasic people.

11. With no desire for result, as directed by the precepts, with mind firm that it should be offered, thus it is given: that sacrifice is Sattvic.
12. But that sacrifice which is offered through ostentation, seeking reward, know that as Rajasic, O Best of the Bharatas.
13. The sacrifice not in keeping with the precepts, with no food offered, with no mantra, gifts or faith is called Tamasic.
14. Worship of the Gods, the twice-born, the Guru, the wise, cleanliness, forthrightness, continence, non-injury: this is called the askesis of the body.
15. Speech which does not excite, which is true, kind, helpful, the repetition of scripture: this is called the askesis of speech.
16. A composed mind, gentleness, silence, self-control, purity of nature: this is called the askesis of the mind.
17. This triple askesis done in full faith by whole men not yearning for results is said to be Sattwic.
18. Askesis arrogantly done with thought for attention and adulation is called Rajasic. It is unsettled and irresolute.
19. Askesis done with deluded notions, which tortures oneself or for the ruin of another, that is called Tamasic.
20. The gift which is given because it should be, without return, in the right place at the right time to the right person is known as a Sattwic gift.
21. But the gift given for the sake of return, seeking results, or reluctantly, that gift is known as Rajasic.
22. The gift given at the wrong place and time, to the wrong person, impolitely and insultingly, that is called Tamasic.
23. 'OM TAT SAT': this is regarded as the triple name of the Brahman, from which the Brahmanas, the Vedas and Sacrifice were made of old.
24. Therefore, all acts of sacrifice, offering and askesis are always begun as directed by scripture, by the knowers of Brahman, with the sounding of AUM.
25. 'TAT' is in the many acts of sacrifice and askesis, in acts of offering done by the seekers of liberation who seek not results.
26. 'SAT' is employed for 'Reality' for 'Goodness'. Also, the word 'SAT' is used to mean an auspicious act, O Partha.
27. 'SAT' is also in Sacrifice, in Askesis, in Stability. And 'SAT' is called 'action for the sake of TAT'.
28. The askesis practised, the sacrifice given, whatever is done without faith is called 'ASAT', O Partha. It is as nothing either here or hereafter."

OM TAT SAT

Here ends the seventeenth chapter called 'The Yoga of the Threefold Faith' in the dialogue of Sri Krishna and Arjuna, in Brahman-Knowledge, in Yoga-Discipline, in the Divine Songs of the Upanishads.

Translated by DHRUVA

SAVITRI'S INITIATION INTO YOGA

(Continued from the joint issue of January-February 1987)

7. The Desert of Coming Days and Death's Door of Escape

THE year was almost coming to an end and there was as yet no way out, no hint, no suggestion, no indication or guidance how Savitri was going to face the moment of death. Pressing grief back into her breast she dwelt within, silent, unhelped, alone. In that grief she saw the desert of her coming days. An unfulfilled life is a miserable thing to live. The future lies forlorn and Time moves with the cruelty of an enemy. Society has no respect for such a woman. She is looked down upon and suspected. It is worse than exile or banishment.

Will Savitri accept such a weary-dreary life of widowhood or will it be better to get consumed in the funeral flames? The pain of separation from her lover would then be dissolved in the bodiless union in another world. Rising from the flames Satyavan and Savitri would emerge always to live together. That fiery union would be death-transcendent. *Voilà*, love escaping death to be deathless! Love adopting death as a quick means for love's immortality! From the pyre would emerge luminous Savitri following in the footsteps of Satyavan.

But even if she were to enter into a world of bliss after death, she would disdain it as it would be a bliss attained elsewhere and not on the earth. She felt her mission to be earth-glorifying. Indeed, she was seriously concerned about her sad and old helpless in-laws who would be left behind without anyone attending on them. In them her own personal grief assumed a cosmic dimension. Apart from her individual happiness, if at all that would have come by crossing the door of escape, she recognised the need to wipe away grief from the suffering world. Therefore, she arrived at the conclusion that the reward for going as Sati on the pyre of her dead husband would not be a bliss worth dying for. She eliminated from her mind one possibility.

But was the thought of the sad parents-in-law so overwhelming in her mind that she preferred the desert of the coming days? That would have made the whole Sati ideal a sham and a puerile affair. Was it that she loved them more than her own husband? But the grief of these parents and her own personal fate epitomised the whole tortured world. The ages had pressed their pain into her single woe. Now accepting the world-grief as a part of her grief she had advanced to a higher level. She was now more inclined and prepared to bear the scorching heat of desert-days stretching ahead of her. In that sublimated state of human consciousness she sat in the silent chamber of her heart expecting the hidden Presence to show her the way.

8. Grief's Calm Self

Yet no answer came. The hand of Death would soon take Satyavan away from her. Savitri's love and passion would be of no avail. And yet she was an inspired prophetess and saviour who came to clasp grief that it may die in her arms. But she was still too

human, and grief was all-powerful, and love too frail to achieve this victory. Keeping her love as in a cloister, secluded from surroundings, in the safety of her bosom, she lived in the expectation that nothing would touch it, no evil would harm it. She did not know what unknown powers and hidden gods governed her love and fate. She was expressionless, mute, silent, suffering inwardly, making an offering of her sorrow to them. The unappeased God of Pain waited "the daily oblation of her unwept tears." Her life was an altar and she herself became the sacrifice. Yet nothing happened. What more did he expect from her? She did not know.

The role of this God of Pain, harsh in his divinity, is to guard the Abyss. How can then the tears, whether they are wept or unwept, wash away his existence? Certainly, not by being helpless but only by conquering Death could she appease this God, and deal with all within her that awoke with a "pang divine."

Her doomed lover, her personal grief, the tortured world, the unappeased God of Pain—they were all silent actors in this strange drama of her life. Therefore, cloistering her love she lived until it seemed that no power could rend the lovers apart. There was no reason then to suspect that their love was a transient and fleeting thing in the worldly course. They rushed into each other and even the body's wall could not separate their beings from each another. All-love's glorious moment was fulfilled. The issue had vanished. There was neither love nor grief nor the tortured world; there wasn't even the God of Pain.

Now she became so calm in grief that nothing really mattered, not even the imminent doom, the immediate cause of her grief itself. No frenzy, no turmoil, no fury, no agitation, no outburst of emotion. Such a tremendous calm was already her human siddhi and first victory, a necessary condition for starting the yogic life. She contained all grief in her heart and her sorrow almost became soul-changed. In that her strength became measureless.

Savitri's sadhana had already begun when, through the love of life, she made her self of grief calm. Her external nature had fallen quiet. All the arguments and mental reasonings had stopped. Now even the crashing of the thunder above her head and the hissing of winds and the pattering of raindrops as of a million footsteps did not disturb her. Her vital nature too was calm. The pulsation of life assumed a different quiescent beat.

Grief's self became calm, dull-eyed, resolute
 Awaiting some issue of its fiery struggle,
 Some deed in which it might for ever cease,
 Victorious over itself and death and tears.¹

A calm resignation with faith in love's future was the solution she had found in the difficult predicament of her human life.

¹ *Savitri*, p. 473.

9. Siddhi of Love's Sadhana

Savitri had an inner certitude that her love would be able to face death. But she had no certain knowledge as to how she should prepare to meet that dire moment drawing near. Yet in the deep recesses of her heart she had a faith that she would get the necessary knowledge too. She had even a kind of conviction that no contingencies and cruelties of life could take Satyavan away from her. For her there was no question of bending or bowing in front of the ministers of misfortune; that was not in her nature at all. Faith in the soul's love—love that will bring the necessary knowledge was her human sadhana. By practising this she succeeded in arriving up to the stage of grief's calm self.

In the silent hours when she made an offering of her unshed tears to the God of Pain, she had almost secretly performed the Sati-act of uniting herself with her lover. They grew inseparably one. That was her sadhana of love. Their conjugality had transcended itself into a heavenly union. Each passing day had brought them closer to the point of fusion, the lover and the beloved becoming inwardly one and yet remaining separate to love.

Fed on grief and sorrow her love became more and more invulnerable and indestructible. Its immortality was an aspect of Savitri's own person. Though appearing to be circumstantial, it possessed the strength and power of her own secret spirit. Nothing could have destroyed it. The blows of Fate and Time were ineffectual against that tower of indomitable might. Love gave her divine strength to calm down her self of grief.

Savitri's personal struggle assumed the wide dimension of the universe when she saw that the God of Pain was unappeased with her oblations. Why was he still unappeased? Was Savitri's love wide enough to embrace the universal grief? In a way yes, it was wide enough. The alchemy of her love turned the whole grey mass made of grief, sorrow and torment into a shining substance of beauty, joy and sweetness. She expanded and held her lover in her embrace. She grew wide and took the entire world, epitomised by her in-laws, to her bosom. Even the doom in the cast of a holocaust-sacrifice became food for growing love. The brooding of the woods, the moan of the streams, the helpless immobility of the mountains turned into bright moods and into cadences of sweetness and into high soaring hopes. Nothing mattered and all those blightsome prophecies became an occasion for love's immortal flaming. Her conscious spirit walked with Satyavan. That was her love's finest victory. The siddhi of her conjugal union was achieved.

The road that was foreseen by Savitri, and by Narad, and by all-wise Fate, was traversed. Savitri's coming to the destined place at the destined hour was itself an aspect of the secret working of the divine Mother who guided her at every step to fulfil in the earth-consciousness her high mission.

But more than that. The divine Mother herself was Savitri who had taken this road on purpose. She had accepted ignorance as a quick means for reaching her goal.

She took birth in this human tribe. The divine Shakti identified herself with the earth-nature and condescended to be the subject of Fate and Time and Chance. This immanence and presence in the secret heart of things was an assurance that the great change and transfiguration would take place. The earthly Savitri suffered until she became the calm self of grief. The divine Savitri triumphed within so that the instrument was now ready for the yogic action and for the initiation of the great and mighty work paving the way towards earthly immortality and transformation.

10. A Summons

The self of grief has become calm and Savitri is sitting silent in the privacy of her soul. Her mind is the undisturbed depth of a blue pond and her heart an unwavering flame of inward and upward intensity. It is in this psychological state that suddenly in the vigilance of the night she receives a summons from her being's summits. Not a voice from within, a prompter's hint, a suggestion, a whisper, but an authoritative command from high above to wake up and get ready to face and vanquish Fate. It cuts across all that is dark and mortal. It invades the lower regions and is determined to establish itself here below. It will brook no opposition, will not get muffled or lost in the chaos of this world. Savitri must obey it.

But only when her nature fell quiet did the mighty Voice invade her. Had it not been so it would have got frittered though coming from the highest source. Savitri was now in a state to receive the secret initiation. It was as if Fate, Time, Circumstance, Destiny all conspired for the mighty Voice's arrival. The human instrument was delivered out of the sombre night for the divine use. The supreme Will and Knowledge would now guide her on the path of an apocalypse.

The command of the Voice is a major event in the inner life of Savitri. Indeed it is impossible to gauge the profundity of its purpose and consequence. This is particularly so because it is from the summits of Savitri's being that the Voice is coming. We may perhaps get some idea or understand the importance of this if only we can know the skies whereunto the peaks of inwardness rise. Savitri is the divine Incarnation in the earth-consciousness: her original birth is in that high inaccessible divinity, but she is here for an earthly work. Actually, it is the Chit-Shakti, the Consciousness-Force, who is doing in the field of Ignorance and Inconscience her own occult work in the person of Savitri; Savitri is that Chit-Shakti here. But now this Savitri has first to discover her own transcendent self and get ready for the advent of the Chit-Shakti. The two have to join and identify themselves with each other. The kindled flame has to receive the sun-luminous Force of the transcendent Mother.

Chit-Shakti and Savitri, originally one but evolutionarily divided, together carry on the work of the Supreme in the earth-consciousness. The power that had descended here and accepted the burden of the lower nature has to unite with the power that works from above. Savitri and the divine Mother are therefore fundamentally

one but functionally two, separated from each other by the curtain of evolution. This has now to be lifted up so that evolution may progress directly in the consciousness of the divine Mother herself.

Savitri is the eternal child of that consciousness on the earth. Therefore, there is the divine Mother's concern for her. Because she herself has become that child, there is already the knowledge and identity of the above with the below. It has to be now realised the other way round too. That would be the Yoga of the divine Mother in the earth-consciousness. Indeed, evolution is the Mother's own Yoga here with the sanction of the Supreme. Evolution is her burden and her joy because it is her Lord's work that she is really doing here.

Now that all the forces have converged at the destined place and time, the Chit-Shakti commands Savitri to throw away the veil and prepare for the mighty action. She has to face with her bare soul Time and Fate. The *kāla-puruṣa*, the Time-Person, can be met only with the strength of that luminous inner fire. What could have been beauty and harmony in the unfoldment of the divine delight has turned into a dreadful and ugly-ghastly person devouring all that is noble and high, driving creation towards dissolution. This utterly deformed Time-Person presents himself inexorable Fate. It is to fight against him that the command comes. It comes from such a high summit that it can measure up to the strength of the dark adversary. It is a Voice absolute and wise.

In the silent hours the call of the Voice touches Savitri. The receiving instrument located in the depths of darkness suddenly grows aware of the power that flows into it from some high unknown source; it quivers to its forceful will. When everything else had failed because of its weakness and mortality, when there was no helping hand available even from the nearest and dearest to her, she sat silent in her self and received the highest injunction. When twelve passionate months were on the verge of the day of fate and within and without all seemed dark, Savitri was drawing closer to God.

An absolute supernatural darkness falls
 On man sometimes when he draws near to God:
 An hour comes when fail all Nature's means;
 Forced out from the protecting Ignorance
 And flung back on his naked primal need,
 He at length must cast from him his surface soul
 And be the ungarbed entity within:
 That hour had fallen now on Savitri.
 A point she had reached where life must be in vain
 Or, in her unborn element awake,
 Her will must cancel her body's destiny.¹

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

It is in this state of consciousness that Savitri receives the command to get out of the surface soul and live within.

But did Savitri expect the Voice to come and lead her out of that darkness? It is true that she had made her life an altar and had offered her days to the hidden gods, but that was for the sake of her love. She had awaited some fiery issue out of her superhuman struggle. In what manner and how and when would she come out of it? About that she had not the least notion or idea. In fact, she had resigned herself completely; in that totally helpless and hopeless situation she was not even expecting anything. There was no call from within to do Yoga. She had accepted Fate and, in her case, dejection in life did not become a cause for God-seeking. The only merit was that grief's self had become calm. Savitri did not expect someone to come and give her instructions.

Not the call but a command is what gives the start to Savitri's spiritual life. A beginning made out of life's dejection would not have been successful, nor would it have been compatible with her mission, nor was it commensurate with her lofty noble nature. Savitri's Yoga is born from on high. She is asked and persuaded to do it.

There is a threefold meaning and necessity in the Yoga of Savitri. Fundamentally, this is a battle between God and Fate and therefore the divine intervention is there at every stage and hence has to be there at such a crucial juncture too. Because it is such a high action the divine victory is sure. Savitri is the sword of that victory and conquest. On the occult level it is the divine Shakti actually carrying the evolution through the instrumentation of the human Savitri who is her own self. But seen on an intimate personal level it is the concern of the divine Mother for her earth-born child. She is therefore always here to guide and protect her. The command is a part of that action.

II. The Intimacy

The Voice although coming from the inaccessible heights is yet intimate not only with Savitri but also with all the world. It knows both the movements of Time and the eternal destiny of the cosmic creation; it is "the Word that knows."¹ In the Voice there is knowledge and there is action, but more than that there is the divine concern for the earth. Not the static Brahman or the witness Purusha silent and watching things and events from a distance, but a Mother-Power directly involved in the whole earthly evolution has stepped out to lead and to take it further up. The divine tapasya in the body of ignorance, even in the body of night, is being carried by her by accepting the travail and the destiny. Here is the high supervision to lead evolution from ignorance to knowledge. In Savitri's fate is gathered the fate of the entire world. Therefore the Voice, though far yet intimate, comes again and again at each stage of her sadhana. Such an intimacy and such a concern are the Mother-aspect of the Divine in manifestation.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 28

And yet it is from the summits of the being of Savitri herself that the Voice comes. It is the divine Savitri who, is initiating the human Savitri into Yoga. It is Savitri's own higher self that comes forward and downward and overtakes the other lower self that has accepted the human nature. Savitri is setting Savitri on the path. The governing of the lower by the higher is the certitude of the lower's success; the higher descending into the lower is the replacement of the mechanism of fate by the spirit's free-will. The two conjointly carry the divine task in conditions of the earth-nature.

Only when such a call comes, and only when it is heard, can the real sadhana begin. Each one of us does receive the divine command from our own being's summits, but often it gets lost or drowned in the flood of surface consciousness. Savitri, now calm towards external events and Time's contingencies, has become a ready receptacle for the supreme *ādeśa*, the *ādeśa* of her own highest being. The *ādeśa* received by the Avatar is the command directly coming from his divine self. The *ādeśa* has always that stamp and bearing and character of the individual. Each one of us gets a separate personal *ādeśa* and has a separate personal path to tread. Savitri's Yoga is Savitri's. It is Savitri who is really commanding Savitri. The divine Savitri, through her instrument, is waging the battle against the all-powerful Time-Person or *kāla-puruṣa*.

The Ajna-Chakra

The invading Voice first touches the ajna-chakra of the subtle-physical body. This is the centre of occult sight and action where will and knowledge meet. Located in the middle of the forehead between the eyebrows, it governs the dynamic mind, will and vision. The seer-will presides over this region. Once opened—it is a white lotus with two petals—the higher force and knowledge start flowing from it into all the parts of being and consciousness. It becomes an effective channel and instrument for the working of the divine Shakti whose action is at once knowledge and will. The expression and effectuation of the knowledge-will is a material certainty of the lower progressing towards the higher. It is on Savitri's forehead that the word of fate was written and it is as if to wipe away this dark script and the sombre foreboding that the first decisive divine descent happens to take place there.

In the Yoga of Savitri it is not the usual upsurge of the serpent-power, kundalini, rising from the Muladhara to the thousand-petalled lotus above the crown, but it is the Shakti who herself is descending from the higher centres into the lower. In her case it is the rush of Maha-kundalini from her transcendent home down into the Inconscience. What is seized in the instrument for this purpose is the centre of knowledge-will: this is because the action has to come down into the most material-physical consciousness. It is the dynamism of knowledge-will in action that can accomplish the task of vanquishing Time and Fate.

Therefore, even as the Voice touches the ajna-chakra, Savitri's body becomes

“a stark/And rigid golden statue of motionless trance.”¹ The calmness of the grief's self now assumes the stability and immobility of a high spiritual poise. Nothing can shake or disturb the peace the Voice has brought to her.

Savitri has become “A stone of God lit by an amethyst soul.”² The Greeks believed that this stone prevented intoxication. Savitri could now keep on drinking God's glory without getting drunk with it. It is into this trance that she enters.

This motionless trance is the first spiritual experience Savitri gets with the coming of the Voice. Even more than that: it is not only within herself that the stillness is experienced; it is a universal phenomenon:

Around her body's stillness all grew still.³

She has become the radiating centre of a vast and luminous peace. A first decisive transition into the yogic consciousness has occurred.

Her grief's self is calm; her mind has renounced thought and has become silent; her body is still like a stone of God; her heart is in resonance with the slow measured beats of the mighty and uplifting Voice. The command has come. Savitri's spiritual journey can now begin.

(To be continued)

R. Y. DESHPANDE

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 474.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

A WEEK IN COURTALLAM

(Continued from the issue of March 1987)

8

C. is really only a village: I have seen a small primary school operating in a *mandapam*, but older children presumably have to go to school in S. or T, each about 5km away. From the bus-stand one passes the usual Annai Statue (freshly garlanded to a 21-rocket salute this Sunday morning) and crosses the bridge over the river, where the paddy-bird fishes in the deep shady pool. The road bears to the right; the pedestrian bazaar forks left and snakes along the river-bank: barbers, vegetable vendors, stalls for cigarettes and soap—lots and lots of soap—tea-shops, several cloth-shops selling mainly the fine hand-woven towels which the men use for bathing in and, as one draws nearer to the temple, a veritable country-fair of photographers' booths and souvenir stalls. These are of four kinds: knives and baskets, attractive local produce; eatables—also all local produce—nutmeg pickles, jaggery sweets in plaited boxes, spices, banana-chips and other snacks; then kitchen equipment—mostly tin or cheap plastic, presumably just the thing for Tamil housewives on their day out; and toys—also cheap and horrible, but of course one has to buy *something* for the children. Then comes the temple—quite a large complex, which stretches northward around the hillside as far as the main road and even beyond it. A couple of attractive old *mandapams* have got swallowed up and hidden by the stalls, the old bathing ghats have been walled up, but a Ganesh shrine stands under a massive tree near the river. Here a row of sadhus sit hopefully with banana leaves in front of them at lunch-time. On the right is the main temple-entrance. One evening we went inside and found that several small shrines had been amalgamated, surrounded by a wall and roofed over, creating a complex network of courts and altars. They allowed us to go right up to the main shrine to receive blessings, there was none of the exclusiveness of some stricter South Indian temples; nevertheless I always feel uncomfortable in such a place—as in many Catholic churches in Europe; they are so patently meant for ritual, these places, and I do not know the rituals and cannot feel at ease with the Lord in these dark, incense-filled spaces. Outside the main building are open grassy spaces, shaded by huge trees and enringed by buildings: dharmashalas and offices probably; higher up are the carts for the deities: beautifully carved wooden chariots with massive solid wheels; there are many of them, each standing by its high stone mounting-block and covered by a pyramidal corrugated tin roof. Along the river-bank beside and beyond the temple the bazaar continues as fruit-stands, tea-stalls and then the bath-oil shops, leading up to the real glory of the place, the basis for everything else: the waterfalls. A new-looking bridge takes us across the river, giving a good view of the falls and the bathers. On the opposite side are changing-rooms, more oil-stalls, and the Post-Office. Here there is always a merry crowd, more or less undressed, oiled and dripping. Ladies go to the left to stand under the torrent with their hair streaming, getting soaked in their gay-coloured

saris or petticoats; men go to the right, and bathe in underpants or wrapped in towels. The water makes a tremendous noise, everyone has to shout to make themselves heard, children scream and laugh. First you oil yourself shiny, then go and stand under the falls to get wet, then use soap and shampoo if you have them, and go back again to get rinsed clean. When you have been thoroughly doused and pounded and purified by the descending torrent you can stand about until you are reasonably dry, put on clean clothes, and return to the river to wash the things you have taken off. These you can spread out along the banks or on the railings of the bridge, and have a tea and snack or just watch the gay scene until they are dry. The water, which is said to flow down from the mountains through fields or medicinal herbs, is tremendously invigorating; just to watch the scene and sniff the spray is fun, so there is always a very cheerful atmosphere; and the little town is smiling and clean to match its major attraction.

We are here in the 'off-season', and were warned before coming that there was 'no water' in the falls. It is true that the flow seems only about a quarter of what we experienced here four years ago at this same time of year. Nevertheless, every day, at all hours and even after dark, whenever we go to look, at least a couple of hundred people are splashing and gasping and laughing and getting clean in the wonderful water. We wonder what it must be like in the real season, in June and July and August, when thousands of people must converge on this little village. Most of the buildings are lodging houses or cottages for rent, some private, many provided by the municipality. Now most of these are closed; the visitors who come are mainly day-visitors who do not stay overnight; those who do, stay only for a night or two. Last weekend some of the big villas on the outskirts were occupied for a couple of nights; now only servants guard the silent premises. But in the season there must be many like us who stay longer and take the time to go off the beaten track and enjoy the lovely surrounding countryside, explore the upper valleys and bathe in remoter, less crowded waterfalls.

The town stands between forest and 'wet-lands'—cleared plain that is well-watered enough to support several crops of paddy a year. On the lower hills are teak and spice plantations, higher up wild forest which nevertheless seems very well-maintained and harvested for timber. Each afternoon a procession of women and lads emerges from the forest bearing long loads of firewood on their heads through the rice-fields towards the railway—it must be sent by train to bigger cities.

One day we went up even beyond the trees and found that citronella grass had been planted on the steep upper slopes: cows were browsing there, and it must be very helpful against dangerous erosion, as well as providing valuable oil.

Where the flat lands begin are orchards of coconut and mango, and then the lovely green sea of the rice-fields. Watercourses and reservoirs are bordered with coconut or tamarind trees, and every inch of ground seems to be producing... a very pleasant prosperous-looking countryside.

There has been only a sprinkle or two of rain since we arrived here almost a

week ago, and today even the clouds that had clung along the mountain-tops were gone—the western monsoon is well and truly over. Rain should come here from the east in a few weeks. Until then the farmers must depend on the streams that come down from the mountains—and this year it seems the flow has been poor, we saw that many reservoirs were dry or nearly empty. But the rice is almost ready for harvesting, lovely, green and lush; and the forests are cool and leafy, though many streams are silent.

When we arrived at Tiger Falls today, surprise! Not a drop of water! Has the stream dried up completely in the few days since we were last here? Or has it been diverted higher up, perhaps to the rice-fields, to fill some reservoir, now that the season is over? We continued on up into the valley, to see whether 'our' waterfall too had dried up. We wanted to explore a little upstream from it, on the path we discovered last Saturday. It had not: there came a moment when in the silent woods we could hear the lovely music of falling water, and after a while from a bend in our path we could see the thin veil trickling over into its little pool.

Now I sit near the upper stream. Here the rocks are ribbed and grooved like the roots of petrified trees, where the water slides over. It is not deep, and very clear. Many tiny black snails cling to the stream-bottom; and if I put my toes in, small fish like sticklebacks come to nibble them. On the surface are many 'water-boatmen' sculling backwards and forwards with their oars—the middle pair of legs, —while the hind and forelegs rest on the surface like the outriggers of a catamaran. Indeed it is difficult to tell which is back and which is front for them. Only if you look closely you can see a pair of antennae between the shorter, bent legs, which presumably are at the front. Where the outriggers rest on the water, there is a dimpling of the surface. They can see me. If I move they become extremely agitated and scull about so quickly that the whole surface of the pool gets rippled. Another kind of craft is also afloat, more dinghy-like, much smaller and solid-looking, but apparently quite as manoeuvrable, though how they steer I cannot see.

Just now as I came to sit here I disturbed a fattish, flattish green-mottled snake, sliding slowly like some sea-creature over the stone. He was moving so slowly I might easily have mistaken him for a long leaf sliding in the wind. As he got under the protective shade of an overhanging rock he seemed to contract himself into a slimmer, more characteristically snake-shape, and to move faster. I distinctly saw his green forked tongue testing the air in front of him: the first snake we have seen here, and I hope the last.

There are many kinds of butterflies in these valleys: some like tiny snippets of sky, some with rather thin elongated wings, the top pair black, the lower ones a vivid flashing emerald, and some huge ones, as big as a hand, the lower wings bright blue or yellow, or yellow-white-orange—as well as all the familiar kinds and sizes.

(To be continued)

SHRADDHAVAN

FOR YOUR EARS ONLY

(Continued from the issue of March 1987)

3. VISITORS TO MY LIBRARY

“WHAT do you have here? A bookshop!” I was once asked by an aged relative who after a gap of twelve years had come to spend a couple of days with me. I was not irritated, for what else can I expect from an illiterate at the sight of a collection of books?

But what really got on my nerves was a sweeping comment made by a school-teacher, who visited my library with a friend of mine. Wide-eyed he stared at my collection for a minute and expressed his surprise thus: “My school library is a dwarf when compared to yours.” After a pause he added: “But what use are books once we finish reading them? Better discard them so that there may be some room left to stretch your limbs.”

Irritated beyond limit I asked the school-teacher: “Don’t you love books?”

“What? Love books! I can’t make love to books. I read them, of course. But only the prescribed text-books,” he replied.

“So you don’t do any extra reading?” I asked.

“Oh! Where is the time for all that?” he said hurriedly.

Does anyone speak of discarding a piece of land after the harvest is done? Does anyone think of divorcing his wife after his wedding night? In my opinion books are not plantain leaves to be dumped into the bin after use. They are like silver plates to be guarded and used again and again.

Poor school-teacher! He does not know the responsibility of his job. Hence I believe it is absolutely useless to talk about the human visitors, since a few envy me and many (my wife is no exception) take me for a madcap. I’ll talk about the other creatures who really have a strong affection for my library and love to visit it time and again.

Unless it is a weekend or a vacation, I can’t afford to sit in my study between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. for obvious reasons. But by 7 o’clock in the evening I positively switch the light on in my study. I am a nightbird. I love to read or write undisturbed in the calmness of the night and go on with my work sometimes upto 2 o’clock in the morning.

It is during these hours my visitors come and go unentertained. Yet they attract or rather distract my attention. The moment the light is on, the first visitors make their appearance. They are the “crucified Jesuses on the wall”—the geckos. Four strong and well-built geckos guard my library and they take their stand in different places on the ceiling most often very near the tube-light.

Before I throw open the windows I can hear the songs of mosquitoes. Wherefrom they come I do not know. Mosquitoes are the only visitors I never could love.

They are the "scroungers of man's fuel". I can tolerate their song provided they don't take me for a stone-deaf fellow and come closer to my ears to be heard. I can afford to sacrifice a few drops of my precious blood provided they suck without disturbing me. But most often these visitors, unable to fly away with the heaviness of my blood in them, get themselves entangled in the webs of spiders who are my permanent guests. I see them quite often cringe before the spiders for life, but, alas, the spiders are very faithful to their ungrudging host.

The damp paddy field with the canals that supply water from the nearby river is only a stone's throw from my study. No sooner do I open the windows than myriads of moths elbow their way to flutter around the lamp. Gaily they circle and circle hitting the lamp again and again. The geckos, on the alert, dart about catching the moths fluttering between their little crocodile jaws. They fill themselves with insects till they get heavy and fall off the ceiling. Sometimes my desk becomes a layer of wriggling bodies and wings.

Once my study was honoured by the visit of a centipede. Its very sight sent a chill down my spine. Crush and kill it, said my instinct. And I was searching for anything that could be used for crushing it. I found nothing but books. But books, my first love, cannot be employed in the service of killing a centipede. I was in distress. I didn't want to allow it to escape underneath the book-cases and remain a constant danger to me. When I was unable to do anything except sit with my legs on the chair and helplessly watch it, a gecko came like a hero in a celluloid from somewhere (God knows from where) to rescue the damsel in distress. Towards the centipede it rushed and gobbled it up. He then rotated his shining black eyes, winked at me and disappeared.

Sometimes the cicadas make their shrill chirping noise for hours together and keep me company. They hop about here and there and once in a while take off like an aeroplane and fall into my banian only to drive me to my wit's end. Quite often I am taken aback when the full-stop I write on the white paper starts moving as if magically infused with life. I gaze at the moving punctuation-mark with wide-eyed wonder. It takes time for me to recognise that it is only a mite, "too tiny to have room for feet" which brings to my memory the lovely poem 'A Considerable Speck' by Robert Frost.

On rare occasions the mantis jets towards my desk and safely alights on a book. From there he surveys and gracefully watches the moving pen making the white paper turn blue or black all the time praying for my copious output. Then the fireflies, the wandering lanterns, come like angels to light my room. When I find too many of them inside, I shut all the windows and switch the light off just for the heck of it. I feel as if I am in a wonderland and my spectacled eyes are not sufficient to enjoy the beautiful sight these flickering spots of light make. Well! Are they not stars blessed or cursed to wander on earth? And am I not privileged to have them in my study?

It's only during the rainy season that I am pestered with too many visitors. The

winged red ants are more than enough to make my study a hell. They fall everywhere—on my head, into my shirt, on the floor to creep into my dhoti or lungi. Once inside they make me twist and dance till they leave me alone. A piece of newspaper soaked in oil and tied very near to the lamp is the best way to make them inactive. While in action they get stuck to the greasy surface of the dangling newspaper and there wriggle for their lives. But since oil is a luxury item nowadays, here is a considerably cheaper way to trap them. Tie a polythene bag very near to the lamp and allow its mouth to remain agape. The flying ants that circle around the lamp fall into the bag. And once inside they are doomed for life. Neither can they fly up nor can they crawl out.

The millipedes both red and black with their train of legs trespass on my study. The geckos care a hoot for them and on account of this they wander freely as our first parents in Eden did. They make their presence felt by sending out an acrid smell of which I am accustomed now. Cunning creatures! They play possum at the least sign of disturbance. But I hate to see a lot of them with their friends and relatives and much of my time would go in throwing them out.

Finally I would like to record here the visit of a creature I very much love in spite of its vandalistic activities. It is a human creature, my little daughter, who has seen me so far only one summer and one winter. She loves my books more than me and likes to handle every one of them, if possible, in the crudest way. She is the only invader I hate to throw out. She would dart into my study, smile at me and shout a few syllables in a language which I am yet to decipher. Then she would laugh hysterically at the sight of my books and would run her eyes wildly, seeking a shelf where she could lay her wee-hands easily.

The books fly pell-mell, the dust-jackets go up in the air, paperbacks are mutilated and torn. Magazines are crumpled, hacked to pieces and eaten. When she satisfies her lust for books in such a peculiar way, she huddles close to me and smiles at the débris she has made. The most-harassed lot are the Indian writers writing in English, for they remain in an open book-case. But I pardon the invader, for I know for certain that one day she will stop treating my darlings as playthings and will love to have them for her companions and guides.

P. RAJA

(To be continued)

STORIES FROM TAMIL LITERATURE

(Continued from the issue of March 1987)

35. THE GIFT THE POETS ASKED FOR

TAMIL literature speaks of Seven Great Givers. Peikan, the prince of the Pothini Hills was one of them. Like Paari, he had a great tenderness of heart, not only towards human beings, but also towards all other living creatures. It was said of him that one cloudy day when he saw a peacock dancing in the forest he mistook it as shivering with cold and was so much overcome with pity that he took off the rich, brocaded shawl he was wearing and covered the peacock with it. But such a sensitive man behaved in a senseless manner once and had to be brought back to his senses by the poets.

Peikan had a loving wife called Kannaki who was beautiful and had all the virtues of a faithful wife. Yet, after a few years of happy married life, Peikan got himself entangled with a wily concubine. He was so infatuated with her that throwing all decorum and good sense to the winds he left his wife and started living with the concubine.

The sorrow of Kannaki knew no bounds. She had loved Peikan with all her heart and had been a most faithful wife. Yet this had happened to her. Her grief was unbearable. But as a timid and gentle wife she could do nothing about it. She endured her lot bravely and passed her days in bitter tears.

Many great poets of the Tamil country were friends of Peikan. They were shocked to hear of Peikan's conduct. They knew him to be a good person basically, and the present entanglement was out of character. They wanted to meet Peikan and talk to him sternly about his unbecoming act. But such passions were not easily given up and interference might sometimes even worsen the matter. So they had to be very careful. They thought among themselves and hit upon an idea. Peikan had a reputation for giving and it was not in his character to refuse anything asked of him as a gift. So the poets decided that they would not reproach him in any way, but ask him for a gift—the gift of making his loving wife happy by going back to live with her.

So one day the poets went together and met Peikan in the concubine's house. As was the wont with the poets they started reciting their poems. The great poet Paranan recited first:

“O Peikan, your fame is great. You covered a peacock with your shawl, fearing it shivered from cold. Now I have come to you, not in hunger, not with my poor relatives, but for a special gift. And this is the gift I ask of you: ‘Jump into your chariot this very night and go back to your dear wife who lives in sorrow and make her happy.’”

Next came Arisil Kilar with his poem:

“Let your riches be with you, undisturbed. We have not come for that. I will play on my harp and sing of you and your fertile land and if you would reward me, please do this: ‘Your wife is suffering terribly on account of your leaving her. Put your swift horses to your chariot and drive up to her immediately. Let her unkempt hair be washed and scented. Let beautiful flowers adorn her hair.’”

Then poet Perunkunrur Kilar faced Peikan:

“Coming from a long distance and crossing many a mountain stream, I have come to see you, strumming my harp and singing of you. At your home, your wife is lonely, steeped in the sorrow of separation, listening to the patter of raindrops on the roof. Her dark hair is dishevelled and there are no flowers in it. Go back to her so that she may tidy herself and shine like a polished diamond. This is the gift I beg of you.”

Uttered in the manner of asking for a gift, the words of the poets had the desired effect. As a giver Peikan could not refuse the gift asked of him, and went back to live with his wife. And he never regretted it.

36. HOW HE TAMED THE NASTY HORSE

Kongu country lies in the north-west part of the Tamil land. It is still famous for its stalwart men who love adventure. Once there was a young man called Kuppuchi in a Kongu village. He was an accomplished wrestler and well-versed in many other martial arts. Loving adventure he left his village and travelled north. He reached the Telugu country and headed for the city of Vijayanagar. When he was about to enter the city gates, he was stopped by a knight who stood at the entrance. The sport-loving king had placed him there to challenge any newcomer to prove his strength against the king’s man in wrestling. The knight wanted every stranger to kneel down before him before he entered the city. If anyone did not want to kneel, he should be prepared to wrestle with the knight. Kuppuchi did not want to kneel before the knight and accepted the challenge. The knight was no match for Kuppuchi and was easily defeated. It was the first time that the knight had been defeated and people greatly admired Kuppuchi. He proudly walked towards the palace. The news had already reached the king when Kuppuchi came to meet him. The king looked at Kuppuchi and liked him. Still he wanted to test his skill and cleverness in another sport.

The king had a nasty horse in his stables which never allowed anyone to ride him. He would wait patiently till the person saddled him and mounted on his back.

Then he would charge wildly, throw the rider off his back and trample him to death. If anyone succeeded in clinging to the saddle he would straightaway make for the lake outside the city, plunge into the water and try to drown the rider. So far no one had succeeded in coming back alive from the encounter. The king asked Kuppuchi to prove his mettle by taming this horse and riding him successfully. Kuppuchi asked to see the horse and was taken to the stable. He studied the horse for some time and said that he would accept the challenge. He would come back ready for the ride the next day and bring his own saddle. The king agreed.

The next day at the appointed time Kuppuchi appeared before the king. The horse was brought there. Kuppuchi fastened his saddle on the horse and jumped on him. The horse charged like a devil and tried to throw Kuppuchi off. Kuppuchi managed to cling to his back in spite of all his tricks. Unable to shake off the rider, the horse darted like an arrow towards the lake. With the speed of lightning he plunged into the water and tried to drown the rider. The next moment the horse screamed with pain and tried to rush out of the water. Kuppuchi did not allow him to do so and the horse screamed again and again with pain. Then Kuppuchi gave the horse a free rein and both came out of water. Something had happened to the horse and he became docile. Afterwards he readily obeyed every command of the rider. And Kuppuchi rode thrice round the palace in great triumph. The king was greatly impressed and he heaped a lot of gifts on the hero from the Tamil land.

What did Kuppuchi do to the horse? Hearing about the water-trick of the horse, Kuppuchi had put a lot of quick-lime into the saddle. When water began to act on the quick-lime, it began to boil and produced terrible heat. The horse could not endure the burning and tried to rush out of water. It was at that time that Kuppuchi became the master of the horse.

M. L. THANGAPPA

Students' Section

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

TWENTY-THIRD ANNUAL CONFERENCE: 17 August 1986

WHAT IS NEW IN SRI AUROBINDO'S YOGA?

SPEECH READ BY ILA JOSHI

IN India, since times immemorial, there have existed many systems of yoga, each with its distinct aim and method of practice. Sri Aurobindo has enunciated his own system which he has named "Integral Yoga", and laid down a unique synthetic method for its practice. The question is therefore often raised: In what way does it differ in its aim and method from the traditional systems of yoga? What is really "new" in his system? He has also called his Integral Yoga, "the Yoga of supramental transformation". So it is asked: What is the difference between this supramental transformation and spiritual liberation which is the aim of most of the other traditional systems?

The question is very important because if Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga is the same in its principle and process as the other yogas, then it cannot claim to be "new" in any real sense of the word. But Sri Aurobindo clearly says that his yoga "is not a retreading of old walks, but a spiritual adventure."¹ Being a "spiritual adventure" it certainly seeks for something "new" that is not yet known in the spiritual history of the past in India or elsewhere.

An adequate answer to this important question is very necessary but instead of providing it in my own words, I prefer to read a long letter which Sri Aurobindo wrote to a disciple in 1935, in which he himself has given a precise and comprehensive answer to this very question which was put to him.

Here is his letter:

NEW ELEMENTS IN SRI AUROBINDO'S YOGA

"By transformation I do not mean some change of the nature—I do not mean, for instance, sainthood or ethical perfection or Yogic Siddhis (like the Tantrik's) or a transcendental (*cinmaya*) body. I use transformation in a special sense, a change of consciousness radical and complete and of a certain specific kind which is so conceived as to bring about a strong and assured step forward in the spiritual evolution of the being of a greater and higher kind and of a larger sweep and completeness than what took place when a mentalised being first appeared in a vital and material animal world. If anything short of that takes place or at least if a real beginning is not made on that basis, a fundamental progress towards this fulfilment, then my object is not

¹ *Letters on Yoga* (Cent. Ed. Vol. 22), p. 101.

accomplished. A partial realisation, something mixed and inconclusive, does not meet the demand I make on life and Yoga.

“Light of realisation is not the same thing as Descent. Realisation by itself does not necessarily transform the being as a whole; it may bring only an opening or heightening or widening of the consciousness at the top so as to realise something in the Purusha part without any radical change in the parts of Prakriti. One may have some light of realisation at the spiritual summit of the consciousness but the parts below remain what they were. I have seen any number of instances of that. There must be a descent of the light not merely into the mind or part of it but into all the being down to the physical and below before a real transformation can take place. A light in the mind may spiritualise or otherwise change the mind or part of it in one way or another, but it need not change the vital nature; a light in the vital may purify and enlarge the vital movements or else silence and immobilise the vital being, but leave the body and the physical consciousness as it was, or even leave it inert or shake its balance. And the descent of Light is not enough, it must be the descent of the whole higher consciousness, its Peace, Power, Knowledge, Love, Ananda. Moreover, the descent may be enough to liberate, but not to perfect, or it may be enough to make a great change in the inner being, while the outer remains an imperfect instrument, clumsy, sick or unexpressive. Finally, transformation effected by the Sadhana cannot be complete unless it is a supramentalisation of the being. Psychicisation is not enough, it is only a beginning; spiritualisation and the descent of the higher consciousness is not enough, it is only a middle term; the ultimate achievement needs the action of the supramental Consciousness and Force. Something less than that may very well be considered enough by the individual, but it is not enough for the earth-consciousness to take the definitive stride forward it must take at one time or another.

“I have never said that my Yoga was something brand new in all its elements. I have called it the integral Yoga and that means that it takes up the essence and many processes of the old Yogas—its newness is in its aim, standpoint and the totality of its method. In the earlier stages which is all I deal with in books like the “Riddle” or the “Lights” or in the new book¹ to be published there is nothing in it that distinguishes it from the old Yogas except the aim underlying its comprehensiveness, the spirit in its movements and the ultimate significance it keeps before it—also the scheme of its psychology and its working: but as that was not and could not be developed systematically or schematically in these letters, it has not been grasped by those who are not already acquainted with it by mental familiarity or some amount of practice. The detail or method of the later stages of the Yoga which go into little known or untrodden regions, I have not made public and I do not at present intend to do so.

“I know very well also that there have been seemingly allied ideals and anticipations—the perfectibility of the race, certain Tantric Sadhanas, the effort after a

¹ *Bases of Yoga.*

complete physical Siddhi by certain schools of Yoga, etc., etc. I have alluded to these things myself and have put forth the view that the spiritual past of the race has been a preparation of Nature not merely for attaining the Divine beyond the world, but also for this very step forward which the evolution of the earth-consciousness has still to make. I do not therefore care in the least,—even though these ideals were, up to some extent parallel, yet not identical with mine,—whether this Yoga and its aim and method are accepted as new or not; that is in itself a trifling matter. That it should be recognised as true in itself by those who can accept or practise it and should make itself true by achievement is the one thing important; it does not matter if it is called new or a repetition or revival of the old which was forgotten. I laid emphasis on it as new in a letter to certain Sadhaks so as to explain to them that a repetition of the aim and idea of the old Yogas was not enough in my eyes, that I was putting forward a thing to be achieved that has not yet been achieved, not yet clearly visualised, even though it is the natural but still secret outcome of all the past spiritual endeavour.

“It is new as compared with the old Yogas:

“1. Because it aims not at a departure out of world and life into Heaven or Nirvana, but at a change of life and existence, not as something subordinate or incidental, but as a distinct and central object. If there is a descent in other Yogas, yet it is only an incident on the way or resulting from the ascent—the ascent is the real thing. Here the ascent is the first step, but it is a means for the descent. It is the descent of the new consciousness attained by the ascent that is the stamp and seal of the Sadhana. Even the Tantra and Vaishnavism end in the release from life; here the object is the divine fulfilment of life.

“2. Because the object sought after is not an individual achievement of divine realisation for the sake of the individual, but something to be gained for the earth-consciousness here, a cosmic, not solely a supra-cosmic achievement. The thing to be gained also is the bringing in of a Power of Consciousness (the Supramental) not yet organised or active directly in earth-nature, even in the spiritual life, but yet to be organised and made directly active.

“3. Because a method has been preconized for achieving this purpose which is as total and integral as the aim set before it, viz., the total and integral change of the consciousness and nature, taking up old methods but only as a part action and present aid to others that are distinctive. I have not found this method (as a whole) or anything like it professed or realised in the old Yogas. If I had, I should not have wasted my time in hewing out a road and in thirty years of search and inner creation when I could have hastened home safely to my goal in an easy canter over paths already blazed out, laid down, perfectly mapped, macadamised, made secure and public. Our Yoga is not a retreading of old walks, but a spiritual adventure.¹”

5.10.1935

SRI AUROBINDO

¹ Sri Aurobindo, *On Himself* (Cent. Ed. Vol. 26), pp. 106-109.

THE EPIC OF THE UNIVERSE

(Continued from the issue of March 1987)

8. Shadow Matter

WE have had a glance at the birth of the Universe. Now we might want to see how it would end, if at all it does. We also saw certain features in the Big Bang model of the Universe which needed further considerations. It is with such an aim that we take up the topic of shadow matter.

The problem of shadow matter, and what it would help predict, can be formulated like this: if our galactic neighbours have been observed to be receding, will they converge again towards each other some time in the future or will they continue to spread out? What are the factors that will determine such an outcome?

It is slowly being recognised that behind the Universe visible to our instruments there is a darker, more massive presence of a mysterious type of matter. The galaxies, even the cosmos itself, seem to be under the gravitational hold of this invisible matter which lies hidden beyond the stars, clutching whole clusters of galaxies in its grip. The shadow Universe may be ordinary matter, or exotic particles that have not yet been created in our accelerators, or it may be ancient energy-fields from the Big Bang, or even forms of matter and energy for which we may really have no theory at present.

Shadow matter is also sometimes called dark matter, understandably so, because its exact nature and composition are not yet clearly known. Luminous matter—what we are made out of—may, in comparison, be hardly more significant than merely a covering of the actual stuff of the Universe.

The problem of shadow matter came to light, we might say, as early as in 1933. Let us see how that happened. There is a certain relationship between the colours and the masses of stars which allows us to weigh galaxies by analysing this data. Fritz Zwicky from Caltech found, in 1933, that galaxies in several clusters were moving around so fast that they would have simply flown away unless the mass of the clusters was ten times bigger. In other words, the mass-to-luminosity relationship indicated that the clusters had to be heavy enough to justify the observations.

Again, in 1983, Marc Aeronson claimed to have found that the Draco galaxy in our Milky Way is apparently much heavier than what it was previously considered to be—ten times more, in fact.

This missing mass, it is believed, goes to make up what we call shadow matter. Strong evidence was found for it by Vera Rubin with the method of rotation curves, which “predicted” shadow matter. Let us have a look at the method and the results obtained by it.

The faster a star moves around a galaxy, the more the centripetal force necessary to keep it in the orbit. In the case of a star the centripetal force is supplied by the

gravitational attraction from the galactic mass inside that star's orbit. A rotation curve, which shows orbital velocities of stars as a function of distance from the galactic centre, would reveal the distribution of mass in a galaxy. The velocities are determined by the Doppler shifts of light from different parts of a galaxy's disc. If a rotating galaxy is edge-on to our line of sight, for example, stars that are coming towards us will have their light shifted to shorter, bluer wavelengths; on the other hand, stars going away will be red-shifted.

After much painstaking work Vera Rubin, in the 1960s, established rotation curves for many galaxies. The striking point in the investigation made was that in the outer regions of the galactic discs, where the mass of the galaxies presumably dropped off, the rotation curves, instead of falling, remained more or less constant. The only way by which these rotation curves could be explained was by assuming that the visible matter is supplemented by invisible or shadow matter.

From these studies, it was concluded that luminous matter makes up no more than a fourth or fifth of the overall mass within the visible discs of galaxies. It was also found that the ratio of dark to luminous matter in clusters and galaxies is a constant between 5-to-1 and 15-to-1. If the present ideas about the Universe are found to be correct then this ratio would become a fundamental property of the Universe.

According to one of the mathematical models of the Universe the course of cosmic history is determined by only two numbers: (i) the rate of expansion of the Universe, and (ii) the number Omega which is the ratio of the density of the Universe and the critical density. The critical density is a theoretically proposed quantity and is the mass of three hydrogen atoms per cubic meter of volume. If the Universe is denser than this critical value (Omega larger than unity) then its expansion will ultimately stop sometime in the future and the Universe will fall back upon itself. The other parameter is the Hubble constant H which expresses the rate of expansion of the Universe. As we have already seen, the value of H is 15.40 Km per second per million light-years.

While the Hubble constant is quite accurately known, it is the determination of Omega that has led to claims and counter-claims. In fact, the fate of several theories is based upon how accurately Omega can be determined and, of course, on its value.

Omega larger than unity would mean that the Universe is denser than the critical density. In this situation the combined gravity of the galaxies and everything else will overcome the expansion. Finally the Universe will begin to contract. When Omega is unity it would mean that the Universe will expand for ever, but more and more slowly. If Omega is less than unity then the Universe will be an open Universe and will expand for ever.

9. Will the Universe End?

We have been discussing so far the creation of the Universe. Basing our speculations on laws of science, let us see how the Universe will end.

In predicting the ultimate future we say: Within the mystery of the missing mass lies the answer to whether the final act will "close with fire or ice, a bang or a whimper."

But the question that must be asked is whether the expansion will some day slow down and reverse itself, or whether it will continue indefinitely.

We know that if a ball is thrown upward from the surface of the earth, then, depending on its velocity, it will slow down, stop and reverse its direction; but it may also escape into space if its velocity is greater than 11Km per second. So we see that the fate of the ball depends on two things: how fast it is moving and how hard the earth is pulling it back. The force of gravity exerted by the earth depends on how much matter the earth contains.

We can think of the present expansion of the Universe in the same way. A given galaxy is receding with a certain velocity that we can measure. Whether it will stop receding and start falling back towards us depends upon how much of gravitational attraction the rest of the Universe exerts on it.

If the mass of the Universe is more than the critical mass, it will be closed—it will fall back on itself. On the other hand, if the mass of the Universe is less than the critical mass, then it is open—it will expand for ever. The mass that can be seen at present is very much less than the critical mass but still we cannot say for sure that the Universe is open, for there might be more matter in our Universe than what has been recorded by our instruments—the very shadow matter that we have been discussing.

At least two lines of evidence suggest that there might be a lot of unseen matter surrounding the galaxies. These are studies of galaxies themselves and studies of clusters of galaxies, as we have previously seen. If we include the unseen mass, then the total mass will be 2-to-10 times greater than the visible mass.

So we see that we still have not reached our first decision-point regarding the future of the Universe. Is it closed or is it open?

We have then no choice but to follow each possible outcome and see where it will lead us.

10. Exploring the Possibilities

Let us begin by assuming that 90% of the Universe's mass is hidden and that actually the Universe is closed. In this case we are in for a spectacular future. For another 40 or 50 billion years the Universe will continue to expand but more and more slowly. Then, like the falling ball, the expansion will reverse at some point and contraction will begin.

80 or 100 billion years from now the earth and sun will be long dead. The galaxies will be less luminous than they are now, with a population of white dwarfs, neutron stars, and other faint objects. As the contraction will progress the galaxies will move closer together and the cosmic background radiation shift toward the visible part of the spectrum. The sky will eventually blaze with light. By this time

the Universe will have contracted to a thousandth or less of its present size. The stars will dissolve into a sea of hot material and atoms and molecules will disintegrate into their constituent nuclei and electrons. From this point onward the stages of the Big Bang that we have already described will simply play backward—nuclei breaking up into quarks and so on, until we shall again be at the original point where the Big Bang occurred.

This scenario leads to the most fascinating question of all: will the universal contraction, the *BIG CRUNCH*, be followed by another expansion, the *BIG BOUNCE*? In other words, will the Universe repeat the entire cycle? Will the Epic reproduce itself?

A Universe which is reborn every 100 billion years or so presents a very attractive picture. The main advantage of an eternally oscillating Universe of this type is that the questions “why did it all start? where did it all come from? etc.?” simply do not have to be asked.

On the other hand, if the Universe is an open Universe, then the expansion will continue for a very long time. Gradually stars and galaxies will turn into black holes and only a thin sea of radiation will be left. After some more time the black holes will start disappearing. Matter which will be left will perhaps turn into iron, the most stable nucleus. Then the iron spheres will turn into black holes until everything disappears leaving a cold thin sea of radiation with a few forlorn particles.

We have made an attempt to predict the future developments in the structure of the Universe. What is most essential for this prediction, and what can be inferred from the discussion, is the knowledge of the actual mass of the Universe—including the visible and the unseen masses. Up to the present time, the mass that can be observed with our instruments is not sufficient to make our Universe a closed Universe. In other words, the present observational data do not suggest that the Universe will fall back on itself into a Big Crunch. But the mystery of the future lies in shadow matter. If in the future we do detect a sufficient quantity of this matter, then the Universe will be closed. Till then we cannot but say that it is open. However, most of the questions pertaining to the nature and fate of the Universe are still speculative in character and we may have to await new discoveries. But the seeds of these discoveries perhaps already lie in our present state of knowledge.

(To be concluded)

SHARAN and SUBROTO
Higher Course, 3rd year