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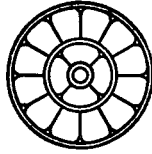
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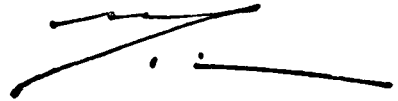


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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THE DESCENT OF THE DIVINE MOTHER AND THE STAIR OF HEAVEN

A VISION-EXPERIENCE

O LORD, O Sweet Divine Mother—with what grace, what compassion and care and love you are carrying me and showing me unknowable world after world and unfolding an endless expanse, the Infinite with its inexpressible wonder! You have made me see the Stair of Heaven by which in the near future you are going to descend upon the earth again and come into our mortal world to make it immortal and change humanity into divinity.

O sole reality of our life, refuge and delight of our soul, my ardent prayer rises at your feet. Beloved Mother, give me new birth in a greater consciousness and mould me afresh so that I may be only yours, live for you, in you, carry out only what you wish, do everything the way you want and become what you want me to be. Dissolve all of 'me' forever, let nothing of this foolish 'I' remain. Mother, Soul of my soul, make me conscious of your working in me, so that I may be aware of you at every step and at every moment. Grant that I may have boundless gratitude for the divine journey which was started for me by you and which is going to be fulfilled only by the gracious magic of your divine touch.

Unimaginable was the sight of the Stair of Heaven in that endless expanse. This Stair does not go straight up, at some places there is a break in the vast space, but it mounts higher and higher interminably. It is made of no solid element, it is made of the same element as the Infinity within which it is hung. This Infinity is not vacant but it is without weight and carries the substance of some heavenly reality. As I gaze into it I see that the Stair is not only going upward: it is also going downward to touch the surface of the earth. But just a little of that surface is visible, giving the faint impression of a roundness over which runs a green line.

Beyond our human conception was the splendour of the deep solemn calm everywhere—the absolute stillness of that immense unending space. The hue of the light of this supreme expanse was also a surprise. It was not anything powerful or dazzlingly bright but a very soothing and delicate shade—something like the first glimpse of dawn when the darkness of the night disappears or like the last ray at evening before the night enters with its darkness. There was a most unearthly atmosphere full of the vibration of a mysterious Presence, known soul to soul.

All, all is revelation after revelation. The immense expanse gives the feeling that it bears within it an ineffable existence—perhaps what Sri Aurobindo calls "The One Existence".

O sweet Mother, where have you brought me? I am lifted high up where the last six steps of the Stair are a flight of gold. There you are giving me your *darshan* in quite a new aspect of Beauty, a figure of All-Bliss blessing me with a marvel-

lous smile and asking me, "What are you doing, sweet child?" I reply, "I have come to clean your room, Mother."

There is a covered space in which I meet the Mother. It too has taken the same golden hue as those steps, but the light within the room is soft like the dawn-tint and the dusk-shade of which I have spoken. The Mother appears before me from some hidden part of that covered space. She is repeatedly coming and going—herself all gold, she is clad in a robe of grey and brings something for me each time she appears and I feel puzzled as to how to carry it. Most gracious is her look, radiating illimitable love.

O victorious and victory-giving Mother, my entire being prostrates itself at your feet with unspeakable gratitude for showing me the Stair of Heaven and letting me know of your descent.

14 May 1987

SAHANA

TWO POEMS OF SRI AUROBINDO'S AND HIS COMMENTS ON THEIR BENGALI TRANSLATIONS

SOME UNCOLLECTED LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO*

GOD

THOU who pervadest all the worlds below,
Yet sitst above!
Master of all who work and rule and know,
Servant of love!

Thou who disdainest not the worm to be
Nor even the clod,
Therefore we know by that humility
That thou art God.

Dilip,

Your translation of the second verse seems to take away the force and idea-substance of the original and to substitute a sentimental pseudo-Rabindrian half-thought without much meaning in it. He who is the greatest of the great—"mahato maheeyan"—does not disdain to dwell in the clod and the worm, and the vast impartiality shown in this humility is itself the very sign of the greatness of the Divine, that was the idea behind the verse. Does your rendering convey it?

Dilip,

R-Devi's rendering of my poem "God" is not very satisfactory, but your changes improve it as far as it can be improved.

The idea is that Work and Knowledge and Power can only obey the Divine and give him service; Love alone can compel him—because of course Love is self-giving and the Divine gives himself in return.

As for the second verse it does not give the idea at all. To have no contempt for the clod or the worm does not indicate that the non-despiser is the Divine,—such an idea would be absolutely meaningless and in the last degree feeble. Any yogi could have that equality, or somebody much less than a yogi. The idea is that, being omnipotent, omniscient, infinite, supreme, the Divine does not seem to disdain to descend even into the lowest forms, the obscurest figures of nature and animate them with the Divine Presence;— that shows his Divinity. The whole sense has fizzled out in her translation.

* With acknowledgements to Dilip Kumar Roy's *Anami*, pp. 242, 245-46. "Uncollected" means "not included in the *Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library*".

You need not say all that to the poetess, but perhaps you might very delicately hint to her that if she could bring in this point it would be better. Then perhaps she could herself change the verse.

*

REVELATION

Someone leaping from the rocks
 Past me ran with wind-blown locks
 Like a startled bright surmise
 Visible to mortal eyes,—
 Just a cheek of frightened rose
 That with sudden beauty glows,
 Just a footstep like the wind
 And a hurried glance behind,
 And then nothing,—as a thought
 Escapes the mind ere it is caught.
 Someone of the heavenly rout
 From behind the veil ran out.

Dilip,

The rendering of my poem "Revelation" is well inspired from beginning to end; the colouring is not quite the same as in my poem, but that is hardly avoidable in a poetic version in another language. To alter it, as you propose, would be to spoil it. There is no point in rendering literally "wind-blown locks", and it would be a pity to throw out *দীপ্তিময়ী* in the translation, for it is just the touch needed to avoid the suggestion of a merely human figure. It is needed—for readers are often dense. A very competent Indian critic disregarding all the mystic suggestions and even the plain statement of the closing couplet, actually described the poem as the poet's memory of a girl running past him on the seashore!!

Dilip,

I can only plagiarise Bentley's remark on a greater case,— "A pretty poem but it is not my 'Revelation'." You need not convey the criticism to the poetess. A translator is not necessarily bound to the original he chooses, he can make his own poem out of it, if he likes, and that is what is generally done. Your translations were exceptional in this respect, for it is not many who can carry over the spirit of a poem, the characteristic power of its language and the turn of its rhythmical movement from one language to another, especially languages so alien in temperament to each other as English and Bengali.

**LETTERS FROM
ALDOUS HUXLEY AND HERBERT READ
ON SRI AUROBINDO**

Hotel St. Regis
Fifth Avenue, 55th Street,
New York, June 16th, 1948

Dear Mr. Dilip Kumar Roy,

Thank you for your letter. I have been a bad correspondent, I fear. I think I wrote to you about your 'Among the Great', saying how much I liked the section on Sri Aurobindo and how helpful I found it.

Sri Aurobindo's poem 'Savitri' I have not yet read but if I see Blum or Gide in France—I expect to be in that country for a short time this summer—I will find out what is being done about the Nobel Prize recommendation and add a word of my own, if they think that would be of any avail, in favour of Sri Aurobindo's *Life Divine*, which I regard as a book not merely of the highest importance as regards its content, but remarkably fine as a piece of philosophic and religious literature.

I expect to be travelling for several months and it will not be until the autumn that I shall be able to listen to the phonograph records you are sending me.

I am asking my publishers to send you a copy of my book 'The Perennial Philosophy'—in the hope that you may be interested in this new treatment of a very ancient theme.

Yours very sincerely,
Aldous Huxley

*

Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.
Broadway House
68-74 Carter Lane, London E. C. 4
1st March, 1957

Dear Sri Purani,

The books which you kindly sent me in December have now arrived and I write to thank you for them. "Savitri" is undoubtedly one of the world's great poems and now that I possess it I look forward with great pleasure to making myself familiar with its message. Your own study of the poem will be of assistance in elucidating its profound significance.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Sir Herbert Read

Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.
 Broadway House, 68-74, Carter Lane
 London E, C. 4
 5th June, 1958

Dear Sri Purani,

Thank you very much for sending me a copy of Sri Aurobindo's *Ilion*. It is a remarkable achievement by any standard and I am full of amazement that someone not of English origin should have such a wonderful command not only of our language as such, but of its skillful elaboration into poetic diction of such high quality.

Your letter raises a question to which I have given a good deal of thought and have often discussed with some of my friends. It is undoubtedly difficult to find readers for poems of the length and sustained creative power of *Savitri*, and the fault must lie in the nature of our present Western civilization. I myself find it difficult to concentrate on such poems like *Paradise Lost* and *The Faerie Queen* which I read in my youth. The reader of poetry—and this applies particularly to the critical and academic reader—now requires a form of verse that is brief and concentrated, almost epigrammatic. It is perhaps a question simply of lack of leisure, but at a deeper level it is I think a failure of the capacity of contemplation. Poems like *Savitri* and *Ilion* must wait for the return of an age of serenity, and meanwhile will only find a few readers who are capable of abstracting themselves from the confused anxieties of modern civilization.

I will do my best to find interested readers for these poems and meanwhile thank you for your great kindness in bringing them to my attention.

Yours sincerely,
 Sir Herbert Read

Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.
 Broadway House: 68-74, Carter Lane,
 London E. C. 4
 16th January 1959

Dear Sri Purani,

Thank you very much for sending me Sri Aurobindo's *More Poems* and *Last Poems* and for your good wishes for Christmas. I am very glad to have these two volumes to add to my collection of Sri Aurobindo's works and I shall read the poems with great interest and appreciation.

With all good wishes for the New Year.

Yours sincerely,
 Herbert Read

AN INTERVIEW WITH SRI AUROBINDO IN 1910

At Calcutta in January 1910 Sri Aurobindo granted an interview to an unidentified correspondent of *India*, a Tamil nationalist paper that had originally been brought out from Madras but later, to escape political persecution, was moved to Pondicherry. This was Sri Aurobindo's first contact with Pondicherry though in an indirect manner. It was as if the nationalist spirit that had taken refuge there were giving him a touch from the future.

The interview provides an interesting glimpse of two aspects of Sri Aurobindo's personality—the spiritual and the political—just before his leaving British India for the French Settlements. The correspondent began with the impression Sri Aurobindo had made on him:

He lived a very simple life, and put on an ordinary appearance with his dhoti and shirt; but his eyes were afire with grace and knowledge and a halo of mysterious peace pervaded where he lived.

The correspondent questioned Sri Aurobindo about the vision of the omnipresent Divine (Narayana or Krishna) that he had experienced in Alipore Jail. "Yes, I saw Narayana with open eyes and yoga is the way to realise him," replied Sri Aurobindo. The correspondent then asked about the yoga he had practised during his imprisonment. Sri Aurobindo's reply:

It is Bhakti Yoga; surrender all your thoughts, acts and your will to the Divine and take refuge in Him. Imagine that He thinks, speaks and acts through your instrumentality. Leave off egoism, practise inner communion and in course of time you will realise the Divine Grace.

The correspondent then moved on to the current political situation. Sri Aurobindo answered in "gentle, sweet and dynamic accents". Asked about India's future, he said:

Since 1907, we are living in a new era which is full of hope for India. Not only India, but the whole world will see sudden upheavals and revolutionary changes. The high will become low and the low high. The oppressed and the depressed will be elevated. The nation and humanity will be animated by a new consciousness, new thought and new efforts will be made to reach new ends. Amidst these revolutionary changes, India will become free.

Not long after Sri Aurobindo gave this interview to the reporter from Pondicherry, he got an *adesh* (inner divine command) to leave Calcutta for the neighbouring French enclave Chandernagore, and after a few months another *adesh* to take ship to Pondicherry on the south coast. On April 4 he landed there.

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 July 1987)

Chapter 11: MAN THE PURUSHA, Part Three

God and Nature are like a boy and a girl at play and in love. They hide and run from each other when glimpsed so that they may be sought after and chased and captured.

Man is God hiding himself from Nature so that he may possess her by struggle, insistence, violence and surprise. God is universal and transcendent Man hiding himself from his own individuality in the human being.

The animal is Man disguised in a hairy skin and upon four legs; the worm is Man writhing and crawling towards the evolution of his Manhood. Even crude forms of Matter are Man in his inchoate body. All things are Man, the Purusha.

For what do we mean by Man? An uncreated and indestructible soul that has housed itself in a mind and body made of its own elements.

*

Why do God and Nature 'run from each other when glimpsed'?

IN play. He says it: they are at play... it is in play.

Mother, does Nature know that it is a game? God knows that it is a game, but does Nature know too?

I think that Nature knows it too; it is only man who doesn't know it!

Sweet Mother, where can Nature hide?

Where can she hide? She hides in the Inconscient, my child. The Inconscient is the biggest hiding place...besides, God hides in the Inconscient too.

Perhaps, if you know that it is a game and do it in play, it may be fun. But when you do not know that it is a game, it is no fun. It is only when you are on the

other side, the divine side, that you can see it like that; that means that as long as we are in the ignorance, we necessarily suffer from what ought to be fun and give us pleasure. In fact, it comes down to this: if you do something on purpose, knowing what you are doing, it is very interesting and can even be very amusing. But when it is something you are not doing on purpose, something you do not understand, when it is something imposed on you, that you have to submit to, it is not very nice. So the solution that is always given is: "You must learn, you must know, you must do it on purpose."

But my personal feeling is that it would be better to change the game.

When you are in that state, you can smile, understand, even have fun; but when you perceive, when you are conscious of all those who, far from knowing that they are playing, take this game very seriously and find it rather unpleasant, well... I don't know, one would prefer it to change. That is an entirely personal opinion.

I know it very well: the moment you pass to the other side, when, instead of being underneath, subjected, you are above and can not only observe but take part yourself, that is such a total reversal that it is difficult to remember the state one is in when you are carrying the whole weight of this inconscience, this ignorance on your back and are subjected to things without knowing why or how, nor where you are going, nor what it is for. You forget that. And then you can say, "It is an eternal game in an eternal garden."

But for the game to be fun, everyone would have to play knowing the rules of the game; as long as you don't know the rules, it is not nice. And the solution that is given—"But learn the rules of the game!"—that is not within everyone's capacity.

I personally have the impression, the very strong impression, that some trickster came along and spoiled the game and made it into something tragic. And this trickster is obviously the cause of the division and the ignorance that has resulted from the division and of the suffering that has resulted from the ignorance. In fact, in spite of all spiritual traditions, it is difficult to imagine that this state of division, ignorance and suffering was planned at the origin of creation. In spite of everything, it bothers one to think that it could have been planned. I myself refuse to believe it. I call it an accident; quite a tremendous accident, but after all it is tremendous as far as the human consciousness is concerned. As far as the universal consciousness is concerned it may be only an accident which can be quite easily set right. And after all, when it has been set right, we may even look back on it and say. "Ah! it has given us something we would have lacked without it." But first we must wait until it has been set right.

In any case, I don't know whether there are people who say that it was deliberate and planned, but *I* tell you that it was neither planned nor deliberate; and that this is even the reason why, when it happened, quite unexpectedly, something immediately sprang forth from the Origin, which probably would not have mani-

fested if this accident had not taken place. If Delight had remained Delight and conceived as Delight and everything had happened in Delight and Oneness instead of happening in division, there would never have been any need for the Divine Consciousness to pour itself into the Inconscient as Love. So, when you see that from very far away and from very high above, you may say, "After all, perhaps we have gained something." But you must see it from very far off and from very high above in order to be able to say that.

Or rather, when it is behind us, when we have gone beyond this state, when we have recovered the Oneness and the Delight, when division and unconsciousness and suffering have disappeared, then we can say, very wisely, "Well, yes; we have gained an experience we would never have had otherwise."

But the experience must be behind us, we mustn't still be in the midst of it. Because even for one—this is something I know about—even for one who has left that state, who lives in the consciousness of Oneness, for whom ignorance is something external, no longer something intimate and painful—even for such a one, it is impossible to watch with a smile of indifference the suffering of all those who have not escaped. I find that impossible. So things must really change in the world, and the acute stage of the illness must be past before we can say, "Well, yes, we have gained from it." It is true that we have gained something from it, but it is a very costly gain.

I believe this is the reason why so many initiates, so many sages, have been attracted by the solution of cessation, of Nirvana; because it is obviously a very radical way of avoiding the consequence of an ignorant manifestation.

Only, to change this manifestation into a true reality, one that is truly divine, is a far better solution. And that is the one we want to try now, with the assurance of succeeding one day, because in spite of everything, what is true is true eternally, and what is true in essence must necessarily become true in actuality one day.

Sri Aurobindo has declared that we have taken the first step on the path and that the moment has come to succeed—so we have only to make a start.

So, what about your question? Was that what you wanted to know?

In fact, you were asking, "Why this image?"

Yes.

We could turn it around. Instead of saying that the universe is like this, the Divine and man are like that, they resemble that, we ought to say that this is perhaps an outer, superficial expression of the essential relationship that exists at present between man and the Divine.

And that would amount to saying that when we play, we are much more divine than when we are serious! (*laughing*) But it is not always wise to say that. Perhaps there is more divinity in the spontaneous play of children than in the learning of the scholar and the asceticism of the saint...I have always thought so.

Only (*smiling*) it is a divinity that is very unconscious of itself.

For my own part, I must confess that I feel much more essentially myself when I am joyful and at play—in my own way—than when I am very grave and serious; much more. Being grave and serious always gives me the feeling that I am carrying the weight of this whole creation that is so heavy and so obscure; whereas when I play, when I play, when I can laugh, when I can have fun, it seems to me like a dust of delight falling from above and giving a very special colour to this creation, to this world, and making it much closer to what it should, essentially, be.

9.1.1957

A TALK BY THE MOTHER

TO THE ASHRAM CHILDREN ON 15 AUGUST 1956

...In the days when Sri Aurobindo used to give Darshan, before he gave it there was always a concentration of certain forces or of a certain realisation which he wanted to give to people. And so each Darshan marked a stage forward; each time something was added. But that was at a time when the number of visitors was very limited. It was organised in another way, and it was part of the necessary preparation.

But this special concentration, now, occurs at other times, not particularly on Darshan days. And it occurs much more often, on other kinds of occasions, in other circumstances. The movement is much accelerated, the march forward, the stages succeed each other much more rapidly. And perhaps it is more difficult to follow; or in any case, if one doesn't take care to keep up, one is much more quickly out-distanced than before; one gets the feeling of being late or of being abandoned. Things change quickly.

And I ought to say that these Darshan times with all this rush of people serve not so much for an inner progress—that is to say, inside the Ashram—as for a diffusion outside. The use we make of these days is a little different; above all, it is to go farther, have a vaster field, reach more distant points. But the concentration is less and there is this inconvenience of a large crowd, which was always there but which has been much greater during these last years than at the beginning. At the beginning there was not such a crowd; and perhaps the quality of the crowd was also a little different.

So the joy you were speaking about would rather be a kind of excitement or the feeling of a more intense or more active life; but it is not actually a greater Presence. One puts oneself, perhaps, into a more receptive state in which one receives more, but there is no intensification of the Presence—not to my knowledge.

So it must be within you that you have to find the reason, and the remedy for keeping this joy.

*But, Mother, what is the significance of the message you give every Darshan? For example, today you gave the picture of the flower that symbolises the superamental manifestation!*¹

Yes, as I have just told you, this is spread in thousands of copies all over the world. It is an externalisation of the thing, it is a way of spreading the influence, spreading the message, reaching farther. Everything that is said in a Darshan message has been studied, proved, tested, *beforehand*. And on Darshan day it is given. First the experiment is made, then it is declared publicly. The first movement is the individual development; at the Darshan time it is spread abroad.

¹ The *haemanthus* which is like a ball composed of hundreds of red and gold stamens.

Sri Aurobindo always spoke of two movements: the formation of the individual in order to be able to reach the goal individually, and the preparation of the world.... For the progress of the individual is, so to say, not exactly delayed or helped by the condition of the whole, but this brings about a certain balance between the two. The individual movement is always much more rapid and more penetrating; it goes farther, more deeply and more quickly. The collective movement forms a sort of basis which both restrains and supports at the same time. And it is the balance between these two movements which is necessary. So, the more rapidly one goes individually, the more necessary it is to try to extend and strengthen the collective basis.

Mother, has this day, the fifteenth of August, an occult or a simple significance? For, in history, important events occurred on this day.

What exactly do you mean? The fifteenth of August is Sri Aurobindo's birthday. Therefore, it is a date which has a capital importance in the life of the earth, from the physical point of view. So?

On August fifteenth other important events took place?...

What, the liberation of India? Is it because the liberation of India came about on the fifteenth of August? And so, it is necessary to tell you why it happened, you can't find it out by yourself, can you? It needs to be said, does it? I think Sri Aurobindo has written it also, hasn't he, in the message he gave? Hasn't he said it?¹

(Silence)

Yes, it is exactly that....

Today, there came into my hands one of those greeting cards which people send on puja days or for the new year or other such festivals; and on this card was written something like this—I don't recall the exact words—but anyway they were, "Greetings on the occasion of this memorable day of the birth of our nation." It is sent by someone who, I think, proclaimed himself a disciple of Sri Aurobindo quite a long time ago.... That seemed to me one of those enormities which human stupidity alone can commit. If he had said: "On this memorable day of the birth of Sri Aurobindo *and* its natural consequence, the birth of the nation", it would have been quite all right. But still, the important point was left out and the other mentioned, which is quite simply a consequence, a natural result: it had to be like that, it could not be otherwise.

But people always think like that, the wrong way up. Always. They take the effect for the cause, they glorify the effect and forget the cause.

¹ Mother is referring to the message Sri Aurobindo gave on 15 August 1947.

And that is why the world walks on its head with its feet in the air. Quite simply, there is no other reason.

(Silence)

I have a huge collection of questions here. I received yet one more today. This question raises perhaps the most difficult problem for the world; so I don't quite know if, precisely, in this Darshan atmosphere, it is very appropriate to touch upon such a problem. However, it is something infinitely interesting. One would like to find a fully satisfactory solution, for then at the same time one would have the key which opens the last door.

Man has always been faced with two possible attitudes when he has wanted to find a solution to the problem of the existence of the universe. It could be said from the practical point of view that, since the universe exists and exists as it does, the wisest thing is to take it as it is, and if one is not satisfied with it, well, to try to make it better. But even if one takes this very practical attitude, the problem remains: How to make it better? And once again one is facing the same fact which it seems impossible to resolve. Here you are, then:

The divine Will—and the Grace which manifests it—is all-powerful and nothing can exist which is not the expression of this divine Will and this Grace which manifests it... The logical attitude—precisely the one described in the little book I read to you on Fridays now, *Wu Wei*¹—a perfect peace, a total surrender, putting aside all effort and all personal will, giving oneself up to the divine Will and letting it act through oneself.

Mind you, this is not at all easy, it is not as simple as it looks. But still, if one sincerely takes up this attitude, it is certain that immediately there comes a perfect inner peace, an unmixed bliss, and whatever may be the events of your life, they leave you totally indifferent. This has always been recommended for individual salvation; and I may remark in passing that in this little book, which is also very beautiful and very well written, the sage compares the state of surrender of which he speaks to a sea which is calm, blue, peaceful, vast, moved by a deep force, swelling up at the right moment, subsiding at the right moment—indeed, it is an ideal description. But a practical and somewhat objective mind immediately tells you, “Well, yes, but there are also tempests at sea, there are also terrible storms, tidal waves, engulfed islands. And so that is perhaps another aspect of the Divine, but it does not bring peace, at least not in the way described by the sage. One would have to be in another state of consciousness to be at peace in such circumstances, one must not compare oneself with the sea!” So the problem presents itself again.

Sri Aurobindo has made a study of all this in *The Life Divine*, and he tells us that there are sure signs of a progressive evolution. An evolution naturally

¹ *Wu Wei*. a novel based upon the philosophy of Lao Tse, by Henri Borel (Librairie Fischbacher, 33 rue de Seine, Paris).

tends towards a goal, and if it is a progressive evolution one may continue to think that all is the expression of the divine Grace and Will, but that at the same time all is not as it ought to be. Everything is in accordance with the divine Will, but everything is not as it ought to be, otherwise things would not move.

And there we are faced with the problem once more.

The question I have been asked is this:

“Now that the Supermind has manifested on the earth, it must naturally follow that the divine Grace is all-powerful”, and I am asked: “Is this right?”

The divine Grace has always been all-powerful.

And yet, if we compare the world as it is with the more or less ideal world we can imagine when we come out of our ignorant consciousness and enter a consciousness which we call more divine, how is it that it is not always so good, if the Grace is all-powerful?

It would seem that the vision of what ought to be comes long before the execution—and this is what gives rise to the whole problem.... One sees ahead—or up above—the realisation, perhaps not of the next step, but still what will happen one day; and then as one sees it, one tells oneself, “But this conception is more divine than what is realised at present; therefore if the Grace is all-powerful, it ought to be realised immediately.” I am now looking at the problem as the human mind, it seems to me, would put it or approximately so, in order to try and make myself understood.

But what does one call an all-powerful Grace? I don't want to speak of the conceptions of an ordinary mind for which the all-powerful Grace is that which would instantaneously realise what it wants or believes to be the right thing; I am not speaking of that, we may eliminate this case, which is childish. But granting that somebody has a deeper, higher vision, a sort of inner perception of an ideal world where all the things which for us are very shocking would disappear; then one is truly faced with a problem which seems insoluble.

This translates itself in very ordinary minds into an over-simple and very childish form: either the Divine Will is something unthinkable for us—which would not be surprising!—unthinkable and almost monstrous if it allows things to be as they are, if it wants things as they are, or else... the Grace is powerless.

That—I warn you to put you on your guard against the trap—that is the great argument of the Adversary. He uses it to cloud the mind and raise up revolt; but still it is well thought out as a trap.

Then come those who say, “It is because you are in the ignorance that you see like that; change your consciousness, enter into contact with the divine Consciousness and you will see differently.” This is perfectly correct. I was just telling you, and I repeat, that if you can manage to get out of the Ignorance and enter ever so little into union with the divine Reality, you live an ecstatic life in which

everything is marvellous, sublime, and where the Grace manifests in all things. Therefore, you have solved the problem for yourself, on condition that you can remain in that state perpetually which is not very easy. But still it is possible. But it draws you out of the world, prevents you from participating in the life of the world, and above all, if everything had to be changed in that way, I think an eternity would not suffice for all the elements of the world to be so transformed.

And the problem presents itself again. In whatever manner, by whatever way you approach it, it will always present itself again.

There is a solution.

Think about it, we shall speak about it again another time. There, I would like you to make an effort. For it is beneficial, because this is a sort of conflict in the human consciousness which comes up constantly; because it is a conflict which forms the basis of all oppositions to a concrete work; because this conflict makes people—I am speaking even of those who are the most enlightened in this field—always confuse spiritual life with an annihilation of the physical, material creation, as for them this is the sole means of escape: “Let us escape from the material reality and we escape the problem”, for, to be in the state where the problem doesn’t present itself any longer, one must get out of life—*according to them*.

There is a solution.

That will be for another time.

When back at the Ashram, after the class,
Mother made the following remark.

I gave the solution, this evening. I gave it twice in the class, without speaking.

Has this solution any connection with the date, August fifteenth? Is there any connection between the Feast of the Assumption in the Catholic Church and the date of Sri Aurobindo’s birth?

Yes. And he has also said it himself. The assumption of the Virgin Mary is the divinisation of Matter. And this is the aim of the last Avatar.

(*Questions and Answers 1956*, pp. 263-70)

VIGNETTES OF THE MOTHER AND SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of July 1987)

Sri Aurobindo's Smile

WITH the whole of his heart X wanted to see Sri Aurobindo smile once. If only once he could see the Lord smile his life would be a success, its purpose would be fulfilled. Slowly this one aspiration filled his entire being. He prayed to the Lord for long months, maybe years, "I do not want *siddhi*, I do not want Supermind, only let me see Thee smile. O compassionate Lord, only once let me see Thee smile."

On one of the Darshans, behold the wonder of wonders. As soon as X stood before Sri Aurobindo, the Lord, who sat august and serene radiating light and love, suddenly smiled broadly. X stood transfixed and bewitched by the miracle of the Divine Smile. And all those who were behind him in the queue in the direct line of vision had the rare privilege to see Sri Aurobindo's smile. "Isn't it how sincere aspirations are fulfilled?"

"O Lord, Save Me"

X, a young mother of three children, lived here with them. In the same house lived an older lady who was a relative.

One day the three-year old daughter of X went to play with a friend. She came back with some toys. X suspected that she had stolen them. She was furious with the child. The child denied having stolen the toys. She claimed her friend had given them to her. Her mother didn't believe her. She shut her up in a room and went for meditation.

From later information the sequel was found to be as follows:

The terrified child cried to Sri Aurobindo, "O Lord, save me. I will never bring any toy home." (In those days, it seems, everyone called Sri Aurobindo Lord.) She kept on calling the Lord. After some time Sri Aurobindo sent two old Sadhaks telling them, "The child is in trouble. She is calling me. Go and see what is the matter." They came and set the child free.

The Mother was furious with the older lady living in the house and slapped her saying, "X is young but how could you, who are so much older, allow this to happen to the child?" Then she scolded X. But X was headstrong and kept saying she was correct in punishing the child. At last the Mother asked to see the child. The child didn't know English. X pouted. "What can Mother tell her? The child doesn't understand English or French," Anyway she sent the child to the Mother. In simple English the Mother told the child, "There is God in our heart. When we tell a lie God goes far away. Then nothing is left." The child

understood every word and repeated them to X.

It was found that the child had not stolen the toys, her friend had willingly given them to her. X repents to this day.

Vision of the Divine

One Darshan eve, Dara, a Muslim sadhak, wrote to the Mother he wanted the vision of the Divine. The Mother conveyed his aspiration to Sri Aurobindo. When Dara stood before Sri Aurobindo for Darshan he suddenly saw beams of blue light emanating from Sri Aurobindo's eyes. And the whole room was filled with a white mist and he could hardly see Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Very sad and perplexed he looked back from the staircase and he saw the beams return to Sri Aurobindo's eyes and the room was clear of the mist. At that time there was another family who were bowing to the Mother and Sri Aurobindo and whom they were patting. Dara suddenly felt jealous and thought: "Since they are Hindus the Mother and Sri Aurobindo are patting them, while for me the room filled with mist and I could not have even their Darshan." Thinking thus he descended a step or two when suddenly he had the vision of Sri Krishna and the *rās-līlā*. Sri Krishna was one but he was with Jasoda, Radha—everyone.

Then ashamed of his jealousy Dara remembered his asking for a "vision of the Divine" which was thus granted to him.

Sri Aurobindo's Residence

X read that Sri Aurobindo lived in the subtle-physical plane and by going there one could meet him. He consciously aspired day and night to enter this plane.

One night he went within and reached a place. He heard a voice say, "This is the subtle-physical." He demanded, "Then where is the residence of Sri Aurobindo?" The voice replied, "On the eastern side at the source of the golden river is the residence of Sri Aurobindo." Hearing this X proceeded towards the east and there found the golden river and started towards its source. It was coming down a mountain. He climbed the mountain up to a good distance. But then the light of the golden river became so brilliant that his eyes were dazzled and he could not proceed farther.

Compiled by S

HOW THEY CAME TO THE ASHRAM

COMPILER'S NOTE

Nolini-da once said, "The story of each one here, telling how he or she came to to the Ashram, is beautiful," This remark has inspired the following compilation. At times the account is in the first person. Mostly it is narrated from the information gathered by the compiler. The persons concerned in such a narrative are all designated X.

X's father was the disciple of a great yogi and also a close friend of Yogi Anirvan who had translated Sri Aurobindo's *Life-Divine* into Bengali. Though a government officer, he was more interested in the affairs of the Spirit. He used to wander in the Himalayas, especially exploring unknown caves. This Godward urge left a deep stamp on X. One day his father told the six-year old that Sri Aurobindo was a Mahayogi. X protested vehemently, saying that Sri Aurobindo was not a yogi, he was a God and that there were only two Gods—Krishna and Sri Aurobindo. This was an inborn conviction of X, for nobody had told it to him. His attraction towards Sri Aurobindo went on increasing till at the age of ten he wrote a letter to Sri Aurobindo asking for permission to come and live in the Ashram. He received the answer that children were not admitted to the Ashram.

At fourteen, X along with one more boy was selected from amongst more than a thousand candidates for military training. Four years passed in concentrated education and training. He became an expert at handling all sorts of weapons. At eighteen the Godward urge became too strong. He left the school and wandered in search—for what? For a Guru, for the Divine. His father told him, "I cannot help you in this matter. It is your quest. Service and money are of no value. The true and highest aim is "God."

After much wandering, many difficult passages and all sorts of experiences, X reached Patal Ganga—the Ashram of Anandamayi Ma. With him was Y, a friend who had been to the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. X knew about Sri Aurobindo but till then he had not heard about the Mother. In the Patal Ganga Ashram after the Pooja in the absence of Ma Anandamayi one of her disciples distributed sweets to everyone.

Y told X, "In the Sri Aurobindo Ashram also there is the Mother. She also distributes sweets to everyone."

It was the first time X had heard of the Mother. At the very mention of the Mother X felt an intense and sweet fire burn in his heart. He stood entranced, statued. His friend asked. "What has happened? what is the matter?" X said with difficulty, "Then I must go there."

X came to Delhu. For some ailment he went to see Dr. Z who was a devotee of the Ashram. The doctor showed X his meditation room and his library. As

days passed X started spending all of his time at Dr. Z's place.

One day he expressed to Dr. Z his desire to visit the Ashram. The doctor said, "It is not at all difficult. I am going on an all-India tour. I'll also visit Pondicherry. You may come as my assistant." X accepted the proposal with alacrity.

After visiting Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, etc., they reached Pondicherry. Sri Aurobindo had left his body but X had the Mother's darshan. He knew at once that here was his home, his destiny. Since he was under contract as Dr. Z's assistant he had to leave with him.

At the completion of the tour when they reached Delhi X at once started back for Pondicherry. He reached the Ashram with two rupees left in his pocket and went to Nolini-da telling him that he wanted to live in the Ashram. The following conversation took place between them—

Nolini-da—"Why have you come to the Ashram?"

X.—"Because the Mother is here."

Nolini-da—"Why do you want to stay in the Ashram?"

X.—"Because the Mother is here."

Nolini-da—"What will you do here?"

X.—"Whatever the Mother will tell me to do."

Nolini-da was delighted by X's attitude. He asked him to come the next day, promising to take him to the Mother. Before taking X to the Mother Nolini-da told her all about this young man. The Mother accepted X at once, gave him lodging, food and work. Since then he has been here.

Compiled by K

THE STORY OF A SOUL

BY HUTA

(Continued from the issue of July 1987)

The Mother's Message

This is the
interesting story of
how a being Su-awas
the Divine Life



Volume Three : 1959

9

THE Mother sent me a lovely card dated 13-7-59, which illustrated a bouquet of coloured roses, and her fragrant words were:

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“To my dear little child Huta,

Yesterday your brother has given me all the nice things you have sent for me. I like very much the photographs and I will make good use of all the things.

With love and blessings.”

Paroobhai also wrote a letter informing me that when he had seen the Mother she had asked him whether I was comfortable in my lodging, whether the English food suited me, whether I was keeping well.

Her concern brought tears of gratitude to my eyes.

Despite all the hardships, my heart was at peace. When I plunged deep into it, nothing really touched me or affected me.

*

Some of my nephews and nieces went to East Africa and others went to India to their parents. They stayed in London for a day or two. I made arrangements for them in one of the hotels.

I gave a few things to Suresh for the Mother. Among them there was a tiny toy tortoise.

In a flash a thought passed across my mind: “Oh, how I wish I could also go with them to Pondicherry!” I could feel the loneliness creeping into my bones.

*

I frequently felt weak, weary and dissatisfied with myself. My shortcomings were gigantic. I slept late at night and rose early in the morning to attend college. I usually skipped breakfast save for a cup of tea or coffee. My lunches were sketchy—tea or sandwiches or sometimes potato chips and an omelette. In the evening I had dinner at Mercury House. It was indeed a rigorous life.

I worked very hard to pass the speed test in shorthand. So all the time I kept my nose to the grindstone.

My principal had already left for India. She would reach Bombay on 25th July 1959.

On 18th July there were final speed tests in shorthand and typing for the first term.

Mrs. Duncan dictated with a stop-watch in her hand. Unfortunately I failed in both by a few marks. I felt sorry and sick.

I wrote fifty words a minute in shorthand, but while typing I could not decipher them. Some incomprehensible words I had put down in squiggles to Mrs. Duncan’s dictation and stared at them hopelessly. It was a bad show. Anybody could do fifty or sixty in the comfortable quiet of speed tests. I felt as if each attempt had fallen thudding flat.

The vice-principal—an old kind lady with bifocals—consoled me: “Don’t be crestfallen or disheartened. Since you know all the theories, now you only require to gain speed which will come by constant practice. I know that you are unwell and got nervous. Now, look, dear, during the holidays I shall leave a typewriter at your residence so that you may practise. Besides, I shall instruct Mrs. Duncan to give you special coaching in shorthand. You will have to go to her place. Thus everything will be fine. Don’t worry.”

I told myself: “That means extra fees.” I found my situation increasingly too difficult for me to keep up my brave façade. However, I thanked her.

My troubles were exhaustion and the monthly period, which nearly killed me. But that was not the excuse for failing. In fact, I never liked shorthand. To force myself to take up the subject was disgusting. I preferred to be unbound.

On 24 July my college closed for two months.

*

I was still worried about my studies and felt restless, perturbed. It was all very well telling myself not to brood over the matter, but the subconscious mind had a habit of disregarding advice.

Just to forget unpleasantness and sadness, I was about to telephone Sudha, then suddenly I remembered that she was already off on a continental tour with her people. So I called Ramesh who asked me to meet him at East Africa House on Saturday morning.

That day the slight mistiness of dawn evaporated and it was soon a bright day. I took my bath and dressed in a pale green sari. I brushed my long hair until it shone, before winding it deftly into a smooth knob at the nape of my neck, securing it with pins. As always I wore a light make-up and finally sprayed my favourite perfume—“Je Reviens” Worth Paris. I slipped my feet into open-toed sandals, draped a short, white, light-weight coat about my shoulders in the prevailing cape-like fashion, took my hand-bag and made my way to catch the train.

I reached E. Africa House where Ramesh greeted me with a broad smile. Then we set off to the Tate Gallery which had been opened in 1897. It is a branch of the National Gallery, and houses the most representative collection of modern paintings in Europe. The Gallery owes its existence to Sir Henry Tate, who not only presented his collection of pictures, valued at £75,000, to the nation, but also contributed £80,000 towards the cost of the building.

We were delighted to see masterpieces—especially the paintings of Joshua Reynolds, William Blake, William Turner, August Renoir, Constable, Wilson, Sargent and Sickert.

I was impressed by the painting *Heads of Angels* by Reynolds. As a matter of fact, he had painted his daughter in different poses. I told Ramesh, pointing to that painting: “The Mother sent me a reproduction of this painting when I was

in Pondicherry. I have got a mass collection of various reproductions of paintings given to me by the Mother. Now I am seeing the original paintings. I am really happy.”

The pictures of William Blake were mystically ethereal. He was a great well-known artist as well as one of the renowned poets in the English language. Not content to see his poems only in a written or printed form, he clothed them in design and colour so that each poem-picture formed an artistic whole.

Those artists, who were schizoids, somehow managed to go through life without any unruly outburst, because their work offered them an outlet in which to express themselves.

Also there were rooms which displayed modern English paintings. We saw a section of sculpture which included Rodin's work.

There was an exhibition of abstract and modern painting in one of the halls. After we had paid 4s. we entered it and started looking around in sheer bewilderment. For, what we saw left us to our own devices to derive the meaning. We racked our brains desperately—the more we tried to make out the significance, the more we got muddled. Finally we gave up for fear of a headache and left the room in total disappointment.

The following jokes are to the point:

“And this, I suppose is one of those hideous caricatures you call modern art.”

“Nope, that's just a mirror.”

Critic: “Ah! and what is this? It is superb! what soul, what charm, what expression.”

Artist: “Yeah! that's where I clean the paint off my brushes!”

Ramesh and I had snacks in a small restaurant. Afterwards we were on our way to Beckett's village—somewhere in Sussex. The golden sunlight was spilling across the roads.

Meanwhile we ran into a friend of Ramesh who was clad in a blue Blazer which had the badge of the special college he attended. Ramesh introduced me to him. He looked at me for a moment or two and smiled. Then suddenly he turned to Ramesh and exclaimed: “Eh Ramesh, you have a pretty girl friend.” I looked at Ramesh who rolled his eyes heavenwards. I smiled and said to his friend: “I am flattered. But I am his elder sister, for I need a younger brother to tease.” His friend remarked: “Jolly good!” And we parted. Then while heading for our appointed place in a train, Ramesh said: “Huta, you talk to me so frankly, so freely, about yourself—your life, work, goal and rosy hopes. They are sincere aspirations—they are real—no schemings, no contrivings, no plots. Just pure and true. That is why in my heart of hearts I wanted you to be my companion. But

now you are my elder sister, equally good!" I affirmed: "Yes, of course."

I was dumbfounded to see the whole miniature village which seemed lively, full of expression. Miniature farmyards, houses with gardens, people, playgrounds, aerodrome, trains, rivers, mountains, trees, flowers, waterfalls, mechanical animals, parks and numberless things of every description. This wonder-village reminded me of Gulliver's voyage to Lilliput where he found a strange tiny town of people like big ants.

I only wished I had a colour camera here to capture this panoramic scene of sheer beauty. I never wanted to leave this splendidous fairyland, but alas! time was up and we moved to London.

Ramesh was to leave the city the next day for Switzerland. I felt sorry, because he was such a nice, noble person.

A few days later I received a card from him showing flowers—Leopard's-bane and long-spurred violet. He had written on the card:

International Civil Service
Santa Maria, Switzerland, 27-7-59

My dear sister,

I have had a lovely journey and throughout I have been thinking about all of you in England. I started my first day of work today. It is a little tough going. There are ten different nationals. We speak German mainly & I am trying to speak it. The people are all very friendly and the country so nice. I shall be writing more in greater detail later on. I have been thinking very much about all the advice you gave me the last time I was there. I am trying to follow it. Till next time bye and keep well.

With every best wish & love,

Ramesh

My advice to him was somewhat like this verse from *Savitri*:

"Only were safe who kept God in their hearts."

*

One fine morning my vice-principal in her tweed suit and white shirt-blouse caught at the throat by an elegant brooch—a cigarette dangling from a corner of her lips—came. She climbed the stairs with a typewriter, left it in my room, took the money and went. I stared at the machine—the previous tests and my failure seemed to jumble themselves in front of my eyes. I squeezed them shut.

I wanted to be alone for sometime to weep out all the uncertainty and dread. My head pounded with pain. That night I went to bed early and mercifully did not take long to fall asleep.

*

On 31st July I received six parcels from E. Africa, sent by my sister-in-law, Urmila. When I opened them I found, to my surprise, tea-spices, different kinds of typical Gujarati savouries, sweetmeats and garlic chutney.

I was touched by her thoughtfulness. Without losing time, I hastened to pen a letter of thanks to her.

My mother had already reached Africa on 20th July. She was not keeping too well.

I shared the eatables with Chetan. Later she too received some parcels from India—mostly pickles which she shared with me. But they were very hot so I could not eat anything. Sometimes we secretly cooked food on a small gas-ring, which we were not allowed to do in the room!

One day when I was busy typing, Chetan tapped and entered my room at night in her filmy *négligée*. She carried a big milk bottle, sat on a chair, crossed one leg over the other and drank the full bottle in the flicker of an eyelid. I gaped. She laughed softly and said : “See, this is how I keep my body fit.” I told myself: “I am not surprised.” She was very short, plump and dark. But her features were good.

We talked about our studies—we especially looked forward to joining the evening classes at the Constance Spry School of Flower Arrangement.

(To be continued)

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THE HORSE, THE HARAPPA CULTURE AND THE RIGVEDA

A CONTROVERSY

ASKO Parpola, the eminent Finnish Indologist, whose views in *Frontline* (Madras), February 7-20, along with those of the well-known Indian scholar I. Mahadevan, had been criticised by K. D. Sethna in the same journal, March 21-April 3, as well as in *Mother India*, June, at somewhat greater length, replied in *Frontline*, May 2-15, to the criticism. Sethna sent a further letter finding fault with the reply. A more detailed form of Sethna's return to the attack is presented below, preceded by a reproduction of Parpola's letter which served as its occasion.

ASKO PARPOLA'S DEFENCE

K. D. Sethna challenges the horse argument in pinning down the linguistic affinities of the Indus Civilisation.

It is true that the Harappans depicted the male rather than female animals on their seals. They also depicted one particular bovine (possibly the *Bos primigenus*) in profile as a "unicorn", in the fashion of the ancient Mesopotamian art. There are, moreover, some mythical fantasy animals in the Harappan iconographic repertory. None of these points, however, changes the fact that the horse is conspicuously missing among the many realistically depicted animals.

Nor do the excavations at Surkotada alter the absence of horse bones from the osteological evidence of the Indian subcontinent before 2000 B.C.

Because the Indus Civilisation, securely dated in the third millennium, did not know the horse, except in the late Harappan phase, it cannot be considered as post-Rigvedic, since the Rigveda amply testifies to the presence of the horse in the Indus valley at the time of its composition.

In fact, the standard reference works date the Rigveda to the second millennium B.C. Such a date is supported among other things by the Aryan vocabulary associated with the rulers of the Mitanni kingdom in West Asia around 1500 B.C. This vocabulary shows a close affinity with the Rigveda and testifies to the Mitanni kings' preoccupation with horses and horse-drawn war chariots.

K. D. SETHNA'S COMMENT

Asko Parpola does not seem to get a number of points into proper focus. I argued that the presence or absence of depictions on the Indus seals could not direct us unequivocally to the animals known. We have no clear clues to the aim of the depictions. Parpola notes that "the Harappans depicted male rather than female animals on their seals". We don't know why there was such an oddity. Parpola

also notes that “there are some mythical fantasy animals in the Harappan iconographic repertory”. Surely the undepicted cows existed along with the bulls and as certainly the depicted “fantasy animals” did not. (even the “unicorn” has at times fantastic postures foreign to Mesopotamian art.) Unless we know the “why” of all the depictions we cannot make any capital out of “the fact that the horse is conspicuously missing”. Its non-depiction may be only one more oddity added to the others. We cannot infer from it that the horse was unknown to the Harappans.

Added to the play of oddity in regard to the seals, there are a couple of other instances of what we may dub the caprice of the seals. The scapula of a camel has been found at the considerable depth of 15 feet at Mohenjo-daro,¹ but no seal depicts a dromedary. Neither do they present a cat. And yet we deduce its existence in the Harappa Culture from a brick at Chanhu-daro bearing the footprint of a cat slightly overlapped by those of a dog.² If that brick had not come to hand, Parpola would have asserted for the Harappa Culture the absence of this animal. In any case, we have no evidence of the cat at the two main sites. We may well attribute the lack to chance. And chance is a factor which might have a bearing on the horse-question too.

Here Harappan Surkotada, which Parpola tries to play down, is very much to the point. He suggests that Surkotada marks “the late Harappa phase” and that the horse-bones found there cannot prove “the Indian subcontinent before 2000 B.C.” to have known the horse. This means: (1) Surkotada goes back to 2000 B.C.; (2) its horse-bones date as early as that period; (3) Harappa and Mohenjo-daro, the two main sites, which could not have been out of touch with Surkotada, must have known the existence of the horse in 2000 B.C. even if they did not depict the animal. For that matter, did Surkotada itself, although knowing the horse from its earliest phase, as J. P. Joshi³ has shown, depict it anywhere? If not, how can the non-depiction at Harappa and Mohenjo-daro argue the absence of horse-knowledge? Besides, those who came to Surkotada in 2000 B.C. to establish there a colony of the Harappa Culture must have brought horses from somewhere else—places which were aware of this animal prior to that date.

In addition, there is a subtle piece of evidence which cannot be bypassed. Stuart Piggott⁴ has remarked: “one clay figurine from Periano Ghundai [in North Baluchistan] seems to represent a horse, and is interesting in connection with the find of horses’ teeth in RG [Rana Ghundai] I, the type site.” This figurine he assigns to the RG III phase which for him begins some centuries before 2500 B.C., and is pre-Harappan even at its end. Now, Piggott⁵ has traced the

¹ Sir Mortimer Wheeler, *The Indus Civilization* (Cambridge, 1968), p. 82.

² *Ibid.*, p. 85.

³ “Exploration in Kutch and Excavation at Surkotada and New Light on Harappan Migration”, *Journal of the Oriental Institute* (M S University of Baroda), Vol. XII, Sept-Dec. 1972, Nos 1-2, pp. 136, 138.

⁴ *Prehistoric India* (A Pelican Book, Harmondsworth, 1960), p. 126.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 192-93.

Harappa Culture's varied relationship with RG, particularly in the matter of pottery. Even the characteristic "stamp seals" of the Harappa Culture have been found in the RG areas.¹ What is of still greater import than the obvious suggestion of horse-knowledge by the Harappa Culture on account of all this relationship with a horse-knowing locality, is marked both by Piggott² and Sankalia³, the latter writing of "Rana Ghundai IIIc Culture found under the debris of Harappan and the low level (-32 feet) Mohenjo-daro". So we have at the two central sites of the Harappa Culture in the Indus valley a background of horse-knowledge and horse-use much before Parpola's 2000 B.C.

At this point his chronological stand *vis-à-vis* the Harappa Culture and the Rigveda is exposed to criticism. From his stress on "a close linguistic affinity" between the Rigveda and "the Aryan vocabulary associated with the rulers of the Mitanni kingdom in West Asia around 1500 B.C.", we gather that along with "the standard reference works" he places the Rigveda in about the middle of the second millennium B.C. We also observe that he takes, on the strength of this vocabulary, "the Mitanni kings' preoccupation with horses and horse-drawn war chariots" as a factor common to them and the Rigveda. So we get the anomaly that the horse which has always been regarded as a broad sign of ancient Aryanism was yet known to the supposedly Dravidian Harappa Culture by 2000 B.C., that is, nearly 500 years before the alleged Aryan advent in India.

In view of this anomaly on top of the close manifold bond between RG's phases and Harappa and Mohenjo-daro, we cannot take seriously the contention of Parpola that the Indus Civilisation "cannot be considered as post-Rigvedic, since the Rigveda amply testifies to the presence of the horse in the Indus valley at the time of its composition".

Here I may draw Parpola's attention to the curious fact that the Rigvedic testimony to the horse's presence in the Indus valley is not at all borne out by archaeology for the post-Harappan period he assigns to the Aryans of the Rigveda. In none of the excavated sites in Punjab and Northern Haryana—Bhagwanpura, Dadheri, Kathpalon, Nagar, etc.—in the early time after 1500 B.C. has any sign of the horse been discovered. The only equine bones the Indus valley has yielded are from an upper level of Mohenjo-daro and from Area G in Harappa which is likely to be just post-Harappan but has nothing to do with any possible Rigvedic presence.

All in all, the problem of the horse in the Harappa Culture is much more complex than Parpola believes.

As to the relation between a pre-Harappan Rigveda, as I conceive it, and the West-Asian Mitanni kingdom around 1500 B.C., we should not overstress the

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 128, 185.

² *Ibid.*, p. 142.

³ "Traditional Indian Chronology and C-14 Dates of Excavated Sites", *Indian Prehistory*, 1964, p. 222.

affinity of their vocabularies or, for that matter, their cults. True, they have been found more allied to each other than either of them to the Iranians who belong to the identical stock. But if they issued from the same place and at more or less the same time, as most Indologists suppose, how is it that the term "Arya" which the Rigvedics apply to themselves, is, as Parpola would say, "conspicuously missing" in the Mitanni documents? Secondly, while the gods whom the Mitanni rulers list in a certain inscription do constitute an important part of the Rigvedic pantheon, the most prominent god of that pantheon is strikingly absent: Agni. When there are the two Nasatyas (Ashwins) and when Mitra is paired with Varuna, we should expect Indra to be coupled with Agni as in such a context he is in the Rigveda, instead of standing alone as in this inscription.

Even apart from these differences and all the more in sight of them, one can think of quite another time for the Rigvedics than *c.* 1500 B.C. of which we are certain for the Mitanni kings. When the successors of a pre-Harappan Rigveda had already moved out of the Indus valley further inland and the Indus Civilisation was running its course where the Rigveda had been, some pockets on the outskirts of India could have retained remnants of the Rigvedic vocabulary as well as parts of the Rigvedic religion and sent forth Aryan adventurers into West Asia. At the present time itself, this vocabulary survives in what are called Pisachic languages spoken between the rivers Kabul and Swat (the Kubha and Suvastu of the Rigveda).¹ There is also the case of the Kalash-Kafirs on the Afghanistan border who up to at least 1960 had gods "linked to the old Indian pantheon".² Under the one supreme creator the local deities—"dewalog"—were several and one of them was "Varin...the Indian deity Varuna, not only in name but also in his function as the guardian of truth and right, and the punisher of evil".³ May I remind Parpola that, in the Mitanni king Mattiwaza's treaty with the Hittite king Shubiluliuma, Varuna and the other gods are called as witnesses just because he and they had a similar function?

On the strength of this treaty's text and the Mitanni Kikkuli's manual of horse-breeding we are not obliged to take them as nearly contemporaneous with the Rigveda and desist from dating the Indian scripture anterior to the Indus Civilisation and from looking at the Indus script in a new linguistic light.

¹ *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. I, p. 356 (Oxford, 1907).

² Peter Snoy, "The Last Pagans of the Hindu Kush", *Natural History*, November 1959, p. 526.

³ *Ibid.*

CORRECTION

ON p. 427 of the July *Mother India*, in "Life-Poetry-Yoga" by Amal Kiran (K. D. Sethna) there is the following paragraph:

"Sri Aurobindo himself seems to have shown impatience only when in the months before his passing away he was dictating *Savitri* to Nirod. Nirod was a little taken aback at the insistence on dictating more and more. Observing his wondering and questioning look, he is reported to have said: 'Yes, I want to finish *Savitri* soon.' When he had completed the Book of Fate he gave the impression of believing that he had done all that was immediately necessary. The Epilogue was brought to his notice—and perhaps also the Book of Death—but he appears to have set them aside, except for small touchings-up."

It has been noted that the account here is not accurate. As it was written from memory, without consulting the proper sources, we are giving some passages from Nirodbaran's *Twelve Years with Sri Aurobindo* to set the record right.

The reference to "insistence on dictating more and more" should belong to an earlier context. Nirodbaran writes (pp. 189-190): "The tempo of the work was subsequently speeded up and it proceeded smoothly without break till the seal of incomplete completion was put about two weeks before the November Darshan. Very probably he had taken his decision to withdraw from this world of the sad music of humanity and leave in compensation his divine music of *Savitri*. A curious incident has stuck in my memory. One day he continued working beyond 1-30 p.m.—a rare occurrence—and that was the day I was invited to lunch at a friend's place. I thought I would certainly be free by 2 p.m. but no, he seemed to be unusually inspired!"

The rest of the paragraph pointing to Sri Aurobindo's "impatience" is loosely connected with Nirodbaran's pp. 272-73 which give the actual facts:

"His whole attention seemed to be focussed on *Savitri*, but again the work had to be suspended owing to the pressure of various extraneous demands. They swelled up to such an extent that he was obliged to remark, 'I find no time for my real work.' When the path was fairly clear and I was wondering what his next choice would be, he said in a distant voice, 'Take up *Savitri*. I want to finish it soon.' This must have been about two months before his departure. The last part of the utterance startled me, though it was said in a subdued tone. I wondered for a moment if I had heard rightly. I looked at him; my bewildered glance met an impassive face. In these twelve years this was the first time I had heard him reckoning with the time factor. An Avatar of poise, patience and equanimity, this was the picture that shone before our eyes whenever we had thought or spoken about him. Hence my wonder. We took up the same two Cantos [of the Book of Fate] that had proved so intractable... When the last revision was made and the Cantos were wound up, I said, 'It is finished now.' An impersonal smile of satisfaction greeted me, and he said, 'Ah, it is finished?' How well I remember that flicker of a smile which all of us craved for so long! 'What is left now?' was his next query. 'The Book of Death and the Epilogue.' 'Oh, that? We shall see about that later on.'"

SOME MYSTIC MILESTONES

AUGUST 2, 1983

MIND free from thought, heart void of hunger's bond
Make room for a gold link with a vast beyond.
A silence opens to an eternity,
Like some wide quiverless unsleeping eye.
A flame unflickering, rooted in core of clay,
Flies up to kiss a secret deathless Day.

AUGUST 8, 1983

Out of the heart a fire goes flowering up
To unfold a secret halo round the face.
No vision of time's unrest can ever stop
The fathomless silence kindling in the gaze—
Sign of the Immortal in the mortal, lit
By the self-wakening bodied Infinite.

AUGUST 17, 1983

“Nothing the kindled soul has known is lost:
There's but a seeming desert to be crossed.
Strive not. Stand deedless, silent, bare,
All I shall do. I wait within to out-flare,
The godhead filling your muteness with his name,
A rhythm and rapture of the Undying's world-game!”

AMAL KIRAN

I HEAR THE CALL

I HEAR the call of the boundless and bottomless,
Of heaven, earth and the nether region,
Dark, dumb and immobile,
Yet charged with a longing for life and light!

I hear the hymns of the Rishis of lore
And the epic songs of the ancient poets
Depicting the deeds of the incarnate Divine
To uphold Dharma against the uprise of evil!

I hear the call of the immortal stones—
Holy shrines from Kailash to Kanyakumari,
Symbols of the devotion of anonymous hands,
Selfless adepts unrecognised in the chronicle of man!

I am beckoned as well by modern science—
Incredible researches and discoveries,
Computer, rockets and voyage to distant space!
But alas! a great threat, if the heart is unaltered...

Thus come diverse calls and they depart
Creating in me hope, anguish and yearning...
Helpless, I brood on where to go and how,
And stay rooted at the place where I always am...

Only at night I am free in dreams
To visit planes of mystery and wonder!...
But at daybreak the fantasy finishes
Letting me lie at the accustomed spot!

I hear the call of the crimson dawn,
Cool breeze and the chirping of birds!
O comes then the call of the Truth of truths
From the luminous core of the secret heart!

O the deep blue Beauty, the cosmic Lover,
Thy nectar-breath plays into the human flute
And with the touch of fingers on the centre of being
Thou hast produced a symphony unheard on earth...

Land, water and sky are vibrant now
 With the ecstatic tinkling of Thy anklets
 To announce the advent of an unprecedented Era
 Suffused with the gold light of a yet unseen Sun!

CHUNILAL CHOWDHURY

THIS "I"

ALL that I drew or painted
 Was there
 In the torn pages
 From Your sketch-book
 Floating as paper boats
 On Times's slow stream.

My compositions
 Are variations of tunes You hum
 When alone—
 Tunes I had stolen in dreams—
 Mine and Yours.

Nothing is mine
 Except this "I",
 Why don't You claim it too?

DINKAR PALANDE

HUMOUR IN THE PLAYS OF SRI AUROBINDO

PART 2—THE VIZIERS OF BASSORA

(Continued from the issue of July 1987)

DOONYA loves gaiety and finds ways to jest at the most solemn moment, at the most unlikely place, for no reason at all, at least her reasons are not apparent to ordinary eyes, for her very eyes are prejudiced in favour of fun: where others see beauty she sees laughter.

Doonya:

(Leaping on Anice)

What is your name,

You smiling wonder, what's your name? Your name?

Anice-Aljalice:

If you will let me a little breathe, I'll tell you.

Doonya:

Tell it me without breathing.

Anice-Aljalice:

It's too long.

Doonya:

Let's hear it.

Anice-Aljalice:

Anice-Aljalice.

Doonya:

Anice,

There is a sea of laughter in your body;

I find it billowing there beneath the calm

And rippling sweetly out in smiles. You beauty!

And I love laughters. Wherefore for the king?

Why not for me? Does the king ever laugh,

I wonder?"¹

Here we get a vague inkling of the turn her mind is going to take—wherefore should the beauty of Anice go to the king? He who does not laugh has no right to this beauty. This seeker of fun creates merriment even if there is nothing in the situation to warrant it. Her nimble mind works overtime to implant the possibility of jollity in any given situation—be it light or grave. Like a river of mirth and revelry, she sweeps away misery and melancholy from human life, she makes

¹ Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library, Vol. 7, pp. 589-590.

of life's trials a joke, because she is one who will laugh even in the face of death. She is duly warned that Anice is for the Sultan, a Sultan so cruel that later on, with a trumped-up charge, he will order that his lifelong servitors, his most faithful Vizier's wife and niece

“be led through Bassora
Bare in their shifts with halters round their necks,
And, stripped before all eyes, whipped into swooning,
Then sold as slaves but preferably for little
To some low Nazerene or Jew.”¹

She knows fully the harsh fate awaiting those who anger the easily angered Sultan of Bassora and his ever-scheming satanic vizier Almuene. Yet her ingrained goodness and sense of justice will not allow her to let Anice fall,

To some thick bearded swart and grizzled Sultan.²

She decides to help her but meanwhile cannot help teasing her. To her impassioned,

But will you help me Doonya, will you help me?
To him, to him, not to this grizzled king!³

She answers,

... yes,
With all my heart and soul and brains and body.
But how? My uncle's orders are so strict!

Anice-Aljalice:

And do you always heed your uncle's orders,
You dutiful niece?"

Doonya:

Rigidly, when they suit me.⁴

In Dr. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar's words,

“Doonya and Anice-Aljalice make another pair, equally quick-witted, equally open-hearted, and equally expert in the language of romance and gaiety.”⁵

She takes charge, decides to put the nose of the Sultan out of joint. Her brain is a-whirl with all the delightful complications possible with Anice and Nureddene as lovers. Her very language is full of poetry and humour. She calls Anice “You living sweet romance.” And when Anice claims that once she gets Nureddene she will keep him chained to herself and will not allow his profligate

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 727.

² *Ibid.*, p. 590

³ *Ibid.*, p. 592.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 592-593.

⁵ *Sri Aurobindo*, p. 218.

ways Doonya believes that by the power of her beauty and intelligence it will be possible for Anice. She strengthens and covers up her motive of kindness with a sense of virtue. She marks with merriment the motives of fair play, of her deep love for Nureddene and her distaste for the fact that such a rare jewel as Anice should fall into the hands of a "grizzled Sultan". Her own self and her own motives also she mocks—

Doonya:

You have relieved my conscience of a load,
 Who blames me? I do this to reform my cousin
 Gravely, deliberately, with serious thought,
 And am quite virtuously disobedient.
 I almost feel a long white beard upon my chin,
 The thing's so wise and sober. Gravely, gravely!

*She marches out, solemnly stroking an imaginary beard.*¹

But as Dr. Prema Nandkumar rightly points out,

"Doonya is bold, but has abundant common sense. Her trick that brings together Nureddene and Anice-Aljalice smacks of disobedience and presumption. Yet her intention is not frivolous."² This Islamic counterpart of the more modern Brigida of *The Maid in the Mill* and, like Cydone who lightens the darkest shadows with her prattle in *Perseus the Deliverer*, has that very rare thing—the courage of her convictions. When she sees a wrong she tries to set it right—but with fun and gaiety bursting forth like Roman candles and not with a set and grim face of a modern altruist who may make a situation more grave by wearing a very long face. Doonya abhors everything serious: love, honour and misfortune—with each she grapples with her own will of laughter, as if by her jollity she could propitiate the gods: her oblations are paid through bright laughter-flowers and her courage is rewarded by Allah's benevolent smile.

We meet this indomitable Doonya again in the 2nd Act.

According to Dr. Prema Nandkumar, "Having completed the exposition in the first act Sri Aurobindo proceeds to entangle everybody with everybody else in the second act. Doonya is full of playful teasing and mocks Ameena's butter-soft sternness, Ameena who is temperamentally incapable of being harsh to anybody—least of all to her darling adored son Nureddene —

Ameena:

Has he come in?

Doonya:

He has.

¹ *S.A.B.C.L.*, Vol. 7, p. 593-594.

² *Sri Aurobindo Circle Annual*, 1967, p. 51.

Ameena:

For three long days!
I will reprove him—call him to me, Doonya.
I will be stern.

Doonya:

That's right. Lips closer there!
And just try hard to frown. That's mildly grim
And ought to shake him. Now you spoil all by laughing."¹

Thus she makes Ameena smile in spite of her resolve to be stern and thus even the pretence of annoyance falls away. At the first words of Nureddene she forgets her resolve to scold and only says in welcome: "My dearest son!" This show of mock severity by Nureddene's parents in two different places is in itself full of the sweetness of humour. All those who are parents and who love their children feel an invisible bond with this essence of parental love personified in Ameena and Ibn Sawy.

Doonya has not yet enjoyed to the full the savour of teasing Ameena for her pretended anger and for forgetting her resolve to scold Nureddene. She tries to put a frown on her own face. But her face, accustomed to smiles, fails to register this unfamiliar expression of anger. So it seems comic and wild to Nureddene who is astonished at her antics.

Nureddene:

Why, Doonya, cousin, what wild face is this?

Doonya:

This is a frown, a frown upon my forehead.
Do you not tremble when you see it? No?
To tell you the plain truth, my wandering brother,
We both were practising a careful grimness
And meant to wither you with darting flames,
From basilisk eyes and words more sharp than swords,
Burn you and frizzle into simmering cinders.
Oh! you'd have been a dolorous spectacle
Before we had finished with you! Ask her else."²

She leaves the reader smiling and wondering at the bliss that permeates this young girl's heart and mind and body, for no occasion is unworthy of satire, no situation without the honey of humour. To Nureddene's facetious self-defence—

¹ *Ibid.*

² *S.A.B.C.L.* Vol. 7 p. 596.

Mother, I only range abroad and learn
Of manners and of men to fit myself
For the after-time.¹

She answers like a sweet mocking chime:

True, true, and of the taste
Of different wines and qualities of girls,
What eyes Damascus sends, the Cairene sort,
Bagdad's red lips and Yemen's willowy figures,
Who has the smallest waist in Bassora,
Or who the shapeliest little foot moon-bright
Beneath her anklets. These are sciences
And should be learned by sober masculine graduates.
Should they not, cousin ?²

It is surprising that Nureddene can keep a straight face and hold his ground. A less audacious, a less carefree person would have blushed and been left floundering with downcast eyes, twiddling his thumbs. When Nureddene answers his mother's lamentations about his long absence from home, by drawing an imaginary canvas of his proposed world-wanderings by saying he will travel

From Bassora to Java and Japan;
Then on through undiscovered islands, seas
And oceans yet unnamed; yes, everywhere
Catch danger by the throat where I can find him,—³

Doonya like a perfect rhyme at once falls in with his mood and yet cannot forbear from a slightly ironic rejoinder to the heady plans of adventure of this spoilt cousin who has seen only enticing soft dawns of life:

Butcher blood-belching dragons with my blade,
Cut ogres, chop giants, tickle cormorants,—

Nureddene:

Then in some land, I have not settled which,

Doonya:

Call it Cumcatchia or Nonsensicum.⁴

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 596.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 596-597.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 598.

⁴ *Ibid.*

She is always ready to get into the spirit of the moment. When she opens her lips there are gathered in a moment the blessings of 'Jannat'. As Nureddene finishes painting his future's canvas which bids fair to be a rival to the Caliph Haroun al Rashid's own, she at once rejoins—

And you will marry me, dear Nureddene,
To Jaafar, your great vizier, so that we
Shall never part, but every blessed night
Drink and be merry in your halls, and live
Felicitously for ever and for aye,
So long as full moon shines and brains go wrong
And wine is drunk. I make my suit to you from now,
Caliph of Faery Land.¹

But she does not let off Nureddene so easily for his long absence. With sweet perverseness she turns his flight of imagination to his present fault—

And meanwhile, brother, till you get your kingdom,
We shall be grim, quite grim.²

Even in a grave situation she can see and laugh at the humour of things or words. In the absence of his father, Nureddene recklessly fritters away his wealth. Doonya watches helplessly the ruin of her brother till creditors besiege him. At last she cannot contain herself and decides to bring the careless couple to their senses and warns Nureddene thus—

“Like a painted tombstone
Sculptured and arabesqued, but death's inside
And bones, my brother, bones.”³

To this Nureddene facetiously answers:

“And there are bones
In this fair pleasing outside called dear Doonya,
But let us think only of rosy cheeks,
Sweet eyes and laughing lips and not the bones.”⁴

Doonya cannot help but appreciate her cousin's apt answer and acknowledges it with a jest—

¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 7, p. 599.

² *Ibid.*, p. 600.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 632.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 633.

“You have boned my metaphor and quite disboned it,
Until there is nothing firm inside; ’tis pulpy.”¹

Now for a moment to turn from magnetic Doonya to her equally charismatic cousin Nureddene. To the surface-look this wanton youth with no sense of responsibility may seem just a rich and spoiled young man. But when half jestingly Nureddene paints an imaginary canvas of his future life we find that his gaze is not confined to beautiful girls nor his imagination bound to the distractions of Bassora. He does not aim to wallow forever in the lanes of the city nor to enjoy in secure comfort the love and riches of his parents. His sight is fixed on farther stars, his arrow is indeed aimed very high. He regards all the world as his playfield to range in, like a demi-god. Without any premeditation he unveils his high dreams, his very soul to Doonya and Ameena. He has a supreme self-confidence in his strength and his destiny. His twin ideals are the furtherance of Islam and righteous enjoyment of life. His soul would not bear to be imprisoned in the limiting circle of an ordinary life passed in ease. High adventure calls to him. His dreams range all over Europe and Asia and even beyond to undiscovered lands. He has total faith in himself—a legacy of a parental love, a logical corollary of the tribute paid to his beauty and generosity by the world. There is nothing impossible for him. He will

Marry a soldan’s daughter, sweet of eye
And crowned with gracious hair, deserving her
By deeds impossible: conduct her armies
Against her foemen, enter iron-walled
Cities besieged with the loud clang of war,
Rescue imperilled kingdoms, ’mid the smoke
Of desperate cities slay victorious kings,
And so extend my lady’s empire wide...²

Great dreams of wealth and valour, generosity and service to beauty are the hallmark of youth. And on the quality of his ideals depends the quality of a person’s life. The next few lines bare the very soul of Nureddene. In them we find a prevision of all that is to follow—

My wealth shall be so great that I can spend
Millions each day nor feel the want. I’ll give
Till there shall be no poor in my realms,
Nor any grieved; for I shall every night,
Like Haroun al Rashid, the mighty Caliph,
Wander disguised with Jaafar and Mesrou

¹ *Ibid*

² *Ibid.*, p. 598.

Redressing wrongs, repressing Almuenes,
 And set up noble men like my dear father
 In lofty places, giving priceless boons,
 An unseen providence to all mankind.¹

Later in the play we will see that this youngster, this bright sapling of nobility is true to his ideal. His words are not mere boasting of ordinary youth. He can give his wealth—which many may do, but he can give away the girl who is his very heart and life to honour his word. He can pardon even Almuenes who had blackened his life's bright landscape most inhumanly. One who had tried to desecrate and torture his gentle mother and sister though by Allah's grace he did not succeed, one who had almost got him hanged.

This golden boy of Islam has the stuff to make his high-sounding boasts come true—

“And o'er romantic regions quite unknown
 Preach Islam, sword in hand; sell bales of spice
 From Bassora to Java and Japan;
 Then on through undiscovered islands, seas
 And oceans yet unnamed; yes, everywhere
 Catch danger by the throat where I can find him,—”²

As we see his courage and generosity in the face of torture and penury, how can we doubt his bravery? His is like an uncut diamond plunged in the dust of self-indulgence, whom each blow of destiny polishes and gives a new lustre and in the end he acquires a true and rare cut and clarity.

This young man plays on the heart-strings of his parents with an accustomed ease. Those who can give largely can also take gracefully. And where his parents are concerned each child is sure of his right. Nureddine till now has had no acquaintance with misery, injustice, pettiness or vindictiveness. For him life bears a rosy face. His attitude towards his parents may seem to verge on impertinence. Yet is it not rather the disguise of a total understanding, trust and love? It is a mask which he throws away in a serious moment and declares:

I swear it was not out of light contempt
 For your high dignity and valued life
 More precious to me than my blood, if I
 Transgressed your will in this.³

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 599.

² *Ibid.*, p. 598.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 619.

And as for the father—the eminent vizier Ibn Sawy—we see in the first scene of the first act itself how exceptional a statesman he is and how deep is his insight in human nature—his advice to Murad and Sunjar testifies to this. With the crooked Almuene he is firm and frank and though he criticises his beloved son Farid yet with a minimum of friction. His depth of character, his forbearance are apparent in the scene where he learns of the sad fate of Ameena and Doonya and faces the imminent hanging of Nureddene. But in some respects the most wise amongst men loses his wisdom and sagacity and behaves with innocent foolishness masquerading as profundity of wisdom and insight. When it comes to Nureddene the overflowing parental love of Ibn Sawy makes him act like a most ordinary doting parent:

Ibn Sawy:

Sir, Sir,

What game is this to buy your hussies trinkets
And send your father in the bill? Who taught you
This rule of conduct?

Nureddene:

You, sir.

Ibn Sawy:

I, rascal?

Nureddene:

You told me

That debt must be avoided like a sin.
What other way could I avoid it, sir,
Yet give the trinkets?

Ibn Sawy:

Logic of impudence?

Tell me, you curled wine-bibbling Aristotle,
Did I tell you also to have mistresses
And buy them trinkets?

Nureddene:

Not in so many words.

Ibn Sawy:

So many devils!

Nureddene:

But since you did not marry me
Nor buy me a beautiful slave for home delight
I thought you'd have me range outside for pleasures
To get experience of the busy world."¹

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 601-602.

Then Nureddene proposes that his father buy him a slave in which case he will be home "Quite four days out of seven."¹

This boldness of behaviour verges on rudeness, but it is only the high spirits of youth. To a youth it seems that the earth revolves only for his sole pleasure. When Ibn Sawy threatens to pull his curls the impudence of Nureddene sets everybody laughing unroariously.

"Nureddene:

I must not let you, sir,
They are no longer my own property.
There's not a lock that has not been bespoken
For a memento."²

The reader may exclaim like his father, "You handsome laughing rogue."

Nureddene unfolds the pages of his heart on which have been just then written the bright tale of true love to Doonya,

O Doonya, Doonya, tall, sweet, laughing Doonya!³

A very apt description of his cousin. Though bold Doonya has already decided to bring the lovers together yet she who is ever ready to tease is not above a little payment:

What will you give me for it?
None of your night-hawk kisses, cousin mine!
But a mild loving kind fraternal pledge
I will not refuse.⁴

Beauty-struck and love-sick Nureddene calls her

The wickedest, dearest girl
In all the world, the maddest sweetest sister
A sighing lover ever had.⁵

And with all one's heart one says "Amen" to such a view of Doonya. This girl, who with her own special sense of humour changes the destiny not only of all those related to her, but of the whole of Bassora, sows the seeds which will deprive a Sultan of his throne and place another on it. She unfolds a wondrous tale:

¹ *Ibid*, p. 603.

² *Ibid*

³ *Ibid*, p. 604

⁴ *Ibid*.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 605.

A tale long, curled and with a tip,—Oh lord!
I'll clip my tale.¹

After sending Nureddene to Anice and warning him of a white-tusked huge-muscled hideous grinning giant she paints herself most aptly with laughter-strokes:

Now the game's afoot
And Bassora's Sultan, Mahomed Alzaym
May whistle for his slave-girl. I am Fate.
For I upset the plans of viziers and of kings.

And, God bless her merry heart, so she does.

(To be continued)

SHYAM KUMARI

¹ *Ibid*

² *Ibid.*, p. 606.

THE MYSTIC

THOU, the universe and I,
Three are Thy dimensions,
Seemingly unknown to each other.
After ages when we met,
The universe and I united.
Thus remained only two—
Thou and Universal I.
After ages we met and fused together,
Now remains only one,
Call it Thou or I.

SHYAM KUMARI

JUNG AND COMPLEMENTARY STUDIES

THE HIGHEST REACH OF DEPTH PSYCHOLOGY— OTTO RANK ON IMMORTALITY, ETERNITY AND BEYOND PSYCHOLOGY

'IMMORTALITY' is a most cherished idea and ideal of man. In Vedic times 'Amritatva' was the highest objective of aspiration. 'Mrityunjaya', 'conquest over death', was the most favourite word, the very best thought and feeling. And for ages this remained so.

In the Upanishadic times when the sage Yajnyavalkya wanted to renounce the world he divided his property between his two wives. Having given Katyayani her part, he offered to give the other part to Maitreyee, his second wife, "Well, this is your half of the property." She exclaimed to the effect, "If this is not going to bring me immortality what shall I do with it?" These words of her have actually been ringing in our ears even though our hearts have not responded to them.

Of course, other ages have had other ideals. Brahman, Truth, Peace, Love, Ahimsa, Sattvic living have been among the many highest aspirations, of life. And in these times 'Amritatva' (Immortality) was almost a forgotten word, at least not the direct objective.

But it is interesting that the intrinsic values of Life, Truth, Beauty, Goodness, Light, Freedom, God, all ultimately get unified. Each one of them includes all the rest of them. So whatever the present approach, it would include Immortality.

However, in recent times, Sri Aurobindo has preferred 'Immortality' and raised it to the status of the highest objective for man in this world of mortality or death. And his epic poem *Savitri* is a poetic delineation of man's adventure of conquest over death.

In the West, the values that reign supreme are different; and 'Immortality' is a strange word. Yet we find in one who was a Freudian, an extreme psychological materialist (holding instinct as the basis of life), a unique preference for the thought and feeling of immortality. This Freudian was Otto Rank, a favourite disciple of Freud, for long the General Secretary of the International Psychoanalytical Association in Vienna. Rank was a profound scholar of cultural history and was valued as such in the psycho-analytical circles. In course of time he developed his original insights and deviated from Freud like Alfred Adler and Carl Jung.

Ira Progoff has made a fine comparative and a 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.

The author 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 their culminating phases tend 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* and it carries the sub-title, "An integrative evaluation of Freud, Adler, Jung and Rank and the impact of their culminating insights on modern man."

Our main interest at the moment is Otto Rank. Psychotherapy is going round the world as the new religion and men enthusiastically turn towards it for peace and consolation as they had done previously to different religions. Psychotherapies of all brands carry a message of healing and hope and they are an answer to the pessimism and anxiety of existentialist philosophy. Otto Rank has a marvellous command over the facts of cultural life and he foresees a stage when the present fumbblings of psycho-therapy are transcended and a true and effective spiritual healing becomes possible. Along with this goes his conception of the rebirth of new psychology, which will know man as a spiritual being.

Here we want primarily to state his idea of immortality. We quote from Ira Progoff. He says, representing Otto Rank:

The "urge to immortality is man's inexorable drive to feel connected to life in terms of his individual will with a sense of inner assurance that that connection will not be broken or pass away."¹

Human history is rich with examples of the ways in which the "urge to immortality" has been fulfilled. One common form that has many varieties is the belief in the permanent existence of the "soul" after death, in a "heaven" or in an "astral" plane from which the departed soul may both interfere with and assist in mortal affairs; or it may be a belief in the transmigration of souls, or reincarnation. Another major approach to immortality is by means of sexuality, either directly through the procreation of children, or indirectly through the "ancestors" or blood ties such as clans, nations or races. Shared beliefs, participation in groups whose members are "chosen" by some higher agency, or who possess an "eternal truth" or a secret ritual are other roads to immortality. And, particularly at the higher levels of civilisation, a main expression of the urge to be immortal is the "art work, a tangible object or undertaking in any realm of life such as art or politics or science to which the individual dedicates his energies in implicit hopes that the product of his creative will will outlive his mortal body."²

The urge to immortality is indeed pervasive in life and it needs to be duly appreciated. That itself will lift us out of our narrowness and smallness. But the fullness of it can come when man rises to his identification with the Eternal Divine.

Rank did recognise what this urge for immortality ultimately would be. Again our author, representing Rank, says:

"Immortality becomes then not merely continued individual existence, but a sense of more-than-personal participation in everlasting life. In this experience, the individual finds a 'new soul', not quite literally but in essence, because he now

perceives his personal existence in a new light.”³

“A new person with a ‘new soul’ emerges by ‘rebirth’; and projecting this into the future, Rank envisages ‘a new type of human being’ coming to the forefront of history with a ‘new structure of personality.’”⁴

The new person that Rank envisages is the artist or the creative person, who was for him the pivotal fact of life. A few of his words on this subject will be enlightening.

“The driving force behind the artist’s life is an unconscious striving to create an individual work that will give him immortality, just as the hero struggles for the prize that brings eternal life.”⁵

*

“When the artist undertakes to interpret the sources of his creative work intellectually, and when he assigns specific ‘reasons why’ he is engaged in art, he is being untrue to the inner principle of his existence as an artist. These sources are far beyond rationality: but they are no less valid, and no less true.”⁶

*

“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.”⁷

*

“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.”⁸

*

“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 characteristic 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.”⁹

*

“The fundamental significance of Rank’s work lies in his perception of the

fact that psychology leads beyond itself. He understood that the role of psychology is as an intermediary by means of which the modern man can make the transition from his old spiritual beliefs to the experience of a 'new soul' still to come,"¹⁰

*

Sri Aurobindo's quest for immortality is that of transcending spiritually the law of decay and death of the human body. That issue itself does not occur to Rank. But he has seen and felt that creativity belongs to the soul in man and that it is necessary to go beyond rationality to get into the true creative form of life. And that is a thing of immortality and eternity, the soul being immortal and eternal.

Ira Progoff's final word at the end of his book is inspiring. Says he,

"The new psychology brings a conception of personality that nourishes and strengthens man's creative will. Finally it frees us from the chronic pessimism of the age of anxiety out of which we are emerging. Ours is an age in which science, transforming itself in many areas from physics to psychology, is opening new spiritual vistas and extending the range of modern experience. Emergent depth psychology has a major role to play in the making of the new era, for it brings a great challenge and a great hope to modern man."¹¹

Still another word:

"...if the creative person would fulfil the meaning of his life and play a heroic role in the modern world, he must forsake the use of his art work as a crutch on which to lean as he hobbles through life. He must rather learn to walk under his own spiritual power in the world, and be the one to take the lead in going beyond this 'transitional psycho-therapeutic stage' in which we find ourselves at present. He must undertake a new art work that can be nothing else than his own personal existence; and in that work he will find both the 'new soul' and the intimate sense of connection to life that the modern personality requires. With a vitalizing experience of immortality as a reality enduring in all present moments and making each an Eternal Now, the modern person will open a new life for himself."¹²

*

"The fundamental significance of Rank's work lies in his perception of the fact that psychology leads beyond itself. He understood that the role of psychology is as an intermediary by means of which the modern man can make the transition from his old spiritual beliefs to the experience of a 'new soul' still to come,"¹³

Otto Rank is evidently the boldest among the Depth Psychologists to affirm clearly and definitely that the Soul, the spiritual substance, is the real reality in man. And that he must rise to the full awareness of it. That is wholeness itself.

Mind and consciousness represent an intermediate stage and a psychology, concerned with them alone, will automatically be an intermediate phenomenon. Soul is immortal and eternal and whole. Immortality, eternity and wholeness are the true historical destiny of man. And that is 'Beyond psychology', beyond the empirical science of mind.

INDRA SEN

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NEWS

SHIVAJI University has awarded Prof. G. S. Pakle the degree of Ph. D. in English. The title of his thesis is "Sri Aurobindo's Use of Image, Symbol and Myth with particular reference to his Poetry."

THE SEARCH

A PARABLE OF THE SOUL AND THE SENSES

ONCE again there was a footfall in the distance. The pearl throbbed with expectation. Nasika sailed right up to the Pearl and said excitedly. "There must be a new guest on the outskirts, carrying a flower. For I can smell it. But the perfume is not of the sweet honeysuckle or of the pungent musk."

Drishti tiptoed on her slender feet and said, "I can see that he is carrying a single white rose on a long stalk."

"Then he does not have a lot to carry. Do you remember that person long ago who came loaded with so many gifts? Oh! the perfumes he carried could last for a long long time."

"Not only perfumes, he carried silks of the finest kind and jewels that sparkled even in the dark corridors. And lots and lots of other objects."

Just then Shruti floated in, jingling her soft bells. "So you two are ahead of me. I thought I would be the first one to hear of the approaching traveller."

Drishti remarked, expressing also Nasika's thought:

"We only know that he is on the first green periphery and carries a single white rose. But tell us: how does he come? Does he hurry on light steps or stomps on heavy feet?"

"His footsteps are neither quick nor heavy. He just walks on."

"At that rate how long do you think he will take to reach the Pearl? Or will he reach it?" Nasika asked.

"Can't say. We can only see and hear and smell. But we do not know."

"Yet we have seen and heard and smelt so many trying to reach the Pearl."

"Yes, so many. We were just talking about that person, who had carried a lot of gifts with him."

"The one who got tired with his load? He was heaving, wasn't he?"

"Yet he refused to give up any of them. How he struggled with his burden! No wonder he had to give up soon after his effort began."

"Crossing the very first gate, he gasped and asked with a puff, 'Have I arrived? Where is the Pearl?'"

All the three broke into a laugh. A shaft of light set out from the Pearl. Shruti silenced the other two with a whisper. In the perfect silence Shruti heard the Pearl say, "He tried."

Rarely did the Pearl speak. A long time it had waited. So many had tried to reach it. They had tried in various ways, with different methods. The three friends sat there remembering the trials of the earlier seekers, when Vacha burst upon them with her babbling voice. "Do you know, have you heard the latest? A new adventurer is on his way. He is tall, he walks on long legs, his eyes are

looking in all directions, he is choosing the short cuts at every possible place, he overtook another one on his way. I think he will soon be here. Let us prepare..."

"Why didn't you go talk to him?" Shruti asked with her hands on her ears.

"You may tease me, but I did well talking that time." Vacha shot back.

"What time?" Nasika asked.

"Not very long ago, there was a philosopher who entered the gates. He asked many questions and answered more than half of them himself. He talked so much. He knew so much. He had read so much, he was sure to get at the Pearl, he said. He was a professor of this, a teacher of that, a guide of what, a knower of when, a master of where, an instructor of which and oh, he talked and he talked..."

"Poor Vacha, how could you stand someone else talking?" asked Shruti. "Oh, I shut him up all right. I squeezed a tiny word in when he stopped for a breath. I said, 'But you don't need the Pearl?' He opened his mouth wide to say 'Oh' and I quickly prayed to the lovely silence flower. Nasika came along, gathered the fragrance from the silence flower and sailed right into his open mouth. She left the silence there and took the professor's breath away."

"Poor professor, how did he proceed without his voice?"

"He did not, because in the silence he felt that he had attained everything. He turned back forgetting all about the Pearl!"

"Yet he knew so much."

"I do not feel sorry for him. He did not miss not getting the Pearl. But I cannot forget the young girl who had come. She had lost someone very dear and was looking for comfort. She heard about our Pearl. She decided this was her only resort. There was a constant prayer on her lips, often with tears rolling down her cheeks. She was very gentle, couldn't hurt even an insect. She came quite a way up."

"Yes, we all felt she was going to make it. She deserved the Pearl. Why did she have to give up?"

"She had come up more than half the way and I could hear her steady foot-steps coming nearer each day. She never even stopped for rest or food. The Pearl seemed to feel her approach several times. It radiated all its soft colours. At times there were vibrations around it. The girl was lucky the Pearl had sent out such a lot of tiny flames in her direction to help her in her search."

"Yes, that one had reached the pink pillars, she had touched them and felt the nearness. She was almost there."

"She was the only one who had come so far. Tell me what happened. Why didn't she succeed?" Vacha asked.

"We don't know why, I saw her touch the third pink pillar. She felt the liquid light that constantly holds up the pillar. She clasped the pillar with both her arms around it. She stood there almost melting herself into the pillar. The next moment she collapsed weeping," Drishti explained.

"Not only weeping, she was sobbing, I heard her from a great distance and

wondered why she should cry helplessly like that,” reminisced Shruti.

“All this talk of the pink pillars, it pulls me. Let me go and take a dip in the tiny pond at the foot of those pillars.”

“There is a footfall in that direction. Can the new traveller have reached so far?”

“Let us go.”

The three pink pillars glowed in their own shimmering light. They looked like pillars only because they stood tall. Actually they were soft to the touch, made of pink and white-light beams, shimmering glows, and silver and gold dust. There was a constant movement in them. They stood there, yet they moved.

Touching the three pillars on the left, there was a pond that was very calm. It was like a blue glass on which gold beams were focussed. It was a silent, ripple-less, tranquil piece of water. The traveller with the white rose had reached the pillars. The four saw him touch them one by one. His eyes smiled, he threw his head back and looked up. His look travelled right up to the tips of the luminous pillars, with a vibrant happiness. He placed the white rose carefully near the pillars and walked to the edge of the pond. He looked back to make sure the rose was safe. Then he slowly stepped into the pond.

“But he is not afraid! See how he just walked in with firm steps.”

“Yes,” whispered Vacha, “he does not splash or splatter—he is so quietly sure.”

The young man had taken a dip. He did not disrupt the deep quiet of the pond. The blue and the gold water was undisturbed.

“He is coming up.”

He came up and walked back to the edge. His steps were light but not quick.

Drishti whispered, “He has peace and delight with him. See how they slide or skip round him.”

“He has come so near, hasn’t he?”

“Will he...Oh!”

The young man bent down to pick up his white rose. It was not there. He looked around once. The four watched him with breathless worry. Will he start rushing around looking for his rose? Will he weep, will he lose all? The silent questions clamoured for an answer.

The young man took a deep breath, smiled with the whole of his being. The quiet firmness too left him. He breathed out completely, every little particle of air that supported his life he breathed out. Calm and Happiness backed out, expecting him to fall or cry in agony.

He called them back to him. He was still smiling. He walked on, leaving the pillars and the pond behind. He had now entered the white blue and pink abode. He did not walk now, he glided on a pathless space.

The Pearl glowed. The soft pink shell-cushion tried to close its soft covering over the Pearl.

“No.” It shook sideways. “There is no need to hide me now.” The shell held back its folding curves.

The young man came, the Pearl glowed.

Behind the Pearl a long upward tunnel opened up slowly. Gold, orange, brilliant yellow circles formed the steps. The Pearl in hand, the traveller entered the lighted tunnel, on a yet further search.

SUNANDA

SONNET

I WOULD write words that tell of magic space
 And open like hidden doors on the unseen,
 Where reveries repose in sublime grace
 Between a life and a life in glimmering sheen.

An utterance that smites with every stress
 The dull grey dead moss-weight of sleeping lids
 And then arrives, a fathomless caress,
 Upon the soul, which some enchantment bids

Awaken to a voice that stillness breathes
 And sings the glory of our miraculous birth
 From the twelve ethers that a fireball wreathes—
 Semblance of the mystic nascence of the earth.

The golden streams that now invisibly pour
 Ring in fiery tiaras the Face I adore.

ARVIND HABBU

FOR YOUR EARS ONLY

(Continued from the issue of July 1987)

7. THE BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTERS OF ZEUS AND I

I DO not write every day. It doesn't mean that I write every night. Of course, I write at night but not every night. Cursed be the lawgiver who framed the ten commandments to writers, one among them being: "Set up a writing schedule and adhere to it faithfully. Get into the habit of writing daily." I'll be the last person to follow such an advice.

Why should I write every day or night and get exhausted within a few years? Writing, to me, is making love to the nine beautiful daughters of Zeus—the Muses—for I dabble my pen almost in every genre of literature, though in one at a time. I know for certain that if I force myself to be creative, I can't make the Muse muse. Yet I don't wait for inspiration. The moment I sight the Muse, I run after her for a blissful embrace. I know very well that if I wait for her to come to me, she may not come at all. No Muse says no if you approach her with sincerity and love. Writing daily is no doubt a good exercise. But without the Muse that exercise would lack the sparkle of life. To what use?

I hate to read in a public library, not even in the general Library of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, where the atmosphere is very conducive to reading and writing. Also I can't write in a public place. Perhaps the Muse is shy. I prefer to write in my own snug study, the ivory tower I built for myself. Writing is a very private affair. I don't like to have a reader over my shoulder.

After supper, I play the story-teller to my kids—one likes supernatural stories with howls and hysterical laughs, the other funny stories peppered with an element of realism and the little one something with a crow or a fox in it. To their every 'Why' I must have my 'because' ready and by the time they go to sleep, it is eleven o'clock. On certain nights, if I am tired of the day's work or if I am not in the mood to invoke the Muse I also welcome sleep along with my kids. But if the Muse haunts me I begin to write. Nothing can hinder my work. My wife keeps a candle and a matchbox on my table for ready use in case of power failure. I write like a devil. On two or three occasions, only the crowing of the cock at dawn tore the Muse away from me.

Dr. Johnson, the Great Cham of Literature, once said, "No one but a block-head ever writes except for money," I don't completely disagree with him, for now and then I receive paycheques from popular journals and newspapers. But money is not the only thing in a man's life. A great many people write solely for the pleasure of getting things off their chest. Is it the Roman poet Horace who declared: "A man is either mad or he is writing verses"? Psychiatrists all over the world believe that all writers are in one way or another abnormal. Am I abnormal?

Maybe. I don't know. I must be. Or else why should I write? Why should I have a kind of passion, a driving desire? To confess, I don't get the same satisfaction out of doing anything else. Certainly it is part of what it means to be a writer.

Occasionally in the ten years of my writing career, I have fallen into a coma—writer's coma. To put it in other words, those were the times I was unable to write. It has nothing to do with writer's cramp, a disease. But it only means that the Muse feigns a dislike to me or picks a quarrel with me.

How to cajole her and bring her back to my side? As a married man, I am no novice in that field. But a Muse is above all human wants. Then how do I invoke the Muse—"a deity within us who breathes that divine fire", to put it in the words of Ovid, the Roman poet?

Samuel Taylor Coleridge invoked his Muse by taking opium. Poet Kannadasan resorted to barrels of wine. Honoré de Balzac drank casks of coffee. Schuller always had the drawers of his writing desk filled with addled eggs, the stinking smell of which stimulated him to write.

I don't believe in any of these eccentric activities. I think I am the only writer in the whole world without bad habits, apart from the pardonable human weaknesses in me. I see through the window the distant coconut trees and bamboo plants. I observe with open-eyed wonder the play of the wind through the leaves. I forget myself by listening to the variety of tunes the birds perched on trees sing. And at night, when a veil of darkness shrouds nature, I read the passages of my choice—maybe from the *The Bible*, or from the *Gulistan* of *Sadi*, or from *Thirukkural* or from the *Complete Works of Ovid*. I continue to do so till my Muse deigns to shake hands with me.

I don't use any special coloured paper for writing as Alexandre Dumas *père* did. Or, like the Mother, I don't have any strong *penchant* for felt pens and dislike of ball pens. Any paper I could lay my hands on—be it a one-side unused sheet bought in kilos from Waste Paper merchants or newsprint paper given free of cost by a friendly manager of a press or even the loose sheets from the daily calendar—becomes the privileged one to bear the new-born child, with all the filth and slime attached to it. I remember to have written my much-admired short story 'The Blood' on the blank brown paper bags that reached home carrying new cloths bought for the celebration of Deepavali. But I type the final scripts on clean white sheets of paper, though not of high quality, before they are despatched to friendly, unfriendly, meticulous, careless, genuine or bogus editors.

Rejection slips do not deject me, though paycheques exhilarate me. 'The Blood' was rejected by twenty-seven editors of magazines and newspapers that publish short stories before the editor of *The Heritage* found it good. I was not surprised when he said that the story was very much appreciated by sophisticated readers. A poem of mine titled 'The Birth of a Poem' which I thought no magazine would publish because of the imagery employed in it was published by eleven Indian magazines. To my great surprise it appeared in the literary

journals of the U.S.A. and Canada too. It is the things that I don't try in life that I regret. Not the things I try.

But what really gets on my nerves is the publication of my work with my name left out. Does it not amount to orphaning my child? It has happened to me thrice so far. *The Illustrated Weekly of India* published my article 'Monument to a Harlot' giving no credit to the author. But a couple of weeks later they published a small boxed-up column regretting that the creditline had fallen off while transferring the templates to their printers. But *The Hindustan Times* that published one of my stories for children and of late *The Week* that published my write-up on a poet from Pondicherry who had received an award from the U.S.A. remained silent to my angry letters. In fact, the editor perhaps after reading my strongly worded letters sent me a very poor paycheque.

Like any other writer who loves his vocation, I too keep an ordered journal and writer's notebooks. All those ideas that strike me go into them and I have nearly a dozen diaries that are utilized for this purpose. But so far I have not used any of the recorded material for any of my creative writings. Perhaps in old age, when my mind goes dry and longs for a shower, I may dip into them. Yet I continue to record in my journals the details of people and places I see now and then. My notebooks are stuffed with snatches of conversation, overheard phrases, short descriptive paragraphs and even a single sentence if it holds some kind of significance. When I open these notebooks many of my colleagues and students speak to me all the time grinning from ear to ear. No doubt, they are a perennial resource of ideas.

I do not discuss my manuscript with anyone. I give a medicated wash to the new-born child now and then as time permits and never allow it to go out till I am satisfied with its health and never before I name it. Sometimes when I have my own doubts about its physical condition, I consult an excellent Wordsmith. "Every writer needs a good coach, someone more knowledgeable than he, someone who has earned the right to criticise another's work." I remember to have read this somewhere. I am lucky to have the finest coach to mould my writing career. Do you like to know who *il miglior fabbro* is? Well, dial Pondicherry 4782 and you will know.

(To be continued)

P. RAJA

STORIES FROM TAMIL LITERATURE

(Continued from the issue of July 1987)

41. THE DEATH WISH

KING Meipporul was a devout worshipper of Lord Siva. He was such a fervent devotee that the very sight of a Saiva saint or sage was enough to send him into raptures of piety, for such a person reminded him of the Lord Himself. He welcomed him with palms folded together in worship and awaited his biddings in supplication. And in those days such reverence was considered to be the sacred duty of the devotee.

The kingdom of Meipporul was small and it was surrounded by several other kingdoms which were frequently at war with one another. King Meipporul was a first-rate soldier and many were the neighbouring rulers who suffered defeat at his hands. King Muthinathan was one of them: he had repeatedly tried to subdue Meipporul and failed. Smarting under many a crushing defeat, king Muthinathan decided to get rid of king Meipporul by any means, fair or foul.

One day there came a venerable-looking Saivite saint to the palace of King Meipporul. He had a flowing beard and his matted hair he wore like the Lord Siva himself. He had also marks of sacred ash on his forehead, arms and bosom. He was carrying a book-case in his hand. The sight of such a venerable sage stirred up pious feelings in King Meipporul's heart and he rushed out to the front yard to welcome him. He knelt before him and the saint gave him his blessings. Then the saint said that he had heard of the king's devotion to Lord Siva and had come there to give him instruction in a recently discovered Saiva scripture. The king was greatly pleased at this and took him into the palace with great reverence. He was introduced to the queen and, when they got ready for the instruction, the holy man said that the instruction was meant exclusively for the king and not for anyone else. So the king led him to his private chamber. The king's bodyguard accompanied them, but the holy man looked at him disapprovingly. So the king ordered him to stop outside and went into the chamber alone with the saint. The only seat in the room was offered to the saint and the king squatted at his feet, ready to receive the instruction.

The saint opened the book-case and pulled out a dagger. King Meipporul was a very alert soldier and he could have easily defended himself from this impostor-saint who was none other than his arch-enemy, Muthinathan in disguise. Muthinathan himself knew that fully well. He had come there not to surprise the king in his private chamber but to play upon the religious sensibility of Meipporul. And he was correct in his judgement. King Meipporul did not want to hurt a person who was in the guise of a votary of Lord Siva. His refinement was such that he thought it beneath his dignity to save his life by committing a sacrilege

which was to injure a sacred-looking body in Lord Siva's image. So with palms brought together in reverence he sat there calmly while Muthinathan stabbed him fatally in the chest.

Meanwhile, the king's bodyguard, who had already suspected the saint to be an impostor, heard the king groan with pain and rushed into the room. Seeing the king in a pool of blood, he sprang at the impostor, drawing his sword. "No! No!", the words flew from the lips of the dying king. "Do not kill him. Whoever he is, he is in the image of my Lord. Not a hair of his should be touched. He should be safely escorted upto the border of our kingdom. See that no one does him any harm. This is not only my command, but my dying wish. Be a good servant and fulfil it." Saying this, King Meipporul breathed his last. Muthinathan who was abject in his shame was safely escorted outside the kingdom.

42. WOMEN FIRST

Thondaimandalam was a kingdom that flourished in the north-east part of the Tamil country. It was founded independently by a prince who was an offspring of a Chola king by a Naga princess. Later, it became a part of the Chola Empire. When Thondaimandalam declined in prosperity many of the people who belonged to the higher social order left the kingdom and spread to various places in the Chola land. Years later, Karikalan, the Chola king and the then king of Thondaimandalam thought of gathering the descendants of the original inhabitants of Thondaimandalam and resettling them in their ancestral land.

The Thondaimandalam people were noted for their refinement and culture and when they had settled down in various places, many local people who belonged to lower social orders began to imitate their habits and ways of living. Soon people of various origins called themselves Thondaimandal-Velalars and took pride in it. Now the kings wanted only the well-bred families to come back, but once the exodus started there was no way of preventing people from flowing into the promised land. However, they at least wanted to know the grain from the chaff, so that the well-bred families could be settled in a separate colony. They did not know how to do this, but at last they hit upon a plan.

The people had to cross the river Cauvery to get into Thondaimandalam. Soldiers were posted on the river banks to watch the people closely while they forded the river. They were instructed not to be conspicuous, but to keep an eye on womenfolk without their knowledge.

When people came to ford a river, it was good manners on the part of men not to mix with the women but to keep away from them when they got into the water. Thus the women would be fording first. The women who belonged to the well-bred families were modest by nature and they kept their decorum even when the men were not present. They forded the water with their sarees remaining as they were, and did not expose their legs. They did not mind their clothing getting

wet. But the women who had a different background and bringing-up looked here and there and not finding any men nearby lifted up their clothing and forded the river exposing the major portion of their legs. The hidden soldiers on both sides of the river made a note of this behaviour and thus were able to separate the well-bred families from the others.

M. L. THANGAPPA

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Lights on Life-Problems Sri Aurobindo's Views on Important Life-Problems. Compiled from his writings by *Kishor Gandhi*, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1987. Pp. i-iv+200. Price: Rs. 35. Distributors: SABDA

THIS popular compilation, which had its beginning in the very first issue of *Mother India* (February 19, 1949), has deservedly run into its second edition. Originally published in bookform in two parts, in 1950 and 1951 respectively, the series has now the advantage of appearing with its two parts combined.

Sri Aurobindo is known to have paid special attention to the instalments in the series. As the compiler, Kishor Gandhi, who used to frame the appropriate questions, writes in his note to the present edition: "...while seeing these instalments Sri Aurobindo himself made alterations in the text of some of the passages quoted from his works in the answers. Some of these alterations were of a minor nature but some others were quite extensive."

No better review of the book, proving its importance, is possible than to put together extracts from two unsolicited letters from abroad received in connection with the first edition.

Extract from a Letter to Prithwi Singh dated 14.3.1968

"Members here expressed special appreciation of 'Lights on Life Problems' by Kishor Gandhi. These two books, First Series and Second Series, are absolutely wonderful! They appeal very much to the Western type of mind, and answer in *real depth* some of the questions which universally arise in the study group. If Kishor Gandhi is a member of the Ashram, would you please convey to him our *deepest appreciation* for the very intelligent approach, the comprehensive questions and subjects chosen, and the magnificent plan of recording Sri Aurobindo's wisdom in this condensed form. Its is by far the most appealing book of its sort, we have yet seen!"

GRAHAM FITZPATRICK
Sri Aurobindo Study Group
Auckland, New Zealand

Extract from a Letter to the Compiler dated 5.6.1950

"I am sure that you have done a magnificent piece of work in compiling 'Lights on Life-Problems', and I do not refer to the labour involved, to the hours of study, to the sheer weight of scholarship which is evident, but to the conception itself. This must be the best book possible to put into the hands of everyone who is enquiring about the work of Sri Aurobindo. Not only are the selections from the works so well chosen—of course they are chosen as answers to the questions—but the choice of the questions is so good. You have penetrated the thought of

the questioner—of so many questioners—in the context within which the questions arise; there is nothing detached or abstract about these questions; as I read the book I see before me the man or the woman who is questioning. And so when I thank you for the book, it is not merely for the book itself, but also and chiefly for the privilege of being allowed to be present, as a third person, with the questioner and the answerer.”

REV. E.F.F. HILL, ENGLAND

Poems by Amal Kiran and Nirodbaran with Sri Aurobindo's Comments: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. April 1987. Rs. 50. Distributors SABDA

Imagine the following lines written in the mid-30s when in the harsh din of the 'modern' milieu the listening ear had lost a good deal of its delicate sensitivity.

Be still, oceanic heart, withdraw thy sense
 From fickle lure of outward fulgencies.
 Clasp not in vain the myriad earth to appease
 The hunger of thy God-profundities:
 Not there but in self-rapturous suspense
 Of all desire is thy omnipotence.

Perfect in sonnet movement and mood, what is set out for us in this sestet is the fulfilment of our being in the time-transcending eternity. The method is also given. We hear not just the Wordsworthian "soul-animating strain" but something very deep which is not accessible to the immediate or outward-looking sensibilities, a renunciation which becomes a fullness by means of a spiritually elevating consciousness.

And imagine the seeing eye too! Often enough our sight gets blinded by the strong electromagnetic daze of the present-day civilisation, but here is a worshipper of the 'Image of Godhead' asking for an unhorizoned vision:

O Image of Godhead, bring into my earth
 Thy flawless vision by which I can see
 Beyond the horizon of my mortal birth
 The silent wonders of eternity.

'The silent wonders of eternity' that were waiting for the inspired utterance have suddenly found in rock-hewn images the quivering lips that speak of the blue skies and the golden truths. We witness the ear of ears and the eye of eyes waking to the subtleties of sense and sound and marvelling at the mystery of God's creation even in Time.

But such a transforming miracle does not simply drop down from high heaven that is not after all so obliging, perhaps because of too much of our earthiness. Sri Aurobindo as the initiator and promoter of the Poetry of the Spirit had, precisely for such a reason, taken up this particular aspect too as a part of his all-embracing Sadhana. The genuine Word, he believed, has the spiritual power that can become a vehicle for great realisations. Beauty, truth, love, joy, delight, sweetness are the attributes of this sublime Muse who must also fill our lives with her gracious presence. This is evidently what we see in the volume under review. Full of "subtleties and intensities of a search for the inmost psyche and the highest self", as the Foreword says, we have here yet another illustration of the mystico-spiritual poetry striving to break into the 'fourth dimension of aesthetic sense.'

Sri Aurobindo wrote prophetically long ago that the future poetry, "transcending the more intellectualised or externally vital and sensational expression," would speak "wholly in the language of an intuitive mind and vision and imagination, intuitive sense, intuitive emotion, intuitive vital feeling, which can seize in a peculiarly intimate light of knowledge by a spiritual identity the inmost thought, sight, image, sense, life, feeling of that which it is missioned to utter. The voice of poetry comes from a region above us, a plane of our being above and beyond our personal intelligence, a supermund which sees things in their innermost and largest truth by a spiritual identity and with a lustrous effulgency and rapture and its native language is a revelatory, inspired, intuitive word limpid or subtly vibrant or densely packed with the glory of this ecstasy."

But this luminous prospectus of the Poetry of the Spirit had to be realised in practice and towards this end not only did Sri Aurobindo write himself seizing 'the absolute in shapes that pass', but also encouraged actively and positively his disciples who came forward for such an apocalyptic adventure. They invoked heaven's light in the inner chambers and called for the occult fire from the depths of the being. And the Aurobindonian Muse was born, Ahana of the Eternal. The present volume vividly tells us of this birth that took place some fifty years ago.

It was a 'God's Labour' indeed that alone could have brought such a vast and wonderful soul-charged birth, as if a new dawn could have broken in our skies only when the night of darkness had been dispelled by some super-Herculean endeavour of a sun-force. Day after day, rather night after night, for long hours, spread over several years, Sri Aurobindo went on writing to the disciples, went on patiently correcting and guiding the aspirants in their Parnassian pursuits. Language, rhythm, an ear for the fine overtones and undertones, metre, the most appropriate word, the revealing figure, the luminously glowing image, a phrase holding in it an occult power, a symbol lit up with the secret splendour of the indefinable and ungraspable, all, even the old assimilable techniques, had to be brought out more and more fully and creatively in that Aesthesis of the Poetry of the Spirit, all that can spontaneously live in her wide calm ecstatic spirit breathing

the sweet natural joy of her beauty, grace, charm. Sri Aurobindo spared no effort for this. In fact, once when Nirodbaran wrote to him whether it was worth while for the Master to take so much trouble and giving the disciple his precious time, the Master wrote back: "You have got the inspiration, but the mental mixture rises from time to time; that has to be got rid of, so I am taking trouble. I wouldn't if it were not worth while." The mental mixture has to be replaced by intuitive and spiritual thinking; nay, we must go even beyond that and allow the truth-substance, truth-beauty, truth-joy to find the inspired and the inevitable word, allow the creative logos to work and establish itself in us. Unless it is an utterance of the soul in the silence of the Spirit it does not become revelatory poetry. The present book of poems is yet another testimony of this godly worthwhileness. We shall be indeed ever thankful to all the three for bequeathing this precious gift to us.

Every page of the book speaks of an infinity whose centre is everywhere. When Amal Kiran mentions "Whitenesses" we may immediately conjure up a Taj Mahal of imperishable and impeccable grandeur standing in front of us like a 'flawless dream', but the poet has seen something more amazing somewhere else and is almost Joy-impatient to tell us about it:

But once I knew a whiteness stranger still:
Limb-mystery kindled to dancing gesture—
A rhythm of adoration its sole vesture,
And every line a call from paradise
Singing to earth the rapture of shut eyes
Impregnate with some vast Invisible!

His *Night of Trance* is, in a very bold way, a 'force of gloom that makes each flicker-stress/Bare the full body of the Invisible's goldenness.' Witness too the alchemy of the power of prayer when the whole earth's futile beauty transforms itself into the figure of divine Aphrodite:

Out of her spirit's sea a rapture swayed
Into her body and for one poise-moment
All her enchanted shape was Aphrodite!...

On another occasion you have a fine suggestive logopoeia when the nature of the Absolute that transcends the illusion of all relative sizes and shapes and measures is caught in the

Joy whose one drop drowns seas of all desire.

Sometimes Amal Kiran sees Garuda, a bird of the seventh and the highest order according to the *Ramayana*, soaring high up almost disdaining our lowliness in

Pride of lone rapture and invincible sun-gaze,

but is immediately told to sweep down and 'consume earth's ineffectual stray desire.'

Then, once in a while, the poet anxiously gathers all sound-flows in a bowl of dream and waits for the breath of God and Love's word to upsurge; but wonders whether the symbolic Rose that ought to appear from the crucible in the discovery of the *elixir vitae* succeeds in showing up.

However, the Master is there to cheer him up: "I think it is successful. Certainly the language and rhythm are—to the full. I don't know whether the symbol you speak of comes out with perfect clearness, but I am inclined to think that the suggestion of it is sufficient." Indeed, he is always there to congratulate him for his success, to tell him what lines have come from the "Overmind Intuition", to say that the poem is "very fine", to dissuade him from his violent decision to destroy a lyric by letting him know that "it has a sort of modernised Elizabethanness about it that is very attractive", to uphold that conceit, eloquence, caprice, point double-point, all can be lifted up by the breath of inspiration which is after all the thing. No wonder, in such an endearing atmosphere the psychic should break through mere fancy and imagination and climb up like bird-reveries to some far-off 'unearthly skies'. And when the reveries have climbed the skies, there is a strange perfumed sweetness and a soft silvery swoon in which is heard a chorus of kindled joy:

Voices of large-eyed day
 Have fallen now:
 The birds in a huddle of sleep
 Their small heads bow.

A worshipping quiet broods—
 Until the moon
 Presses a silver call
 Through lids of swoon.

Kindling with nameless joys,
 Answers each throat:
 From neither night nor day
 The strange cries float—

As if bird-reveries climbed
 Unearthly skies,
 Their wings a moonlight flicker
 Of tranceful eyes.

And here is Sri Aurobindo's comment *vis-à-vis* the question whether there was more of fancy than true insight in this little enchanting lyric: "It is a very beautiful and delicate fancy in any case. The last stanza is admirable, but there is a subtle imaginative beauty throughout."

Dr. Nirodbaran's is a different "case-history" wherein we see that he had an exceptional privilege of Sri Aurobindo himself participating in various degrees in the creative process. To quote from the Foreword again: "With various touches of technical criticism as well as of creative impetus, often going together with glances of delightful humour, he drew out the aspirant writer's latent powers and patiently built up a many-sided splendour of revelatory expression." His Muse wears a different face, rather possesses a different heart from Amal Kiran's, not the upward burning diamond but a deep-dwelling amethyst fire: if the one has the aura of the "overhead" wondrous, the other tends to move through strange dream-worlds in search of some super-Surrealistic experience of the inner countries:

Life's dream-ward flames quiver with a delight
As if some voice had whispered to their ear
The intimate approach of the Infinite
Around the margin of its diamond sphere.

You may be puzzled about the dream-ward flames quivering with the approach of the Infinite, but then the poet has his own way of telling you things. He will even tell you that the margin of the Infinite's diamond sphere lies where his mortal joys change into an awakening of ecstasy and where nothing of humanity can endure. On another occasion, in his "very beautiful" moment, he will give out his secret too that the 'hued memories' of his Love had painted his soul's 'diamond walls with flames of moon-edged dreams' born of that Love's 'ritual fire'. He seems to be quite accustomed to see in his Garden of Vision

Snow-foamed ripples of a moon-edged mere,

or is confident in his eerily captivating phanopoeia that

As the horizon spreads its hues
On the slow-sinking edge of day,
The voice of earth is faintly heard
Echoing through the pale moon-lit way.

When he is lost in the winding woods he hears

....an impetuous Spirit-call
Breaking the rocky distances
Like the rushing force of a waterfall.

But look at the wonder of wonders, an “authentic vision”, when he comes out with a Neo-Upanishadic utterance:

A fire that burns beyond the sleeping line
Of thought into a wide inscrutable space;
Each star, a drop of that immortal wine,
Mirrors the beauty of a deathless Face.

Sri Aurobindo’s little touch—for instance, ‘burns’ instead of ‘rises’ in the first line—transmutes the entire line into pure gold. See also how Nirodbaran’s

The whole universe seems in me to cry

suddenly becomes poetically magnificent when the Master rewrites it as

While the whole universe seems to be a cry,

lifting it up to the luminous overhead.

Similarly, ‘Across the mind’s un navigated seas’ becomes spiritual when the ‘disciple’s mind’ is replaced by the Guru’s ‘spirit’. So too we have

Dropping this weary earth like a crumpled veil
Upon a shore of sombre memories

marked superlatively. In such deep soul-fulfilling exquisiteness

Each sound, a wave of some apocalypt-word,
Comes from a universe of tranquil prayer,

and the mortal thoughts reach a wide immensity where the breath is an

Awakening behind a splendour-fold
Of the sapphire veil of the immortal Bride.

Obviously such a Himalayan ascent, or leaping for the immortal Bride, cannot be accomplished with limping feet; but the Master is there to supply the needed half-foot or do the legs anew. The final result is a ‘Grecian perfection’ with the soul of joy suffusing the body of beauty, as in the *Myriad Fires*:

In the shoreless silence of the night
A myriad fires are a-glow
Emerald, ruby and pearl-white
Visions on a timeless brow.

On my path of destiny they cast
 Shadows of the heavenly states
 That through the voids of time have passèd
 And the secret flaming gates.

And now the deeps of my spirit shine
 With the measureless beauty of God
 And are mirrors of His mood divine,
 A fathomless Wonder's abode.

And my days are circled round with dreams
 Of His endless mysteries;
 They come from His luminous sun-streams
 On the edge of the infinities.

Sri Aurobindo as the creator and critic and Amal Kiran and Nirodbaran as young poets—in their thirties—growing directly under the sunlight of his inspiration is a rapture-moment that has come alive in this germinal work presently in front of us. We see new vistas of Infinity unfolding—as the Master's *Savitri* puts it—

In metres that reflect the moving worlds,
 Sight's sound-waves breaking from the soul's great deeps.

Indeed, in these poems the sound of the original Word is found on many occasions standing in front of us like Gayatri wearing the rhythms of the Truth-beautiful.

But that a book charged with such spiritual sight and insight should occasionally bring in a play too of oversight is rather piquant. Take, for example, the sonnet *Mukti* on page 26 with Sri Aurobindo's comment: "Congratulations! It is an exceedingly good sonnet—you have got the sonnet movement very well." But then in *Overhead Poetry* edited by K. D. Sethna (Amal Kiran himself) not only does the same poem appear but it also has the following additional remark on page 126:

Originally, line 7 ran:

Poised in calm vastitude of consciousness.

Sri Aurobindo was asked if "plenitude" would be better in place of "vastitude". He replied: "'Vastitude' is better than 'plenitude'—but 'plenitudes' (in plural) would perhaps be best. The singular gives a too abstract and philosophical turn—the plural suggests something concrete and experienceable."

It is unfortunate that this has not been included in the present book. However, while we would choose to ignore such an oversight, for it does not really mar the magnificence the work is, we would have certainly liked to see a couple of facsimiles of the originals with Sri Aurobindo's comments and corrections

in his own handwriting; they would have brought his presence closer to us making it extra-tangible and visually perceptible now when we are placed so far away from him in time.

R. Y. DESHPANDE

IDEAL CHILD AND IDEAL PARENT

WE are pleased to introduce the booklet IDEAL CHILD containing some words of the Mother. To date about two million copies have been printed in 14 Indian and 7 European languages and sent for distribution to children all over the world. We are passing through a critical phase in the development and progress of humanity as a whole. It is the responsibility of the present generation to guide and prepare the future generation by presenting the highest ideal to the budding citizens. We have this high ideal in the booklet IDEAL CHILD. Let us then present this to all students to inspire them to become ideal children growing into ideal citizens in the midst of the present world turmoil.

IDEAL PARENT is a booklet compiled from the Mother's writings in logical sequence to IDEAL CHILD. Rather the Ideal Parent is needed most for the Ideal Child. We have already received some letters including one from a member of the National Council of Education, Research and Training (NCERT) which express the need for the booklet IDEAL PARENT. We do not want to say anything more about the booklet at present. Let the booklet speak for itself. Now it is available in English, Hindi, Gujarati and Marathi.

The work for the booklet IDEAL CHILD is continuing and will continue till all the children of the world get one copy each. Your co-operation is solicited for both these projects.

Just for your information, a friend from Maharashtra who is very interested in this work has suggested the distribution of IDEAL CHILD to all the school-going children of Maharashtra. He will pay for it. Here is an example for others to follow. Those who have the will and means can arrange for distribution in their states, towns, cities, etc. according to their choice.

The cost for IDEAL CHILD and IDEAL PARENT is the same, i.e., Re. 1/- for a single copy and Rs. 60/- for 100 copies in India.

You may purchase 1,000 copies or more for your own distribution. The cost for 1000 copies in India is Rs. 500/- including postage and for outside India U.S. \$80 by surface mail. But for 500 copies the cost is Rs. 275/- and U.S. \$40

You may contribute towards the work of distribution in India and elsewhere. Drafts should be made payable to Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. All orders and contributions should be addressed to:

KESHAVJI, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry 605 002, India.

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?

Speech read by Nivedita Das*

EVOLUTION on earth from matter to Spirit is usually a very slow and tardy process working upwards through long milleniums, though at each forward stage it gradually gets accelerated. This is because the Spirit which is always the motive force of the evolutionary *nisus* remains veiled and allows its instrumental powers of Nature to operate on the surface. But in this slow and tardy process there arrive certain crucial periods of transition when the Spirit directly intervenes to carry the evolutionary movement to its next higher stage. This intervention takes the form of a special incarnation of the Spirit or the Divine suited to the need of each critical period. During such a period the incarnate Divine himself becomes active and, assuming effective control of the evolutionary movement, lifts it up to its next higher level. Such periods, according to Sri Aurobindo, are the hours of God.

There have been several such hours of God in the past history of terrestrial evolution marked by the advent of a series of Divine Incarnations. At the present moment the evolution has arrived at one more crucial stage when it is poised to rise from the mental to the supramental level. So we can call it one more hour of God. And as during this period the Divine has incarnated as Sri Aurobindo we can as well call it "The Hour of Sri Aurobindo".

My friends, who spoke before me, have explained to you in sufficient detail the meaning and significance of "The Hour of God". What I propose to do is to explain how we should prepare ourselves for it, which forms the second part of the subject of this Seminar. This preparation on our part is essential because though the Divine is All-Powerful yet at the human stage of evolution a certain preparation on the part of the human race to make itself fit for the next supramental stage is needed. This preparation, at least in a small section of humanity, is the necessary condition for the successful accomplishment of the supramental manifestation on earth.

How are we to prepare ourselves for this pioneering change? Basically the

* Revised

preparation consists in carrying out the whole process of integral transformation by practising Sri Aurobindo's integral yoga.

But then it may be asked: what are the chief requirements of practising this integral yoga? What are the main conditions of preparation for the supramental change?

This, indeed, is the most important part of the topic of our Seminar. But I do not wish to elaborate on it in my own words. I have found a letter of Sri Aurobindo in which he has laid down succinctly seven conditions of preparation of the supramental change which together constitute the whole endeavour of supramental transformation. Following the modern trend, which reduces all important projects to specific point-programmes, we may even call this: "the 7-point programme of supramental change." Here is the letter:

MAIN CONDITIONS OF PREPARATION FOR THE SUPRAMENTAL CHANGE

1. "Get the psychic being in front and keep it there, putting its power on the mind, vital and physical, so that it shall communicate to them its force of single-minded aspiration, trust, faith, surrender, direct and immediate detection of whatever is wrong in the nature and turned towards ego and error away from Light and Truth.

2. "Eliminate egoism in all its forms; eliminate it from every movement of your consciousness.

3. "Develop the cosmic consciousness—let the ego-centric outlook disappear in wideness, impersonality, the sense of the Cosmic Divine, the perception of universal forces, the realisation and understanding of the cosmic manifestation, the play.

4. "Find in the place of ego the true-being—a portion of the Divine, issued from the World-Mother and an instrument of the manifestation. This sense of being a portion of the Divine and an instrument should be free from all pride, sense or claim of ego or assertion of superiority, demand or desire. For if these elements are there, then it is not the true thing.

5. "Most in doing yoga live in the mind, vital, physical, lit up occasionally or to some extent by the higher mind and by the illumined mind, but to prepare for the supramental change it is necessary (as soon as, personally, the time has come) to open up to the Intuition and the overmind, so that these may make the whole being and the whole nature ready for the supramental change. Allow the consciousness quietly to develop and widen and the knowledge of these things will progressively come.

6. "Calm, discrimination, detachment (but not indifference) are all very important, for their opposites impede very much the transforming action. Intensity of aspiration should be there, but it must go along with these. No hurry, no inertia, neither rajasic over-eagerness nor tamasic discouragement—a steady and

persistent but quiet call and working. No snatching or clutching at realisation, but allowing realisation to come from within and above and observing accurately its field, its nature, its limits.

7. "Let the power of the Mother work in you, but be careful to avoid any mixture or substitution, in its place, of either a magnified ego-working or a force of Ignorance presenting itself as Truth. Aspire especially for the elimination of all obscurity and unconsciousness in the nature.

"These are the main conditions of preparation for the supramental change; but none of them is easy, and they must be complete before the nature can be said to be ready. If the true attitude (psychic, unegoistic, open only to the Divine Force) can be established, then the process can go on much more quickly. To take and keep the true attitude, to further the change in oneself, is the help that can be given, the one thing asked to assist the general change."¹

March 5, 1932

Sri Aurobindo

¹ *Letters on Yoga* (Cent Ed, Vol 23), pp. 554-55.