

# MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

MAY 1987

Price: Rs. 3.75

Some delay in posting the May issue has been unavoidable.  
With the June issue we hope to regain the old posting rhythm.

## REVISED SUBSCRIPTION RATES: 1987

### INLAND

Annual: Rs. 42.00

Life Membership: Rs. 588.00

### OVERSEAS

#### Sea Mail:

Annual: \$16.00 or £10.00

Life Membership: \$224.00 or £140.00

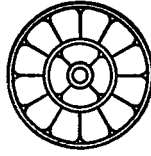
#### Air Mail:

Annual: \$36.00 for American & Pacific countries

£26.00 for all other countries

Life Membership: \$504.00 for American & Pacific countries

£364.00 for all other countries

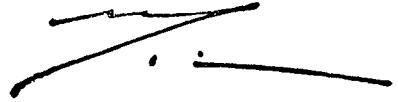


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



All Rights Reserved. No matter appearing in this journal or part thereof may be reproduced or translated without written permission from the publishers except for short extracts as quotations.

All correspondence to be addressed to:

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

Editor's Phone: 4782

Publishers: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust

Editor: K. D. SETHNA

Published by: P. COUNUMA

SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM TRUST, PONDICHERRY - 605 002

Printed by: AMIYO RANJAN GANGULI

at Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, Pondicherry - 605 002

PRINTED IN INDIA

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

# MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XL

No. 5

---

*"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"*

---

## CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
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)	... 263
SQUIRRELS AT THE SAMADHI (Poem) <i>Shraddhavan</i>	... 266
A TALK BY THE MOTHER: TO THE ASHRAM CHILDREN ON MAY 9, 1956	... 267
TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO <i>Nirodbaran</i>	... 270
THE STORY OF A SOUL <i>Huta</i>	... 274
YAJNA (Poem) <i>Sonia Dyne</i>	... 279
VIGNETTES OF THE MOTHER AND SRI AUROBINDO: ONE RUPEE <i>Compiled by S.</i>	... 280
LIFE-POETRY-YOGA: SOME PERSONAL LETTERS TO A SADHAK <i>Amal Kiran</i> <i>(K. D. Sethna)</i>	... 281
HUMOUR IN THE PLAYS OF SRI AUROBINDO I. <i>The Maid in the Mill</i> <i>Shyam Kumari</i>	... 286
'FLOCCINAUCINIHIILIPILIFICATION' <i>K. Subramanian</i>	... 292
SAVITRI'S INITIATION INTO YOGA <i>R. Y. Deshpande</i>	... 293
JUNG'S RELEVANCE TO INDIA FREUD, JUNG, ADLER AND RANK— DEPTH PSYCHOLOGY AS A WHOLE: ITS SEARCH FOR THE MEANING OF LIFE <i>Indra Sen</i>	... 298
HOMESICK (Poem) <i>Dinkar Palande</i>	... 303
TABERNACLE (Poem) <i>Arvind Habbu</i>	... 304

CONTENTS

		<i>Page</i>
A WEEK IN COURTALLAM	<i>Shraddhavan</i>	... 305
FOR YOUR EARS ONLY		
4. THEY MADE ME A WRITER	<i>P. Raja</i>	... 307

STUDENTS' SECTION

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION : SIXTY-FIRST SEMINAR :		
22 FEBRUARY 1987 : WHAT IS THE MEANING OF		
"THE HOUR OF GOD" AND HOW TO PREPARE FOR IT?	<i>Speech by Kishor Gandhi and</i>	
	<i>Arvinda Das</i>	... 311
THE EPIC OF THE UNIVERSE	<i>Sharan and Subrato</i>	. . 316

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

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

*(Continued from the issue of 24 April 1987)*

## Chapter 7: THE GOAL, Part Six

*Not to go on for ever repeating what man has already done is our work, but to arrive at new realisations and undreamed-of masteries. Time and soul and world are given us for our field, vision and hope and creative imagination stand for our prompters, will and thought and labour are our all-effective instruments.*

*What is there new that we have yet to accomplish? Love, for as yet we have only accomplished hatred and self-pleasing; Knowledge, for as yet we have only accomplished error and perception and conceiving; Bliss, for as yet we have only accomplished pleasure and pain and indifference; Power, for as yet we have only accomplished weakness and effort and a defeated victory; Life, for as yet we have only accomplished birth and growth and dying; Unity, for as yet we have only accomplished war and association.*

*In a word, godhead; to remake ourselves in the divine image.*

*Have we only accomplished weakness, effort and a 'defeated victory'?*

So far all the victories that have been won have had reactions which were in the end defeats. Nothing is ever final and complete. Each time that you think you have won a victory, you find that it was incomplete, partial, transitory. This is a fact you can always observe if you examine yourself carefully. Not that things are necessarily just the same as they were before; no, something has changed. But not everything, and not completely.

It is very clear, very noticeable in physical conquests, conquests over the body. By very assiduous labour you manage to overcome some weakness, some limitation, some bad habit, and you think that this victory is final; but after a while, or sometimes immediately, you notice that nothing is completely done, that nothing is final, that what you thought you had accomplished has to be done over again. Because only a total change of consciousness and the intervention of a new force, a reversal of consciousness, can make the victory complete.

In the old Chaldean tradition, there was an image that was very often given to young novices when they were invested with the white robe. They were told, "Do

not try to remove the stains one by one; the whole robe must be purified." Do not try to cure your faults one by one, to overcome your defects one by one, it does not lead very far. The entire consciousness must change, a reversal of consciousness is needed, you must rise out of your present state into a higher one from which you have an overall view of the work that needs to be done. I think that Sri Aurobindo has said this: things are such that we cannot say that anything has been done unless everything has been done. One step forward is not enough—a total conversion is needed.

How often I have had people, who were making an effort, tell me, "I am trying, but what use is my trying? Every time I think I have gained something, I find that I have to start all over again." It is because they were trying to go forward while remaining in the same spot; they were trying to progress without changing their consciousness. The entire standpoint has to be shifted, the entire consciousness has to escape from its present groove, to rise up and see things from above. This is the only way that we can avoid victories becoming defeats.

*Mother, how can one change one's consciousness?*

Of course there are many different methods, but each person has to do it by the approach that is most accessible to him. And the indication of the right method usually comes spontaneously, through something like an unexpected experience. And for each person, it shows itself in a slightly different way.

For example, one can have a perception of the ordinary consciousness, which is extended horizontally over a surface, it works on a plane which is both a surface of things and which is in contact with the superficial outsides of things, people, circumstances; and then suddenly, for some reason or other—as I say, it is different for each person—there is an upward movement, and instead of seeing things horizontally, of being on the same level with things, suddenly you are overlooking them and seeing them from above, as a whole, instead of only seeing a very few things that are very near to you. It is as if something pulled you upwards and let you see things as if from a mountain-top or from an aeroplane. And instead of seeing only details and on the same level, you see the whole *as a whole*, from very far above.

There are many different ways of having this experience, but usually it happens as if by chance one day.

Or else you may have an experience which is almost the opposite, but which comes to the same thing. All of a sudden you plunge into a depth, you find yourself at a distance from the thing you were seeing, it seems far away, superficial, unimportant; you enter into an inner silence or an inner calm, or an inner vision of things, a deep feeling, a more intimate perception of circumstances and things in which all values change. And you become aware of a sort of oneness, of deep identity, which is one in spite of all diverse appearances.

Or else, just as suddenly, the sense of limitation vanishes and you enter into the

perception of a sort of infinite duration, without beginning or end, something which has always been and always will be.

These experiences come suddenly for a flash, a second, a moment in your life, you don't know why or how.... There are other ways, other experiences—they are innumerable, and vary from person to person; but with that minute, that second of existence, you catch hold of the thing by the tail. Then you must remember it, try to relive it, go into the experience in depth, recall it, aspire, concentrate. That is the starting-point, the tip of the guiding thread.

For all who are destined to find their inner being, the truth of their being, there is always at least one moment in their life when they are no longer the same—perhaps just for a flash, but that is enough. That shows the path you must follow, it is the door opening onto that path. So you must go through the door, and with a perseverance, and unflinching obstinacy, seek to re-experience a state that will lead you to something more real and more total.

Many different methods have always been given. But a method that has been taught to you, a method that you have read about in a book or heard about from a teacher, does not have the same effectiveness as a spontaneous experience that has come for no apparent reason, and which is simply the flowering of the awakening soul, one second of contact with your psychic being which shows you the path that is best for you, the one that is most within your reach, which you must then follow with perseverance in order to reach your goal. One second that shows you which way to go, the beginning.

Some people experience it at night in a dream; for some it is sparked off by one thing or another: something you see awakens this new consciousness in you, or something you hear: a beautiful landscape, a beautiful piece of music, or perhaps just a few words you read, or else the intensity of concentrating on some effort—it doesn't matter: there are a thousand reasons and a thousand ways of getting it. But I repeat: all who are meant for the realisation have experienced this at least once in their lives. It may be very fleeting, it may have been when they were very small, but always they have, at least once in their life, the experience of what the true consciousness is like. Well, that is the best indication of which path to follow. You can search within yourself, you can remember, you can watch; you must notice what happens, you must pay attention, that's all. Sometimes when you see a noble action, when you hear about something exceptional, when you witness some act of heroism or generosity or nobility, or when you meet someone who shows some special capacity, or who acts in an exceptional and beautiful manner, a sort of enthusiasm or admiration or gratitude may awaken suddenly within your being and open the door to a new state of consciousness, a light, a warmth, a joy you had not known before. That too is a way of catching hold of the guiding thread. There are a thousand ways, you only have to be observant and on the alert

First of all you must have conceived of the need for this change of consciousness, have adopted the idea that *that* is the path that must lead to the goal. And once you

have accepted this principle, then you must be on the watch And you will find it—  
you find it. And once you have found it, then you must set off, without hesitation.

In fact the starting-point is to observe yourself...not to live in a constant state of  
nonchalance, of not-caring. You must be on the alert

26.12.1956

*(To be continued)*

---

## SQUIRRELS AT THE SAMADHI

### I

TODAY he doesn't want 'Plasticity'—  
though it's usually his favourite

And those luscious deep-pink 'Surrender' roses—  
He's just pushing them aside

For today, there's 'Integral Wisdom'—  
with that to nibble on, what else would you want?

### II

As the lady in the dark-red sari  
rises from her knees,

Out of the tree, the squirrels  
sprinkle her with marigold petals;

Smiling, she raises her hands in salutation:  
'Mother is blessing me!'



## A TALK BY THE MOTHER

TO THE ASHRAM CHILDREN ON MAY 9, 1956

*Sweet Mother, where does our true spiritual life begin?*

THE true spiritual life begins when one is in communion with the Divine in the psychic, when one is conscious of the divine Presence in the psychic and in constant communion with the psychic. Then the spiritual life begins, not before. The *true* spiritual life.

When one is united with one's psychic being and conscious of the divine Presence, and receives the impulses for one's action from this divine Presence and when the will has become a conscious collaborator with the divine Will—that is the starting-point.

Before that, one may be an aspirant to the spiritual life, but one doesn't have a spiritual life.

*Sweet Mother, I would like to have the explanation of a sentence. Sri Aurobindo has said somewhere, "Materially you are nothing, spiritually you are everything."*

That means that it is the Spirit, the spiritual consciousness and the divine Presence which give to life all its value, that without this spiritual consciousness and divine Presence life has no value.

The same holds true for the individual, whatever his material capacities and the material conditions in which he lives, his only worth is that of the divine Presence and the spiritual consciousness in him.

And so from the point of view of the truth of things, a man who has no material possessions and no remarkable capacities or possibilities, but who is conscious of his psychic being and united with the Divine in him, is infinitely greater than a ruler upon earth or a millionaire who possesses considerable material power but is unconscious of his psychic being.

From the point of view of the truth, it is like that. This is what Sri Aurobindo means: no apparent and outer things have any true value. The only thing which is valuable is the divine consciousness and union with the Spirit.

*Mother, according to what you said last time, there is still the question of those who are not consciously open to the new Force. Then how will they be influenced? Will it be by the spiritual force but not by the supramental?*

What, what, what?

What difference do you make between the spiritual force and the supramental?

*No. But you said that those who have done nothing or have not given themselves, how can they hope to be influenced or to profit by this Force? Those who are here but are not consciously open, will they be influenced also?*

Influenced, yes.

*They will also be helped?*

But if they don't care to be helped! You want to help them despite themselves?

If one aspires, wants the help, even if the opening is very small, still there is necessarily some opening. But if one doesn't want to be helped... Or rather, I could say there are people who are sure they don't need to be helped, they feel that they can help themselves quite well, that they need no help, that it is they who do the work, they who make the progress, they who do everything. So they don't want help, they feel no need for it. Why do you want them to be helped when they don't care for it?

*But you said that even the blind will be obliged to realise it.*

I said that it will be visible even to those who are ill-willed—is that what you mean? But that's quite different. When you receive a punch on the nose, you have to recognise something even though it hasn't helped you!

*No. When one recognises this Force...*

Yes.

*One is bound to be open...*

Yes.

*So even one who didn't want to be helped so far, will want it.*

Recognise this Force? —Oh! When he has received the punch! (*Laughter*) Perhaps. It may happen. Anything can happen.

*So, even one who is now unconscious will open under the blow.*

And then? What is your conclusion? What do you expect to happen?

*That is to say, he will see that it is a miracle.*

That he has been punched? (*Laughter*)

He won't call that a miracle, he will call it a bad deed. He will say, "That's bad luck, it's my unfortunate fate, it is an injustice", he will say anything at all, as people are in the habit of saying.

But what I have not yet caught is the point of your question. What are you driving at? You mean the whole world whether it wants it or not, whether it aspires or not, whether it recognises it or not, will sooner or later come under the influence of the supramental presence on earth—is that what you mean?

*No.*

Ah! what a pity, for that had some meaning. (*Laughter*) And I would have answered, "Yes"—and then it would have been over!

*No. Those who are half open ..*

They will receive half more than those who are not open at all! (*Laughter*)

*This manifestation will make them aspire more?*

Ah! that I don't know. It must depend on the case. For each one it will be different. Is it for yourself you are pleading?

*Yes.*

Oh! Oh! You want to know what will happen to you?

Set your mind at rest, it will be quite all right. I could almost say as for the banner of Joan of Arc: "You have shared in the labour, you will share in the Glory." There then, are you satisfied?

*Yes.*

## TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of 24 April 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 5, 1941

N: In Nishtha's case, is it the Force that has produced this rapid improvement or is it the right medicine?

SRI AUROBINDO: You can infer or believe as you like.

N: If the Force, why then was there no effect for such a long time but as soon as the right medicine was given she improved?

P: It may be that right conditions were absent before and now they have been brought about and so the cure.

SRI AUROBINDO: But does the right medicine cure always?

M: No, Sir.

N: If the right medicine can be found, yes.

SRI AUROBINDO: There are many instances where the right medicine had no effect. According to the French doctor, the medicine is an excuse, it is the doctor that cures.

N: If that were true, why couldn't André, who was treating Nishtha all along, cure before and is now able to do it?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is the French doctor's opinion, not mine.

N: What is yours then?

SRI AUROBINDO: As for me, there is the Force, the doctor and the medicine. It is the combination of all these that brings about the cure. From my point of view, a disease is a play of forces. If you can make a combination of one kind of forces, it gives one result, a different combination a different result. But in Nishtha's case the main credit goes to the chicken (*laughter*) and one can say that the doctor has hit on the right medicine.

M: After the Inconscient, Sir, aren't the mind and vital to be worked out?

SRI AUROBINDO: No, that has already been done; not in each and every one but in principle. In the mind and vital again there are many parts. There are also the subconscious mental, vital and physical.

M: What is the difference between the Inconscient and the Subconscient?

SRI AUROBINDO: In the Subconscient, consciousness is suppressed but it is there while the Inconscient is all black, there is no consciousness at work, and yet consciousness is involved in it, out of which matter and everything else emerge by evolution.

M: *Jada* is Inconscience, isn't it?

SRI AUROBINDO: No, consciousness may also be *Jada*; *Jada* is a result of Inconscience.

N: What is the difference between Inconscience, Ignorance and Nescience?

SRI AUROBINDO: Ignorance may be knowledge that is wrong, partial or imperfect. Nescience is absence of knowledge; Knowledge develops out of Inconscience. The theory I have put forward in *The Life Divine* is that the Inconscient and the Superconscient are two sides or counterparts of the same reality, though they appear to us as opposed to each other. The Inconscient is a black trance—the dark counterpart—while the Superconscient is a luminous trance. Out of the Inconscient knowledge rises by evolution. In the Superconscient, knowledge is always there, it only rises out. They are the two opposite poles of the manifestation of the Absolute.

Nescience may be sensitive to impulses without knowing what these impulses are, whereas Inconscience is also insentient. Here is the great riddle that Inconscience can yet create perfect order. It is like the Sankhya Prakriti which is *Jada* and at the same time intelligent.

N: What are the effects of the working out of the mind and vital?

SRI AUROBINDO: Opening to the higher consciousness and capacity to receive.

N: Why don't we see any effect then?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is only in principle. If everybody were able to receive, then the whole of humanity would be changed.

N: But we are slightly different from humanity.

SRI AUROBINDO: Still part of humanity unless you want to say that you have achieved the Supermind.

M: We ought to have at least a little taste of the Supermind since we are here. If an incense burns in a room, one gets the smell of it.

SRI AUROBINDO: But if you have no nose like Sayaji Rao? (*Laughter*)

N: If the working now is in the Inconscient, how do some people, especially newcomers, get experiences? Is the work in them not in the Inconscient?

SRI AUROBINDO: It depends on what kind of experiences—inner or higher experiences or those in the vital. One may think that one has become the Supreme and the Supermind, but the fact may be otherwise.

N: But don't some newcomers have psychic experiences?

SRI AUROBINDO: The work may be going on in the psychic, the Inconscient coming in between to hinder it.

P: Those who have been long here may be participating in the working and in them the Inconscient may rise up.

SRI AUROBINDO: So that you may suddenly feel stupid. (*Laughter*)

P: That should give some consolation!

January 6, 1941

M: Mother says in her "Conversations" that one can progress without meditation.

SRI AUROBINDO: Can't say anything without the context. In that case the whole world would progress.

P: No, Mother says about those who can't meditate that through work they can progress in Sadhana.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is different. There are people here who can't meditate at all but are working all the time and they receive through their work. (*Addressing Dr. Mamlal*) But you have no excuse. You can meditate. You go into deep meditation, though not quite like a *Tirthankar*. (*Laughter*)

M: I couldn't be a *Tirthankar*, Sir, otherwise I wouldn't have been born again.

P: Why? Are *Tirthankars* afraid of life?

SRI AUROBINDO: No, afraid of *Pudgal*<sup>1</sup> (*Laughter*)

M: Might I have been a Jaina in my previous birth, Sir?

SRI AUROBINDO: Certainly, since you know all about Jainism but don't follow it. (*Laughter*)

M: Is it a tragedy, Sir?

SRI AUROBINDO: No, from the previous birth knowledge comes; you don't follow because it is not necessary since you have done it already.

M: How to pass through the stage of sleep in meditation?

SRI AUROBINDO: Is it sleep or going within?

N: Well, I don't know. Sometimes I seem to come out of a deep sleep knowing or remembering nothing about where I have been. Sometimes, I see many incoherent things and can't remember them.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is the border of the Subconscience. Before sitting, one has to fix a will to be conscious; the result comes afterwards.

C: I also seem to be going somewhere very deep; it is very pleasant and nice there. One would like to be there for ever.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is the inner being. You feel like Shankaracharya who said, "I went somewhere to a region of Bliss. I wish I could remain there."

(*After this, the talk turned on the Hindu Mahasabha whose conference was taking place in Madurai.*)

M: The Mahasabha people are in favour of giving help to Britain but they also want India's freedom. I don't understand Gandhi's attitude at all. There is no question of his being insincere but his stand and action are not very clear.

<sup>1</sup> Body, Matter.

N: Some say he is not sincere. As proof they cite the fact of his pledging unconditional support at the beginning and then making a somersault, saying that we are not making a bargain when it is nothing but that, etc.

SRI AUROBINDO: The question is when the bargain is not a bargain like the question when killing is not killing.

M (*apropos of Abhay's father suddenly losing his sight due to a cataract*): There is no cure for it except an operation when it is mature, unless Dr. Agarwal can do something. But I think gazing at the sun may sometimes destroy the eye.

SRI AUROBINDO: It depends on how one does it. Sun-gazing has been done in India since time immemorial. I myself have done it and there are people here who have regained their sight and discarded glasses by the practice.

P: I have done it too. I used for many years to gaze at strong sunlight. Only after what happened once during meditation I gave it up. There was a great descent of force; then suddenly I felt a severe pain in my eye.

SRI AUROBINDO: It must have been an attack.

M: In meditation also can the hostile forces attack?

SRI AUROBINDO: Why not? It is their business to do so at any time.

M: Is there no protection of the Divine? Purani is quite strong.

SRI AUROBINDO: Strength and protection are not the same thing. So long as there is a weak spot one is liable to attack unless one puts it right oneself.

January 7, 1941

M: Does killing of mosquitoes come in the way of spiritual attainment, Sir?

SRI AUROBINDO: Whose attainment? Of the mosquitoes? (*Laughter*)

M: No, Sir! our attainment?

SRI AUROBINDO: No, it may be for the mosquitoes because you kill them before they have exhausted their mosquito propensity. But why that question?

N: Gandhian Ahimsa perhaps or Jaina virtue and vice.

SRI AUROBINDO: It may take away from ethical qualities but it has nothing to do with spiritual principles.

M: In medical practice we may sometimes be liable to kill patients because of our lack of knowledge, negligence, etc. Are we responsible for the deaths?

SRI AUROBINDO: If they are due to negligence, yes: but not if due to lack of efficiency or knowledge. It is the spirit or intention that is more important than the act.

N: But is ignorance excusable?

SRI AUROBINDO: If one is ignorant but goes on committing mistakes in his ignorance, then he can't be excused. But if one's intention is good, lack of knowledge doesn't make one responsible for his mistake. I am not speaking of those people who go on making experiments on patients.

(*To be continued*)

# THE STORY OF A SOUL

BY HUTA

*(Continued from the issue of 24 April 1987)*

## The Mother's Message

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



Volume Three: 1959

6

DORIS took me to the Victoria and Albert Museum. While going in a bus she advised me to be very practical, because she saw me putting my umbrella beside me; "Huta, you must keep it in your hand—wind the string of the umbrella around your wrist so that you never forget it in a bus or in a tube-train."



Yes, this was an important tip, for previously I had forgotten in a bus a very pretty umbrella—a gift from Mohansingh.

The Victoria and Albert Museum is a beautiful building in the Renaissance style, which was first erected in 1857. The present building was opened in 1909 by King Edward VII. It is the national museum of industrial art, illustrating the crafts of all nations at various periods—all kinds of metal-work, from gold to steel, pottery and glass, Gothic tapestry, wood-carving and antique furniture, drawings, paintings, miniatures of the Tudor time. I was lost in all this magnificent display of curios.

I liked the terracotta virgin with the laughing child and the Kuan-yin figure in painted and gilded wood, which was Chinese, a lady holding a mirror which was an earthenware Chinese figure, the virgin of sorrows in carved and painted wood, the Angel of the Annunciation and quite a number of other paintings by the great masters and their students. Raphael's cartoons were engaging. The oil painting of J. M. W. Turner, R. A. depicting Venice was very attractive.

My memory winged back to my trip to Venice in 1952. A gondola glided down the grand canal which was a broad ribbon of silver before me—mirroring the blue sky. At night the million stars, the moonlight and the music of the gondolier. It was a memorable experience. Venetian glassware, the colossal cathedral of St Mark's, the Doge's Palace were worth viewing.

I also recollect how often the Mother used to send me reproductions of Turner's paintings in which he had fused glorious bright colours on canvas and lavished his wondrous, lively imagination.

\*

My new college at Heath House, Lyndhurst Terrace, N.W. 3 opened on 28th April 1959. It was Tuesday.

Mercury House was quite a distance from the college. But to catch a bus I had to walk in another direction equally far. So I preferred to walk almost one mile.

The college-building had two storeys. The principal Miss Margaret Darvall stayed on the second floor. On the first floor and in the basement classes were held. We were introduced to four lady professors and the vice-principal.

Our class began. The professor wore horn-rimmed glasses sliding down a pointed nose and she had the habit of looking over them. She warned us: "Girls, here is a homily. Beware of boys, never trust them. They will persuade you with sweet words to take drinks with them. But remember, girls, the consequence will be disastrous. So all of you must be very careful. Understand?"

A few girls exchanged knowing glances, pursed their lips and smiled quizzically, I thought that she was wise to advise.

In fact, after a few days I witnessed a confirmatory scene. On my way to Mercury House, I saw two Bobbies carrying a drunken girl from a bar. Her clothes were

in disorder, her hair dishevelled. She was almost unconscious. It was a disgraceful, disgusting sight. I was appalled. Then suddenly my professor's words flashed into my mind. I acquired a new awareness of life's strangeness.

\*

My third brother Paroobhai and his wife Urmilla came from East Africa and stayed at Mrs Bee's house at Marble Arch. They were given a big front room with a double bed.

Since my college had started I could meet them only in the evening.

On week-ends I went with them sight-seeing round the city. There was Westminster Abbey—we were on the opposite bank of the river Thames at a place between Lambeth Bridge and Westminster Bridge. From this spot we caught a picturesque view of the Houses of Parliament and Big Ben. There are many bridges. But London Bridge is the busiest. Tower Bridge was opposite to the Tower of London. It is the tallest of all the bridges and stands most strikingly above the water level. It is suspended from two main towers rising to a height of one hundred fifty feet, and two drawbridges span the two hundred feet between. Each drawbridge weighs one thousand tons and takes ninety seconds to rise to allow ships to pass. It is estimated that the drawbridges are raised about six thousand times a year. The total length of the bridge is nine hundred forty feet. The raising of the drawbridges is one of the sights of London.

We did not see the Tower of London, because too many sad stories were connected with the place.

Battersea Pleasure Gardens was another enjoyable place. Sudha, Sashi and Manu were with us. We rode on the roundabout, we sat in the Dodg'em cars. The water-chute and Ferris Wheel were great fun. I did not enter the grotesque ghosts' house. The rest had an amusing experience: a skeleton came very close to them hitting their fore heads with a sponge. Urmilla and Sudha screamed. Men perhaps suppressed their fear.

There are more than twelve parks in London full of greenery—trees, flowers, enchanting woodland.

Greenwich Park was full of cedars, chestnut trees, islands, lakes and waterfalls. The gardens of roses were the high-light. They thrilled the air with their fragrance. Birds, swans and other water-fowls graced the scenery. The whole atmosphere was cheerful.

St. James's Park is good but I found Regent's Park most entrancing. It covered four hundred fifty acres. There are also zoological gardens which occupied an area of thirty-four acres. Our visit to the zoo was entertaining. We saw the feeding of lions, tigers and an astonishing tea-party of chimpanzees. The aquarium was extremely absorbing. There was indeed a combination of beauty and the beast.

The zoo recalls to my mind this piquant joke:

An Indian villager who knew some English came to town and was taken to a zoo by a friend. The villager saw the label "Kangaroos" over the place where these animals were kept. Later he saw the place where lions and tigers were kept. Before reaching it he read a board where a warning was written "Dangerous". The villager exclaimed: "Oh those were Kangaroos and here are Dangaroos!"

We also went to see St. Paul's Cathedral—Sir Christopher Wren's masterpiece was built on the site of the earlier cathedral, destroyed by fire in 1666. A church of the same name stood here fourteen hundred years ago. Rebuilding St. Paul's took thirty-five years. It was finished in 1710. Services of a national character take place here, such as the Thanksgiving Service in 1902 for the recovery of Edward VII from the illness which delayed his coronation. Many great men are buried here, including Wren himself, Lord Nelson, the Duke of Wellington, Lord Jellicoe and Earl Beatty.

The dome of St. Paul's is the most prominent feature of the London skyline. There were also the whispering gallery, the inner dome and the crypt.

\*

Madam Tussaud's celebrity wax-work exposition at Marylebone Road—off Baker Street—was worth seeing. The three-storied museum was founded by Madame Tussaud, who was born in 1760. She was a French aristocrat, imprisoned during the Reign of Terror in the French Revolution. She made numerous wax-dolls in the jail. Later she was forced to use as models the death-masks of the French Revolutionary leaders, which she did with tears in her eyes.

The method of doing the modelling work is much different now from what it was at the time of Madame Tussaud.

Madame Tussaud escaped to London at the age of forty-one or so. She kept developing her skill up to the age of seventy-four. She established an exhibition in the three-storie building which is called Madame Tussaud Museum. The present building was opened in 1928, replacing the one destroyed by fire in 1925. She died at the age of eighty-nine. Before she passed away she made her own image which is an eminent feature of the show. Her work is carried on by her family.

All the wax-dolls are life-size figures. These statues are of notables—exact images of the original personalities. There are different tableaux where we saw the models of historical and contemporary worthies. On the third floor is the King's Hall. There we saw kings, queens, princes, princesses, statesmen and politicians of England and also foreign dignitaries. Their dresses were fabulous—each suited their moods and moulds. We felt as if these lively figures would speak to us presently.

The expressions of Gandhi's and Nehru's faces were not up to the mark.

The representation of the two princes who were killed in the Tower of London

was a pitiable sight. The scene of the wounded Nelson at the battle of Trafalgar was shown in detail.

On the other floors there were figures of musicians, sculptors, scientists, sportsmen and other geniuses.

The statue of a "sleeping beauty" was charming. She wore a silken black dress and slept deeply on a velvet mattress. Her right arm was flung across her forehead. To show her heart palpitate, they put an electronic machine. The lady—Madame du Barry—was the mistress of King Louis XV of France.

The museum is famous all over the world. There were streams of visitors who were full of admiration.

Every year the people in charge put new faces of VIPS to attract the attention of spectators of all nations.

There we saw a chamber of horrors—very dim, dreadful, eerie, set apart for criminals. Two horrible sights left me sick and shaken. One was the punishment of a young woman shown hung with a hook in her intestines. Her tongue stuck out with terror and her eyes goggled. The other was the execution of Marie Antoinette. Torture, punishment, ruthless guillotining, electrocution, strangulation and so on and on. O God, I saw naked hell here.

It was said that if anybody could stay overnight in that chamber, he would be rewarded handsomely. None took up the challenge.

In 1958 they started a new section called London Planetarium. There we saw an extraordinary set-up of lights. We felt as if we were entering into planets. Wonderful music was played to suit the occasion and atmosphere. Moving planets—stars, suns, all different kinds of heavenly bodies were demonstrated colourfully and vividly. We were as though gliding in the midst of galaxies.

\*

When we crossed Fleet Street, Sashi told us that work went round the clock here. This was the commonwealth's busiest press-centre, where the *Times*, the *Daily Express*, the *Daily Mirror*, the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Observer* were all edited. Fleet Street was named after the nearby river Fleet. The P.M. Mr. Harold Macmillan stayed in this street.

We also saw the changing of the Guard, when the Queen was in residence at Buckingham Palace. The soldiers in their bright-red uniforms with large shining brass buttons and huge black caps were on guard-duty outside. They stared into space and perhaps never even blinked, I thought.

There were good shows in West-End which we did not miss. By the time I returned to Mercury House it was very late. I had to walk quite a long way from the bus-stop to reach there. Sometimes they saw me off in a cab. On our way we took cappuccino in an Italian restaurant. Later my brother bought a car, so there was no difficulty.

I wrote a few letters to the Mother describing my outings. Whatever I did, wherever I went, the remembrance of the Divine and my goal were always present in my consciousness.

*(To be continued)*

Copyright © Huta D. Hmdocha

---

## YAJNA

HERE is fire. Here is butter.  
 Make me butter, make me fire—  
 Here is wood, the fine dry kindling,  
 Make me That.

Here is music,  
 Pipe-sound, drum-sound—  
 Here are clear sweet bells.  
 Here are voices,  
 Chanting, praising—  
 Make me Sound.

One who reigns  
 In garlands golden  
 Rests his feet  
 On Earth's bare breast.  
 Blessed the dust their touch has hallowed,  
 Make me That.

SONIA DYNE

# VIGNETTES OF THE MOTHER AND SRI AUROBINDO

*(Continued from the issue of 24 April 1987)*

## ONE RUPEE

SOME devotees were coming from Calcutta to the Ashram for the Mother's darshan. Eager to reach Pondicherry, they talked of the Mother, Sri Aurobindo and the Ashram constantly during the three days' long journey. To one side on the floor sat an old simple poor villager to whom neither they nor anybody paid any attention.

Suddenly after two days the old man somehow gathered his courage and addressed them, "Respected Sirs, I have been listening a long time to you talking about the Divine Mother. It was nectar to me. I have fallen in love with Her. But alas I am very poor, I saved for long for this one journey. To go to Pondicherry is impossible for me, nor can I even have Her darshan. I have this one rupee—my whole saving. Will you kindly give Her my humble offering?"

Deeply moved by his simple and sincere words the devotees took the one rupee coin and promised the old man that his offering would be given to the Divine Mother. After no time the villager got down at his destination.

The devotees from Calcutta gave the old man's coin to the Mother and told her the whole story.

The Mother weighed the coin on her palm and remarked, "You know, the Divine will find it difficult to repay him."

Compiled by S.

# LIFE-POETRY-YOGA

## FROM SOME PERSONAL LETTERS TO A SADHAK

*(Continued from the issue of 24 April 1987)*

YOUR whole Holland-experience—a varied bitter-sweet—strikes me as an inevitable phase in your development, carefully planned in all its kaleidoscopic complexity by the Divine. I don't think anybody could have prevented it. You have grown considerably—numerous eyes have been opened. Some of them forcibly, others flowerily: you appear to be like a little Argus, half interested in the hundred directions suddenly shining into view, half bewildered by their seemingly different calls. What is to be felt with a clarifying keenness is that all these varied vistas are really radiating from a single centre in the depths of your heart and that each of them leads to the same wide circumference—the Mother—surrounding your life like an embrace from some infinite unknown. When you succeed in feeling these two truths, the little Argus will mature and realise something of that infinite unknown within himself and exclaim to the Supreme Beloved in the words of the young Aurobindo romantically mysticising in some clear evening at Cambridge in mid-spring:

My spirit is a heaven of thousand stars  
And all these lights are thine and open doors on thee.

(4.10.1986)

There are a number of good insights in your letter: (1) “a lover's right never to be satisfied”, (2) “I want to return to Her my right to choose”, (3) “Your strength is mine and if ever You let me go I will fall like a stone.” Your “fresh ‘free verse’ ” is also insightful in the lines:

Like yesterday's delicious dinner,  
Like the day before's dear gods,  
Like last month's tears and smiles,  
Like last year's spring and winter,  
Like friends of times gone by  
All things of old and gold  
Have their special place,  
Their particular slot,  
Not anywhere else, and yesterday's bliss  
Could be today's curse.

Numbers (1) and (2) as well as the second line in the above free-verse are especially fine. The first statement might be a suggestion of greed, but the word “lover” lights

it up and frees it from the penumbra of egotistic grumbling. A sunshine from the depths is in that word and the term "satisfied" has a sort of smile in it which shows appreciation and happiness at the same time that the lips seem to be open with a mute plea for more nectar. No. (2) has a couple of bright truth-points—the realisation that you have been given "freewill", the right to choose and that it is out of your own heart's wish, your liberty to say "Yes" or "No", you offer yourself to the Mother and place your life in Her hands to do with you what She desires in her wide wisdom. The phrase "Like the day before's dear gods" indicates the Infinite ever ahead of us and the ever-progressive movement of life,

For the Divine is no fixed paradise  
But truth beyond great truth, a spirit-heave  
From unimaginable sun-surprise  
Of beauty to immense love-lunar eve,  
Dreaming through lone sidereal silence on  
To yet another alchemy of dawn.

The phrase concerning "gods" is particularly profound: the others which bring in "dinner", "tears and smiles", "spring and winter", "friends" suggest that new things have to come into the picture but not necessarily that these novelties would be essentially better, whereas the one about "gods" sparks off the sense of the supreme and the paradox of the "supremer", which is the core of true progress—the seeming highest giving place to a still greater peak and so on in an astonishing succession of epiphany-splendour and initiation-secrecy. The adjective "dear" for "gods" is also significant. While the context directs us with the noun to the perennially largening objective dimension of spirituality, it makes us aware by this adjective of the increasing subjective largeness needed: the Yogi has constantly to outgrow the cherishing, the devotion, the worship which his heart offers, he must be ready to give up the degree in which he held as precious to himself whatever he took to be the Ultimate and go in for an intenser love exploring the Unknown for a marvel sweeter and sublimer. The adjective and the noun form a simple spontaneous combination lit with inevitability.

I was particularly struck by your light-hearted and at the same time light packed phrase: "the route I have taken on this hard but fun-filled road." You have hit off to a profound nicety the character of the Aurobindonian Yoga. We have been summoned to accomplish a labour that can make a Hercules blanch and yet the summons is from the mouth of a Heavenly Humorist who can make the yoke which is implicit in the term "yoga" rhyme most naturally with "joke", for there is abundant play (yes, play and not only action) of Grace, a smiling sweetness with surprise after surprise of sunshine for us when all seems gloomy and the way ahead obstructed. This sunshine can indeed be fun-shine.

(27.10.1986)



You are right in thinking that continuing on the path of Yoga is itself a progress even if no markedly impressive development may have been there. Not only is the persistence a sign of progress but the Force at work is such that we are bound to go further and further, however subtly and imperceptibly, just as we can't help being carried on in the earth's rotation around its own axis and the earth's revolution around the sun as well as its journey forward with the whole solar system which is moving towards the star Vega in the constellation Lyra. What is essentially required to ensure this automatic Yogic advancement is a basic resolve to do one's best—one's fairly feeble best in most cases—to be sincere in self-dedication to the Divine. Then in the course of time the hidden benefits will break out, like flowers from seeds secretly lying in the earth and waiting for sun and rain to call forth their colour and fragrance.

Yes, Sri Aurobindo's *The Synthesis of Yoga* lays out a superb programme. Even to traverse in mind the wonder after wonder of spiritual experience it discloses to the aspirant is to attain a permanent opening—an empty space, no doubt, but one which constantly invites the multi-splendoured Plenitude. The *Synthesis* is most helpful if we can feel that Sri Aurobindo is not merely describing states of the Spirit: he is letting these states communicate themselves in a mode of expression proper to prose-writing. Prose has to be true to the gods of clarity and order so that the thinking mind may be able to grasp things and discern a system in them, but it has also to convey something of the beauty of whatever it holds forth as truth. Prose and not only poetry is an art, and the sense of perfect form is to be kindled by it. This is what Sri Aurobindo does to an extreme degree and in doing so with an "overhead" afflatus he brings to the intellect simultaneously a moving series of lucid concepts and a call to the imagination to prepare an inner silence in which these concepts may serve as shining shadows of realities beyond the intellect's ken, realities waiting to become life on earth.

Regarding contact with those who have passed away, I believe that occasionally we do meet them in the early period after their departure. Since departed sadhaks and sadhikas live with the Mother and Sri Aurobindo and since the latter two are established on the subtle-physical plane our dead friends are also there. But I conceive that they are absorbed in being with the dual Divine and do not bother to be concerned with earth-affairs. Only rarely will they make contact with us in their form-aspect, though psychically they may be reached by us in the midst of their absorption. In not more than four or five instances, when I have dreamed of my wife Sehra in the last six years, could I feel sure she was concretely with me.

What you say about poetry has always been my view. I hold that all poetry is "dramatic" in the sense that the poet does not express merely his experience. I use "experience" in a wide connotation. I mean not only actual incidents but also actual suggestions—suggestions coming both from one's own sensory or mental movements and from books, particularly from poems of others when a phrase or an image in them starts proliferating in one's consciousness. Whatever the stimulus, the creative

faculty begins drawing to oneself all sorts of relevant features extending the contents of the experience, deepening their original shock-surprise, enriching their initial glow of thought and warmth of feeling. The seeing mind and the responsive heart link up with what Sri Aurobindo calls the "soul" in his *Future Poetry*—not the psychic being as such, to which his later directly Yogic writings give that name, but the inmost intuitive self in whatever plane the poet is poised on. If we like, we may consider this self the psychic being's representative within that plane. Of course, infiltrations from the "overhead" also take place, mostly getting coloured by the atmosphere of one's habitual inner level. At times, poetry is "dramatic" in an extraordinary sense: something from the inner or higher levels comes sheer and the poet is entirely a passive channel with no recognisable life-experience except for the general sadhana-state to spark off the "multifoliate" expression. Many of Nirod's poems are outbursts or downpours of this nature. Broadly speaking, all poetry is a god taking a cue from a man.

This cue-taking can occur independently of poetry. That is what you are after, so that every movement of life finds its profound or uplifted significance. You are asking for the process of this intensifying or immensifying of all life. I know of only two keys. One is the practice of a standing back—a self-detaching silence in the midst of the world's rumble and your own grumble—a reposing in some vast background studded with "calm faces of the gods", as it were,

Bringing the marvel of the infinitudes.

The other key is the simple formula: "Remember and offer." With the first key the mystery of the one universal Spirit gets opened, with the second the secrecy of the true individual soul gets unlocked. I may add that accompanying the hushful withdrawal there awakes an awareness of the Unthinkable above, so that one may feel, as Emily Dickinson says, the top of one's head blown away. One may not always be able to assert, with Sri Aurobindo,

My consciousness climbed like a topless hill,

but one may have the intuition of an enormous sun-blazed or moon-glinted or star-tangled dome replacing the usual feel of one's thick-wooded, sparse--growth'd or desert-bare skull. If one succeeds in standing back in a poised spread-out serenity and then from the centre of that circle whose circumference tends to be everywhere one makes the continuous gesture of giving everything—one's own inner movements and the outer to-and-fro of "time's unrest"—to a gracious Presence whose finite form of human-seeming loveliness with yet an endless aura of the unknown stretches out welcoming hands—if one carries on this twofold process all happenings within and without will catch a revelatory hint of some Supreme design, some Archetypal Order waiting to be manifested. Ordinary phenomena will disclose

enchanted meanings, unfold signs of a superhuman existence appearing to shadow forth the Ineffable. Thus the experience of love between human beings, with the heart beating faster in joy, could turn into that vision *à la* Flecker:

A red immortal riding through the hearts of men.

Tennyson's quiet, solemn, simple representation:

Twilight and evening star

would change into that revelation made by an Aurobindonian poet:

The wideness with one star that is the dusk.

Small events from day to day would become apertures across which gifts of inner development would be received. All words, all acts, whether one's own or of others, would be stepping-stones athwart the flood of transience towards eternal truths.

(8.II.1986)

AMAL KIRAN (K. D. SETHNA)

# HUMOUR IN THE PLAYS OF SRI AUROBINDO

## 1—THE MAID IN THE MILL

(Continued from the issue of 24 April 1987)

IN the II Scene we find our irrepressible Brigida gently mocking and sweetly teasing the love-lorn lady Ismenia who is trembling in eager expectancy to know the answer and the reaction of Antonio. Anyone else also would be all palpitation in her place for she had staked her heart and, much more, even her honour. Realising fully well her pathetic condition, her trepidation and extreme nervousness, Brigida prattles on of this and that.

“Brigida—Santa Katarina! How weary I am! My ears too! I think they have listened to more nonsense in these twenty minutes than in all their natural eighteen years before. Sure, child, thou hast committed some unpardonable sin to have such a moonstruck lover as this Antonio.

Ismenia—But, Brigida!

Brigida—And his shadow too, his Cerberus of wit who guards this poetical treasure. He would have eaten me, I think, if I had not given him the wherewithal to stop the three mouths of him.”<sup>1</sup>

Ismenia is all burning impatience and exclaims,

Ismenia—Why, Brigida, Brigida.

“Brigida—Saints! to think how men lie! I have heard this Basil reputed loudly or the Caesar of wits, the tongue and laughter of the time; but never credit me, child, if I did not silence him with a few stale pertnesses a market-girl might have devised for her customers. A wit, truly! and not a word in his mouth bullet-head Pedro could not better.”<sup>2</sup>

At each reproach and every sigh of impatience from the sorely tried Ismenia, instead of telling her straight away what she is dying to hear, she lets her tongue wander here and there. This incarnate insouciance talks of cut bottles, nasturtiums, of summer house and Pedro and above all of Basil, “Don Wit, Don Cerberus, Don subtle three-mouths”.<sup>3</sup>

Even the gentle lady Ismenia is reduced to reproaches which in themselves are delightful witticisms.

“Ismenia—Will you tell me, you ogress, you paragon of Tyrannesses, you she-Nero, you compound of impossible cruelties?”<sup>4</sup>

Our dedicated tease further lengthens her discourse by putting off the sweet disclosure for which poor Ismenia is dying.

<sup>1</sup> *Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library*, Vol 7, p 856

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 856-857.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 858.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

“Brigida—Saints, what have I done to be abused so? I am coming to it faster than a mail-coach and four. You would not be so unconscionable as to ask me for the appendage of a story, all tail and nothing to hang it on? Well, Antonio took the letter.

Ismenia—Yes, yes and what answer gave he?

Brigida—He looked all over the envelope to see whence it came, dissertated learnedly on this knotty question, abused me your handwriting foully.”<sup>1</sup>

Giving up the battle of reasoning with Brigida, Ismenia kneels before her cousin to beg for Antonio’s answer. Even then this delightful mistress of all the sense and nonsense of the world prattles away, egging on Ismenia further till she is driven to ‘gentle violence’. Then and only then the she-tyrant reveals to her that her love is fully reciprocated. When dishevelled Brigida reproaches Ismenia for her roughness Ismenia takes a leaf out of Brigida’s own book and answers:

“Ismenia—Hear her, the Pagan! A gentle physical agitation and some rearrangement of tresses, ’twas less punishment than you deserved. But there! that is salve for you....”<sup>2</sup>

Brigida’s penchant for fun is endless and her quest for the ridiculous, the off-beat and the effervescent is incessant. Now in a masterly harangue of pert witticisms, this paragon of sarcasm, this epitome of pure mischief pokes fun at the effusive, gushy, classically lovelier words of Antonio.

“...But to speak bare facts, Ismenia, I think he is most poetically in love with you. He made preparations to swoon when he saw no more than your name; but I build nothing on that, there are some who faint when they smell a pinch of garlic or spy a cock chafer. But he waited ten minutes copying your letter into his heart or some such notebook of love affairs; yet that was nothing either; I doubt if he found room for you, unless on the margin. Then he began drawing cheques on Olympus for comparisons, left that presently as antique and out of date, confounded Ovid and his breviary in the same quest; left that too for mediaeval, and diverged into light and heat, but came not to the very modernness of electricity. But lord! what a career he ran! He had imagined himself blind and breathless when I stopped him. I tremble to think what calamities might have ensued had I not thrown myself under the wheels of his metaphor. The upshot is, he loves you, worships you and will come to you.”<sup>3</sup>

Then in a show of superiority and bravado she declares that the happiness of lovers is not a thing that she values. “.. No, I will be the type and patroness of spinsters, the noble army of old maids shall gather about my tomb to do homage to me.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 859.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 860.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 860-861.

But her vagrant heart has already escaped and she has invited "Don Witty-pate"<sup>1</sup> to accompany Antonio. The mating game is on. It is the season for turtles to coo and for magpies to chatter together. The scent of battle is in her nostrils. She has tasted victory and is eager for more of it. Her high enthusiasm for ridicule seems insatiable. Her sprightliness seems doubly dear to the readers.

In the IV Scene she jauntily sets out to demolish the remains of the ego and self-confidence of poor Basil. Thus ego he has gathered by life-long labours. Frolic and fun, exuberance and exhilaration gush out like wordy fountains of irony and animation if she as much as opens her lips. She is full of fume ever ready with sarcasm, provocation, burlesque and is pining to parody and make pulp of Don Basil. Brushing aside the tears of helpless laughter the reader is left blinking as much as poor woe-begone Basil. The volatile variety of her moods, the sharp brilliance of her verbal arrows make us raise our eyes to heaven for a moment. And the male readers may feel a ready sympathy for the pulverized reputation of Basil. The ladies may say "Bravo" under their breath to this razor-tongued prattler, who vindicates the honour of all women in the field of debate and takes a worthy revenge on the representative male for their millennial subjection.

We see in the IV Scene Antonio discoursing in the time-honoured phrases of moon-struck lovers and for his hyperboles Basil is ready enough with witticisms —

"Here's a whole epic on an ounce of oil, a poor, drowned wick bought from the nearest chandler and a fly sodden in it.."

or

"Am I mad"?

Do you think I'll trust a lover? Why, you could not  
Even ask the time but you would say, 'Good Sir,  
How many minutes to Ismenia?'<sup>2</sup>

But his renowned wits desert him as he sees Brigida coming—

".... 'Tis the she-guide,  
The feminine Mercury, the tongue, the woman."<sup>3</sup>

Brigida at once sets out to demoralise further the already cowering Basil,

"Were you not hiding when I came up to you?  
What was it, Sir? A constable or perhaps

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 849.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 863.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*

A creditor? For to be dashed by a weak girl  
I know you are too bold.”<sup>1</sup>

After tormenting Basil thus, Brigida leads Antonio to Ismenia and comes after a while and, finding all quiet, soliloquizes thus—

“No sound? Señor! Ismenia! Surely they cannot have embraced each other into invisibility. No, Cupid has flown away with them. It cannot have been the devil, for I smell no brimstone. Well, if they are so tedious I will not mortify myself with solitude either. I have set Don Cerberus on the stairs out of respect for the mythology. There he stands with his sword at point like the picture of a sentinel and protects us against a surprise of rats from the cellar; for what other wild beasts there may be to menace us, I know not.”<sup>2</sup>

For a moment Brigida becomes serious. She is put out and disappointed by her easy victory, by her own top class. No one comes even near her category. She despairs of finding a worthy adversary, her peer, and laments thus—

“... These men! these men! and yet they call themselves our masters. I would I could find a man fit to measure tongues with me. I begin to feel lonely in the Alpine elevation of my own wit. The meditations of Matterhorn came home to me and I feel a sister to Monte Rosa.”<sup>3</sup>

Yet she accepts her fate and, knowing that to find her equal is impossible, accepts the fact that her heart has strayed into pursuit of Basil.

“Certainly this woman’s fever is catching, and spreads a most calamitous infection. I have overheard myself sighing; it is a symptom incubatory. Heigh-ho! when turtles pair, I never heard that the magpie lives lonely. I have at this moment a kindly thought for all suffering animals. I begin to pity Cerberus even”<sup>4</sup>—and to Basil she says—

“Put up your sword, pray you; I think there is no danger, and if one comes, you may draw again in time to cut its tail off.”<sup>5</sup>

Thus at each step she makes Basil taste gall and wormwood. His grey matter is stifled, and choked by her torrential tongue and he mutters—

“...If it were not treason to my wit, I begin to feel this strip of a girl is making an ass of me. I am transformed; I feel it. I shall hear myself bray presently. But

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid*, p. 864.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 870

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 870

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*

I will defy enchantment, I will handle her. A plague! Must I continually be stalemated by a wile-o'-the-wisp, all sparkle and nowhere? courage, Basil."<sup>1</sup>

But before the out-witted and bewildered Basil can gather his powers of raillery Brigida fires a close shot—

“You meditate, Señor? If it be to allay the warmth you have brought from the stairs, with the coolness of reflection, I would not hinder you ”<sup>2</sup>

Thus the duel goes on. The boa-constrictor has her prey in her sight. He sits there fascinated and trembling and yet willing and happy to be devoured. For Cupid makes defeat a glory and victory a regret. When Basil tries to kiss Brigida she provokes and harasses him further,

“Brigida—Ah, Señor, beware, living coals are dangerous; they burn, Señor.

Basil—I am proof.

Brigida—As the man said when he was bitten by the dog they thought mad; but it was the dog that died. Pray, Sir, have a care. You will put the fire out.

Basil—Come, I have you. I will take ten kisses for the one you refused me this forenoon.

Brigida—That is too compound an interest. I do entreat you, Sir, have a care. This usury is punishable by the law.

Basil—I have the rich man’s trick for that. With the very coin I have unlawfully gathered, I will stop her mouth.

Brigida—O Sir, you are as wasteful an accountant of kisses as of words. I foresee you will go bankrupt ”<sup>3</sup>

By a simple ruse Brigida disengages herself. Basil pretends he had let her go willingly—

“...Because I knew that to stop your mouth was to stop your life, therefore in pity I have refused your encounter”<sup>4</sup>

This is a telling shot, a minor come-back for the banished Basil, balm to his affronted heart.

Here for the first time the sorely tried Basil makes one solitary hit. His score which was zero till now to the hundred-and-one of Brigida rises by one notch; alas, woe to the male ego that it does not rise any higher. For our virile brazen virgin

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 870-871.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 871.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 871-872.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 872



does not let it pass unavenged. She is unabashed and at once lets go a fusillade.

“Brigida—Was it, truly? Alas, I could weep to think of the violence you have done yourself for my sake. Pray, Sir, do not torture yourself so. To see how goodness is misunderstood in this world! Out of pity? And make me take you for a fool!

Basil—Well.

Brigida—O no, Señor, it is not well, indeed it is not well. You shall not do this again. If I must die, I must die. You are scatheless. Pray now, disburden your intellect of all the brilliant things it has so painfully kept to itself. Plethora is unwholesome and I would not have you perish of an apoplexy of wit. Pour it out on me, conceit, epigram, irony, satire, vituperation; flout and invective, tuquoque and double-entendre, pun and quibble, rhyme and unreason, catcall and onomatopoeia; all, all, although it be an avalanche. It will be terrible, but I will stand the charge of it.<sup>1</sup>”

Basil flusters and flounders, and sinks lower and lower in the mire of his defeat—

“Basil—St. Iago! I think she has the whole dictionary in her stomach. I grow desperate.

Brigida—Pray, do not be afraid. I do not indeed press you to throw yourself at my head, but for a small matter like your wit, I will bear up against it.

Basil—This girl has a devil.”<sup>2</sup>

Brigida further presses her advantage and puts the seal of complete victory over the hapless Basil—

“Brigida—Why are you silent, Señor? Are you angry with me? I have given you no cause. This is cruel. Don Basil, I have heard you cited everywhere for absolutely the most free and witty speaker of the age. They told me that if none other offer, you will jest with the statues in the Plaza Mayor and so wittily they cannot answer a word to you. What have I done that with me alone you are dumb”<sup>3</sup>

She savours fully her frolicking and mischievous victory and razes the last vestige of Basil’s reputation—

“... O Sir, have pity on the whole world and be always silent.”<sup>4</sup>...

Thus this wonderfully audacious girl with her bold gaiety rattles our dear Don

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 872-873.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 873.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

Basil. Her merry provocations are endless, her glad self-assurance—which biased male readers may call nerve and cheek, insolence or presumption—is truly laughter's nectar and, since all is supposed to be fair in love and war, one cannot call her methods wrong. Her alertness and perspicacity would do honour even to a Socrates. Poor Basil finds himself annihilated and getting more and more enmeshed in the net of her wit and charm.

Full of sparkling badinage, this incomplete play is a thing of joy forever. If only the happy playwright had completed it, it might have been the brightest jewel amongst the comedies of the world.

(Concluded)

SHYAM KUMARI

---

## 'FLOCCINAUCINIHIILIPILIFICATION'

THIS is the longest word recorded in the Oxford English Dictionary. It has 29 letters. It was coined humorously by Shenstone in 1741. It means 'the action or habit of estimating as worthless.' The sentence in which Shenstone used it first is this: 'I loved him for nothing so much as his *floccinaucinihilipilification* of money.' Sir Walter Scott used it in 1829. It is hardly ever used in speech. In writing also, it is not frequently used. You may use it to impress others. He is noted for his floccinaucinihilipilification of book knowledge. The word is a combination of the Latin words flocci, nauci, nihili, pilli+fication. These together mean 'setting little or no value.' All the 'i's in the word are pronounced like the 'i' in 'bill' and 'hill'. 'Flocci' rhymes with 'foxy', 'nousi' rhymes with 'lousy' and 'drowsy'. So take a long breath and pronounce the word. I don't know whether it is worth taking so much trouble to say that something is useless.

(*The Hindu*, 25.3.1986, p. 19)

K. SUBRAHMANYAN  
CIEFL Hyderabad

### EDITOR'S NOTE

The next longest word is 'honorificabilitudinitas'—22 letters. The accent is on 'di'. It is archaic and means 'honourableness' and is the shorter proper form of a word Shakespeare used in *Love's Labour's Lost*, Act V. Scene 1, line 45: 'honorificabilitudinitatibus', a semi-jocular term which is the ablative plural of the Latin original of the English archaism. Another Elizabethan dramatist, Nashe, has made use of it also.

# SAVITRI'S INITIATION INTO YOGA

*(Continued from the issue of 24 April 1987)*

## 13. Time and Fate

THE command is to vanquish Time and Fate. Time has its first birth, when seen subjectively, in a high deployment of consciousness, in the creative delight of manifestation. But then it has seasons and it has moonlike phases of waxing and waning in our world. It separated itself from the origin and finally when it fell into the Inconscience it turned hostile. A deployment arising from the dark Source is now the terrible aspect of the inconscient dynamism presenting itself in the person of cruel Time. This fallen and lost Time is the agent of our inescapable Fate.

Savitri is enjoined to look at Time and its events and relations not from the surface soul but from the soul deep within. The whole of its nature and character would then appear to be different. However, it should not be merely a matter of change of outlook, a shift in poise, an altered standpoint. Such a shift of poise would still leave everything essentially unchanged; Time would still remain the same; the dark power would only be seen as an aspect of God. Obviously that would not be sufficient, although it would mean a great advance over the ignorant outlook. What Savitri is told to do is to go farther than this and vanquish Time. She has to go to the very roots of these events and strike at them with her power of consciousness. The fallen Time has to be resuscitated to his high diviner state. The deployment or the unfoldment has to be in the luminous extension of God. Only then would the temporality-aspect of God be a new power of evolution co-extensive with Eternity. That would be the real Time-eternity. Such a change of outlook and victory over Time would then be simultaneous in the consciousness of Savitri. It is therefore a command for realisation as well as execution. That indeed is the action of the divine Shakti here in the darkness of terrestrial existence.

If the dynamics of Inconscience is the fallen Time presenting itself as a formidable figure and agent of Fate, then Death is its frightening personification; he is the embodied Nothingness standing in the path of the soul's journey to the heavens of beatitude. Again, seeing Death simply from a higher point of view as a law in the present stage of evolution is not enough, because here it has to be dealt with as an actual fact of dark life. No doubt, the soul can escape from this world but then the purpose of its coming here wouldn't be served; in that eventuality its mission would remain unfulfilled. Such an immortality in the presence of Death all around would only be half of the solution, the upward lap of the pilgrim's progress; the other lap, more arduous and difficult, of establishing that beatitude in this very kingdom of darkness, is what Savitri is asked to undertake. Vanquishing of Death is her high mission for which she has descended now into the earth-consciousness. As an instrument of the divine Will she has to wake up and prepare herself to exe-

cute what she has been commanded to do. Hence her own higher self intervenes in her present human strife and bids her not to nurse grief in a helpless heart; instead she must first discover her soul.

#### 14. This Deathbound Earth

This dumb deathbound earth, this transient and sorrowful world, this cradle of grief and suffering; this battle-ground that never brings victory! And the skies above, withdrawn and lonely and indifferent, of attenuated blue, of passionless joy, unconcerned with the misery and fate of earthly creatures! And yet the flames of sacrifice must rise and reach the high heavens. For all the glory and beauty that must be the earth's, someone has drunk the cup of hemlock and soon the poison will be numb the body from feet upward; he is tied to the cross and will die with two thieves; he will be guillotined and the blade-touch will be felt on his neck even in another birth. The one who has come to save the world must suffer for its stupidity. But not on the pyre will now she be burnt. Nor will she go as Sati. The immortal Energy has not come to submit but to conquer. She is not tied to the post of Time or Death. The Voice is stern in its command that Savitri must get up, cast off her self of grief, arm herself to meet the hour of Time and Fate. Otherwise all that was done for the dumb and deathbound earth would become a vain labour; the occult price that was paid would be of no avail. But with Savitri's coming this will not happen.

The problem with the earth is her dumbness, and her death-boundedness, and her ignorance; and all this under the skies that are so indifferent. Why? But the question is irrelevant and put in vain. There is a divine destiny for the earth but she is not as yet aware of it. She would like to speak but she cannot; she would like to get out of death but she cannot; she would like to lead a life of light and delight flowing in knowledge but hers is the helpless heart filled with grief and sorrow. She has to suffer and die repeatedly because she is under the sway of Fate and Time. If Death is vanquished everything would change; she would then be an expression of God's freedom; she would live in immortality for an unending progress; she would begin to know what God's creation is and its purpose and its meaning in manifestation. A new era would commence. The skies will not any more be indifferent. Savitri's coming is that assurance. She has identified her grief and her joy with the earth's and therefore she is the real saviour and redeemer of this sorrowful and death-bound creation. Therefore she must arise and conquer Death. The command is from on high; it has hit the eyebrow centre; it has the infallibility of action and outcome.

#### 15. Yoga of Remorse

Savitri hears the command in the dim night, dim because it is indistinct. What she hears is in a heart filled with grief and with a passive submission. In fact, she is

almost sulking in her response. Her complaint is that her strength has been given away to Death and the heavens are shut and her struggle is against mute inevitable Fate. Furthermore, it is a vain bid to try to lift up this ignorant human race. She can tell this to the Voice because of her intimacy with it.

What was Savitri's strength that was given to Death? It was her love. Suddenly she finds that the one single column on which her entire edifice was built is gone. She has made all her life the cause of living for Satyavan and he himself is being snatched away from her arms. And what a stroke of cruelty! She implored the heavens but they were closed to her prayers and no succour came. And hers is a struggle against mute Fate which cannot be escaped. A Fate which cannot speak but is inevitable is perhaps worse than a vociferous Fate. If Fate is inevitable then what is the point in struggling against it? She must simply accept it and be subject to it. That is how she reasoned. Certainly, if Death is so strong and powerful, and if her strength has been given to Death, then it is suicidal to fight against it.

"This vain ignorant race"—that is Savitri's assessment of human nature. Men are happy with their lot; the daily routines of life are absorbing for them; they love the misery and the misfortune; they like to climb up and stumble down into the chasm; they enjoy sea-faring and getting drowned in the whirlpools; the squalor of the earth is what they would not like to miss. No light enters into their life. Even if one is to make an attempt to change their lot for the better, there is their fierce opposition. They feel belittled and mock and jeer at the saviour; they have no need of the bringer of light and love. For them what is not mind's is meaningless. Wisdom to be acceptable must pass through the gates of thought. Such is the ignorance and stupidity and obsequiousness of this race for whom she has been commanded to rise and fight against Death and Fate. For such a lot, she thinks, why should she make a sacrifice which is ultimately going to be of no avail.? Odious that they are, it is not worth one's while to bother about them when one's own personal grief becomes so acute. And then, on top of all this, imagine the indifferent heavens!

God sits above in peace leaving the mortal here to face the dark omnipotent Law that is Death. Such a deity does not get moved by the human cry. Savitri does not expect such a God to give help in the hour of her trial; she is not sure of its coming. While, therefore, on the one hand there is humanity happy with its lot and loath to change, on the other there is God's indifference towards his creation. In this situation, then, what is the need for her, and for Satyavan, to avoid what is fated? For what and for whom should she invoke a greater power to come down and help her?

Savitri's reluctance to budge from her fate-given position is in a way rather strange and foreign to her nature. A self-assertive woman giving up her claim on life and love—this role is not in her character; she cannot brook defeat. But presently she is prepared to cross the dark doors for an eternal union with her lover. The rest seems to be of no avail or consequence to her. It is almost an illusion to try to change the human race and to ask for the help of the high indifferent gods. Hers is the Yoga of Remorse, remorse like a kind of self-pity. She has abandoned the

battle, kept the bow and arrow at the feet of the mighty Voice, and is prepared to make a retreat in the face of the invasion of Fate and Time. All that she now sees is only personal salvation in love's union. She is, if at all, concerned only with her own need, and the need of her husband, and the rest does not seem to count or matter.

On the other hand, if changing human nature is such a powerful illusion then that could precisely be the task for Savitri to accomplish. When it is confronted successfully and conquered, the victory will be the greatest.

### 16. Mandate from Eternity

Therefore, the mighty Voice does not accept Savitri's line of reasoning and approach. It knows that it is the human Savitri who is speaking from her surface consciousness. Being an intimate Voice coming from her own higher self it admonishes and almost rebukes her for not rising up to carry forward the mission for which she has come down here. Can her work remain undone?

Charged with a mandate from eternity,  
A listener to the voices of the years,  
A follower of the footprints of the gods,<sup>1</sup>

can she return without changing the dusty laws and without fulfilling in earth-nature the will of the Highest?

The mandate given to Savitri is to change the old laws of sorrow and suffering born of inconscient material existence into the workings of the truth's free-will and dynamism. She is the listener of things which will come in cyclic time and she is the seer of the footprints of gods even though they are invisible here. A greater truth coming from eternity has to enter into the movements of time bringing with it the Seasons of the Truth, the rhythms of the supreme *ritam*. If the purpose of Savitri's coming here is to establish this truth in the earth-consciousness, then how can she at all forget her task and be happy with her lover in other countries? Not for such a love did she come all the way here to the earth. There ought to be new tables and new laws and new expressions of that dynamic truth, the *ritam*. She has to give shape and mass to the new Word expressive of the highest truth-force and truth-delight. By mastering her own fate she has to master the universal fate, as it is its epitome.

It has already been foreseen that a greater light shall come down on the earth and transform her. This greater light alone can dissolve her ignorance which is the cause of suffering and sorrow. To prepare the way for the descent of this higher glory is Savitri's mission. She is the executive power to establish in earth-consciousness that light so that the transforming miracle be achieved. By opening the doors of Fate, the iron doors that seemed to be for ever closed, she has to lead man on the

<sup>1</sup> *Savitri*, p. 475.

truth's wide and golden road that runs from transient things to eternity. Savitri's presence here means that a decision has already been taken to bring about this change. That march "has been firmly willed and settled above by the secret Intelligence that always possesses for the manifested intelligence that still seeks."<sup>1</sup> Nothing can now stop it unless the supreme Will reverses itself. How then can Savitri fail in her task? Her guardian angel reassures her in her human moment of weakness and remorse. Her strength is not given away to Death; in fact, always "Heaven's tranquil shield guarded the missioned child."<sup>2</sup>

With the assurance from the Voice, Savitri's heart falls mute. Calm like a hill, surmounting the seas of mortal ignorance, its peaks immutable above the mind's thin blue air—the earthly waves and tides do not reach that promontory of the Sublime. A Power from within Savitri's heart answers in that stillness the mighty Mother speaking to her from high above. The Power immediately recognises that it is the command coming from her own supreme self. Shakti guiding and Shakti responding to Shakti—that is the play of the within-above. The Power recognises the Voice and therein lies the surety and success of the Yoga of Savitri.

The moment the responding heart awakes and submits to the higher will, the spiritual life begins. Savitri gets the injunction how to proceed in her sadhana. But her sadhana is not an open-ended sadhana; it is with a specific purpose, *viz.* to vanquish Fate and Time. Love and death and joy of union and sorrow and suffering are only a means towards this, almost as if they were designed with this single objective, as if there was none of what we may call our natural spontaneity and freedom in her action and movement. The stamp of a mission is too bold on the face of her life and life's doings. And yet Savitri has to carry the burden of human nature on her soul's back; she has to encounter in a real way all the difficulties of this death-bound life and its physical limitations. It is only to the extent that they are met and conquered that her sadhana will be successful. But not by accepting death can death be conquered. Not by remaining in the mundane consciousness can the world be saved. Her knowledge is presently shrouded in the outward surroundings and hence she must first recover its true form and figure. Her great immortal spirit came down here to make this knowledge dynamically operative. This is the task Savitri is given to accomplish; the Power seated deep within her heart and responding to the Voice has now understood it. It declares that it is a portion of the Voice itself.

*(To be continued)*

R. Y. DESHPANDE

<sup>1</sup> *The Secret of the Veda*, p. 257

<sup>2</sup> *Savitri*, p. 16.

## JUNG'S RELEVANCE TO INDIA

### FREUD, JUNG, ADLER AND RANK— DEPTH PSYCHOLOGY AS A WHOLE: ITS SEARCH FOR THE MEANING OF LIFE

WUNDT's was the first laboratory in psychology opened in Leipzig (Germany) in the year 1879. And it was he who proposed and advanced the ideal, "Psychologie ohne Seele" (Psychology without a soul). Thus did psychology become a natural science with an experimental bias.

The ideal rapidly gained momentum and it spread over Europe and then America and today it is the most influential trend in psychological study and research. Psychology is today essentially a natural experimental science. It seeks to investigate reactions to different environmental situations and draw generalisations which are proving useful in different fields of life, for personality-studies, for education in intelligence-testing and vocational guidance, for commerce and industry, for selection of personnel for different kinds of work, and for management of labour etc., etc. Psychology is thus proving to be widely useful in life.

But this is a study of personality in its reactions to the varied external situations. Do we also know what personality by itself is? What is its essential composition, its make-up, and how can its quality be improved?

On these issues, we have learned to know from another set of psychologists, who started as medical men interested in the treatment of neurotic persons but soon emerged as psychologists with a view of human nature as such and its relation to life as a whole. They soon became popular and began to command general attention and exercise wide influence on life, education, religion, culture, etc. These pioneers were Freud, Adler, Jung and Rank. Their work together constitutes what has come to be known as Depth Psychology which inquires into the meaning of Life. It is, so to say, a general cultural reaction to the present times and lends a sense of inwardness to our life. Each of them in his own way has contributed to a profounder understanding of human nature, which stands contrasted to the superficial correlational studies of the experimental natural science of psychology.

Ira Progoff has made a fine comparative and synoptic study of all the four leading analytical psychologists, Freud, Adler, Jung and Rank, and shown clearly their common purpose in the midst of their radical divergences and differences.

Progoff calls the work of them all the search for the meaning of life. He demonstrates how each one of them goes ever deeper into the truths of personality and in his culminating phase tends to point to or affirm a spiritual truth in life, which constitutes the meaning of life. His book is called *The Death and Rebirth of Psychology* (Julian Press, NY.) and carries the subtitle, "An integrative evaluation of Freud, Adler, Jung and Rank and the impact of their culminating insights on modern man."

As representative of the characteristic temperament of the four pioneers of



this movement of the search for the meaning of life, he gives at the beginning of the book the following four sentences:

### SIGMUND FREUD

"None is so big as to be ashamed of being subject to the laws which control the normal and morbid actions with the same strictness."

### ALFRED ADLER

"We are concerned not with the possession of truth, but with the struggle for it."

### C. G. JUNG

"The ever deeper descent into the unconscious suddenly becomes an illumination from above."

### OTTO RANK

"The new type of humanity will only become possible when we have passed beyond this psycho-therapeutic transitional stage."

These fine statements represent the spirit of the four pioneers. Freud refers to laws governing the actions of the morbid and the normal persons and demands adherence to them with equal strictness. Adler affirms the same in terms of dedication to truth. Jung goes beyond and affirms a higher illumination and Rank visualises a humanity come into its own in spirit, after transcending the present fumbings of psychotherapies to bring partial relief to mentally suffering patients.

Freud, Adler, Jung and Rank together constitute a unity. Freud was the inspiration and it developed further with different emphasis. The original approach was of depth and the same was followed by the others with their distinctive emphases. And all of them in their characteristic ways turned round to a deeper sense and meaning in life. That is how they together constitute a unity, a unity of approach initially and a unity of purpose towards which they tended.

The analytical or reductive habit of mind, of discovering the antecedents was ingrained in Freud. It was also responsible for the view that raising the unconscious content to consciousness worked out the relief. Adler, Jung and Rank started in the same way, but in their maturer work developed a prognostic attitude, an attitude to work out a purpose. And Progoff reports that Freud too had towards the end recognised the lack of it in himself. He says:

"We find in each case that the ideas that first made them famous—the theory of 'organ inferiority' and the 'family constellation' in the case of Adler, the theory of 'psychological types' and the 'collective unconscious' in the case of Jung and the

conception of the 'birth trauma' and the 'analytical situation' in the case of Rank—were all expressions of Freud's analytical habits of thought. The significant fact, however, is that despite the heavy commitment and attachment that their years of training had laid upon them, they all took gradual but clearly perceptible steps away from Freud's analytical orientation. And in their later years, after their reputations and positions had been secured, they each made increasingly bold strides in the direction of a nonanalytical depth psychology. We see this in Adler's effort to communicate 'social feeling' as a humanistic religious experience; in Jung's transcendent sense of the 'self' as well as his conception of the creative power of archetypes; and in Rank's impassioned drive to reach the irrational ground of artistic and religious experience. In their mature works, each of them showed a clear realisation that the analytical and reductive point of view leads to a dead end for depth psychology, and each in his own way undertook to go beyond it. Interestingly enough, there are even signs that in the last two decades of his life, Freud himself would have wished to accompany them in this direction, if he had only been able."

"The last writings of Freud, Adler, Jung, and Rank contain the seeds of a fundamental transformation in the spirit of psychological work. Most significantly, the new view of their later years tends toward agreement on a much deeper level than the conflicting theories of earlier days."

Freud started with cases of hysteria and soon came to discover a sex desire in repression, which by being talked out afforded relief to the patient. Childhood memories and the sexual tensions of those early days laid bare the causes of the later neurosis. However, wider experience of analysis showed to him that pleasure-seeking and its repression were not all that made for neurosis. The ego, the id and the super-ego have come to an adjustment among themselves and the ego has expanded itself and established itself in the personality. Yet analysis was usually getting protracted and sometimes not showing results.

Alfred Adler started in the same way but soon discovered the child's inferiority resulting from his dependence on the parents and the compensatory reaction of the entire organism to make up for it as the basic situation. Any maladjustment here led to neurosis later on.

"A man can advance beyond neurosis only when he transcends both his sense of inferiority and his desire for superiority and learns to think of himself as a part in a larger encompassing whole, as an individual who participates in life and shares immortality as a member of the community of mankind," says Ira Progoff. And it is only by this pervasive and creative social feeling that the vanity that is the sign of neurosis can be lastingly overcome.

Adler's psychological thought was thus much simpler than Freud's. So too was Jung's.

Jung too was a Freudian to start with. But the sexual theory of Freud created difficulty for him and he had to part company with him. He interpreted the Libido as general psychic energy and was led on to the hypothesis of the collective

unconscious, which he explored for many years. That led on to the discovery of the archetypes, the primordial images, which included the Self-images, the central fact of personality. These images then became the levels to explain human behaviour, abnormal, normal as well as supernormal. The Self-image represented the wholeness in life, which worked out progressive integration. This gave Jung his future outlook enabling him to come out of his earlier reductionist bias. Says Ira Progoff in this connection, "Each psyche, both Jung and Adler agreed, must be understood in terms of the innate goals of its individual nature, interpreting neurosis as an intermediate period of upset without which a new creative condition could not be achieved." Jung and Adler, however, employed in their therapies the analytical as well as the prospective approaches, the future goals sought and the past conditions leading to the present crisis.

The archetypes were basic universal determinants, which, however, in different historical situations took on new symbolisms.

Freud's conception of the unconscious was essentially based on the repressed wishes. But in his study of "the Ego and the Id", he gave indication of the future development of the unconscious as striving, affirmative and impersonal. This was the closest that Freud came to Adler, Jung and Rank.

Otto Rank is the last one of the Big Four of depth psychology. He had a genius for the cultural history of mankind and had the vision of developments in the large perspective of human evolution. He could see the precise place that Freud's Psycho-analysis occupied and what was to come afterwards. Similarly he could see the place psychology as a science occupied in the march of human history and to what further developments it must eventually give rise.

The artist was not a neurotic person as Freud understood him to be. He was a creative man with a 'will' as the central fact of his personality. All history was tending towards this man. Rank showed that the true therapeutic factor in personality was the 'will.' This 'will' was ultimately the spirit, which found its immortality and eternity in its oneness with humanity. Psychology and psycho-therapy were phenomena of the transitional stage. They must lead on to 'Beyond Psychology' where the spirit ruled and achieved true healing.

Commenting on Rank's work, as a whole, Ira Progoff says, "His mature work is authentically a depth psychology that studies the unconscious in its historical dimensions, complementing and verifying from its special point of view the corresponding work of C. G. Jung." Rank saw a weakness in the Psycho-analytic idea "that the bringing into consciousness of the unconscious must be the therapeutic agent."

"What operates therapeutically," then—and here Rank introduces a most profound insight—"is the promise and hope of some kind of intellectual control over the irrational forces."

As Progoff says, Rank defined the will as "as autonomous organizing force in the individual which . . . constitutes the creative expression of the total personality

and distinguishes one individual from another." Further he tells us, "The Self as conceived by Jung is the psychological potentiality that emerges in each individual personality; and the life will as conceived by Rank is the vital force with which that potentiality is expressed and fulfilled in the world."

Immortality and eternity are the ultimate references of life. Says Progoff:

"Without a sense of immortality, the artist is cut off from life. He can experience no enduring meanings beyond those that he can 'explain' rationally and psychologically, and he is left with only personal and subjective concerns.... No longer believing in his soul, nor in the validity of the experience of his soul, the artistic mission that could have been the meaning of his life becomes pointless. When the connection between immortality and art is severed, the creative person is cast adrift in life. All that is left to him then is his personal anxieties. The potential artist who has ended in neurosis under the guidance of psychology constructs his art work out of his fear of life, and uses it as a substitute for living. His art then displays the characteristics of the psychological attitude. Self-conscious and self-analytical, art becomes, like psychology, a way of rationalizing life and, ultimately, a means of avoiding it."

This is how Depth Psychology finally in the person of Rank looked into the future. It truly discovered a meaning in life. To this culmination Freud, Adler and Jung all contributed, each in his own way, through the growth they went through personally while developing their distinctive standpoints.

INDRA SEN

## HOMESICK

WHEN I ask, "May I come home now?"  
You always reply, "Not yet,  
Many things are yet to be done."

The road is long, the horizon always distant,  
The road lonely, shadows the only company.  
Whether I go slow or fast  
Who is there—not too far off—  
Whom I can reach?

I keep on walking up the slope,  
You remain on heights  
Where the air is rare,  
Where I must struggle to breathe.

All that You give, that lasts long,  
Are promises and promises,  
All other gifts are short-lived,  
Too transient to grasp and keep.

I have placed at Your feet  
Ambitions and the zeal to live and desires,  
Those I could not uproot  
I denuded of their intensity.

There are no thrills any more,  
No dynamic peace either,  
Indifference I have achieved  
But where is Your promised delight?

If I come home early  
Won't You let me in?

DINKAR PALANDE

# TABERNACLE

(For J. On Her Birthday)

A SILENCE like a circling whisper fell  
Homing towards a Light's rapt secrecy,  
Surrounding the mind in its unfathomed spell  
Of spirit upborne into infinity.

Billows from unknown deeps have now upsurged:  
A vast and brimming call to Godhead found,  
Its intimate throb is subtly quietly heard,  
Risen to the memory of an ancient sound.

Within the body rhythms a passionate prayer,  
A breath of fire expunging darkness's core:  
A wrath divine racing through the densest layer  
And widening like an ocean-wind along an eternal shore.

Another sight revealed a sunlit world,  
Another breath inspired an air immune:  
Enter awakening, O Soul, your mansion pearled,  
From the crystal quarries of inwardness hewn.

I have seen Beauty remould your human face,  
A Wisdom-Power unseal there its prophet sight,  
In an unmoving look woven Eternity's grace  
Of Spirit absolving your mortal plight.

I felt a titan Calm throw its primal gleam  
Across Consciousness through millennia grown self-aware,  
A Joy whose flow is an unbidden stream  
Of Life beyond the pale of Death's powerless snare.

O Lord, I have seen Thee in each moment's hue,  
Through each face fathomed Thy lurking nearness:  
A tabernacle awakening the unlost, the True,  
In a single embracing of vast dearness.

27 November 1986

ARVIND HABBU

## A WEEK IN COURTALLAM

(Continued from the issue of 24 April 1987)

9

ON our last full day we found an unexpected treasure: the Chitra-Sabha.

The temple-complex stretches northwards from the main waterfall, curving around the contours of the hill. The road to Five Falls cuts through it, the carved wooden *rathas* under their pyramidal shelters of corrugated iron stand beside their stone mounting-platforms on both sides of the road. One, nearest the street, has become a vegetable and fruit stall: the vendor crouches in the shade between the huge wheels, his produce hanging from the carvings or spread out at his feet. Far away to the north of the road I had several times noticed a pretty gopuram, and later a high temple-enclosure wall painted in the characteristic red and white stripes, crowned by a beautiful medallion relief of Shiva Nataraja. I thought it would be nice to have a closer look, and on Thursday morning we strolled up there. We found that the lovely five-tiered gopuram stood not over a gateway but over a mandapam on a massive platform in the middle of a bathing-tank. The tank however was practically empty—its deep floor, surrounded by steep stepped ghats, was a muddy bed for long grasses and weeds. On the western edge the steps led up from the tank to a huge porch and doorway in the high enclosure. A young man sitting there beckoned us over.

As we approached we could read the neon sign on the roof: 'Chitra Savai', and wondered what it meant. To me it suggested paintings—*chitralikh* in Sanskrit means a painter, one who works with colours—and that turned out to be not far wrong: as we entered the high stone hall we were confronted by two large frescos flanking another door on the west side. They were in the typical style one knows from cloth-paintings: vividly rhythmical and linear, a two-dimensional pattern of blue and white, brown and yellow, outlined in black, representing two larger-than-life and rather pop-eyed deities. Before them stood four fine bronze figures, almost life-size and extremely life-like in the 'Madurai' style, apparently representing local people: a hunter or woodsman, a peasant woman, dancing and making offerings to the gods.

All this was extremely surprising and attractive—such things we had not expected to find. We readily paid the minimal admission fee that would allow us to proceed further. The way out of this first hall passed between huge doors carved in panels—much bigger than the famous baptistry doors in Florence, and with deeper reliefs. Unfortunately I could not recognise many of the story-scenes depicted, and the custodian, though he seemed very enthusiastic about the lovely place he cared for, had not enough English, and probably not enough knowledge, to enlighten us much: but he enjoyed our obvious delight and appreciation. These great doors had wonderful brass knobs and fittings, also cast into intricate relief. But our eyes were drawn away from the doors to what lay beyond them. In a vast, perfectly proportioned courtyard, walled and floored by smooth blocks of granite that were laid as neatly

and accurately as bricks and painted white, stood two exquisite *wooden* structures, entirely covered with paintings, their sloping roofs tiled with small square overlapping copper sheets, the corners upturned with almost Japanese elegance. Both stood on stone pedestals, the nearer building one step lower than the further one.

This first structure was a golden rectangle laid lengthwise east-west, and its walls were an open lattice of vertical and horizontal slats, grooved and painted with animals and flowers. Above the slats, a painted frieze ran under the fantastically carved and painted rafters. The floor of this charming pavilion was the stone of its foundation pedestal, amazingly smooth and even; and at about two-thirds of the way down the long right side stood a stone altar-slab, grooved for liquid offerings to flow through a drain under the wooden wall and down into the stone runnel along the base of the pedestal outside. It seemed an unusual position for an altar, and there was no deity in sight. The deities stood in the next house—another similarly-sized rectangle laid at right-angles to this one, its long sides running north-south. We stepped through a narrow door, over a high wooden threshold into the small space between the two structures, where steps went down to left and right, and then through another narrow door, across a second high threshold, we entered the sanctuary. A narrow *pradakshina* corridor ran right around inside; the outside walls were pierced at intervals by wooden-shuttered windows, the inner walls were blind; but both sides of the corridor were covered from roof to floor with paintings, as were the outside walls, and the inner walls of the two sanctuaries themselves: the first a larger chamber with several deities ranged around, the second smaller with Shiva and his family on the far wall.

The style of all these paintings was extraordinary—very different from the ones in the entrance hall. Nowhere in India had we seen or heard of anything to compare with it. Some of them looked very old and deteriorated, others had apparently been recently restored, but the style was consistent and showed a modelling which gave an almost 3-dimensional, *trompe l'oeil* effect which persisted even at very close quarters. Strips of story-frieze ran along the corridor walls, deities and their worshippers stood on the inside and outside walls, and the wooden window-shutters and pilasters bore purely decorative bunches of flowers or garlands. “Made by rishis, a thousand years ago” was all the information the guardian could give in answer to our wonder-struck enquiries: quite patently untrue, but somehow appropriate.

The freshness and gaiety of the colours, the vividness of the figures, the perfect cool proportions of the buildings in their plain white courtyard, combined in a joyous harmony that was purely delightful. What a lovely place to hold in the memory, wonder about, and think of returning to—perhaps especially lovely because so unexpectedly stumbled upon: a last gift from ‘Chance’—who had gifted us so many other delightful discoveries during this memorable week.

(Concluded)

SHRADDHAVAN



## FOR YOUR EARS ONLY

*(Continued from the issue of 24 April 1987)*

### 4. THEY MADE ME A WRITER

It is customary of my wife to find fault with me on several occasions every year, for I am forgetful of important dates. To her a husband is expected to remember at least some out of the several important dates in his life. One is the date he got married, and the other the birth-dates of his children. So on four occasions I cut a very sorry figure before my wife who likes to see me grin sheepishly. Yes, I have three kids—two sons, born of necessity and a daughter, born of compulsion. Thanks are owed to God—no, no, to my wife—for not blessing me with any more and thereby saving me from further troubles. And once in a year my father presents me with a big round plum cake and blesses me. That must be on October 7. What about the year in which I was born? Usually I fumble, but just now I have referred to my Birth Certificate. It was 1952. Somehow I have a strong hatred for numbers. To confess, I had real hell with my mathematics and history teachers in my school days.

But the year 1975 is deep-rooted in my mind. Ask me when I finished my collegiate education. Ask me when I entered the Pondicherry government service. Ask me when I began writing. I have the same answer to give—1975. But what really counts in my writing career is not the year but the people who made me a writer.

Writers are either born or made. I belong to the second division, for I nurtured no desire for writing till that blessed unforgettable year.

My first appointment was in Arignar Anna Government Arts College, Karaikal. I joined the institution as Tutor in English. My work was limited to correcting a couple of hundred composition notebooks every week written by unwilling students. Hence I found enough time to pore over the classics of my taste. And even after the college hours I had no choice but to continue reading in my room.

Eleven years ago Karaikal was not a city of entertainment. It was a calm and peaceful place, of course, but too difficult to pass time if one knew not how to make use of it. How long can one read? How long can one sit on the deserted seashore? How long can one stroll on the banks of the Arasalaru? How many movies—as old as one's great grandparents—can one see at the expense of sacrificing a few c.c. of blood to the bugs and mosquitoes? And what else to do? I was not married at that time. Staying in a coffin-like room and picking my grub from unhygienic canteens and leading the life of a bachelor gave me a horrifying experience. The loneliness of Karaikal only added to it.

Loneliness drove me to seek more company with books. Luckily for me I was on the staff headed by my own professor who taught me Language—Mr. N. Santhalingam, whom I have already mentioned in the second chapter of this serial. In 1975 he was given additional charge as Chief-Editor of the college maga-

zine, published annually. Since the articles submitted by students were below standard and if published they might tell against the college, the learned professor assigned a few of the staff-members to write on any subject of interest, so as to fill up the pages of the magazine.

I did not know what to write. The professor who understood my plight said, "Write an introductory article on the author of your choice" When I gave him a number of lame excuses to escape from writing, he quoted Bacon and added, "I am glad to see you a full man; it is also my wish that you should be an exact man."

I was trapped.

At that time I was reading the collected works of a Finnish humorist, Martti Larni, in English translation. I wrote a short article titled 'Laugh with Larni' and submitted it. The professor after reading the piece commented, "The writer in you is born today. He is hale and healthy."

My piece of writing saw the light through the college magazine in the following year. I realized the significance of his words when the same article was reproduced in *Youth Age*, a monthly from my native place, Pondicherry. I believe it was a welcome leap—from a college magazine to a literary magazine. It is edited and published by Mr George Moses, a retired Superintendent of Police and also a connoisseur of literature.

Three weeks later I met him. I was asked to contribute regularly to his magazine. I began as a contributor of literary articles. One day my imagination triggered off a poem which I sent to him. It was titled 'Wipe Out My Tears'. He gave me the status of a poet by publishing my first poem. Very soon *Indian and Foreign Review* and *Democratic World* of New Delhi published my poems. I should say they bought my poems.

I gratefully recollect the day Mr George Moses introduced me to Mr K. D. Sethna and Mr Manoj Das, and thereby put me in touch with the famous writers stationed in the Ashram.

A few days later I carried a file pregnant with literary articles written on various aspects of world literature to impress Mr K. D. Sethna, editor of *Mother India*, Monthly Review of Culture, published from the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. What a fool was I to think so! How can a Lilliputian ever think of impressing a Brobdingnagian? Sethna didn't even bother to open the file I carried.

"Can you review books for *Mother India*?" he asked abruptly.

"Review, Sir? I have never reviewed before," I humbly replied.

"Oh, Good! A new broom can sweep well," he said, handing me a copy of Nolini Kanta Gupta's *Collected Works* (Vol. VII).

"But...but I do not know how to review books," I stammered.

"Simple," he smiled and continued, "First read the book from cover to cover without any preconceived notion. Jot down your impressions as you proceed through the book. Note also whatever you find striking in it or else particularly off the mark. Then begin to write. Don't take a writer to task for not

writing this or that. The review must say what is in the book and pronounce on it. Consider the author's final aim and judge whether he has fulfilled it. Of course you can find fault with his steps towards it but don't demand that he should have done what you would have thought best. Give him his due always—and criticise, if you must, in a way that shows the errant author how he could do better along his own lines. Your criticism has to be creative at the same time that it is destructive. And look at the manner and not merely at the matter. Writing has to be precise, well-shaped, mobile. In your own review too aspire after this ideal. Let your final assessment keep its head. If you feel the need to be discreet, be so, but never write simply to please anybody. Avoid praising a book skyhigh just because it agrees with your own ideas. But don't hesitate to be enthusiastic if, within the universe of discourse proper to it, it really stands out in both substance and style."

Even today when I take a book to review his piece of advice rings in my ears. My joy knew no bounds when the editor of *Mother India* once introduced me to his guests thus: "Here is our Star Reviewer." He made me a somebody out of a nobody.

I learnt fiction-writing by reading the stories of a master craftsman. One must read Tchekov and Maupassant, they say, if one wants to write short stories. But I would like to add one more to the list. He is Manoj Das whose stories enchant readers of all age groups. I cherish his friendship and aspire to be his Boswell.

After reading his stories for children, I tried my hand at that genre too. Manoj Das not only gave me proper guidance and suggestions but also published my work in *Chandamama*, a monthly for children to which he is the editorial adviser. Very soon my stories for children appeared in *Champak* and the Children's Section of *The Hindustan Times*. My best short stories have appeared in a monthly, *The Heritage*, the only popular magazine that remains blind to politics and cinema, edited by him. Above all, he showed me the path to various magazines and newspapers in India and abroad.

Meanwhile I was promoted Lecturer and transferred to Tagore Government Arts College, Pondicherry, where I studied for my B.A. My stay in my native place strengthened the contact with the intellectuals.

Before I sign this article, I must mention one more of my well-wishers Ms. Maggi Lidchi, the English novelist. It was my serial in *Mother India*, 'The Stupid Guru and His Foolish Disciples' that introduced me to her. Making an appointment I met her.

"Can you type?" she asked.

"Yes," I replied, "I type-write my work."

"Can you take dictation on the typerwriter?"

"I have not tried."

"Then try now," she said and ushered me into her study.

Thus began my literary relationship with her.

She dictated many of her short stories, novelettes and a big portion of her novel based on the *Mahabharata*. Every year I spent my summer vacation (three full

months) reading the books in her library and taking dictation directly on the typewriter. Bread and chicken for everyday lunch, a decent salary on the 1st of every month were what she paid me. But I didn't pay anything for picking from her the various techniques of fiction-writing, better English and the enormous speed which I exercise on the typewriter.

I once asked my son, "Who made you?" Without a moment's hesitation he ungratefully replied, "God made me." If you ask the writer in me "Who made you?", he would gratefully reply, "These gods in human forms made me."

But can I call myself a writer?

Listen to me before you make a decision. I have to my credit two published books and one has just gone to the press. Three are already in search of publishers while one more is in the offing. My published articles, short stories, one-act plays, reviews, skits, features, stories for children, interviews and translations so far 471 in total (till December 1986) have appeared in a wide variety of journals and newspapers both Indian and foreign, numbering 57. I have nearly fifty under editorial consideration.

And what have I earned by writing? A substantial amount good enough to buy a sophisticated colour TV set with a Video cassette recorder—if only I had saved. Dear me, I spent it on books! But I have also gained a few fans, mostly from the Northern part of India (a fan from Andhra Pradesh offered to be my secretary-cum-wife), a heap of rejection slips and above all a battalion of enemies.

So I think I am a writer.

"Well, maybe," I hear you say, "It's a little early to be sure."

*(To be continued)*

P. RAJA

# *Students' Section*

## THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

SIXTY-FIRST SEMINAR:

22 February 1987

### WHAT IS THE MEANING OF "THE HOUR OF GOD" AND HOW TO PREPARE FOR IT?

#### Introductory Speech by Kishor Gandhi

Friends,

We have organised this Seminar to celebrate the 110th birth anniversary of the Mother which was yesterday.

To fit this solemn occasion we have chosen for this Seminar a subject related to a profoundly significant Message which the Mother gave on the New Year day in 1963: "*Let us prepare for the Hour of God.*" The term "Hour of God" in this Message is taken from a short prophetic writing of Sri Aurobindo<sup>1</sup> of which a tape-record in the Mother's own voice we have just heard.

This Message is profoundly significant for two reasons. Firstly, it has a direct bearing on the central life-work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother; secondly, it has an intimate relevance to the present world-situation which has become extremely critical and which, if not resolved soon, is fraught with ominous consequences for the future evolution of humanity. As the Mother herself said in 1967: "...we are at one of the 'hours of God' as Sri Aurobindo puts it—and the transforming evolution of the world has taken a hastened and intensified movement".<sup>2</sup>

I may mention that because of its great importance the Mother reiterated the substance of this New Year Message of 1963 a number of times in her New Year Messages for subsequent years. Here are some of them:

1964—"Are you ready?"

1965—"Salute to the advent of the Truth."

1966—"Let us serve the Truth."

1967—"Men, countries, continents!

The choice is imperative:

Truth or the abyss."

1970—"The world is preparing for a big change.

Will you help?"

1971—"Blessed are those who take a leap towards the Future."

<sup>1</sup> "The Hour of God", *The Hour of God* (1982 edition), pp. 3-4.

*The New Age* (1977 edition), edited by Kishor Gandhi, p. 233.

All these recurring Messages have essentially the same theme, and because this theme is of exceptional importance for the reasons I have already mentioned we have thought it fit to deliberate upon it in the present Seminar.

Some of our student-members have given careful thought to this topic and have prepared papers in which they have tried to explain the various issues relevant to it. In doing so they have taken ample help from the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and frequently quoted passages from their writings to make their presentation more clear and effective.

I may point out that the idea of "The Hour of God" occurs not only in that short writing of Sri Aurobindo to which I have just referred and with which we are all familiar, but also in some of his other earlier writings that have the same powerful prophetic tone. So to set the pace for the other speakers who will follow me I shall read here two of them:

"This is an hour in which, for India as for all the world, its future destiny and the turn of its steps for a century are being powerfully decided, and for no ordinary century, but one which is itself a great turning-point, an immense turn-over in the inner and outer history of mankind. As we act now, so shall the reward of our Karma be meted out to us, and each call of this kind at such an hour is at once an opportunity, a choice, and a test offered to the spirit of our people. Let it be said that it rose in each to the full height of its being and deserved the visible intervention of the Master of Destiny in its favour."<sup>1</sup>

"...there are particular movements in particular epochs in which the Divine Force manifests itself with supreme power shattering all human calculations, making a mock of the prudence of the careful statesman and the scheming politician, falsifying the prognostications of the scientific analyser and advancing with a vehemence and velocity which is obviously the manifestation of a higher than human force. The intellectual man afterwards tries to trace the reasons for the movement and lay bare the forces that made it possible, but at the time he is utterly at fault, his wisdom is falsified at every step and his science serves him not. These are the times when we say God is in the movement, He is its leader and it must fulfil itself however impossible it may be for man to see the means by which it will succeed."<sup>2</sup>

### **Speech by Arvinda Das**

Dear friends,

When we feel hungry we say, "It is time to eat", when we feel sleepy we say "It is time to sleep." We feel the workings of our body, therefore we can say it is time for sleeping, eating, studying and so on. We generally never say, "It is time

<sup>1</sup> Centenary Edition, Vol. 27, pp. 506-7.

<sup>2</sup> *Karmayogin* (Cent. Ed., Vol. 2), pp. 69-70.

for the Divine” because we are not sure of His workings. Just because we don’t give any time to the Divine, that does not mean that there does not exist a time for the Divine. To quote Sri Aurobindo, “In all things there is a cycle of their action and a period of the divine movement.”<sup>1</sup> And this is the hour of God. This hour always precedes a major change. And in the hour of God either the Divine manifests Himself or sends a mighty Shakti to help the change. Every individual, nation, the whole of mankind and the universe have their respective hours of God.

There is a story from Ramkrishna which illustrates the idea of the individual hour of God. There was once a zamindar who lived in a mansion beside a river. He loved to stay amidst wealth and had no time for any pious practices. Everyday a girl who stayed on the opposite side of the river came to the zamindar to sell milk. One day the zamindar was busy and kept the girl waiting. She was in a hurry to go because the ferry boat had fixed timings and she wanted to return before it was dark. So she said, “Time is passing, when will I go?”. The zamindar heard this and said, “Yes, the time is passing and I have done nothing for God.” At once he left his wealthy life to become a sannyasi. What was an ordinary sentence for the girl became an eye-opener for the zamindar because it was his hour of God.

One can say that India’s hour of God was around 1905 to 1909 (the period of the national struggle). Vasudeva told Sri Aurobindo in jail, “It is Shakti that has gone forth and entered into the people. Since long ago I have been preparing this uprising and now the time has come and it is I who will lead it to its fulfilment.”<sup>2</sup> Similarly we can see that in the course of evolution the ten avatars came each at a period of crucial change. We should not think that once the hour of God has come it will not come again; on the contrary, it keeps on recurring, but generally we are not aware of it.

When Sri Aurobindo says in *The Hour of God*, “the lamp has not been kept trimmed for the welcome”,<sup>3</sup> he refers to a biblical story of the ten virgins some of whom had not kept oil in their lamps to welcome God who came at night unexpectedly. They missed their chance to meet Him; so when they asked God to give them a chance, He answered, “watch therefore, for ye know not neither the day nor the hour wherein the son of man cometh.”<sup>4</sup>

This idea that God or a divine moment comes and we are not aware of it, is a very common idea in India. In the Gita Krishna says, “Deluded minds despise me lodged in the human body because they know not my supreme nature of being, Lord of all existences.”

अवजानन्ति मा मूढा मानुषी तनुमाश्रितम् ।  
पर भावमजानन्तो मम भूतमहेश्वरम् ॥<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Synthesis of Yoga* (Cent. Ed., Vol. 20), p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> “Uttarpara Speech”, delivered on 30 May 1909, *Karmayogin* (Cent. Ed., Vol. 2), pp. 8-9.

<sup>3</sup> *The Hour of God* (1982 Edition), p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> The Parable of the Ten Virgins in *The Gospel according to St Matthew*.

<sup>5</sup> The Gita, Ch IX-11.

Even Rabindranath Tagore says in his *Gitanjali*, "He came and sat by my side, but I woke not. What a cursed sleep it was, O miserable me!"

Suppose this very hour is the hour of God, then are we ready? In fact at present we are in the midst of an hour of God. As Sri Aurobindo says, "There are moments when the Spirit moves among men and the breath of the Lord is abroad upon the waters of our being; there are others when it retires and men are left to act in the strength or the weakness of their own egoism... It is true that the latter may prepare the former..."<sup>1</sup>

Before the present period we were left to act in our strength or weakness. Meanwhile, Nature was preparing us for the next rung in the evolution. Nature made a mental being and now she is concentrating all her efforts to bring a supramental consciousness. Nature is secretly demanding at least a few individuals to be ready for the hour of God. It does not mean that the radical change in the evolution depends on us, for the supramental consciousness is bound to come. If we are ready it will come early, otherwise we will be considered as an evolutionary failure and, maybe, some greater being will be there to carry on the work. To quote Sri Aurobindo:

"Either man must fulfil himself by satisfying the Divine within him or he must produce out of himself a new and greater being who will be more capable of satisfying it. He must either himself become a divine humanity or give place to Superman."<sup>2</sup>

In other words, we are now left only with one choice. Sri Aurobindo says, "At present mankind is undergoing an evolutionary crisis in which is concealed a choice of its destiny."<sup>3</sup> And the crisis expresses itself outwardly through acute political and economical problems. As the choice is imperative, why not choose to prepare ourselves? Some think that the preparation is easy or postpone it by saying that when the divine moment comes they will be ready, but they do not realise that their situation will be like that of the young man who had heard that a great drama party was coming to his village to perform a drama. He was eager to see it and so when the day arrived, he went early, found a good place, spread out his mat and went to sleep, thinking that he would get up when the play would start. But when he woke up the drama had finished, so all that was left for him to do was to roll up his mat and go back home. This will not do; a complete awareness and a dedicated will to make oneself ready for the Divine hour is necessary. This is a difficult thing and generally we shirk such heavy responsibilities. But shirking at this moment will not help us. It would be better if we dedicated ourselves completely to the Divine; then He would do everything for us. In fact Sri Aurobindo says that the supramental consciousness is ready to descend if only we fulfill certain conditions:

"A total surrender, an exclusive self-opening to the divine influence, a constant and integral choice of the Truth and rejection of the falsehood, these are the only conditions made. But these must be fulfilled entirely, without reserve, without

<sup>1</sup> *The Hour of God* (1982 Edition), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *The Life Divine* (Cent. Ed., Vol. 18), p. 209.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* (Cent. Ed., Vol. 19), p. 1053.



any evasion or pretence, simply and sincerely down to the most physical consciousness and its workings.”<sup>1</sup>

These are the only conditions, but they are difficult ones because total surrender means no “ego” which is very tough. Anyway, as we have no other choice we can make the attempt and also it is worth attempting.

<sup>1</sup> *The Hour of God* (Cent. Ed., Vol. 17), p. 46.

# THE EPIC OF THE UNIVERSE

*(Continued from the issue of 24 April 1987)*

## II. Wonder After Wonder

WONDER after wonder is revealed by the "Mystery's process" that operates in the Universe. There is a phenomenal growth in the knowledge of the physical world and yet the end does not seem to be in sight. The "boundless finite" seems to be breaking all the bounds and merging into the incomprehensible. The horizons of physical observation are constantly receding. We have seen the rapid progress made both in the field of observational and theoretical branches of Astrophysics. But there is no closing in on itself. Recently, the sky has suddenly opened itself to pulsars and quasars. At home, about our planetary system itself, new information through modern techniques using balloons, rockets, satellites and sophisticated instruments and controls, is constantly pouring in. New wonders and surprises ever seem to be there to baffle us. In the following we shall briefly take these efforts essentially as illustrative of the untiring pursuit to understand the nature and structure of the Universe.

Pulsars (abbreviated from pulsating red stars) were first discovered in 1967 by Jocelyn Bell, a graduate student studying at Cambridge in the U.K. Since then these have proved to be an important discovery for astrophysics even though many questions about them are yet to be answered. By now more than 300 pulsars have been discovered. As the name implies, they emit radiation in the form of short pulses. These pulses last typically for a few hundredths of a second and beat with a periodicity of 1.3372795 seconds. Observation of pulsars is possible only through radio-telescopes. The periodicity of the pulses is maintained with such an astonishing accuracy that a time-keeping clock can very well be maintained correct to within a fraction of a second a year.

From the time the pulsars were first discovered it was clear that they must be exceedingly small astronomical bodies. A large body cannot emit a sharp flash of radiation because of the different travel-times of radiation from different parts of its surface. Broadly speaking, the duration of the pulse multiplied by the velocity of light could be taken as the greatest possible size of these objects. The pulsars therefore cannot be greater than a few thousand kilometres in diameter.

At present the most widely believed concept of a pulsar is that it is a rotating stellar body, perhaps a spinning neutron star. Let us see briefly how the pulses from such an object could be generated. During the gravitational collapse leading to the formation of a neutron star, while a great deal of gravitational potential energy is released the angular momentum remains intact. Immediately following the collapse the neutron star will be spinning rapidly, about 1000 revolutions per second. The voltages caused by dynamo action at the surface of the star will exert forces sufficient

to tear charged particles from the star and fling them outward. These particles may either be swept around by magnetic forces or accelerated radially until they travel at speeds close to that of light. When this happens the particles will generate radiation and the theory of relativity shows that this will be cast into a narrow beam.

Even before the pulsars were seen in the skies another type of objects, known as quasars, was spotted at the far edge of the Universe. Quasars, the quasi-stellar objects or QSO's, as they are called, are astronomical objects with star-like point images that show large red-shifts.

As their existing distance-estimates are not very reliable, the amount of light and radio-energy released by these objects cannot be exactly known. But it seems that the QSO's cannot be amongst the brightest of objects in the sky.

The first QSO's were discovered by radio-astronomers in 1963. Following this unexpected find, several QSO's were later on identified and their red shifts measured. In general, the red shifts that were measured were found to be much larger than any that had been seen for the ordinary galaxies. The early and perhaps too quick an explanation was that these shifts were due to the expansion of the Universe and would be proportional to the distances from the observer. It was therefore concluded that the QSO's must be enormously far away and must be extremely luminous, up to 100 times brighter than the brightest galaxies.

It is generally agreed that a QSO has an extremely small but very massive nucleus, with a total size of less than a light-year, and is surrounded by an extended halo of gas that can be excited by the energy coming from its central core. The temperature of the gas cloud is about 30,000 degrees Celsius and the electron densities are approximately  $10^2 - 10^6$  electrons (and an equal number of protons) per cubic centimetre. The composition of the gas is similar to that in the gaseous nebulae. The multiple absorption red-shifts are to be associated probably with shells of cloud moving away from the centre at velocities approximately several thousand kilometres per second.

Apart from these discoveries and problems at the far-off distances, we see that we have not even understood well enough our own neighbours! Our knowledge about the solar system itself is still incomplete in several respects.

A detailed study of planets should reveal to us, for example, their exact orbits, the climatic conditions on their surface, the composition of their crust and constituents of inner cores. A comparative study of these planets should further enable us to understand the Earth itself. It could give us details about the formation of the solar system and perhaps clues to the origin of life on the Earth.

Data about the planets and their satellites can be obtained by ground-based instruments such as telescopes or by the radar-echo methods. Artificial satellites sent from the Earth functioning as flybys, orbiters, or landers may help us to know the geophysical and geochemical nature of the planets. These latter data could consist of chemical composition and structure of the atmosphere; structure of the

interior (using seismic methods) and chemical, petrological and mineralogical composition of the surface, etc.

The presence of magnetic fields near the planets could also supply us information about the interior of the planets, because formation of these fields requires a conducting core in the planet. The Earth, for example, has a surface density of  $5.5\text{g/cm}^3$  indicating that it has a high-density metallic core. Mars, on the other hand, does not have an appreciable magnetic field showing that it might not have a liquid conducting core.

Regarding the origin of the planets of our solar system there exist two major theories. One group of theories postulates the grazing collision of a nearby star with the sun; alternatively, it could also be a violent explosion of a companion star of the sun.

The other group of theories explains the appearance of planets merely as a by-product of star formation. When the sun was formed from the interstellar matter, some of the latter that was left over was used up to form the planets and their satellites. It is yet to be settled which of the two theories is really correct. Or could there be other possibilities?

## 12. Epilogue

In the present work we have understood the study of the Epic of the Universe in its several astrophysical aspects. This was done using essentially the language of science. We will now quickly summarise these in the following and assess how far science has really gone in this direction.

We saw how the ancients, while they wondered at the grandeurs of the heavens, used their observations to know when to plant and to harvest crops and when a river would rise in flood. By the 6th century BC they could also predict when eclipses would occur and when the seasons would change. At about this time Pythagoras first suggested that the Earth had a spherical shape.

Modern astronomy began in the early 16th century AD. Nicolas Copernicus presented his ideas about the solar system with the sun at its centre and the planets revolving around it. Galileo could be credited to have invented the telescope and to have made many remarkable observations. During this period Kepler formulated his three laws of planetary system which have become the foundations of theoretical astronomy. The works of Galileo and Kepler were used by Newton in enunciating the Laws of Motion and the Universal Law of Gravitation.

Right from the 1920s, when it came to be known that there exist other galaxies—apart from the Milky Way galaxy in which our solar system is located—we have been asking ourselves the question if the Universe has a finite size. We have also asked questions about the origin and evolution of the Universe. While doing this, we quickly reviewed the basic propositions of the three most well-known theories: the Big Bang, the Steady State, and the Pulsating Universe. Side by side with

the theoretical work, a huge mass of data is continuously piling up in observatories and space research stations all over the world. Using the present day theoretical framework of physics we found that gravity, even though the weakest of the four forces, is nevertheless the most dominant force in governing celestial mechanics. Apart from the gravitational field, we also considered questions about the possible existence of an antigravitational field.

By way of an example, we took up the story of the birth and death of a star which is one of the entities that exist in the state of plasma. A star is born when a ball of gas and dust falls inward on itself. This gravitational collapse is countered by gas pressure. Indeed, all the subsequent developments of the star depend on the balance between gas pressure and the gravitational force. The star becomes a red giant and then a white dwarf. At this stage, if it is heavy enough, the inward pulling gravitational force will transform it into a neutron star and finally turn it into a black hole.

Next, we saw the mysterious Shadow Matter which still remains understood. It is found that many galaxies apparently have more mass than was previously supposed. This mass seems to be distributed all around the edges of the galaxies. This invisible matter, quite surprisingly, outweighs by a very large factor the visible matter in the observed galaxies and clusters of galaxies. The importance of such observations stems from the fact that the very fate of the Universe hangs upon them. If the observed density turns out to be more than a certain critical value, then, after some time in the future, the Universe will fall back upon itself; otherwise it will keep on expanding for ever.

Assuming that 90% of the mass of the Universe is hidden and that the Universe is closed, it will expand for another 40-50 billion years; but this will happen more and more slowly. Eventually the expansion will reverse and contraction will set in. If the Universe is not closed, then the expansion will continue and stars and galaxies will gradually turn into black holes. It is believed that matter will finally disappear leaving behind a cold thin atmosphere of radiation.

In addition to these uncertainties about the understanding of the Universe, we have also seen that new facts are constantly being discovered with an amazing rapidity. Pulsars and quasars were taken as two examples. But the details of the understanding of the celestial objects and their systems still remain clouded behind the nebulous mass of the scientific approach itself. The mystery of the Universe, as was thought a few decades ago by Jeans or Eddington to have been solved, still haunts us with several uncertainties. Indeed, in the words of J.B.S. Haldane, the Universe is "not only queerer than we suppose, but queerer than we can ever suppose."

In any case, the merit of the scientific approach lies in matching theoretical ideas with the precision and accuracy of observations. No theory can be considered to be final unless these criteria are fulfilled. Take, for example, the case of several cosmological models that have been worked out with the observed red-shifts concerning the expansion of the Universe. A parameter  $q$  can be defined to relate the

rate of expansion of the Universe. If  $q$  is positive then we have a Universe in which the rate of expansion is slowing down. On the other hand, the negative value of  $q$  implies an increasing rate of expansion,  $q$  equal to zero means a steady rate of expansion. Models pertaining to the Big Bang, the Steady State, or the Pulsating Universe will be characterised by these different values of  $q$ . The fates of these models are therefore determined entirely by the exactness of the measured value of  $q$ . But, unfortunately,  $q$  still has several doubtful factors in it. In other words, the present cosmological theories can be considered to be passing through a period of provisional acceptance only.

Leaving aside the aspect of sensationalism—very often promoted by the professionals themselves—it is necessary to assess the proper implications of the cosmogonies based on current observations. We should also realise that the two important theoretical frameworks of physics, Relativity and Quantum Mechanics, have not yet been successfully integrated into one. We do not know what will lie in store for us if quantum gravity is discovered tomorrow. There is also a question regarding the presence of anti-gravity. And then, are the laws of physics universally valid? We can best summarise this position in the words of Jayant Narlikar: “I personally feel that the major influence of astronomy will come about through the removal of the straight-jacket placed on physics by the limitations of a terrestrial laboratory. Since laboratory experiments have guided the growth of physics over the last two centuries, physicists are accustomed to thinking in terms of ‘local’ laws of physics, that is, in terms of laws applicable ‘here’ and ‘now’... This hardly does justice to the grand laboratory provided by the Universe as a whole... Indeed, the unity of the Universe demands that while we study what is happening ‘here’ and ‘now’ we cannot, for consistency and relevance, ignore what goes on ‘out there’.”<sup>1</sup>

But what is the relation between ‘here’ and ‘now’ and ‘out there’? We seem to be at a total loss. One then really wonders if the language of science is after all yet another language of symbols. But, of course, that does not mean that we are verging on mysticism. What is happening is, perhaps, that we are only trying to understand the nature of our own language. Yet can there be such a division between the various languages? In other words, cannot the expansion of the Universe, which is taken as a scientific fact, be simply regarded as a material transcription of some non-physical phenomenon? We shall conclude our Epic with the following question and the answer to it given by the Mother:<sup>2</sup>

*The stars are receding from one another at a speed that increases with their distance  
...What does that imply?*

These are images, aren't they? You can conceive a universe becoming bigger

<sup>1</sup> Jayant Narlikar . *The Structure of the Universe* (Oxford University Press), pp. 249-250.

<sup>2</sup> The Mother . *Questions and Answers*, March 17, 1951

and bigger, but then what is it that will contain this universe? What would there be beyond this universe?... Immediately our small human mind conceives of something quite empty and a universe occupying more and more place in this void, which means that there would be a space in this void, which is an absurdity. In fact, one should say, "it is as though", because that is not really what happens, it is only a way of expressing it...

*(Concluded)*

SHARAN & SUBRATO  
Higher Course, 3rd year (1986)