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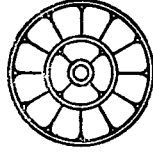
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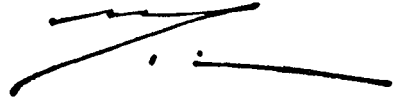


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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A GLORIOUS DARSHAN IN A DREAM

BY CHAMPAKLAL

THE Mother and Sri Aurobindo gave me Darshan in a dream on 20th February 1985. The Mother was in peals of laughter. Seeing this, Sri Aurobindo kept on looking at me and then at the Mother with a buoyant smile. What a delightful laughter it was of the Mother! She was gazing at me with fond affection. It was an extraordinary sight! Then She exclaimed, "Champaklal, Bravo! Bravo! Bravo! But is this the way? What are you doing? Have you not written about us (and our way of working) in your book? You were shown everything. You understood well too.... Why are you then reacting in such a way?" On hearing these words, Sri Aurobindo burst into laughter. Usually Sri Aurobindo smiled softly. But at that time he chuckled aloud in the same manner as The Mother had done many years earlier. Today after ages I had the rare privilege of witnessing both the Mother and Sri Aurobindo in sparkling mirth. A magnificent spectacle indeed!

Then the Mother recalled,

"Champaklal, did you not mark that many a time I worked the whole day without taking any food? All the time was spent in meeting people. And that too in what a way! What kind of persons I was obliged to see, and what not and how much I had to bear! Very few individuals know about it. But you were present all along. I had kept you with a purpose. When I used to apprise Sri Aurobindo of the day's happenings, then too you were often there. Have you forgotten all this?

"Do you not perceive that you have to work like me? Can you not see even from the way I change your circumstances and also the programmes planned by you, and set them anew? Because by giving importance to what you have to undergo on meeting others, you wish to stop going out and retire completely, I am compelled to re-organise your environment. Do you not understand even then? You have yet to work further, more and more.

"Au revoir..... Champaklal Au revoir!"

Bidding me good-bye and smiling sweetly, the Mother left.

Then Sri Aurobindo smiled gently and asked me, "Champaklal, did you follow? Did you grasp what the Mother told you?" Having said this, Sri Aurobindo roared with laughter and my eyes opened! That exhilarating laughter! I can see it clearly even now.

The Mother's birthday brought a great benediction for me.

21-2-1985

After this dream, the Mother made me recollect one of the past incidents.

She and Sri Aurobindo then stayed on the first floor of the Meditation House where there is Sri Aurobindo's room. The Mother's new apartment on the second floor was not yet built. On climbing up the staircase of the Meditation House, there is a passage where The Mother's big photo is placed on Darshan days. In that small passage, The Mother would ask me to wait so that when necessary, She could call me. The right side door of the passage was kept closed. That was the time when the Mother confided in Sri Aurobindo experiences of Her own sadhana and also all the personal affairs of the sadhaks and sadhikas. Due to the Mother's speaking loudly, even though the partition door was shut everything could be heard because of the open space on top. During that period, I used to be in a real fix. Should I stay on or leave? Such things were heard that one felt one ought not to remain. But since the Mother Herself had instructed me to be there, how could I go away? If she needed me and called for me — what then? That is why I say I was in an embarrassing situation.

(Translated by Sushilaben with the help of Kamalaben and Champaklal from the original Gujarati)

FEBRUARY TWENTY-FIRST

Under the hush of the early devout hours
 An immaculate calm and a mystic silence prevailed:
 Silent soft pearl-drop dews
 Of grace and love of a myriad hues
 Were constantly falling from the divine bowers.
 Then came the moment when all got drenched
 By the heart-blossoming and joy-flowering showers
 Of the Divine's transcendent powers.
 The throat and the lips and the tongue
 Remained unstirred; not even a whisper was heard.
 Yet an unnamed name, a wordless cry
 Kept repeating and throbbing in the occult depths of the heart:
 It was to commemorate a divine birth;
 A fathomless emotion was blissfully conscious
 That it was February Twenty-first.

AJU MUKHOPADHYAY

A TALK BY THE MOTHER

TO THE ASHRAM CHILDREN ON JUNE 19, 1957

Sweet Mother, if someone falls seriously ill, is this a purely physical phenomenon or is it a difficulty in his spiritual life?

THAT depends on the person! If it is someone who is doing yoga, it is quite obviously a difficulty in his spiritual life. If it is somebody who is not at all engaged in yoga and who lives an ordinary life in the most ordinary manner, it is an ordinary accident. It depends absolutely on the person. The outer phenomena may be similar, but the inner causes are absolutely different. No two illnesses are alike, though labels are put on diseases and attempts made to group them; but in fact every person is ill in his own way, and his way depends on what he is, on his state of consciousness and the life he leads.

We have often said that illnesses are always the result of a disturbance of equilibrium, but this disturbance can occur in completely different states of being. For the ordinary man whose consciousness is centred in the physical, outer life, it is a purely physical disturbance of equilibrium, of the functioning of the different organs. But when behind this purely superficial life, an inner life is being fashioned, the causes of illness change; they always become the expression of a disequilibrium between the different parts of the being: between the inner progress or effort and the outer resistances or conditions of one's life, one's body.

Even from the ordinary external point of view, it has been recognised for a very long time that it is a fall in the resistance of the vitality due to immediate moral causes which is always at the origin of an illness. When one is in a normal state of equilibrium and lives in a normal physical harmony, the body has a capacity of resistance, it has within it an atmosphere strong enough to resist illnesses: its most material substance emanates subtle vibrations which have the strength to resist illnesses, even diseases which are called contagious—in fact, all vibrations are contagious, but still, certain diseases are considered as especially contagious. Well, a man who, even from the purely external point of view, is in a state in which his organs function harmoniously and an adequate psychological balance prevails, has at the same time enough resistance for the contagion not to affect him. But if for some reason or other he loses this equilibrium or is weakened by depression, dissatisfaction, moral difficulties or undue fatigue, for instance, this reduces the normal resistance of the body and he is open to the disease. But if we consider someone who is doing yoga, then it is altogether different, in the sense that the causes of disequilibrium are of a different nature and the illness usually becomes the expression of an inner difficulty which has to be overcome.

So each one should find out for himself why he is ill.

From the ordinary point of view, in most cases, it is usually fear—fear, which may be mental fear, vital fear, but which is almost always physical fear, a fear in the cells—it is fear which opens the door to all contagion. Mental fear—all who have a little control over themselves or any human dignity can eliminate it; vital fear is more subtle and asks for a greater control; as for physical fear, a veritable yoga is necessary to overcome it, for the cells of the body are afraid of everything that is unpleasant, painful, and as soon as there is any unease, even if it is insignificant, the cells of the body become anxious, they don't like to be uncomfortable. And then, to overcome that, the control of a conscious will is necessary. It is usually this kind of fear that opens the door to illnesses. And I am not speaking of the first two types of fear which, as I said, any human being who wants to be human in the noblest sense of the word must overcome, for that is cowardice. But physical fear is more difficult to overcome; without it even the most violent attacks could be repelled. If one has a minimum of control over the body, one can lessen its effects, but that is not immunity. It is this kind of trembling of material, physical fear in the cells of the body which aggravates all illnesses.

Some people are spontaneously free from fear even in their body; they have a sufficient vital equilibrium in them not to be afraid, not to fear, and a natural harmony in the rhythm of their physical life which enables them to reduce the illness spontaneously to a minimum. There are others, on the other hand, with whom the thing always becomes as bad as it can be, sometimes to the point of catastrophe. There is the whole range and this can be seen quite easily. Well, this depends in a kind of happy rhythm of the movement of life in them, which is either harmonious enough to resist external attacks of illness or else doesn't exist or is not sufficiently powerful, and is replaced by that trembling of fear, that kind of instinctive anguish which transforms the least unpleasant contact into something painful and harmful. There is the whole range, from someone who can go through the worst contagion and epidemics without ever catching anything to one who falls ill at the slightest chance. So naturally it always depends on the constitution of each person; and as soon as one wants to make an effort for progress, it naturally depends on the control one has acquired over oneself, until the moment when the body becomes the docile instrument of the higher Will and one can obtain from it a normal resistance to all attacks.

But when one can eliminate fear, one is almost in safety. For example, epidemics or so-called epidemics, like those which are raging at present—ninety-nine times out of a hundred they come from fear: a fear, then, which even becomes a mental fear in its most sordid form, promoted by newspaper articles, useless talk and so on.

Mother, how are medicines to be used for a body which is not altogether unconscious? For even when we draw on the divine grace, we see that we need

a little medicine, and if a little medicine is given it has a good effect. Does this mean that only the body needs medicine or is there something wrong with the mind and the vital?

In most cases the use of medicines—within reasonable limits, that is, when one doesn't poison oneself by taking medicines—is simply to help the body to have confidence. It is the body which heals itself. When it wants to be cured, it is cured. And this is something very widely recognised now; even the most traditional doctors tell you, "Yes, our medicines help, but it is not the medicines which cure, it is the body which decides to be cured." Very well, so when the body is told, "Take this," it says to itself, "Now I am going to get better," and because it says "I am going to get better", well, it is cured!

In almost every case, there are things which help—a little—provided it is done within reasonable limits. If it is no longer within reasonable limits, you are sure to break down completely. You cure one thing but catch another which is usually worse. But still, a little help, in a way, a little something that gives confidence to your body: "Now it will be all right, now that I have taken this, it is going to be all right"—this helps it a great deal and it decides to get better and it is cured.

There too, there is a whole range of possibilities, from the yogi who is in so perfect a state of inner control that he could take poison without being poisoned to the one who at the least little scratch rushes to the doctor and needs all sorts of special drugs to get his body to make the movement needed for its cure. There is the whole possible range, from total, supreme mastery to an equally total bondage to all external aids and all that you absorb from outside—a bondage and a perfect liberation. There is the whole range. So everything is possible. It is like a great key-board, very complex and very complete on which one can play, and the body is the instrument.

Mother, by a mental effort—for instance, the resolution not to take medicines when one is ill—can one succeed in making the body understand?

That is not enough. A mental resolution is not enough, no. There are subtle reactions in your body which do not obey the mental resolution, it is not enough. ~~Some~~ something else is needed.

Other regions must be contacted. A power higher than the mind's is needed.

And from this point of view, all that is in the mind is always subject to inner questioning. You take a resolution but you can be sure that something will always come in which perhaps may not openly fight this resolution but will question its effectiveness. It is enough, you see, to be subject to the least doubt for the resolution to lose half its effect. If at the same time as you say "I want", there is something silently lurking, somewhere behind, in the background, something

which asks itself, "What will the result be?" that is enough to ruin everything.

This play of the mind's working is extremely subtle and no ordinary human means can succeed in controlling it perfectly. For instance, this is well known among people who practise yoga and want to control their body: if through an assiduous yogic effort they have succeeded in controlling something in themselves—a particular weakness of the body, an opening to a certain disequilibrium—if they have managed to do this and had some result, for instance the disappearance of this disequilibrium for a very long time, for years, well, if one day at a particular moment, suddenly, the thought crosses their mind that "Ah! now it is done", the very next minute it returns. That is enough. For it proves that they have come into contact with the vibrations of the thing they had rejected, on a plane where they are vulnerable, the plane of thought, and that for some reason or other in the play of forces, they are open, and it comes back.

This is something very well known in yoga. The simple fact of observing the victory one has gained—observing it mentally, you see, thinking about it—is enough to destroy the effect of the yoga which may have existed for years. A mental silence strong enough to prevent all outer vibrations from coming in, is indispensable. Well, that is something so difficult to achieve that one must really have passed from what Sri Aurobindo calls "the lower hemisphere" to the higher, exclusively spiritual hemisphere, for it not to happen.

No, it is not in the mental field that the victories are won. It is impossible. It is open to all influences, all contradictory currents. All the mental constructions one makes carry their own contradiction with them. One can try to overrule it or make it as harmless as possible, but it exists, it is there, and at the slightest weakness or lack of vigilance or inadvertence it enters, and destroys all the work. Mentally, one arrives at very few results, and they are always mixed. Something else is needed. One must pass from the mind into the domain of faith or of a higher consciousness, to be able to act with safety.

It is quite obvious that one of the most powerful means for acting on the body is faith. People who have a simple heart, not a very complicated mind—simple people, you see—who don't have a very great, very complicated mental development but have a very deep faith, have a great power of action over their bodies, very great. That is why one is quite surprised at times: "Here's a man with a great realisation, an exceptional person, and he is a slave of all the smallest physical things, while this man, well, he is so simple and looks so uncouth, but he has a great faith and goes through difficulties and obstacles like a conqueror!"

I don't say that a highly cultured man can't have faith, but it is more difficult, for there is always this mental element which contradicts, discusses, tries to understand, which is difficult to convince, which wants proofs. His faith is less pure. It is necessary, then, to pass on to a higher degree in the evolutionary spiral, pass from the mental to the spiritual; then, naturally, faith takes on a quality of a very high order. But I mean that in daily life, ordinary life, a very

simple man who has a very ardent faith can have a mastery over his body—without it being truly a “mastery”; it is simply a spontaneous movement—a control over his body far greater than somebody who has reached a much higher development.

Mother, I am asking you a small personal question. An incurable illness, an organic disease has been cured by your grace, but a purely functional illness is not. How can that be? In the same body. Is it a lack of receptivity or...?

It is something so personal, so individual, that it is impossible to reply. As I said, for each one the case is absolutely different, and one can't give an explanation for these things without going into the details of the functioning. For each one, the case is different.

And for every thing, every event, there are as many explanations as there are planes of consciousness. In a way... well, in an over-simplified way, one may say that there is a physical explanation, a vital explanation, a mental explanation, a spiritual explanation, there is... There is an entire gradation of countless explanations that you could give for the same phenomenon. None is altogether true, all have an element of truth. And finally, if you want to enter the field of explanations, if you take one thing and follow it up, you always have to explain it by another, and you may go round the world indefinitely and explain one thing by another without ever reaching the end of your explanation.

Indeed, when one sees this in its totality and its essence, the wisest thing one can say is: “It is like that because it is like that.”

(Questions and Answers 1957-58, pp. 120-26)

WHAT DO EARTH AND MEN NOT OWE HER?

BY C. V. DEVAN NAIR

Talk at the Sri Aurobindo Society, Singapore, on the Supramental Manifestation, at the Leap Year observance, on 29 February 1988

LET us forget for the moment the frenetic mental structures, formulas and theories devised by the experts of our all too transient modernity, the pretentious graphs and charts which claim to capture reality but only manage to hide, diminish or distort it, the volatile Dow Jones index and the rest of the world's febrile stock exchanges, the development curves which have the incurable habit of ending in crashes, and everything else which politicians, economists, news editors, scientists, doctors, lawyers and the rest of the glib caboodle swear by and hang on to so desperately, as if these things were the be-all and end-all of life.

Let us forget also our own pet opinions and prejudices, speculations and philosophies, likes and dislikes. We are told by the Mother that from the infinitely greater perspective of what is to be, all these things are totally unimportant. They are not the things we remember when we suddenly look back, as at the moment of drowning, upon a lifetime. At such times, they say one sees an accelerated film unroll itself, and the truly significant moments of an entire life flash by in just two seconds. But it is only the stark and naked moments one remembers, shorn of all pretensions, all humbug. These are the soul moments when something else, quite outside our normal waking thoughts, feelings and activities, invades our consciousness. In short, we remember only the incursions from what may be called the Fourth Dimension. These are the only memories, the Mother said, which we carry with us from one life to the next.

All of us present here will probably recall such invasions. Otherwise we wouldn't come to a place dedicated to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. These raids from the invisible take different forms with different people, and leave different imprints. The windows which open out on the great Beyond are as multifarious as human beings, and probably as all plant and animal life as well. For some the invasion may clothe itself as a baby smiling in its sleep. For others the occasion may be the glory of a sunrise over ocean or mountain. Or it may be a sublime piece of music, or the grace of sudden illumination from some lines of poetry. Divinity can, and often does, leap out from mathematical equations too, and from countless other things besides. And in all such instances we are left with the certitude of *something else*, which has nothing to do with human science and statistics, and which cannot be known, plotted and graphed by the human mind.

Indeed, if we take the trouble to consider these experiences, we note a very significant fact. Invasions from the Fourth Dimension take place only when the

unending rackets and tumults in our heads are, for one reason or another, silenced for the nonce. But the moment we try to grab the experience with our mental tools, as it were, and attempt to analyse or dissect it, the whole thing evaporates. Which prompted the great Einstein, probably when struggling with his equations, to make a very profound observation: "Whoever undertakes to set himself up as judge in the field of Truth and Knowledge is shipwrecked by the laughter of the gods."

Some of the greatest men and women in history have been so enraptured by the Fourth Dimension that they left everything in the world to immerse themselves in THAT. Many of them were dismissed as madmen who insisted on pursuing strange butterflies into mysterious forests, or went fishing in forbidden and enchanted waters. But they left profound and moving witness to the SOMETHING ELSE, which has so deeply influenced spiritual seekers in all times and climes. And yet, throughout history, the firm impression was given that the SOMETHING ELSE was always SOMEWHERE ELSE eternally ELSEWHERE. And all the shining witnesses sought and preached blissful annulment in the Fourth Dimension. The realms of the Spirit were seemingly and forever closed to those who were not prepared to renounce the realm of mortal matter. Earth and Heaven, Matter and Spirit were eternally separate, inherently incompatible. Are they?

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother came with a unique message, a stunning one. They experienced and proclaimed the secret oneness of Matter and Spirit, in a hitherto unsuspected dimension. Not entirely, perhaps, for we find glimmers of this plenary perception in some of the inspired utterances of the Vedic Rishis. They sang of the buried "sun in the darkness", about "the One conscious in unconscious things", and exclaimed "Thou art the head of heaven and the navel of the earth.... Thou art the power that moves at work in the two worlds." But Sri Aurobindo not only saw this power that moves and works in all the worlds, known and unknown. He went further. He also gave the assurance: "Matter shall reveal the Spirit's face." The Mother announced the fulfilment of that pledge: "The things that were promised are fulfilled."

Those who are interested in knowing more about the greatest adventure of consciousness ever undertaken in human history may do so through the copious records of the works and words of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. It would be foolish to attempt an intellectual summary here or, for that matter, at any other time. Doctoral dissertations on the Supramental might earn one a PHD, but they won't get you THERE, nor will THAT get here, and for a good reason. We learn that THAT is not THERE, but always HERE. Not a Chinese puzzle, this, to be worked out by the whiz-kids of the intellect. For the Mother it was a decisive fact of experience, of physical, material experience. I don't know, but one suspects that poets and musicians might have a slightly better chance of coming by

“magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.”

Intellectual exploration is not our purpose here. We have come to a stage where words have only one use, a very preliminary one, and that is to help us switch off all the distracting noises in our heads. Sri Aurobindo once remarked that he wrote his voluminous *Life Divine* only in order to help people silence their minds. It is terribly difficult to persuade the human mind to shut up.

A suitable preparation for the revelatory words of the Mother on the enormous significance in human history of this day may be to heed the following advice of Sri Aurobindo:

“Cease inwardly from thought and word, be motionless within you. Look upward into the light and outward into the vast cosmic consciousness that is around you. Be more and more one with the brightness and vastness. Then will Truth dawn on you from above and flow in you from all around you. But only if the mind is no less intense in its purity than its silence.”

The apprenticeship of silence is very necessary if we are to derive benefit from the words of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Revealing lights from the heights suffer grave dilution and distortion in the abyss. What little sunlight manages to penetrate the depths of the ocean is no longer the light we know on land. The creatures of the deeps are as blind as bats when they see light. Which explains why they dare not surface. They are shattered by too little of the darkness they are used to. We therefore have to train ourselves to bear a Light to which we are quite unaccustomed. Hence the rationale, or rather the supra-rationale, of the sadhana enjoined by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

On this day, in another leap year 32 years ago, on February 29th 1956, a date of destiny for all mankind, quietly, unobtrusively, and quite unnoticed, something entirely new in the history of evolution made its advent on earth. There have been other evolutionary leaps of consciousness in the past. First, when (if we may borrow from Shakespeare), way back “in the dark backward and abysm of time”, life unaccountably stirred in the primeval slime, and hitherto dead seas began to pulsate with living things, which slowly crept on to land and burst into green grandeur and multifoliate splendour on a hitherto lifeless earth. Twitterings and cooings, cries, barks, snorts, growls, roars and multitudinous other noises followed. The next great leap occurred when thinking man first stood in a dangerous, primitive wilderness, looked up in wonder at the wheeling stars in the night sky, and in the light of day picked up a stone and fashioned the first stone tool, the earliest token and promise of today’s electronic gadgets and supercomputers.

But “Man is a transitional animal,” Sri Aurobindo has declared. He told

us: "The animal is a living laboratory in which Nature has, it is said, worked out man. Man himself may well be a thinking and living laboratory in whom and with whose conscious cooperation she wills to work out the superman, the god..." Everyone of us is a living, a divine laboratory, a half-way house between the worm and the god. As the worm concealed man, so man conceals the god. Nothing is lost in evolution. Everything is gained. Today's pains bear tomorrow's fulfilments.

Evolution is not a miracle. Nor is it a fortuitous play of chance. "Nothing can evolve out of Matter which is not therein already contained", wrote Sri Aurobindo. "The truth above shall wake a nether truth." Which is what happened all along. Life above awoke the life latent in matter, and living forms crowded our earth. Then Mind above awoke the mind concealed in life and matter, and mental human beings began to lord it over the planet. The next giant step which Sri Aurobindo announced will be when the Supramental Truth above will awake the secret supermind concealed in mind, life and matter, and a Divine Race of beings "cross the twilight of an age", "the sun-eyed children of a marvellous dawn", whose "tread one day shall change the suffering earth and justify the light on Nature's face."

What then happened on 29 February 1956? Before giving the answer, in the Mother's own words, we might heed K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar's cautionary statement: "It was an event beyond all mental categories of understanding or description." We might note that although the Mother recorded her experience the same night, she made it public only four years later, on 29 February 1960. When explaining the circumstances under which she made the record, the Mother told K. D. Sethna on 25 November 1956:

"The whole thing was not so much a vision or an experience as something done by me. I went up into the Supermind and did what was to be done. There was no need for any verbal formulation as far as I was concerned, but in order to put it into words for others I wrote the thing down. Always, in writing, a realisation, a state of consciousness, gets somewhat limited: the very act of expression narrows reality to some extent."

The Mother's record reads as follows:

"This evening the Divine Presence, concrete and material, was there present amongst you. I had a form of living gold, bigger than the universe, and I was facing a huge and massive golden door which separated the world from the Divine.

"As I looked at the door, I knew and willed, in a single movement of consciousness, that 'the time has come' and lifting with both hands a mighty golden hammer I struck one blow, one single blow on the door and the door was shattered to pieces.

“Then the supramental Light and Force and Consciousness rushed upon earth in an uninterrupted flow.”

The Mother told a sadhak on 25 November 1956:

“When I came back from the Supermind, I thought that with so stupendous an outpouring of light everybody would be lying flat. But when I opened my eyes I found everybody sitting quietly and perfectly unconscious of what had happened.”

Similarly, one can conceive that when the first mental human being fashioned the first stone tool, the rest of life on the planet was equally unconscious. According to the Mother merely four people—two in the Ashram and two outside—had any unusual experience at the time which gave some clue to the most crucial event in evolutionary history. The first incursion of mind on our planet went unnoticed. Nor did the first supramental invasion of our earth announce itself by beat of drum.

The modern world of science and technology is the outcome of the first mental vibration on earth which occurred unheralded. The consequences of the first supramental vibration on our planet can only be seen in the future. On 24 April, the Mother made an explicit announcement:

“The manifestation of the Supramental upon earth is no more a promise but a living fact, a reality.

“It is at work here, and one day will come when the most blind, the most unconscious, even the most unwilling shall be obliged to recognise it.”

We don't know when that day will be. The descent of Mind on earth did not result immediately in Einstein, computers, spaceships and space-rockets. These came only millions of years later. The Mother put it thus:

“The new race? Wait for something like... a few thousand years....

“When the mind descended upon earth, between the moment the mind manifested in the terrestrial atmosphere and the moment the first man appeared, nearly a million years elapsed. So now this will go faster... But faster means still thousands of years probably...”

Nonetheless, we may expect some startling new developments, demolitions and displacements, many of them unpleasant, even chaotic. When the first men developed primitive slingshots and spears, the animal world discovered, for instance, an uncommonly efficient predator. The real King of forest and prairie was no longer brontosaurus or mammoth, but Man. The Mother explained: “”

“Every time a new element is introduced in the total of possible combinations, it causes what may be called a tearing of its limits... all past limits disappear and new possibilities come in and multiply infinitely the possibilities of old...”

“Well, it is from this change...which quite certainly is going to bring in a sort of chaos in the perceptions that a new knowledge will emerge.”

Let us not ignore a very crucial aim in Sri Aurobindo's yoga. The Life Divine will not be lived in some remote paradise, unconnected with life on our own earth. It will be realised here, in body and matter. “Almighty powers are shut in Nature's cells,” said Sri Aurobindo. “Salvation is physical,” declared the Mother.

The Yoga of the body which the Mother pursued with so much intensity after 1956 makes, at once, for the most fascinating as well as the most poignant reading in the world. She did not tell us all that she experienced and lived through. Time and again she exclaimed that it was beyond all human language to translate in mental terms experiences which so much exceeded the categories of the human intellect. So, we may recall, did Sri Aurobindo. But what the Mother did deem necessary to say was mind-boggling enough, which was probably why she gave us the hints she did give. For the human mind requires to be boggled, and to gracefully consent to fall silent, if we are to experience the first faint glimmerings of the supramental transformation. With the Mother we sense the margin of immense new continents of consciousness, of marvellous liberations, preternatural possibilities.

I will conclude by giving just a few of the Mother's words on the Supramental change. First, an experience she had on 23 November 1968. She told a disciple:

“I have had an interesting experience... Not last night, but the night before, someone, whom I shall not name, told me, ‘I am wholly down in the physical consciousness: no more meditation, and the Divine has become something up there, so far away.’ Then immediately, as he was speaking, the whole room got filled with the divine Presence. I told him, ‘Not up there: here, here itself.’ And at that moment, everything, the whole atmosphere... It was as though the air had changed into the divine Presence (*Mother touches her hands, her face, her body*), well, everything was touched, touched, pervaded, but with... the thing that was particularly there was a dazzling Light, a Peace like this (*gesture of massiveness*), a Power, and then a Sweetness... something... one had the feeling that it could melt a rock.

And it did not go away. It stayed.

It came in that way, and then it stayed.

And so the whole night it was like that—everything.

Even now the two are there: a little of the ordinary consciousness, as if in a mechanical way, but I have only to be quiet or concentrated for a moment and it is

there. And it is the experience of the body, you understand, physical, material, the experience of the body: everything is full, full; there is only That, and we are like... everything is as though shrivelled, a dried up rind, something like that, dried up. One has the feeling that things are (not entirely, but superficially) hardened, dried up, and that is why you do not feel That. That is why you do not feel Him; otherwise, all is That, That, there is nothing but That. You cannot breathe without breathing Him in; you move, it is within Him that you move; you are... everything, everything, the whole universe is within Him—but materially, physically, physically.

“It is the cure for this ‘drying up’ that I am now looking for.

“I feel it is something fantastic, do you understand?”

“And then when I listen, He tells me things also. I said to Him, ‘But then why do people always go up there?’ And with the most extraordinarily unusual humour the answer comes: ‘Because they want me to be very far from their consciousness!’” Things like that, but not formulated in such a precise manner: impressions only. Many a time—many—I had heard: ‘Why do they go so far in search of what is’—of course there are tenets that said: It is within you—‘what is everywhere?’

“I did not say it to this person, first because the experience was not, as it is now, a continuous thing.

“And then there was this particularly: no new religions, no dogmas, no fixed teachings. One must avoid—one must avoid at all cost the thing becoming a new religion. Because as soon as it is formulated in a way that is elegant and imposing and has a force, it would be the end.

“You have the feeling that He is everywhere, everywhere, everywhere, everywhere; there is nothing else. And we do not know it because we are... shrunk, I do not know how to say, dried up. We have made great efforts (*Mother laughs*) to separate ourselves—and succeeded! Succeeded, but succeeded only in our consciousness, not in fact. In fact, it is there. It is there. There is nothing but That. Whatever we know, whatever we see, whatever we touch, it is as though bathing, floating in That; but it is penetrable; it is penetrable, quite penetrable: That passes through it. The sense of separation comes from this (*Mother touches her forehead, indicating the mind*).”

On the night of 13 April 1962, the Mother had a decisive experience relating to the Supramental Manifestation. She spoke about it thus:

“Suddenly in the night I woke with the full awareness of what we could call the Yoga of the World. The Supreme Love was manifesting through big pulsations, and each pulsation was bringing the world further in its manifestation. It was the formidable pulsations of the eternal stupendous Love, only Love. Each pulsation of the Love was carrying the universe further in its manifestation.

“And there was the certitude that what is to be done is done and the Supramental Manifestation is realised.

“Everything was Personal, nothing was individual.

“This was going on and on and on and on.

“The certitude that what is to be done is done.

“All the results of the falsehood had disappeared: death was an illusion, sickness was an illusion, ignorance was an illusion—something that had no reality, no existence. Only Love and Love and Love and Love—immense, formidable, stupendous, carrying everything.

“And how to express it in the world? It was like an impossibility, because of the contradiction. But then it came: ‘You have accepted that the world should know the Supramental Truth... and it will be expressed totally, integrally.’ Yes, yes....

(Long silence)

“The individual consciousness came back: just the sense of a limitation, limitation of pain; without that, no individual.

“And we set out again on the way, sure of Victory.

“The skies are full of the songs of Victory.

“The Truth alone exists; it alone shall be manifested. Forward!

“Glory to Thee, Lord, Supreme Triumpher!

(Silence)

“Now, to the work.

“Patience, endurance, perfect equality, and an absolute faith.

(Silence)

“What I am saying is nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing but words if I compare it to the experience.

“And our consciousness is the same, absolutely the same as that of the Lord. There was no difference, no difference.

“We are That, we are That, we are That.

(Silence)

Later I shall explain better. The instrument is not yet ready. This is only the beginning.”

I next quote an extract from a conversation with some disciples, on 2 April 1972. The Mother’s words issue, not from a small, frail and stooping 94-year old woman, as she appeared to be, but from the puissant consciousness of the divine “Warrior of the worlds”, who was and is forever young, whose infinite variety “age cannot wither, nor custom stale.” Said the Mother:

“For centuries and centuries humanity has waited for this time. It is come. But it is difficult.

“I don’t simply tell you we are here upon earth to rest and enjoy ourselves,

now is not the time for that. We are here... to prepare the way for the new creation.

"The body has some difficulty, so I can't be active, alas. It is not because I am old, I am not old. I am not old, I am younger than most of you. If I am here inactive, it is because the body has given itself definitely to prepare the transformation. But the consciousness is clear and we are here to work—rest and enjoyment will come afterwards. Let us do our work here.

"So I have called you to tell you that. Take what you can, do what you can, my help will be with you. All sincere effort will be helped to the maximum.

"It is the hour to be heroic.

"Heroism is not what it is said to be: it is to become wholly unified—and the divine help will always be with those who have resolved to be heroic in full sincerity. There!

"You are here at this moment, that is to say upon earth, because you chose it at one time—you do not remember it any more, but I know it—that is why you are here. Well, you must rise to the height of the task. You must strive, you must conquer all weakness and limitations; above all you must tell your ego: 'Your hour is gone.' We want a race that has no ego, that has in place of the ego the Divine Consciousness. It is that which we want: the Divine Consciousness which will allow the race to develop itself and the supramental being to take birth.

"If you believe that I am here because I am bound—it is not true. I am not bound. I am here because my body has been given for the first attempt at transformation. Sri Aurobindo told me so. Well, I am doing it. I do not wish anyone to do it for me because... because it is not very pleasant, but I do it willingly because of the results; everybody will be able to benefit from it. I ask only one thing: do not listen to the ego.

"If there is in your hearts a sincere Yes, you will satisfy me completely. I do not need words, I need only the sincere adhesion of your hearts. That's all."

The death of the ego is the essential precondition for the divine birth in Matter. We can collaborate, She said. There must be no going back to puerile inanities for those whose lives have been touched and quickened by Her transforming grace. Increasingly, insistently, Aswapathy's unforgettable cry to the Divine Creatrix must become our own:

"How shall I rest content with mortal days
And the dull measure of terrestrial things,
I who have seen behind the cosmic mask
The glory and the beauty of thy face?"

Today, the sublime symbol of an incredible planetary metamorphosis, slowly

but ever so surely uprears itself on a coastal plain in southern India. The egoless love and harmony which is brought to bear on the growth of the Temple of the Mighty Mother, will measure the advance we make from present darkness to the silver twilight preceding the golden supramental dawn. It's completion will be a portent of the fulfilment in human time of the divine pledge to which Sri Aurobindo gave magnificent utterance in *Savitri*, and which was recited with so much power by the Mother Herself in her physical voice:

“O Mind, grow full of the eternal peace;
O Word, cry out the immortal litany:
Built is the golden tower, the flame-child born.”

If we do only but dimly, only but minimally, apprehend the utter magnitude of the evolutionary endeavour undertaken by the Mother on our behalf, we ought to ask ourselves, in all humility: What do earth and men NOT owe Her? What indeed?

THE MOTHER WHOM WE ADORE

IN THE LIGHT OF HER *PRAYERS AND MEDITATIONS*

THE incarnate human Mother and the divine Mother beyond are two-in-one.

Sri Aurobindo has given an analytical approach to the Mother's embodiment and her purpose in the following quotations:

"... She is working here in the body to bring down something not yet expressed in this material world so as to transform life here—it is so that you should regard her as the Divine Shakti working here for that purpose. She is that in the body, but in her whole consciousness she is also identified with all the other aspects of the Divine."¹

"There are not many Mothers, there is One in many forms. The transcendental is only one aspect of the Mother. I don't know what is meant by the embodied aspect of the transcendental Mother. There is the embodied aspect of the One Mother—what she manifests through it depends on herself."²

Sri Aurobindo distinguishes between the Mother's universal action and her transcendental work to bring a terrestrial transformation. "It is the work of the Cosmic Power to maintain the cosmos and the law of the cosmos. The greater transformation comes from the transcendent above the universal, and it is that transcendent Grace which the embodiment of the Mother is there to bring into action."³

On the transcendental Mother Sri Aurobindo writes:

"That is what is termed *Adya Shakti*; she is the Supreme Consciousness and Power above the universe and it is by her that all the Gods are manifested, and even the supramental Ishwara comes into manifestation through her—the supramental Purushottama of whom the Gods are Powers and Personalities."⁴

".... It is she who works out all as the supreme Consciousness-Force who holds all souls and beings within her and as executive Nature; all exists and acts according to Nature, all is the Consciousness-Force manifesting and playing with the Being in millions of forms and movements into which she casts his existence. If we draw back from her workings, then all can fall into quiescence and we can enter into the silence, because she consents to cease from her dynamic activity; If we would realise a higher formation or status of being, then it is still through her, through the Divine Shakti, the Consciousness-force of the Spirit that has to be done; our surrender must be to the Divine Being through the Divine Mother; for it is towards or into the Supreme Nature that our ascension has to take place and it can only be done by the supramental Shakti taking up our mentality and transforming it into her supramentality."⁵

The Mother met her spiritual collaborator in the year 1914. She had strongly felt that she was destined to do work in India. Soon after her arrival, a philosophical magazine named *Arya* was launched by both the spiritual visionaries on

15th August 1914 with a view to making plans to accomplish the life divine on earth. Two years before she met Sri Aurobindo, she had commenced her diary of Prayers and Meditations. Her prayers are correlated with the ideas and visions of Sri Aurobindo. During those years similar revelations had come to both of them from above.

In all her Prayers and Meditations she is praying to her own Divine Counterpart for an integral manifestation of the Supreme Truth.

The true condition for such a manifestation is to make an integral self-offering and to be absorbed in an all-embracing love for the Divine.

In the following prayer on February 25-26, 1914 the Mother showed the urge of her love:

“O Lord, grant that the offering I make to Thee of my being may be integral and effective.

“With a respectful and loving devotion I bow down before Thee, O ineffable Essence, inconceivable Reality, Nameless One.”

Much later—on May 12, 1954—she discussed the topic of surrender with the students of the Centre of Education in the Playground. She used to take a class in the evening during that period. She explained the meaning of “Surrender”, based upon Sri Aurobindo’s *Elements of Yoga*, Chapter 6.

In that book the question was put in the following words by a student on the said issue: “What is the sign to indicate that a sadhaka’s determination to surrender to the Divine is having a practical effect in his life?” Sri Aurobindo replied: “The sign is that he has full obedience without question or revolt or demand or condition and that he answers to all divine influences and rejects all that are not from the Divine.” The Mother commented:

“...as Sri Aurobindo says... ‘... Nothing in the thought or the vital must revolt or contradict or question or try to justify, to prove to oneself (and sometimes even to the Divine) that one is right, that what one has done is the right thing.’

“Fundamentally, whatever be the path one follows—whether the path of surrender, consecration, knowledge—if one wants it to be perfect, it is always equally difficult, and there is but one way, one only, I know of only one: that is perfect sincerity, but *perfect* sincerity.”

With perfect sincerity and with full consecration the Mother prays on August 24, 1914:

“Receive the offerings of our ardent gratitude and our integral surrender.

“I know that this notebook would end with the closing of one phase of my spiritual life. That is indeed what is happening.

“The light has come, the road has opened; with a grateful bow to the laborious past, we shall move swiftly forward on the new way opened wide by Thee before us.

“On the threshold of this new field of a vaster and more conscious realisation,

we bow before Thee, O Lord, in an integral surrender and adoration. We give ourselves to Thee without reservation."

This prayer of the Mother illustrates what Sri Aurobindo says: "The very act of offering implies that all belongs to the Divine."⁶

On August 5, 1914, the Mother addresses the Lord: "O divine Master, accept this offering of all myself, as a holocaust that Thy work may be accomplished and the time may not pass in vain."

In this prayer the Mother says: "that Thy work may be accomplished"—Does it not imply surrender of action? The Mother's words "this offering of myself as a holocaust" show her readiness to accept completely and at any price the commands of the Lord.

Sri Aurobindo's exposition of the surrender of action runs: "The best foundation for the surrender of action is the realisation that Prakriti [Nature] is doing all our actions at God's command and God through our *Svabhāva* [individual nature] determines action. From that moment the action belongs to him, it is not yours, nor the responsibility yours..."⁷

The Gita teaches the surrender of action to which Sri Krishna gives so much importance. Sri Aurobindo has explained it with one sloka from the Gita. The sloka runs: "Laying down all actions upon Me, with thy whole conscious being in *adhyātmayoga*, become free from desire and the sense of belongings; fight, let the fever of thy soul pass from thee."⁸

The Mother's prayer, dated May 4, 1914, offers the glimpse of a view similar to what is recorded in the Gita: "Become free from desire and the sense of belongings." The Mother tells us: "To be merged both in Thee and in Thy work ...to be no longer a limited individuality...to become the infinitude of Thy forces manifesting through one point...to be freed from all shackles and all limitations ...to rise above all restrictive thought... to act while remaining outside the action ...to act with and for individuals while seeing only Oneness, the Oneness of Thy Love, Thy knowledge, Thy Being... O my divine Master, eternal Teacher, Sole Reality, dispel all darkness in this aggregate Thou hast formed for Thy service, Thy manifestation in the world. Realise in it that supreme consciousness which will awaken the same consciousness everywhere...."

"O Lord, all my being cries to Thee in an irresistible call; wilt Thou not grant that I may become Thyself in my integral consciousness, since in truth I am Thou and Thou art I?"

The Prayers and the Meditations of the incarnate physical Mother are more synthetic and much vaster than the teaching of the Gita. The Gita speaks of the complete liberation of the soul and identification with the Supreme Being (*Puruṣottama*). The Mother in her ardent surrender shows the process of preparing for the complete transformation.

On December 8, 1916 she says:

"This was our conversation today morning. O Lord:

“Thou didst wake up the vital being with the magic wand of Thy impulsion and say to it: ‘Awake, bend the bow of thy will, for soon the hour of action will come.’ Suddenly awakened, the vital being rose up, stretched itself and shook off the dust of its long torpidity; from the elasticity of its members it realised that it was still vigorous and fit for action. And with an ardent faith it answered the sovereign call: ‘Here I am, what dost Thou want of me, O Lord?’ But before another word could be pronounced, the mind intervened in its turn and, having bowed down to the Master as a mark of obedience, spoke to him thus: ‘Thou knowest, O Lord, that I am surrendered to Thee and that I try my best to be a faithful and pure intermediary of Thy supreme Will...But shall I be able to prove equal to the task, shall I have the power of organising what the vital being has the capacity to realise?’ ...‘It is to prepare thee for this that I am working at the moment; this is why thou art undergoing a discipline of plasticity and enrichment. Do not worry about anything: power comes with the need. Not because thou hast been confined, even as the vital being, to very small activities at a time when this was useful, to allow things which had to be prepared the time for preparation—not because of this, I say, art thou incapable of living outside these smallnesses in a field of action consonant with thy true stature. I have appointed thee from all eternity to be my exceptional representative upon the earth, not only invisibly, in a hidden way, but also openly before the eyes of all men. And what thou wert created to be, thou wilt be.”

(*To be continued*)

NILIMA DAS

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3. *Ibid*
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VIGNETTES OF THE MOTHER AND SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of May 1988)

OF ROSES

SOON after X's family joined the Ashram they faced great domestic discord. Young X was confused by these incomprehensible strifes and misfortunes. Meanwhile with the Mother's permission she started a small garden. She knew nothing whatsoever of horticulture yet she had high hopes of developing country roses (Rose Bangalnesis) into an exotic high pointed and beautiful variety. She took great care of her plants but was very much disappointed when the first flowers turned out to be a bunch of small and flat flowers. Still they were the first roses from her garden and in those days the first bloom from each plant was offered to the Mother. She was absolutely of the mind that they were not worthy of being offered. She approached the Mother in the Playground with her bunch of flowers. To her surprise, the Mother accepted them with a keen joy and asked X, "My child, do you know the significance of these flowers?" X answered, "No, Mother". "It means abject surrender," she said.

X came to know later that the Mother had commented, "Out of chaos she brought surrender." X was very happy. What touched her most was that the Mother had appreciated her ignorant but sincere effort.

The Mother has given the significance of this flower as "Integral surrender" but on that occasion she said, "Abject surrender."

As we have noted, though keen on growing roses X knew nothing about rose-culture. She used to see that every day Y took twenty to thirty beautiful roses to the Mother. A particular rose "Peace" was then the Mother's favourite and often Y offered Peace roses. In those days choice varieties of roses were not available in Pondicherry. Those Ashramites who had means ordered plants from good nurseries of Bangalore, Bengal, Bihar, etc. Having no resources it was impossible for X to order plants from outside. Once Z gave her some good rose plants. Amongst them was one Peace. X took great care of her plants. Finally at the year's end there bloomed one perfect flower on a long healthy stem surrounded by glossy, green, perfect leaves. She was thrilled and naturally wanted to offer the flower to the Mother. By then the Mother had retired to her second-floor room. X took the rose to Nolini-da. In his room X saw about twenty similar perfect Peace roses offered by Y in a big vase. X felt heart-broken. She was sure that amongst that magnificent profusion her lone flower would be lost.

She was so depressed that she immersed herself in work to forget the whole affair, and succeeded. At 11 o'clock somebody came from Nolini-da's office

to call her. Nolini-da said, "There is a blessings packet for you. As soon as I went to the Mother she pointed to your flower and asked for it. She was very happy to receive it and has sent this blessings packet for you." On hearing that the Mother herself had taken the flower X's happiness knew no bounds. She understood that a sincere offering, however small, brings down the Mother's love and compassion.

TO THINE OWN SELF

The lake looked at the mountain, and thought,
 "O fortunate mountain, rising so high,
 while I must lie so low.
 You look far out across the world
 and take part in many interesting happenings,
 while I can only lie still.
 How I wish I were a mountain!"

The mountain looked at the lake, and thought,
 "O fortunate lake, lying so close
 to the warm-breasted earth,
 while I loom here
 craggy, cold, and uncomfortable.
 You are always so peaceful,
 while I am constantly having to battle
 howling storm and blazing sun.
 How I wish I were a lake!"

All the time, quietly,
 the mountain was coming down
 in silver streams to run into the lake,
 and the lake was rising as silver mists
 to fall as snow upon the mountain.

JAMES DILLET FREEMAN

HOW THEY CAME TO THE ASHRAM

WILFIE'S STORY

I WAS studying at Bangalore and I used to spend some of my holidays at Pondicherry with Udar and Mona. In those days things were unbelievably cheap in Pondicherry and it was worthwhile making a trip there just to savour the wonderful chocolates. Chocolat Ménier was only half an anna a bar; Japanese silk at six annas a yard and a variety of good quality goods. During my visits I used to meet very interesting personalities. There was the ebullient Purani, so full of vitality; the shy Arjava, an English poet with whom I visited some of the surrounding tanks. We went round in Udar's 1929 Ford and we used to throw lotus plants in the bare tanks. Often the villagers would remove the plants as soon as we went away. They probably felt that we were polluting their tanks. But a few plants did survive and if you see some of the tanks with lotus blooms in them, you have to thank Arjava for this. There was the retiring Premanand. He had a penchant for tidiness and order. On his table in the library each paper weight had its proper place. Just to test him I used to displace the paper weights just a little when he was out of the room. On his return Premanand would automatically put them back in their proper places. Each person was an entirely different character and so interesting.

There was Charu Dutt. Such an eminent personality. He used to tell a group of young lads, myself included, the most wonderful stories. Eccentric Benjamin, yet thoroughly lovable. He used to service cycles and repair umbrellas. His little French songs and ditties were charming, Bhishmadev, the magician on the Harmonium and Tabla, was there too. His fingers used to move like butterflies over the taut parchment. Ali Hydarî tried to teach me how to cook a true Hyderabad Beigan Bagare.

What actually brought me finally to the Ashram were two small incidents—incidents too small to rate as cataclysmic, but for me they certainly were. For, it is these two small incidents which decided me to come to the Ashram.

The Mother used to distribute little bags of ground-nuts to Ashramites and visitors at the Playground each evening. One day I missed receiving this. Later I was rushing past the Mother, when she suddenly said: "Wait, I haven't given you ground-nuts. Here is a bag." I thought about this little incident deeply. Surely it was not by a mental process that the Mother knew that I had not received the ground-nuts. It must be something very profound, I thought to myself.

The second incident was in a class-room on the first floor just across Sri Aurobindo's room. Here, the Mother used to read the *Prières et Méditations* and explain Her writings, all in French. My knowledge of French was very sketchy, but I used to attend these classes because of the lovely atmosphere there, where the Mother was presiding. We had barely started a chapter and I had to

leave Pondicherry. So I told the Mother that I would be going in four days' time. "Then we must finish this chapter before you go." Again I was struck with wonder. The Mother was hurrying up Her lesson just for one insignificant person. She knew I did not know French very well, nevertheless She wanted to finish the chapter just for my sake. This again made a tremendous dent in my being.

Now these two incidents are very small ones if matched against the wonderful experiences of others. But for me they were indeed a watershed because they marked the moment when I had to come to the Ashram.

Compiled by K

THE SERVICE TREE

THE tree was planted, I am told, by Dyuman and Manubhai in the year 1929. They did all the work of removing the debris 6 ft. high and filling the pit with compost without paid labourers. The sapling, probably from the Botanical Garden, took a good start and grew up under their care, nourished by the gaze of the Mother. When I came in 1934 I saw it well-grown resting its branches on the tile-roofs of 3 consecutive rooms called the Flower-rooms. Jyotinda was then in charge of the Flower-rooms.

When the time came for a spacious courtyard by demolishing the flower-rooms, the question of propping up the branches came up. The Mother did not allow the cutting of any branch and asked a Czech engineer named Sammer to plan the support. He did a simple and artistic design inspired by a model at Sanchi. The Mother liked it. This was probably done in 1941.

The Service Tree extended its roots and branches unhindered. The branches were coming so low to the ground that they posed a difficulty to the persons going to and coming out of the Meditation Hall. The Meditation in those years of the war mostly took place at midnight. Complaints came to us about injuries in vulnerable portions near the eyes. When Jyotinda took the complaint to the Mother She would simply say how gracefully the branches came down to touch the earth. No prop was allowed. On one occasion I made bold to protest. She replied, "They protest! They must learn to bow their heads", and She showed us how to do it.

The Mother, I was informed by someone, would not trample the roots above the soil but jumped over them. Getting a chance I proposed to Her to cover up the soil. She said that could have been done before, now the roots had thickened and they were as good as branches: no covering up.

When in 1943 a devastating cyclone played havoc with many trees in the town, a very big branch of the Service Tree fell down. Seeing the damage the Mother said, "Had a roof given way I would not feel so deeply as at the loss of the Service Tree branch." So dear was that branch to Her!

When Sri Aurobindo left His body on 5th December 1950 and the body was kept in state till 9th December, the Mother announced that it was charged with a massed Supramental Light. As long as it was so the body would remain. On 9th December the first symptoms of decomposition started. In the meantime the Mother had decided that Sri Aurobindo's body would be laid at the foot of the Service Tree. She asked Jyotinda and myself to guard any cutting of a thick root. Luckily no thick root had intervened to change the site. The work was smoothly done.

An incident took place after the Samadhi work. The tree at one time was badly infested with wood-borers. They would lay eggs here and there and attack the branches. Jyotinda and I would climb the tree and remove the nests and

inject Agrisol in the affected areas. Once during these operations I lost my balance and came down with a thud between the two ladies working there; my body tilted to the courtyard instead of lashing against the slab. It was a miraculous escape. The Mother knew about it and sent some invigorating drink and some arnica for massage by Birenchandra.

I remember another incident probably in the year 1962. It was arranged by the sanction of the Mother that the van carrying vegetables would stop and be unloaded at the Cartonnerie Gate and its contents be transported from there via the Samadhi to the fruit-room. The Samadhi passage needed widening by the planks to carry the four-wheeler. One fine morning I happened to be in the Ashram and found the workmen digging the pits for pegs. On questioning the supervisor I came to know that it had been sanctioned by the Mother. As the workmen were now near the main trunk where the possibility of damaging the thick roots was imminent, I went to Amrita and as soon as he knew about the Service Tree he made no delay. The Mother had come out of the bath-room, and came straight on to Pavitra's terrace. Asking us to stop the work She came down after an hour. Taking to task the men for the damage to the roots She stopped the work altogether. The gentleman who had taken the sanction protested that there was no other way. She said simply, "It is absurd."

A very convenient way was found by taking the van to Ravindra's door and carrying up the vegetables by lift. No roundabout way, no harassment to the persons making pranams at the Samadhi.

This is how the Mother looked to the interest of the Service Tree with which She was inwardly identified.

PARICHAND

LIFE-YOGA-POETRY

FROM LETTERS TO FELLOW AUROBINDONIANS

“COMPASSION” for us cannot mean the same thing as what is talked about by good-natured worldly people. When I think of it I see Buddha before me. “Nirvana” and “Compassion” are his two characteristics at its highest and they interpenetrate. Buddhist compassion is the envelopment of the poor suffering non-Buddhas with the “peace, stupendous, featureless, still” of the “illimitable Permanent” which Sri Aurobindo’s sonnet about his own experience suggests to us. It is to be able to free people from their suffering with the help of one’s mighty inner liberation. One doesn’t oneself suffer: one merely reflects the sufferer’s state in a clear unmoved mirror of true perception—but here is not the cold perception of the distant mind: here is the warm yet undisturbed perception of a close-beating heart, giving the sufferer a feeling of intimacy with the healer. No doubt, none of us is in the Nirvanic category yet, but some faint image of “the mute Alone” can be in our being and along with it some echo of the compassionate response accompanying it. The sweet serenity of the deep heart’s sense of human suffering can be in us to a certain degree—in preference to the merely considerate calm of the inner mind’s knowledge of it. In any case there should not be in us the contagion of the sorrowful condition we want to relieve: such contagion is not necessary for genuine compassion of the spiritual kind. In fact, it may even prevent the authentic soul-help. (4.4.1986)

*

Here are my answers to your questions.

(1) The experience of a Presence silently radiating love from the heart is surely of what Sri Aurobindo calls the “psychic being”, the true soul. But the psychic being itself is something of the Divine flowing out to Everything of the Divine beyond ourselves from the same Everything within us. In order to be authentically psychic, the radiation you speak of has to be of a deep quiet intensity that gives and gives and never feels wasted if there is no response from the human recipient, for it really goes forth to the Divine who has worn the face and form of this or that person. Actually it streams out not only to persons but also to non-human living creatures and even to objects, that is, to all manifestation. I may add that it creates in one a happy constant sense of self-dedication and self-consecration to the Supreme

(2) In the course of individual evolution it is the psychic being that “grows” through the various experiences from life to life. The apparent movement is towards the True, the Good, the Beautiful, but inwardly the movement is towards the Divine and when this inward fact is recognised the genuine spiritual life has

begun and one is aware of one's soul directly and not only of the reflection or rather emanation of it in the mental-vital-physical complex. I may add that no matter how much the psychic being grows, it still remains a child—simple, straight, trusting, humble. But this child is at the same time an extremely wise one, with the experience of ages enriching it and a spontaneous truth-feeling derived from its transcendent origin. Nor is it a weakling: its inherent immortality gives it a natural strength—strength to endure, to help, to conquer circumstances—strength born from the unflinching intuition of an omnipotent Loveliness accompanying it at all times. (11.4.1986)

*

What is happening in you is the drawing together of all the strands of your life into the central personality who is for ever a child of Sri Aurobindo and the Divine Mother. Once the commonly diffused being finds itself unified, there takes place by force of the psychic concentration an opening into a new dimension so that the future going forth of one's consciousness into the time-and-space experience, which we know as our life from day to day in the midst of changing circumstance and shifting company, is no longer a diffusion as before but a laser beam moving uniformly towards the Supreme under all conditions. A flow of endless warmth, which is felt as gleaming as well, goes on from the deepest heart, seeking the Divine, carrying upon itself the whole sense of one's being and carrying in a movement of offering the sense of all events, persons, interrelations, problems. I said "seeking the Divine" but actually what is a seeking at one end is a finding at the other. The reality of the Divine's existence and presence is felt at all moments, and no matter where the eyes are cast there is never the least forgetting of it and everything is spontaneously surrendered to that existence, confided to that presence. A softness and sweetness in the being, that is at the same time a subtle strength—a profound peace within that manifests as a secret power without—an all-enfolding love which, instead of grabbing its objects to one's own little breast, bears it towards some ever-receptive infinitude: these states, these experiences grow more and more a part of one's life. With their growth, problems cease to be pressures and are either surprisingly solved or pleasantly postponed or borne with a smiling discomfort like a child in a petulant mood in one's arms. (27.3.1987)

*

It is interesting that when you remember me you always see me smiling. I have used the word "remember" as if you had met me and were carrying a memory of me. It is certain that your inner being has established a concrete contact with me—no wonder it has the impression of a smile playing perpetually on my mouth, for indeed, as with many in this Ashram, there is a quiet happiness all the time deep within—yes, all the time precisely because it comes from something that

does not begin with one life or finish with it but runs like a gleaming thread on which life after life of various shades is hung. I am sure you also feel in yourself the smile of the Immortal in the mortal, which the seers call the Soul. All of us who have been touched by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have wakened to it but the whole travail of Yoga lies in keeping alive the sense of that touch of theirs by which the inner is brought close to the outer.

The soul's smile is also the best weapon against difficulties which the hostile forces raise in our path. To smile at their doings instead of raging at them or feeling depressed is to make them realise how little importance we give them. Failing in their attempt to upset us, they themselves are disappointed and get exhausted. The smile is, in addition, a secret message from us to what stands behind the apparent hostile forces. For behind them and under the mask of the Devil is the Divine, paradoxically helping us through the trials and troubles which bring up our weaknesses and challenge us to be strong. Of course this does not mean that we should look for difficulties. But when they come we must feel Sri Aurobindo manipulating what the hostile forces believe to be their own working. The Lord takes advantage of every crisis to create for us a short cut towards our own fulfilment. And when we have the vision of the Supreme hidden within His seeming opposite we at once lose the sense of infirmity and hopelessness at being hard hit. Nothing in Yoga happens without the Mother's mysterious hand somewhere in it. And our smile speaks of our recognition of it and immediately draws the Grace towards us across the darkness. The moment we feel its presence at the back of everything, our hearts begin to sing in answer to trumpets of victory sounding from afar. The assurance comes to us that there is no abyss so deep that the Grace cannot lift us out of it sky-high.

So, dear friend, keep a smile wreathing your lips in all circumstances. It will also help you, among other things, not to be upset if you don't hear from me for long. I have a lot of work—reading, writing, editing—and I may not be able to answer your sweet letters very frequently. But have the smiling certainty that I have not forgotten you and that I appreciate fully your deep feeling for me.

I was sorry to learn of your headaches and tiredness, but I am sure they are passing things, and the hands of our Gurus are always holding you and leading you onward and inward and upward to your own true self which is eternally their child, "the Purusha no bigger than the thumb of a man, who is like a fire without smoke and who was there in the past and will be there in the future".

(7.10.1987)

*

You wrote your letter in the evening, the time to close the day with the books of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. In that holy time your thoughts come to my place. I am happy to learn of this association. I am writing the present letter to you in the early morning when my own thoughts rise like the birds whose throats

are touched by the golden rays to a skyward melody. You are also like a bird, belonging at once to earth and sky, but as yet for me a migrating bird between India and Europe and therefore in two senses a *rara avis*—"rare" because you are not always in sight of Amal's opening eyes but more because you are a special species, one with eyes extraordinarily open to the secret Sun of Truth and Beauty.

The Uttarpara Speech of Sri Aurobindo which you have just finished reading before writing to me is particularly an eye-opener in the spiritual sense. The basic experience at the back of it is even more significant than the one that came to Sri Aurobindo in that upper room at Baroda in three days' time—the experience of Nirvana. For Nirvana drew his eyes inward to the infinite silent Brahman clear of all cosmic limitation, a necessary farness and freedom for the soul. But it made the cosmos appear a colossal illusion. On the other hand, the experience of which we hear in the Uttarpara Speech was an inner illumination which yet drew the eyes outward to the cosmos to reveal there the creative and transformative presence of the plenary Person who is birthless and deathless and still has chosen not only to put forth the ever-moving scene within which our souls and bodies play their manifold part but also to enter with His own self the play of up and down and light and shade. He has chosen to be a companion and a leader to us with a mysterious call and magic lure and guiding love which Sri Aurobindo suggests in that enchanting line:

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

The very title of the document from which we learn of Sri Krishna Vasudeva appearing to Sri Aurobindo in Alipore Jail and taking charge of his life is symbolic of the new experience: it is a Speech—delivered at Uttarpara. The Nirvanic realisation was, as I have said, of a Supreme Silence. The realisation figured now was of a Supreme Speech: the Transcendent self-expressed and become not only the universe and its in-dwelling resident but also manifested in it as the Avatar, meeting our humanity on its own level and uplifting it towards its ultimate destiny, the incarnate Divine. And from what Sri Krishna did for Sri Aurobindo we can have the assurance that Avatar Sri Aurobindo will do likewise for you and me if we give ourselves to his warm protective clasp. (19.2.1988)

*

I have not replied to you for eight days. The delay has changed the formula I mentioned in my last letter: "You are frequently in my thoughts" to "You are constantly in my thoughts", for all the time I was thinking, amidst my thousand and three occupations, of writing an answer to your deeply felt affectionate note.

It makes me happy and proud to read that while you were aspiring to the Mother and Sri Aurobindo in the middle of the night I suddenly appeared on

the scene. I hope it means that I am with them in reality over and above being associated with them in your friendly consciousness.

The question of being with them brings in your cry "Oh Divine! how far art Thou!" for a bit of comment. I know that the way your soul has expressed itself must cause what you call "a tint of pain" in your aspiration. But I should like to point out that it is not the Divine who is far: the Divine is always with us. His very attribute of "Omnipresence" assures this: it is we who keep far from Him, mostly due to incapacity and not perversity. But the fact of our being far must not blind us to the truth of His perennial proximity. And the Divine who is always near us is quite aware how much we the sadhakas of the Integral Yoga need Him and how painful to us is our own incapacity to feel close to Him. Knowing the sad situation, He is unremittingly at work to remove the incapacity and make the relationship of "He-we" a glowing mutuality. Please remember that He is as eager as we are that He should be a blaze of beauty in our being. If we have sought Him from day to day, it is because He has secretly beckoned to us night after night. The whole mystery behind our misery is summed by St. Augustine when he addressed God at the beginning of the famous *Confessions*: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee." (20.2.1988)

*

Once I gave five definitions of poetry and illustrated the last of them—"Magic leading into mystery"—by quoting that line of Sri Aurobindo's, which is a favourite with me:

Ever we hear in the heart of the peril a flute go before us.¹

Now I should like to say a few things about the first and the most general of my definitions: "Not only sight but also insight." And I shall take up a line from Sri Aurobindo which initially seems nothing save a vivid seeing. It will be a good opportunity to elucidate genuine poetry's invitation to the reader in diverse ways to its "great riches in a little room."

The true poet looks out over the world of men and nature and while his eyes disengage certain curves, colours, forms, scenes he gazes into things, as it were, trying to seize their significance to his mind, their suggestions to his heart. A simple instance of what happens is that snatch from the very first poem, "Songs to Myrtilla", which gives the title to Sri Aurobindo's earliest published volume of verse:

Sweet water hurrying from reluctant rocks.

The poet responds to the freshness of a mountain stream and to its swift movement down the hill-side. But he goes further than the mere observation. To

¹ See *Mother India*, October 1987, pp 636-37

him the water appears as if eager to get away and get along. It is "hurrying." Here is a subtle psychological shade, which would be absent from expressions like "speeding" and "rushing", even though the former would alliterate with "sweet" and the latter with the last two words of the line. "Hurrying" immediately makes us ask "Why?"

Before answering this question, let me dwell a little on what we may call the immobile activity of the rocks. They are said to be "reluctant". Again a psychological shade is introduced. By their rigid poise they offer resistance and seem to want to hold back the variously adaptive freshness flowing around them. Simultaneously they show a kind of forceful hindrance and a sort of desire to keep to themselves the crystalline fluidity. The poet has hinted at a living presence in what strikes one ordinarily as inanimate. And the aptness of the insight is brought home to us by the play of recurrent sounds—the *r*-sound which comes five times, weaving the line into a unity and, in one place—"hurrying"—it even conveys by the urge slightly to roll the *r* the impression of water quickly running. The alliteration of "reluctant" with "rocks" serves to make reluctance the very nature of rocky entities, something intrinsic to them and not something added to their existence, as would be by, say, the adjective "impeding". Another epithet, "obstructive" has a better effect because of the cluster of the consonants—*b, s, t, r*—which tend to hold back the voice, but the meaning is primarily physical. "Reluctant", over and above having *ct* and *nt* in close succession, bears a subjective shade, an emotional attitude lurking in it, in tune with the poet's entering into a hidden life of natural phenomena.

We asked why the water was in a hurry. One answer is that it did not enjoy being made captive by ruffians like rocks. Another is that it felt the call of a far sea across the sloping miles and it was intent on keeping its own liberty to reach the great expanse of its own substance in as short a time as possible.

A final point needing to be touched upon is the very first word in the line: "Sweet". It has an easily-found air and may even be charged with sentimentality or sugariness in the mode of Tennyson at his most Victorian. We have more than once referred to the freshness of mountain water, but the adjective "fresh" would be flat and prosaic as a line-opener here. "Cool" would be appropriate to the lack of response of the water to the clasping by the rocks, a virgin purity averse to their seizure, but it would not show the water to be worth clasping, attractive enough for them to try to hold it back. To imply its allure as well as its pleasure-giving contact, "sweet" with its suggestion of both an unsullied charm and a nectarous quality is, for all its sentimental or sugary surface, the *mot juste*.

All this comment may be dubbed fanciful. But actually it is an echo of the reader's sensitive imagination to the lively imagination of the poet who at his best achieves intuitive felicities of uncommon experience even in the most simple phrase about common happenings.

(12.10.1986)

AMAL KIRAN (K.D. SETHNA)

THE STORY OF A SOUL

BY HUTA

(Continued from the issue of May 1988)

The Mother's Message

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



Volume Three: 1959

No. 18

NOVEMBER 1959 came to a close. One memorable event took place during that time: I received Mr. Jaykissen Bahety and Mr. Narottam Mehra—both devotees of the Mother—at Mercury House. We greeted one another. They were on a business trip. Apart from that they wanted to purchase a wonderful gift to offer to the Mother on the golden occasion—the 1st recurrence of the Supramental Manifestation, which would fall on 29th February 1960.

Mr. Bahety gave me a packet from the Mother and apprised me of all news concerning the Ashram. Though the Mother had withdrawn from outer activities, her spiritual and occult work continued. In fact, it increased considerably.

Mr. Bahety remarked: "Huta, you have changed a lot. In the Ashram I always saw you so tense—there was no smile on your face—your brows had a frown all the time." I laughed.

We had tea together in my room. I was so glad to meet them and hear them talk enthusiastically about the Mother, her Grace and affection. Their devotion and love for the Mother showed in their eyes.

After thanking them and bidding them *Au revoir* I sat quietly on a sofa and opened the packet. I found the *Bulletin* and the message of 24th November with the Mother's love and blessings. I was charmed to see a card: a lovely pink rose painted on cloth on the left side and on the right she had written: "Love."

The message of the Victory Day was:

How can the immortal Gods and Nature change?
 All changes in a world that is the same
 As man from childhood grows, yet is the same.
 Man most must change who is a soul of Time
 And the gods alter too who rule his mind.
 Out of their Chthonian darkness they arise
 And are in their new birth the Suns of Light.
 Man then shall change into a Soul of Light.
 And be the likeness of his gods.

SRI AUROBINDO

I contemplated on these verses from *Perseus the Deliverer* and felt my aspiration intenser than ever.

*

My principal, Miss Darvall, came back from India without success. Besides, she had lost her best friend during the ascent of Mount Everest.

I went to her and conveyed my sorrow. She was touched. She informed me: "Your friend, Mrs. Sarala Shah, was extremely kind and helpful when I was in Bombay. Thank you for arranging our meeting." I said: "It was my pleasure."

Indeed Mrs. Sarala Shah had stood by me since 1953 when I had not yet settled in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. I am ever grateful to her.

Miss Darvall inquired about my studies. I explained to her my difficulties. She advised: "If you want a diploma, you must take all subjects and finish your term." I expressed my regret. She queried: "Then how can you get a job and earn money? You must think about your future—musn't you?" I said: "I

appreciate your good will, but I am afraid I haven't made my position clear to you. As a matter of fact, I don't need to take any job, because I have already taken one which is enough to fill my whole life."

She was baffled. Then I enlightened her about the life of yoga I had been leading. I told her that I wanted to gain self-confidence and experience in the big city, and added:

"So far I have carried on with boring studies, because I did not wish my family to be under the impression that I was doing nothing."

After that she suggested to me that I should go to the London Training Centre, 26-32 Oxford Street, London W. 1, where I could choose my own subjects.

I registered in my mind that I would get around to it soon.

*

Now December made its dull, drab entry on Nature's stage with acute and unbearable cold.

I woke on the 8th morning and saw from my window grey, gloomy woolly clouds heavy with snow. There was the sound of the wind racing through the bare trees near Mercury House. I looked up at a whitening sky, the shimmer of the beginning before snowfall.

I was reluctant to attend college. But I had to go, because it was the last day before our Christmas vacation.

On my way to the college, the sky exploded into a carnival of white confetti—the first fresh snow fell. It swirled through the sky in cottony flakes through a white haze, covering the pavement, caressing my face like feathers. It was snowing steadily now. I firmly clutched my scarf to ward off the poignant chill. The steam of my breath mingled with the frosty air.

I walked gingerly across the dazzling snow-cream spreading all around me. The flakes floated down in almost a lazy way which made the pile on the ground still higher and began to fill the hollow spaces. It was fascinating to see them dancing in the icy breeze.

I was frozen when I entered the college. There were no lessons but an elaborate exchange of good wishes and good will.

My principal gave me a recommendation paper and advised me once again to approach the L.T.C. I thanked her and my teachers and said good bye to them. I opened the gate and let myself out of the college. That was the last I would see of it.

I returned home exhausted both physically and mentally. I was seized with a terrible feeling of loneliness. I stared out of my window at a quiet street. Grey clouds scudding across the low sky promised to bring heavy snow before morning.

The next day I saw big clumps of snow-flakes drifting down through the frigid air. It was snowing incessantly. My only moment of real ease was watching the snow. It soothed my nerves. There was peace and a curious impression of timelessness.

Everything looked marvellously white and pure. The snow brought an entrancing beauty which gave a sense of serenity. The whole panorama reminded me of the cards the Mother had sent me when I had been in the Ashram. They had illustrated landscapes covered with snow, snow-capped mountains, snow in fairy fronds on trees. One of them was still vivid to me. It pictured a snow-wrapped landscape—clustered with a thousand sharp-tipped stalactites like a fantastic array of icy chandeliers. All this was reflected in the glassy surface of a vast lake.

Now I remembered the Mother and missed her so. She too loved snow.

*

Mr. Bahety and Mr. Mehra came once again before they left for Pondicherry. They told me that they had bought exquisite golden glassware from Harrods. I sent a card and a letter for the Mother through them. How much I envied them, because soon they would meet the Mother.

*

I went out. Everywhere there was snow. I had to be very careful lest I should slip. I walked slowly. The snow crunched beneath my shoes. I liked the sound.

I saw shop-windows which were full snow-scenes—miniature Christmas trees and numerous decors. They wore a festive look to tempt the Christmas shoppers. Winter-woollies and other items were displayed artistically everywhere. But the December wind herded the shoppers towards the comfort of their houses.

I was hearing this song constantly:

“Jingle bells, jingle bells
Jingle all the way—
O what fun it’s to ride
On a one-horse open sleigh.”

I entered the huge building of the L.T.C. and met its authorised people. They saw the recommendation paper given by my principal and arranged for my study from January to July 1960.

I took English literature, poetry, business management and typing.

It was dusk when I was heading for my house. There was a garish illumination—with countless coloured lights all the way. Londoners were in a jolly mood. Shops were ablaze with light, showing tinsel, holly and glittering baubles.

The blast of the icy wind hit me. I had become an iceberg by the time I at last reached Mercury House. The cold draught had penetrated my bones, my hands and feet had grown numb, my teeth rattled.

As always, after my dinner I sat on a sofa in the lounge near a roaring fire, drowned in deep thoughts of the approaching months.

*

Sudha and I had chosen to join one of the Educational Institutions run by the London County Council.

We went to the office of the Institution and filled the forms. Sudha was younger, so she had to pay half fees. I paid half as well since they refused to believe my age.

Our college was in Barrett Street W.1. There we decided to learn how to make flowers from silk and other materials—also how to do bead-work on a Tambour frame.

In addition I intended to learn drawing and painting in St. Martin School of Art. Sudha had no inclination to do so.

I thought that now I would be driving somewhere.

(To be continued)

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FROM BUSINESS TO ASHRAM

“How can we make our life more complete; what is the highest an individual can do; how can the whole world be happy; how can yoga be practised in the midst of this world, while working, talking, eating or even sleeping—at each moment of one’s life; can death be conquered; can destiny be changed; can one attain a divine life in a divine body?”

Profound questions. Questions that have assailed man from time immemorial. Questions that have attained a poignant urgency in a world helplessly caught in suicidal speed, global corruption, sudden dissolution, the nuclear menace, etc.

But few have come forward to wrestle with such questions and prescribe bold remedies for mankind’s increasing self-pity and unhappiness. Fewer still have initiated action to make their prescription work. Among these very few shines the name of Navajata, the architect of Sri Aurobindo Society that has carried the message of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother of Pondicherry all over the world.

Born on January 3, 1922, Keshav Dev Poddar’s natural dwelling was the high pressure world of businessmen and the stock exchange. He graduated from the Sydenham College of Commerce, Bombay University. A good sportsman and a commendable student, Keshav Dev took up research in economics. After a year, he preferred to enter business and soon became the head of a huge corporation of investors. Before he was 30 years old, he had become the chairman of many companies and managed offices in several parts of India. One saw him always at work, effortlessly dealing with several phones at the same time and facing awesome responsibilities which went hand in hand with the power to sign on his own a cheque for two crores of rupees in those far off days. Keshav Dev was also on the board of several public and social organisations and was, for sometime, Justice of Peace and Honorary Magistrate. A family man, an incomparable host, a member of the cultured elite of Bombay: such was Keshav Dev Poddar in the early fifties.

But there was also another dimension to his life and this was to take precedence soon. His father Shri Ramnarayan was a devotee of Sri Aurobindo and used to take the young Keshav Dev to Pondicherry for darshan of the Master. One day the Mother noticed the young boy in a silk kurta. She enquired about him and was informed that this was Ramnarayan’s son. Probably Keshav Dev’s tryst with the Divine was made on that day. Throughout his youth and manhood, he continued to imbibe the Aurobindonian vision of human transformation and world unity and propagated the message in various ways. One of these ventures was the founding of *Mother India* in 1949 and this monthly has been rendering extraordinary service to the cause of Indian culture under the able editorship of K.D. Sethna.

As the call of the Divine became increasingly irresistible, Keshav Dev wound up his far-flung successful business and joined the Ashram along with his family. The Mother welcomed him and gave him an appropriate name to mark the New Birth. Keshav Dev Poddar became the beloved Navajata. He worked under the direct guidance of the Mother and was soon leading a life busier than the erstwhile one. 1960 saw the launching of the Sri Aurobindo Society and Navajata became the general secretary and treasurer. Within a short while the Society achieved remarkable expansion and inaugurated the City of Dawn—Auroville—in 1968. His magnetic presence and persuasive words linked the UNESCO with the project. The opening ceremony lit a torch of hope for a humanity that was riddled with mutual suspicions and divided into power blocks of egoistic war-mongering. And the UNESCO invited “member states and international non-governmental organisations to participate in the development of Auroville as an international cultural township designed to bring together the values of different cultures and civilisations in a harmonious environment with integrated living standards which correspond to man’s physical and spiritual needs”.

Like any ideal nurtured to reality in the flawed human atmosphere, the Auroville project has had its share of problems but the original vision remains undimmed, already the industries, agricultural farms, schools, community kitchens, medical clinics, sports stadia and cultural pavilions are helping the Aurovilleans to move towards a global unity founded on infinite diversity. It is clear that the Auroville Charter has not been in vain, after all.

Auroville wants to be the bridge between the past and the future. Taking advantage of all discoveries from without and from within, Auroville will boldly spring towards future realisation.

Auroville will be a site of material and spiritual researches for a living embodiment of an actual Human Unity.

The massive amount of work that preceded the inauguration and the quick all-round progress that marked the first decade meant a superhuman record of planning, public relations and financial backing. The passing away of the Mother in 1973 called for a keener understanding of the issues on hand. Navajata had to take up the chairmanship of the Society. This meant that often he had to carry single-handed the entire burden of work. Undaunted, he rose to the occasion and was brilliantly successful because he had a deep sense of commitment to his chosen ideal and was himself a dynamo of physical and spiritual energy. In fact, he looked forward to a global expansion of the idea when he commented:

The work of Auroville will not be confined to its physical boundaries. Auroville will multiply all over the world until the ideal of human unity in diversity becomes a living reality.

But then, Navajata was not a mere builder of institutions. He was engaged in man-making, in the ushering in of the divine body, the establishment of the divine life. Towards this end he travelled widely.

A powerful speaker who could gauge the exact level of his listener's consciousness, he would glide down to the listener's level with ease, and then suddenly lift him up to the regions of higher thought and spiritual consciousness. His words had a crystalline purity and simplicity that invariably achieved a change in the listener's heart. For instance, the awesome fact of Sri Aurobindo's passing away would be made a recognisable part of the mystery of creation. Speaking to a group of sadhaks in Delhi on 5 December 1980, he recounted anecdotes concerning the Mother in his inimitable conversational style and added with a note of finality:

One thing we should know is that no progress at all is possible after death. Whatever progress we have made during life, our psychic being carries it to the next life and then it waits for the next life to make a new progress...

The message was clear. Tarry not! Strive to achieve as much progress as possible NOW!

Integral sadhana was made approachable by Navajata who made a list of the fundamentals with mathematical precision. There were no purple phrases, scholarly quotes or impressive marshalling of facts in his lectures. At the most a line or two from Tulsidas, and of course the sayings of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. It was personal experience, personal sadhana speaking. His audience was spellbound in his mesmerising presence and each member felt that this sadhana was graspable, possible, desirable. Here was a man dedicated to the realisation of the Aurobindonian vision of building a new man, a new society and a new world—the Supramental World. Here was the new man who had achieved stupendous tasks. Here was the new world but a step away. Why not enter it?

As Navajata clad in his simple dress made a gesture with his hands to bring home a point, the symbols of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo flashed from his fingers. His eyes smiled at you and also gazed beyond at the vision of future possibilities. The steady voice drew an arc about the four aspects of the new body: luminosity, lightness, plasticity, adaptability. Point after memorable point was made. That this vision "is the fulfilment of all which we have dreamt of spiritually and all which we have dreamt of materially". That the new creation may take several hundred years but we must begin working for it from now onwards. That human effort constitutes but one per cent and the rest would come from the descent of the supramental force. That we must make our body cells conscious of the force by preparing ourselves

through sadhana. That this would mean eliminating all that wastes our time, and hold on to a single-pointed aspiration for the divine life. That in Sri Aurobindo and the Mother we have the Guru, in their works the necessary shastra, and in the present the auspicious Hour of God to begin our sadhana. That we must cultivate *utsāha*, enthusiasm, to bring to fruition this ideal combination of the Teacher, the Scripture, and Time. That we should consciously, tirelessly, willingly train our body and psyche and make ourselves fit instruments of the Divine.

There was never a dull moment in Navajata's spiritual discourses precisely because he held up the mirror to ourselves. We saw our daily weaknesses with deadly clarity when he said:

The present life which we are leading is a life of confusion, ignorance, in a world of stupidity. You cannot imagine the ninety-nine per cent of wastage of life in these newspapers, in these parliamentary discussions, in the so-called business; it is all a wastage, wastage. Because we are not ready for a higher life, we succumb to this kind of waste.

Affectionately called Bhaiji by all, Navajata was easily accessible to everyone. He lived intensely, did not waste a single moment in work unconnected with the Aurobindonian vision and always radiated a rare joy. When he passed away on 19 January 1983, another heroic builder of the Aurobindonian vision, Surendranath Jauhar (the architect of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, New Delhi) found the right words of homage:

Millions called him Bhaiji. He was a brother of humanity. A brother to crores of people.

Aren't children of the Mother real brothers?

And yet the Mother named him Navajata. Indeed he was a new-born babe of the Mother.

The Mother brought up the new-born child, sent him all over the world to do her work.

Now the Mother realised that this imperfect world is as yet incapable of understanding the work of the new-born child. Hence she has received him back in her lap.

I cannot forget the way work went on wherever Navajata turned up to serve. The work was done with such sincerity, care, and efficiency and quickly too! Our tears dry up as we remember the palace of love he built; but only the stream flows, an ever-increasing flood.

PREMA NANDAKUMAR

Courtesy: The Indian Express Weekend, February 20, 1988, p. IV.

GLIMPSES OF PAVITRA

FROM THE REMINISCENCES OF PAVITRA AND MRITYUNJOY

(Continued from the issue of May 1988)

Part 2

The War: France: 1914-1918

Pavitra's talk begins with an account of his war-time years and his opening to spiritual life.

PAVITRA: During the First World War, most of the four years that it lasted were taken up with trench-warfare, meaning that the two armies were entrenched opposite each other. They had dug trenches, shelters, and lived, day after day, night after night, in conditions that were often difficult and sometimes, but not always, dangerous; their enemies were cold, rain, disease, boredom, and sometimes of course, enemy shells and bullets. Well, at that time I was a junior officer. I was just twenty in 1914. I had studied Science. I had been at the Ecole Polytechnique for a year and, like all the students, I had undergone some military training before entering the School. And in 1914, just at the time the war broke out, in August, I was scheduled to go and spend some time as a private in an artillery regiment—after one year of college during which we had studied mainly mathematics, physics and chemistry.

War was declared just the day before I was supposed to join my regiment. So I joined it, but the conditions were different, and we were immediately put 'under pressure', which meant riding four or five hours a day. In those days that was supposed to be the best preparation for warfare. Then there was theory... Anyway, it was quite intensive, and after a few months, on the strength of this military training we had undergone, they appointed us sub-lieutenants of artillery. And in October, the end of October, four months after the beginning of the war, we left for the Front.

I was in a battery, as a junior officer, in a battery of 105s: what the English call a four-inch gun. It was a new piece of rapid-firing equipment, which France was very proud of—interesting.

At that point, I was a young man who had all the ordinary interests of any ordinary young man at that age. I was just like all my fellows. I had the same ideas, the same interests as the young men around me. I enjoyed my studies—in general I liked what I was doing, because I preferred liking it to not liking it. It makes life easier! But when I look back on my past, I cannot say that I had any spiritual aspirations. I was brought up in the Catholic religion, but it didn't especially interest me. Actually I hadn't really thought about it much.

Well, during the war, we sometimes had 'hard pushes'—difficult periods—but also at times we had a lot of free time on our hands. I don't know how—it was probably the hand of fate—I began to read a few books about so-called 'psychic phenomena'—things that the science of the day did not study at all, things that it rejected, considered outside its province, non-scientific.

There were all kinds of things: telepathy, clairvoyance, mediums, all those things; even pendulums and divining—everything that is rather on the borders of science. I went into it in a scientific spirit, simply to find out about it, thinking, "How strange! Here is a whole domain that Science does not deal with. Why? No one knows."

I never practised these things, I never took any interest in practical experiments with mediums, predictions and all that. That was not what interested me. It was the possibility that these things existed. "Do they exist? Are they true? Are they false? Why doesn't Science examine them?" It was not that I wanted to gain these powers or to know the future or things about myself—no! Then gradually, from one book to another, I began to read about what in Europe is called occultism. I won't mention any authors, but I read whatever there was to be read on that subject, so-called 'magic'—not black magic, that didn't interest me, but 'magic': the possibility of controlling certain forces, of proving their existence. And then I went back to the Middle Ages—because when you study occultism, you are naturally obliged to turn to the period when occultism was flourishing: the Kabbala, the secret initiatory societies, the Hebrew tradition, then alchemy (in the spiritual sense, the transformation of nature); and then the modern occultists—and the door to India.

I have to say that it was Theosophy which opened the door to India for me, and for this I am extremely grateful. And in Europe, especially at that time, there was not much else. It was the Theosophists who translated many of the Indian sacred texts and made them available, almost fashionable, who made the ideas of reincarnation, karma, perfection on earth, the ideal of the *jivanmukta*, available to the Western mind; these ideas are there in Theosophy.

So, for my part, as far as I can remember, when I came across these ideas of reincarnation and karma, they seemed perfectly natural to me. Self-evident. From the moment I saw these ideas of reincarnation and karma, I never doubted them for a second—I adopted them as a part of myself. It all seemed obvious to me. I knew, of course, that they could not be proved, so there was no use in discussing them: either you accept them or you don't.

So with these ideas from India, I entered a new phase—a new phase of... of aspiration for spiritual perfection. You see, there are two ways of studying Indian religions. One is from outside (as Westerners, Frenchmen, usually do), without participating in them, without living them. In that case you study India just as you would study a colony of bees or ants: you report what they think and what they do. But the other way, and the only one that interested me, was, well,

to live it—first to understand, and then to live it. It was the ideal of a perfection that could be realised by men in the course of time, in the course of many lives, that really appealed to me—it seemed both correct and worth living for.

But the war was still going on. For two years, I was at the Front, going from one position to another, still with the artillery, the 105s. And then, for another two years or so, I was at an army headquarters as an artillery reconnaissance officer, where I had a job that was almost a desk-job, but which was very interesting because it meant collecting all the available information and passing it on to the artillery of an army. (An army would include a variable number of corps; each corps was made up of two or three divisions; the divisions had two brigades; a brigade was made up of a certain number of regiments—that is, several thousand men; so a corps represented one or two hundred thousand men at the Front, with a considerable amount of artillery and twelve or fifteen air-squadrons.) So it was a matter of research—collecting, scrutinising, sifting through every kind of information that could be gathered. And at the same time I had another task, a work of personal contact with the units, the units at the Front—with visitors, with foreigners, because, after a certain time, there were lots of Americans. There were Englishmen too.

But all the free time I had—there wasn't much, we were very busy—I devoted to reading, often far into the night. And these ideas took possession of me more and more; I surrendered to them, consecrated myself to them. And in a few years—from 1917 onwards, that makes two years—my outlook had changed completely. I had been, I can't even say "a materialist", because I didn't have any opinion on the matter. I was, as I told you, a young man who had received a scientific, logical, rigorous training, but I had never thought about these matters. But once they entered my thoughts, my feelings, I gave myself to them completely.

Mrityunjoy adds a number of details about Pavitra's war years and his interest in occultism.

MRITYUNJOY: A job in the Artillery was one of the toughest positions in the Army, and generally the most able men were selected. For the first two years of the war, Pavitra was in the front line. When he was promoted to captain and became a reconnaissance officer, he had more office work than active duty; but, as he soon realised, it was an even more serious and delicate task than manipulating guns, for it involved risks not only to himself but to his whole division. Pavitra had to collect information, classify it, and pass it on to his superiors. He also had to go on reconnaissance flights to risky positions behind enemy lines. He told us that on one occasion the report he brought back did not quite support the situation his commanding officer believed to exist, and to act upon the information would have meant a change in the line of action. The officer there-

fore asked Pavitra to check his data again, warning him of his responsibility, and even suggesting that he repeat the mission if it were feasible. Ultimately all went well and Pavitra's report was accepted.

During this period in the Intelligence Branch, one of his important assignments was to meet people. He often had to take visitors to the Front, mostly Americans and English who were war correspondents. He would show them the troops, introduce them to the field officers, give them a picture of the fighting and explain the possible gains and losses. To do that well, he had to have a thorough knowledge of what was happening. It was not an easy job.

Pavitra often told us that unless one has served in wartime, one cannot fully know the meaning of duty, obedience, alertness and acceptance of difficult conditions—qualities, in a word, that are necessary to any spiritual discipline. Also hard labour. Trench warfare was common in those days. The soldiers had to dig long deep trenches, piling up sand and mud in front of them, then fight from inside them, standing or kneeling according to the depth of the trench. Sometimes they would have to dig the trenches, wait inside them for days and nights on end, often in freezing cold, and then, after a week's vigilance, suddenly be ordered to abandon them and draw back. When it rained, the soldiers had to stand in water. Many would fall sick. Sometimes the soldiers had to march for days with very little food or water; on reaching their destination, they would simply collapse and fall asleep. Pavitra gave this as an example of the body's power of endurance until it reaches its goal. He was speaking from his personal experience.

But during the war there were also periods of leisure. Pavitra whiled away this time reading serious books. He was not interested in novels, dramas and detective stories—he was a student of science. Sometime in 1917, guided by a hidden hand as it were, he began reading books outside the domain of science proper—books on what the scientists would call psychic phenomena. In his study of modern occultism he read the works of the Theosophists Madame Blavatsky and Charles Leadbeater and Annie Besant. Theosophy, he said, opened the door to India for him. He read with deep interest the books on Tantra by Sir John Woodroffe, especially his *Shakti and Shakta*. Some of these books were in his room for many years, and later were sent to the Ashram Library.

Along with his studies of occultism, Tantra and Indian scriptures, Pavitra started placing restrictions on his food, like orthodox Indians. He gave up meat and fish and wine, but at this time he was still at the Front! Vegetarianism there was highly inconvenient and seemed almost fanatical. His fellow-officers felt sorry for him and hoped that good sense would prevail. Wine was part of a Frenchman's diet; to give it up could only be a narrow moralist's virtue! But Pavitra was ready to undergo such misunderstandings, and his new attitude to food remained the same to the end of his life. Yet it was hard on his system to remain a vegetarian, particularly under war conditions and in cold weather.

Naturally, in the exigencies of war, food could not always be served at regular times. Pavitra suffered many intestinal disturbances at that time and the trouble remained throughout his life.

The war also affected his sleeping habits. There were periods when the troops could sleep reasonably well but others when there was little regular sleep; they would have to sleep out in the open on straw, in the midst of the thunderous sound of exploding shells. Pavitra's nerves were affected, and later in life the slightest noise would wake him from sleep: he would appear a bit shocked and upset, like a child.

A Polytechnique friend of Pavitra, junior to him by one year, was stationed with him at the Front in Champagne, and held the same rank—that of captain. Their friendship grew closer through their common attraction towards the extraordinary. Whenever they could meet during their spare time at the Front, they would discuss religion, occultism and such subjects. This friend, André Monestier, had been brought up in a rigorous Catholic environment, while Pavitra's surroundings had been free from any such orthodoxy. Thus Monestier, due to his upbringing, was rigid in his belief in Catholicism, whereas Pavitra was inclined towards the Theosophists and tried to influence his friend by sharing his thoughts with him.

After the war Pavitra completed his engineering studies and was assigned a responsible high post in Paris, but he soon left it and went to Japan in search of his Guru. Monestier became an industrial engineer in the same line as Albert, Pavitra's brother, and plunged himself more and more into worldly activities. He did not keep in touch with Pavitra, but he remembered their old friendship. As the years passed Monestier understood more clearly why the Christian faith in which he had been brought up failed to satisfy the scientific curiosity of this friend Pavitra. Even though he did not keep in direct contact with Pavitra, Monestier was always keen to know about him through his brother Albert. Albert regularly informed him of Pavitra's life in the Ashram, and quite naturally about the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. Thus it is not surprising that one day this friend should come to see Pavitra in the Ashram.

Monestier has written about his association with Pavitra in his book, *En Inde sur les sentiers de l'oecumenisme*, which was published in France in 1966, shortly after his return to Europe from Pondicherry.

(To be continued)

THE HAUNTING ACTION-AT-A-DISTANCE THROUGH THE AGES

(Continued from the issue of May 1988)

WHEN the question of a medium such as the 'luminiferous ether' to sustain electromagnetic waves got dissolved by the conclusion of the Michelson-Morley experiment, the concept of the field itself acquired the status of a physical substratum for these phenomena. The fact that such a field is not only a passive substratum acting like a screen on which one sees projections, but also a repository of electromagnetic energy gave further weight to this notion. Action-at-a-Distance through this energy-field therefore meant energy carrying the action. Indeed, Poynting had considered, for mathematical purposes, this energy as a fluid that can flow from place to place. But for physics, while the concept of the stored energy is quite understandable, it itself being a vehicle of action is something new. Besides, as we have already seen, electromagnetic disturbance travels only with a finite velocity, which therefore should mean that it must possess some kind of an inertial property. Thus another dimension to the problem of Action-at-a-Distance gets added when we consider it in the light of the electromagnetic theory, the theory of light itself. There is actually a third difficulty too: vis-à-vis Newton's Third Law of Motion which states that the action of body A on body B is always equal and opposite to the action of body B on body A. This must hold good at any instant of time. Therefore, if the electromagnetic disturbance takes 8 minutes to travel from the sun to the earth, we do not know what must be happening to the action-reaction pair during the intervening period. The problem becomes more serious when we consider the dimensions of the universe of several billion light-years. Field as a carrier of action has thus its own difficulties.

Does it mean that pure Action-at-a-Distance will turn out to be a disdained metaphysical concept wherein the omnipresence of the acting agency would give a zero transmission time for an event? But such a ubiquity of the initiator of action will again fall outside the tangible and finite world of science. It will certainly fall outside Einstein's Special Theory of Relativity (1905) which rules out any absoluteness of simultaneity of events for observers with different relative motions with respect to each other.

The problem of Action-at-a-Distance is seen again in the General Theory of Relativity (1915) from the point of view of the field problem, but a field of a different kind. In this formulation a force is visualised as a consequence of geometry, geometry of four dimensions, of space and time together. Imagine a marble rolling on a flat surface. Its uniform undisturbed motion means that there is no external force acting on it. Conversely, the flatness of the surface is taken as the absence of a force. Now, if the same marble were to drop into a

hole, we would have said that it "experienced" an attractive force. In the four-dimensional space-time continuum of Einstein any curvature is thus equivalent to the force we are familiar with in the Newtonian way. "Differential equations contain the law of force as well as the law of motion," says Einstein. Thus by eliminating the concept of force he disposed of the very question of Action-at-a-Distance; there is no Action-at-a-Distance.

Einstein placed matter in the four-dimensional space-time continuum and demonstrated the 'gravitational' effect. But while space and time became parts of this fundamental reality, matter itself could not be incorporated into it. In fact, matter appears as 'singularities' in this formulation and hence cannot be 'produced' or explained in terms of the field quantities. Why there should be only the gravitational force of attraction and not repulsion in the universe, that is, why there should be only valleys in the four-dimensional continuum without any hills, remains unexplained in this theory. To put it in another form, we have only positive masses in the universe and not negative, because the kind of equations we have solved are the symmetric field equations. The solution of non-symmetric equations has been worrying the best minds but is intractable even today. Perhaps that is the reason why electromagnetic phenomena too cannot be incorporated in the continuum field description. Therefore, from the point of view of the Action-at-a-Distance that we are discussing here, the four-dimensional space-time continuum hypothesis fails to be comprehensive enough to include electromagnetic interactions. Indeed, the other two types of interactions that have been recently discovered in the sub-atomic world remain also unintegrated in the relativistic formulation. Perhaps the failure is understandable because the four-dimensional continuum is after all a geometrical structure and there can be more than one geometry. Geometry is a mathematical abstraction and therefore lacks the concreteness or substantiality of a physical substratum. Quantum Mechanics is in that sense a better system dealing directly with physical entities and processes.

It all started with the quantum of action introduced by Max Planck in December 1900 almost in a hopeless bid to solve the problem of what is called black-body radiation that was haunting classical physicists for several years. The concept was so astonishingly successful that despite its unconventionality it stayed on; in fact, it was firmed up by Einstein when he used it to explain the photoelectric effect, the emission of electrons when a beam of light is incident on the surface of a metal. Planck made light a packet of energy but Einstein gave it granularity. The Special Theory of Relativity further provided it with mass and momentum thus completing the particle-picture, the now well-known photon. The most convincing proof came in with the Compton effect (1923) wherein, essentially, an incident high-energy photon is scattered by an electron. The effect is consistent with the particle-idea in the sense that the incident photon as a particle gives a part of its energy and momentum to the stationary electron

and comes out as another photon with these quantities reduced. But the photon is something more dynamic than that. Let us see it in the context of Action-at-a-Distance.

Take the example of the hydrogen atom of Niels Bohr wherein the electron moves around the proton in stationary orbits in the manner of a mini-solar-system. The Coulomb force of attraction between the two charges provides the necessary centripetal force required for it to go around the piston. But this would again mean Action-at-a-Distance. However, in the Quantum Theory of electromagnetic interactions it is the photon which is treated as an exchange particle; the photon establishes communication between electric charges. To quote Hans Bethe: "We know that the interactions between electrically charged bodies moves with the speed of light. Further, this interaction can be described essentially by saying that quanta of light are emitted by one electric particle and absorbed by another. In the process, light quanta transmit energy and momentum from the first to the second particle; in other words, they transmit the electric force, though they themselves have no electric charge."¹

This basic concept was adapted by the Japanese physicist Yukawa in 1935 to understand the nature of the nuclear force. Experimental confirmation for the needed particle was obtained by Powell and his group in 1947. Actually, today we postulate exchange particles of various kinds to account for the interactions in different regions of the physical world: photons for the electromagnetic, pions for the nuclear or strong, weakons for the weak, gluons for the quarks, and gravitons for the gravitational interactions. We thus see that Quantum Physics deals not with forces but with exchange particles to communicate interactions. Indeed, there are only two types of fundamental entities or particles: bosons and fermions named after S.N. Bose and E. Fermi, respectively. Bosons are particles which transmit forces and fermions go to make up the bulk matter as we know it in the universe. The problem of Action-at-a-Distance is thus seen settled in terms of the bosons given to us by the Quantum formulation.

But alas! Quantum Mechanics is "not a complete theory". It has not been yet integrated with Relativity. We cannot therefore talk of gravitation, a Quantum-product, to act as an exchange particle between celestial masses well described by the relativistic formulation of the four-dimensional continuum. Einstein's own efforts to unify gravity and electromagnetism remained unfulfilled. Quantum-gravity is therefore quite far away from that. However, some recent developments show a possibility of a grand unification using an 11-dimensional representation but we will have to await several aspects to be looked into more carefully. There are a number of insurmountable difficulties in the approach.

As a matter of fact, Quantum Mechanics has been plagued with interpretational and philosophical controversies right from the time of its birth. There are several uncertainties in understanding the concept 'observation' itself, the

¹ *Scientific American*, September 1957, p 58

theory leading to the possibility of a subject-object interpenetration which is not a very happy situation for the purists of science. There is, then, the uncertainty, though not hesitancy, about the famous "Uncertainty Principle" itself, the corner-stone of the modern theoretical superstructure. Einstein when he said 'God plays no dice' showed his displeasure in no uncertain way about such a principle. Niels Bohr, one of the most enthusiastic proponents of the Quantum Theory, argued extensively without convincing him till the end of his life.

What is the Uncertainty Principle? Given in February 1927 by Heisenberg, it states in simple terms that in the atomic world of physics no two conjugate quantities, such as position and momentum, or energy and time, of a particle can be measured simultaneously without any imprecision in them. The product of uncertainties in their measurements is always of the order of Planck's quantum of action.

Einstein's objection was formulated, along with Podolsky and Rosen, in 1935 in the nature of a thought experiment (gedanken experiment). Consider a situation similar to the Compton experiment. Let us name the scattered particles A and B. The total energy and momentum of these two particles are well-given by the starting conditions of the experiment. This follows from the respective conservation laws. Now, if we set up an experimental apparatus to measure the momentum of B precisely, then knowing the total momentum we get a precise value of A's momentum without doing any experiment on it. The degree of this measurement can be improved to the extent we like. Of course, at the moment, we are not interested in knowing the exact position of B. The exact position of A in which we are interested can be obtained by setting up an experiment for this purpose alone. In this experiment we won't care what would happen to its momentum which we already know from the measurement on B. Thus we come to know both the parameters, momentum and position, of A (as well as of B) very precisely. This in the EPR-suggestion should defeat the formulation of the Uncertainty Principle.

But Bohr, its champion, counter-argued immediately in 1935 itself from a more fundamental level by stating that B's momentum framework cannot be, strictly speaking, linked up with A's position framework in view of the independence of the coordinate systems. But these gedanken-arguments in the Aristotelian fashion could go on endlessly unless they were subjected to experimental tests in the laboratory. And this is precisely what Aspects did in 1980. His experiments seem to suggest that there are correlations of measurements done on B affecting those of A. If this is true, then it means that there *is* Action-at-a-Distance at the quantum level. Certainly, one will have to await further confirmation on this important point. Relativity-continuum rules out Action-at-a-Distance whereas the Quantum-concept upholds it as an essential aspect of the Uncertainty Principle.

Granting that there is Action-at-a-Distance in Quantum Mechanics, we

should immediately recognise that it is not of a classical Newtonian kind. Of course it cannot be. Firstly, it is not instantaneous and, secondly, it is intermediated by the bosonic particles; but most importantly, it involves the quantum of action. We also do not know whether we can apply Newton's Third Law of Motion to these interactions. Suppose we do. Then the time delay between the action from A and the reaction from B, or *vice versa*, can be accounted for only if we assume that the reaction from B starts ahead of the event in anticipation of action from A. Indeed, if we go a step further and say that action (or reaction) from an object is constantly going on both forward in time as well as backward in time, then we may be able to take care of the action-reaction law. In 1948 Feynman did something of the sort when he assumed that the motion of a particle forward in time is equivalent to the motion of an antiparticle backward in time; a particle moving into the future is equivalent to an antiparticle moving into the past. But what is an antiparticle? It can be visualised in terms of the following process: when a particle and an antiparticle collide they annihilate each other disappearing in the form of energy, as photons. The reverse is also possible *viz.* materialization of particle-antiparticle pair from energy. Such weird processes are constantly going on in the physical universe.

(To be continued)

R. Y. DESHPANDE

MAN, MALADY AND MEDICINE

(Continued from the issue of May 1988)

THE theory of evolution, which is known so widely is in reality the last part of the whole play, the first part deals with involution. The two aspects taken together may be regarded as a three-act play. The first act shows how the Superconscient Spirit, whom we know as *Para Brahman* or the *Absolute*—the One without a second—chooses inconscient matter as Its habitation. For this purpose the One (the Absolute) wills to become *many*. But at the first instance It manifests Itself in two terms—a Being and a Becoming. The Being, otherwise known as *Sachchidananda Purusha*, is the fundamental reality, and the Becoming (*Prakriti*) is an effectual reality; it is a dynamic power and result, a creative energy and a working out of the Being. The first act also shows that the Becoming manifests itself in multiplicities of its creation and thus this world of diversities is created and that inconscient Matter is the self-chosen habitation of the Being out of which among others our planet earth is evolved. As a result of this mysterious play, the Superconscient Spirit becomes Inconscient Matter. *Sat* (Existence), *Chit* (Consciousness), *Ananda* (Bliss), become *Asat* (non-existent), *Achit* (inconscience) and *Anananda* (pain and grief). Of course this does not mean that *Sachchidananda Purusha* ceases to remain as such when He becomes Inconscient Matter.

The act further indicates that in Its own domain which is otherwise known as *parārdha* (Upper Hemisphere) the Superconscient Spirit dwells simultaneously in different poises in different chambers of Its *Dhama* (Home). They are termed—*Satyaloka*, *Tapaloka* and *Jnana Loka*. In the first chamber—It is Absolute, Infinite, Impersonal and Ineffable. In the second chamber It is at once Knowledge and Power (*Tapas*), It is *Chit* (Infinite Consciousness). It has *Jnana Shakti* and *Kriya Shakti* at the same time. In the third chamber It is *Anandamaya*—Infinite Bliss.

There is also a fourth chamber in the Upper Hemisphere which is known as *Maharloka*. In this chamber the Superconscient possesses the power of self-determination of the Infinite with form and is capable of manifesting unity in infinite multiplicity. Sri Aurobindo calls it Supermind.

Sri Aurobindo emphasises: “In the language of the Vedic Rishis as the Infinite Existence, Consciousness and Bliss are the three highest and hidden names of the Nameless... so this Supermind is the Fourth Home (*Turiya Dhama*.”

From this Fourth Home, the *Sachchidananda Purusha* starts descending to *Aparārdha* (Lower Hemisphere) through three downward steps, which are termed *Swarloka*, *Bhuvarloka* and *Bhuloka*. These three steps are the origins of Mind, Life and Matter respectively.

Thus from the very first act which explains the theory of Involution we come to understand that there are seven grades of consciousness: three in the Upper Hemisphere and three in the Lower Hemisphere and in between there is the fourth grade,—fourth to that (Absolute) in Its descent and fourth to us in our ascension. And this is the prelude of the second act.

The second act explains the process of Evolution and we learn that evolution is an inverse action of involution. What is an ultimate and last derivation in the involution is the first to appear in the evolution; what was original and primal in the involution is in evolution the last and the supreme emergence.

To be more explicit we must say that in the process of involution, that is to say, in the first act of the play, the Being (*Sachchidananda Purusha*) has not at once become inconscient matter. But by the working of the Becoming He has to pass through different derivations before He ultimately turns Himself into inconscient matter through self-oblivion. Therefore we come to know that the ultimate derivation is inconscient matter. So, in the second act we see the process of evolution. In the words of Sri Aurobindo:

“This inevitable evolution first develops as it is bound to develop matter and a material universe, in matter life appears and living physical beings, in life Mind manifests and embodied thinking and living beings.....”

(*The Life Divine*, Book I, Part II, chap. XVI)

The second act does not end with the appearance of mental beings. It also explains very vividly man's progress as the seeker of Truth and the anomalies of his present nature, his imperfection which is the sign of his transitional state. He is not satisfied with what he is or what he has. He aspires for something more, something else. He feels an inner urge to rise above what he is at present. He wills to surpass the mortal limits. His intellect, his rationality enables him to develop within him the capability of seeing and judging things in a new way. He begins to look beyond to discover the new horizon. He realises very acutely that he cannot rest permanently until he reaches some highest good. He is the greatest of living beings because he is the most discontented, because he feels most the pressure of limitations.

All these small scenes of the second act, which deal mainly with man and his nature, explain very convincingly that the emergence of the mental being in the material universe is not the culmination or final consummation. And we come to understand that we are to ascend another rung of the ladder—the fourth rung in our ascension—to complete our journey. But how to perform that great task? That is the theme of the third act.

As we all know, a drama must have a concluding act,—the final say of the whole play. The second act is not conclusive in itself, because with the appearance of mind in the material universe *Chit*—that is to say *Jnana-Shakti* and *Kriya-*

Shakti—as also *Ananda* (Bliss) of *Sachchidananda Purusha*, that are involved in Matter, are not fully evolved. It is clear from the second act that Mind in man, as evolved out of matter, is an ignorant, clouded and struggling power. It is a dark ray in the splendours of the Universal Mind. Man's life as shown in this act is a striving, exulting, suffering or a longing petty movement of the Universal Life. His body is a labouring perishable speck in the material universe. This cannot be the end of the process of evolutionary Nature. There is something that mankind shall be. An immortal soul is somewhere within him and gives out some sparks of its presence. And hence the necessity of the third—the concluding act.

But before the third act begins let us enquire whether the questioners are satisfied with the account of the process and meaning of the terrestrial creation as depicted in the drama (upto the second act) so vividly. Have they got their answers?

They say 'NO'. Even if they admit all that we have described, still they remain stuck to their original questions—whether man the mental being has the capacity to develop into a higher evolutionary being, whether the appearance of a Consummated Truth-Consciousness—a being of knowledge—is at all possible in the fundamental ignorance of the earth-nature. They also argue that considering the state of consciousness which present-day man possesses it can hardly be expected of him to achieve a greater status in future. According to them, man is a peculiar creature among all other creatures in the world. His discontentment, his desire for something else or something more is his innate characteristics with which he appeared out of the animal and these have made his life more complex than that of any other living creature on the one hand and on the other they have made him the brightest product in the universe. But that does not mean that he is eager to become something other than himself. Of course, he deeply wills to understand very clearly the mystery of the creation and to discover the creator if there be any at all. He therefore intends to attain perfection of his own kind but never dreams of becoming other than himself by attaining absolute perfection. He has no concept of the beyond. So he cannot propose to grow and become something other than what he can conceive. That is quite alien to his nature and the native law of his being—his *Swadharma* and *Swabhava*. We may be told emphatically that, if for argument's sake it be admitted that by an occult law of Nature such a human development is intended, even then it is certain that that could be realised only by a few human beings who have detached themselves from the race so as to become the first foundation for this new pattern of being. So there is no reason to suppose that the whole race could develop this perfection. In support of such an argument it may be pointed out that the process which the seekers of Truth—the *Sadhakas* and *Yogins*—have so long been following in their *Sadhana* and *Tapasya* to arrive at something supraphysical, proclaims that this world of ignorance is a falsehood and therefore has to be abandoned. Besides, in the past no *Sadhaka* has ever endeavoured to

transform this ignorant world of falsehood into a *new world* of Truth and Knowledge, nor had they attempted to change the mould of existence into another kind—greater and more elevated—here in this physical world. So it is concluded that there is no reason to assume Nature has any intention to lead humanity to a perfect transformation.

The arguments are put in such a way as to make it clear that the questioners are not only the advocates of physical science but of metaphysics also. Their arguments are on the line of such reasoning as has a considerable cogency and importance and therefore they cannot be brushed aside but have to be carefully considered

(To be continued)

SAMAR BASU

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA BIRTH CENTENARY

TWO IMPORTANT DATES

Compiler's Note

Two important dates—7.7.88 and 8.8.88—are coming. On 7.7.77 Nolini-da gave a talk in the Ashram's Flower Room.

Later I asked him: "Did the Mother mention only the number 7 or this specific date 7.7.77?"

Nolini-da replied: "The Mother said long back that 7.7.77 would be a day of manifestation and realisation."

I further asked: "Will this manifestation and realisation be on some subtle plane or on the material one—here also?"

"Here also. The difference will be only of degree."

"Did the Mother say anything about 8.8.88 and 9.9.99?"

"No, I don't know of anything," he said and laughed.

Below are reproduced his two talks on the subject and by going through them the readers can deduce the significance of the coming dates and welcome the manifesting Force consciously.

SHYAM KUMARI

7.7.77

Have you noted today's date? My attention has been drawn to it. It is very remarkable: 7.7.77. Four sevens together. Has it any special significance? Yes, Mother herself once gave the meaning of these four sevens—"Manifestation and Realisation". Manifestation means the appearance of the truth, the truth that is hidden behind somewhere, when it comes forward and shows itself, that is manifestation. Realisation means we express this truth that has come forward in our consciousness, make it real on the physical plane, embody it in our external activity in other words whatever you *do* you *do* the truth, whatever you speak you speak the truth; the Truth first appears in your mind, in your mental consciousness, then it realises itself in your physical activity. Number seven has a special meaning. The number seven gives the scheme of creation; it is the number of worlds that constitute creation. The creation is a globe, there are three worlds above, that is the higher hemisphere and three other below forming the lower hemisphere. The higher worlds are as you all know Sat-Chit-Ananda—the Divine Existence, the Divine Consciousness and the Divine Delight. Below in the lower half there are the mind, the vital and the body—*manas*, *prāṇa* and *anna*. Three above, three below, in between there is another joining the two, another principle or world, it is the Supermind, *Mahas*. The three higher worlds are invisible, beyond the normal consciousness; they become

visible and concrete when they pass through the intermediary Supermind and become the principles of the lower hemisphere. Now these are the seven principles of creation. Manifestation means the expression of the higher worlds, the supreme triple principles of Sat-Chit-Ananda in the lower triple principle of mind, life, body through the intermediary Supermind. Mahas-Supermind is the manifestation, the beginning of the creation and realisation comes when the higher trinity is realised here below and embodied in the lower trinity. That is the significance of 7. There are four sevens. Four is the number signifying a square, fullness, completeness.

Sri Aurobindo gave me this mantra of creation and explained it to me, as I have done to you today, on the very day perhaps of my arrival here in Pondicherry almost seventy years ago! Where were you then?

8.8.77

I find today's date also is very remarkable: 8.8.77. You have any idea? First observe how the figures are nicely balanced, symmetrically arranged—8.8.77. 8 equals $4+4$. Two eights equal $4+4+4+4$, four fours; and seven means $4+3$. So how many fours are there in all? Six. There are then six fours and two threes. I said last time, four represents completeness, also creation; square means a complete creation, a complete completeness. Three, Mother said, represents the three fundamental principles of creation—Sachchidananda. That is to say, first existence, you exist, you are; next, you are aware, that is to say, you are conscious, and finally, delight—you exist, you are conscious of your existence and you delight in your existence. These three fundamental principles of existence that are now behind the creation are here presented to you in this figure of a riddle as a token, I suggest, as a symbol: the preparation of their taking a form upon earth embodying in material existence.

HUMOUR IN THE PLAYS OF SRI AUROBINDO

PART 4: *THE PRINCE OF EDUR*

(Continued from the issue of 24 April 1988)

THE Vrindavan lila of Krishna and Radha, the daring elopement of Udayan with Vasavadutta are what these young Princesses are in search of and there is no place in their lexicon of Love for “a snub-nosed Scythian Krishna”. The sacred seat is held secure for some Aryan youth, who would live for love and could die for honour, who would take by force the one whom he considers his true mate and would not basely parley or bargain with or threaten the parent as Toraman seems to have been doing. This sort of thing is against the very grain of true love. In Nolini Kanta Gupta’s words:

“...the mould in which Sri Aurobindo has cast even earthly human love is divinely noble and beautiful. Love has been uttered, as it were, by a Divine tongue and it has been transmuted, irised and is full of the redolence of heaven’s delight: if it cannot claim to be the very delight of Brahman (Brahmananda) yet it is as the ancients declared, *brahmānandasahodaro*—consanguineous, of one blood, with Divine Delight.”¹

So beauty and nobility are the two necessary catalysts to set aflame the hearts of these maidens, to yield forth or bring out that sweet afflatus which is akin to heaven’s delight, and these two prerequisites Toraman woefully lacks. But all is not lost. The situation is pregnant with other possibilities.

Comol—pardon, dear reader, let us dispense with the ‘Cumary’—is enchanted at the notion of going to Dongurh. She looks forward to see

The woodland flowers in a sudden blush
Crimsoning at the sweet approach of Spring
As once it did against that moonèd white
Of myriad blossoms.²

for when one is sixteen and courageous with a reliance on one’s destiny, has an optimistic outlook, then a carefree confidence becomes natural. Like a twin note Coomood easily falls in tune with Comol’s mood,

“Shall we not dance upon the wind-blown peaks
And put the peacock’s feather in our hair
And think we are in Brindaban the green?”³

¹ *Collected Works of Nolini Kanta Gupta*, Vol 4, p 385.

² *Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library*, Vol 3, p 750

³ *Ibid*, p 750

Nirmol says dryly—

“But they say Krishna was neither Scythian nor Rajput but a Bheel. Well, there is another Krishna of that breed out who will make eighth-century Rookminies of you if you dance too far into the forest, sweethearts.”¹

Here we get the first inkling of what is in the Princesses' hearts. They have heard of the exploits of the Bheel youth Bappa. Now that Nirmol brings up his name, the heart-beats of Comol and Coomood must have quickened while Coomood with pretended nonchalance says—

“You mean this boy-captain of robbers who makes such a noise in our little world? Bappa they call him, do they not?”²

Nirmol sees through Coomood's words and guesses the secret which the Princesses have so jealously guarded,

“’Tis some such congregation of consonants. Now, what sort of husband would the most modern taste approve? A coal-black sturdy young Bheel, his face as rugged as Rajputana, or a red and white snub-nosed Scythian with two prosperous purses for his cheeks. There's a problem in aesthetics for you, Coomood.”³

Comol answers with lofty disdain that to a Rajput maiden a barbarous emperor and a hill-side thief are the same. Nirmol incites them further, to know their intention. She has to be sure of the inclination of the Princesses, for it is a matter of life and death. So she asks point-blank—

“Yes, but housed with the emperor the dishonour is lapped in cloth of gold; on the thief's hillside it is black, naked and rough, its primitive and savage reality. To most women the difference would be great.”⁴

Comol says simply “Not to me!” and adroitly turns the topic back to the name her heart longs to hear, by asking how is it that the Bheel has not been yet subdued. Nirmol answers dryly,

“Why, they sent out a captain lately to catch him, but he came back a head shorter than he went.”⁵

¹ *Ibid*,

² *Ibid* pp 750-751.

³ *Ibid*, p 751

⁴ *Ibid*

⁵ *Ibid*

This thrills Comol but not to give herself away she asks Nirmol if she has no more news in her sack. Nirmol has the genius of twisting even the simplest thing. She answers,

“Your kingly father was the last to stalk out of it. I expect him here to finish my story.”¹

The King enters and asks Comol to go to Dongurh, hinting at Toraman carrying her off *en route*. The Queen Mother comes and hints that she may become a flower upon the proudest Crest of Rajasthan and Visaldeo hints that the other road may lead her to a greater or greener glade. Three different persons hope for three different grooms. The plot thickens. There are innuendos and *double-entendres*. And the one who is most concerned decides to keep her own counsel. She is fully alive to the perils of her situation and says to her sister,

“If we must marry Toraman, Coomood, it shall be in that shadowy country.”²

The moment is pregnant with possible tragedy—death or even worse: dishonour. But irrepressible Nirmol cannot let go a chance for a laugh even if they be on the brink of “that shadowy country” and ripples out,

“Where, I hope, justice will have set right the balance between his nose and his cheeks. Girls, we are the prizes of this handicap and I am impatient to know which jockey wins.”³

She implies that if they have to take up Toraman they will not lose life lightly and surely take him with them to Hades. Nirmol strikes a note of courage and hope in a grimly complicated situation.

Visaldeo in the meanwhile having alerted Bappa the reception committee for the Princesses is ready to “shoot through the twenty eyeballs of them.”⁴ Nirmol has hatched a plot by dressing Comol’s servant Meera as the Princess. She anticipates with pleasure her enthronement as the Queen of Cashmere which Comol thinks she deserves for having served her sincerely.

A Scythian throne is no great wages for service to a Rajput princess.”⁵

Out of the reach of her scheming father, away from the intrigues of the palace

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Ibid.*, p. 755

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 759.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 761

the heart of Comol is light, she laughs with delight and remarks:

“....Alas! My royal father will not greet his little emperors this journey, nor my lady mother scent her blossom on a Rajput crest. They must even put up with their poor simple Comol Cumary just as she was,—(*aside*) and as she will be until her heart finds its mate.”¹

Nirmol who is more forward than the others speaks aloud in her gay, devil-may-care fashion what is in the hearts of all of them—a glimpse of the hero Bappa and of his band—

“It is a sin, I tell you Comol; I am mad when I think of it. Why, I came to be abducted; I did not come for a quiet stroll through the woodlands. But I have still hopes of our Bheel Cateran, our tangle-locked Krishna of the hill-sides; surely he will not be so ungallant as to let such sweet booty pass through his kingdom ungathered.”²

Though the play is set for carnage and tragedy the situation seemingly hopeless, yet the atmosphere is so full of spring, light and laughter that it seems there is a happier ending awaiting the reader than the situation warrants.

The secret wish of the Princesses is granted, fate and the high Gods appear to favour them. Their escort is felled, most of the palanqueen-bearers desert but some of the faithful ones offer to save the Princess and to lay down their lives for her honour. Comol hesitates for a moment and, sensing her hesitation with her rapier-sharp senses, Nirmol remarks—

“Quick, Comol! or are you longing for your palavar with Tangle-locks?”³

And at that moment of love's divine destiny the Princesses' dearest wish is granted. She becomes a willing prisoner, for just then enters Kodal, the foster-brother of Bappa, with his Bheels. He threatens the warlike Ishany none too gently—

“Shut your mouth, Rajpootany, or I will skewer your tongue to your palate with an arrow.”⁴

When he places his hand on Nirmol's wrist to wrest her dagger she who had taken stock of him in a moment repulses him—

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, p. 763.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 764.

“Off, savage! I will have no tongue-skewer for my husband.”¹

Enters Sungram who is more courteous and an Aryan and pleases Nirmol who is undaunted and pays him a compliment—

“... If you are the master-Jockey, the winners of this handicap are no such rank outsiders after all.”²

Her mind is made up, her heart given, the rider of her high destiny found. These two are well-suited. On the other side after a few action-packed minutes Prithuraj carries away in his arms the reluctant fiery Ishany. Sungram asks Nirmol,

“Must we follow in the same order?”³

Nirmol who has found the youth of her dreams, her dashing hero, banter and bestows her hand on him without even his asking. The whole thing goes so fast that the reader is left winking his eyes and his heart blesses this most forward Revaty who answers,

“By your leave, no. I turn eleven stones or thereabouts, Sungram—I will not easily believe it. Will you suffer me to test the measure?”

Nirmol Cumary—

“I fear you would prove an unjust balance; so I will even walk, if you will help me over the rough places. It seems you were not Krishna after all?”

Sungram—

Why, take me for brother Balaram then. Is not your name Revaty?

Nirmol Cumary—

It is too early in the day for a proposal; positively I will not say either yes or no till the evening. On, Balaram! I follow.”⁴

The reader thinks, “So that is that, so far so good.” Here we find that, as opposed to Sungram’s refined brand, Kodai has his own brutal and uncouth brand of humour. He has already offered to skewer the tongue of Ishany, now he warns the palanquin-bearers with a Bheel-brand threat,

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Ibid.*, pp. 764-765

³ *Ibid.*, p. 768.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 768-769

“But it is too soon to hollow? Stop, you plain-frogs, or you shall gutturalize your last croak.”¹

On being stunned by the blow of one of these detested plain-frogs his humorous apology at his own cost makes us chuckle—

“Only stunned, Bappa. The hillside was a trifle harder than my head. Plain-frog, thou didst that trick handsomely. Give me thy paw, fellow.”²

(To be continued)

SHYAM KUMARI

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 771.

² *Ibid.*, p. 770-771

THE ETERNAL CHILD AND THE ETERNAL MARVEL

THE SQUARING OF THE CIRCLE

GOLDEN AGE

(Continued from the issue of May 1988)

AND Jason too set sail for far off Colchis....

With him went all the heroic youth of a nation newly born among the hills and jagged coasts of Hellas: Orpheus with his lyre, Herakles with his club and lion-skin, and so many others—setting off to reconquer from the depths of the interior seas of Asia something that had once been theirs, something which would restore order and content to their tiny kingdoms where already the first acropolises were piercing the sky:

a golden fleece.

Then, after slaying dragons, overcoming enemies, escaping every kind of danger, the Argonauts have reached their goal... and all in vain! The cunning of an old Levantine chieftain has faced them with the impossible, and they are at his mercy.

But... there are secrets which reason, and even virtue, cannot penetrate (as Midas had just learned), and in this game which seemed irremediably lost, Aphrodite played her all-powerful trump-card: The Queen of Hearts. A woman's love responded to the beauty and nobility of a hero crushed by Fate; and lo, the magic of her passion overcame all difficulties and swept away all resistance. At the end of his quest, when all seemed lost, Jason had discovered his secret strength:

Medea, child of the Sun.

So the Golden Fleece became their marriage-bed; and the perilous return journey—pursued by enemies, ambushed by friends, lost among the coasts and islands of a still-unexplored sea—became a blissful cruise across the Mediterranean. The heroes had only to admire the scenery, count the birds and the clouds, sport with the dolphins who leaped from the waves to hear their news... She arranged everything!

She who had left her country,
betrayed her family,

who unveiled all secrets,
 revealed all mysteries—
 she who had given herself entirely
 simply because the Goddess within her had willed it
 and her woman's heart obeyed the commands of Love.

She, always she!

She it was who swept away all obstacles, overcame all adversities, foresaw the route; she it was who steered this Argosy, bearing back to the Greek cities the splendid trophy of their first Asian conquest ...

even though it was nothing but a skin!

And once there, this golden fleece, their nuptial couch, was hung in the temple of the Goddess of Reason. And Jason too became reasonable—and started finding reasons! Enough of follies, of voyages and adventures: a Greek life for him, and a princess of Hellenic blood for his reconquered kingdom! Each thing in its proper place, order at last restored; and as for that sorceress from far Colchis—she too must learn her place.

And like the fleece suspended in the sanctuary of Athena, life too stretched its golden skin in the clear and measured vision of Corinth's new master. One idea proceeding upon another, as orderly as the colonnades of the first peristyles, action submissively follows upon thought, the present slips into the future, and Being vanishes into Becoming....

But She, the force of Love, the energy of the moment without past or future, how could she fit into this chess-play where every move was premeditated, every decision already decided, every issue settled once and for all? Oh, she would vanish in her sun-chariot drawn by celestial dragons, leaving the skin and the emptiness to the opaque gaze of the hero already congealing into a statue in his marble solitude, in his city-kingdom, in a world growing ever colder and more calculating, ever more precise and exacting, implacable—where thought would turn to formulas and formulas to machines and machines to noise and noise to chaos; until a new idea would arrive... and turn to thought and the thought to formula and the formula to a new machine and....

Or would this skin, stretched ever tauter and tauter, one day split apart?
 And what was there

behind the skin of things?

Ass's skin

“Enter my breast and breathe in it such force
As when, O singing Sun-god, you plucked out
Marsyas from the scabbard of his limbs.”

(Dante, *Paradiso*, 19-21)

Through the brambles in the heart of the forest where he had just lost his last way, Midas reached beyond thorns towards a scarlet marvel whose indefinable form constantly dissolved in an ever-unpredictable blossoming of petals, as if its passionate, intoxicating, mystical perfume could better express its nature of ecstasy and absoluteness. And as the Golden Ass savoured the exquisite scent of this quintessence of tenderness and mystery, the lids of his inner eyes closed in an imageless emotion, which seemed to open other lids on other soul-depths where life becomes music and music flows into light and...— he seemed to hear resounding in the core of his memory the rhythmic syllables of the great Vedic mantra:

“*hiranyamayena pātrena....*”

‘The face of Truth is covered by a golden lid.’

And in a movement which turned everything inside-out and upside-down—every last barrier shattered into a golden dust that shimmered rosy pink under a wave-curl of irresistible Love—Midas glimpsed through every shade of the rainbow the gold-red hues of a new dimension of Being, in which form liberated from all limits blossoms into beauty, where strength freed from all effort grows harmonious in delight, where life transmuted into light expresses the Eternal.

The gold of truth had melted in the fire of love; and Midas beheld, beyond all magics and all arcanas, a supreme Alchemy which revealed to him the face of the One Being, the divine Form beyond all forms,

the unending marvel of the Absolute.

For this world-image that had just dissolved—even the last, most luminous one, this golden mask of divinity—, this skin of things which imprisons their life and imposes on them the need for death... what was it if not dream and illusion: absurd fixing of a flow forever uninterrupted though cradled upon immobility; trust in a man-made law, obedience to a power that was only a shadow of the true strength of his being?

But reality? Once this world-image had vanished, Midas saw that it was the very Flame which he had sought in so many faces, so many beings, so many things glowing like magic lamps from its mysterious radiance. It was the sparkle of its luminous reflection on the surface of life that had captivated him, that had

seemed to gild existence for him; it was its vibration through the waters of the great Stream that had rocked him in the rhythms of universal Harmony; and now, on the other side, it was himself, this Fire, and Being, and the one World, and all Creation.

And form was but the rhythm of this throbbing flame, emanating from an unmoving oneness at the heart of everything; the blossoming flame-petals of a flower whose calyx held the nectar of a single essence; the pollen of a star-explosion smiling from sun to sun in every atom; the infinite dance of beauty of a single all-embracing ecstasy of Love.

And Midas, King at last in the aureate purple of his Fire almighty, waited divinely for every crust of his being to turn to flame in this Energy that restored to him his face of light and freedom; for every wave of Becoming to break upon the shore of this fabulous continent of Being arisen from the waters like a mountain-peak in resplendent certainty beyond all mist and cloud... like a sun that, having created worlds with its cast-off radiation, lifts itself at last above their night to illumine them, to make them live, to turn into the rainbow-splendour of its origin everything that had forgotten—in its blind wheeling towards a non-existent goal—its destiny of Light.

And so be it!

(To be continued)

B. PETRIS

(Translated by Shraddhavan from the original French)

FOR YOUR EARS ONLY

15. THE TRUMPET TAKES REST

“UNDER what genre can we classify your serial?” Many of my illustrious colleagues and a few admirers have asked me.

“As you like it,” is my only answer. “Personal essay or literary biography or something in between or if you so desire coin a new term.”

I am contented to note that it has proved to be an attention-getter.

Before I started telling you my story, I have asked myself quite a number of times: “Why should I expose myself to the readers?”

The answer was the same all the time: “If you don’t do it, who will do it for you?”

But I had my own second thoughts.

More than a year ago, one evening, when I was enjoying a literary chit-chat with K.D. Sethna, my Godfather, a middle-aged man ambled in. No sooner was he offered a seat than he was introduced to me.

“Here is one of your admirers,” said Sethna to me.

I was all teeth. I expected my admirer to shake hands with me. But all that he did was to ask Mr Sethna a question—a question that shocked me: “Who is he?”

Sethna laughed and then replied: “He is Mr P. Raja.”

“What?” the middle-aged man jumped from his seat, as if he was stung by a couple of scorpions at the same time. He looked at me as though I was from another world. Seconds later he pounced on me and hugged me.

“I expected a gray-haired or bald-headed toothless fellow under the name of P. Raja. But what a pleasant surprise?” He said and after a pause added: “Next time when I meet you, see that you dye your hair white and draw crow’s-feet round your eyes so that you may pass for a middle-aged man at least... You are so young and you write so well!”

I was happy at his compliment, but I wondered why any reader should mistake me for an old man. Even now I am not cleared of my doubt.

The great doubt instilled into my mind the desire to speak about myself. Thus began this serial with the blessing of my mentor who was kind enough to spare me a few pages in every issue.

My original plan was to tell you whatever I wanted to, in just four instalments. But finding an overwhelming response to the serial, I emboldened myself to write more.

“I won’t stand in your way,” granted K.D. Sethna.

Encouraged thus I thought of continuing my serial for another two years. But on second thoughts, I realized that that would be midsummer madness. How long can one blow one’s trumpet? Everything must have a stop. Other-

wise what is a fullstop for? And now is the time for me to stop.

But before I stop, I must record here my indebtedness to a great soul. Without any reference to him this serial would be incomplete.

As a critic of the first order he played and continues to play a major role in my writing career. As an educationist, he taught me patience and perseverance through his character. He is always the first to read my works as and when they appear in print and make comments upon them. Though his words are quite often encouraging he does not hesitate to call trash trash.

Himself being a well-known writer, he has a soft corner for me. To me he is an immediate superior, but to him I am a younger brother. That may be the reason why I seek his counsel on several matters of interest. He has written highly favourable reviews of my first four books and has given a scholarly foreword to my fifth published book, which is also my first collection of poems—*From Zero To Infinity*.

Have you put your Holmesian brain to work? Before you guess it wrong, I will identify him for you.

He is Prof. K.R. Ramachandran Nair, Head of the Department of English, Tagore Government Arts College, Pondicherry, where I am on the staff.

When my book *Folktales of Pondicherry* brought me a cash award of Rs. Rs. 1000/- from the Central University, Pondicherry, he was the first to express his hearty thanks to the Vice-chancellor of Pondicherry University. Here is an excerpt from his letter, just to show you what a noble-hearted man he is: "...Mr. P. Raja is an eminent teacher and a promising writer who very much deserves such an award. At a time when genius often goes unrecognized, it was very thoughtful and gracious on your part to recognise the talent and merit of this young teacher of our department by giving him this award. We consider the honour bestowed on Mr Raja most deserving and share with him the moment of joy and pride. Also it is a moment of pride for our college and for our department in particular..."

To call him a paragon is no exaggeration. I was unable to arrest my joy in words when he once told me at his residence that his family members are my fans.

Finally it will not be out of place if I mention here that this serial has earned for me a lot of admirers. I am told by the editor that there have been a few private complaints but nobody has written to me any anathemas. With the exception of my short story 'The Blood' no other work by me than this serial has brought me such fan-mail. So far I have received forty-three letters from all over India. I am grateful to everyone of these writers for their appreciative lines.

After all, a writer wants to be read and enjoyed. I believe I have told you enough of my story and pleased you. It is time to give rest to my trumpet.

(Concluded)

P. RAJA

Students' Section

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

Sixty-Third Seminar

28 February 1988

THE MOTHER'S VISION AND WORK FOR THE FUTURE

Speech by Somosree Biswas and Deepa Hariharan

We shall speak about the supramental manifestation upon earth which took place on 29 February 1956, and its 8th leap-year recurrence which we will celebrate tomorrow, because these two events are related to the Mother's vision and work for the future which is the subject of this Seminar.

The Mother had announced long back on 25 September 1914, in a prayer:

“A new Light shall break upon the earth.
A new world shall be born,
And the things that were promised shall be fulfilled.”¹

After more than four decades she declared that the supramental Light and Force and Consciousness had entered the earth-atmosphere, the subtle-physical layer of the earth on 29 February 1956. This meant the fulfilment of what she had announced in her prayer, and so she made the necessary changes in it and gave it as a message for 29 March 1956.

“A new light breaks upon the earth,
A new world is born.
The things that were promised are fulfilled.”²

Then four years later, on 29 February 1960, she told us how the supramental manifestation had taken place. It was she who had ushered it in during the collective meditation on 29 February 1956.

“This evening the Divine Presence concrete and material, was there present amongst you. I had a form of living gold, bigger than the universe, and I was

¹ *Prayers and Meditations, Collected Works of the Mother* (Cent. Ed.), Vol 1, p. 249

² *Words of the Mother, Collected Works of the Mother* (Cent. Ed.), Vol 15, p. 204

facing a huge and massive golden door which separated the world from the Divine.

“As I looked at the door, I knew and willed, in a single movement of consciousness, that ‘*the time has come,*’ and lifting with both hands a mighty golden hammer I struck one blow, one single blow on the door and the door was shattered to pieces.

“Then the supramental Light and Force and Consciousness rushed down upon earth in an uninterrupted flow.”¹

Thus the Mother had to intervene in order that the manifestation might take place as early as in 1956. For without her intervention it might have taken an indefinite time.

One might ask: What change has the supramental manifestation brought about upon earth? Though as yet the change is not very perceptible in our daily lives, yet the Mother has promised us that the change shall come no matter what the hindrances are. She says: “One day will come when the most blind, the most unconscious, even the most unwilling shall be obliged to recognise it.”²

The Mother and Sri Aurobindo tell us clearly what will be the nature of the fundamental change that the supramental manifestation will bring about in this world. So far, the creation has been based on Ignorance and Inconscience. But the basis of the supramental creation will be Truth and a spontaneous Knowledge. Life and existence will be a harmonious expression of the Divine Unity manifesting in the world. The Spirit will govern the whole manifestation consciously and directly. The Mother has explained this change to us by giving a very significant example. At present, we human beings have to think and plan out a particular action before executing it. “Whereas,” says the Mother, “the supramental action is decided by leaping over the mind; passing through the mind is not necessary, it is direct...The mind is a motionless zone for transmission.”³

But we cannot expect this change to take place by a sudden miracle, for every evolutionary change that takes place in Nature is gradual and takes a long period of time, as it took nearly a million years for man to appear on earth after the manifestation of mind in the earth-atmosphere. So the Mother says half-humorously that though the supramental consciousness has manifested in the earth-atmosphere we may have to wait for something like a few thousand years for the appearance of the new race on earth. It can go faster, but for that man’s earnest collaboration is needed; he must open himself to the supramental Force and make an effort to progress. And she significantly asks: “How is it that all of you were so unfamiliar with this Force that when it came you didn’t

¹ *Ibid*, p 202

² The Mother’s Message of 24 4 1956 *Ibid*, p 198

³ *Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education*, February, 1962 p 77

even feel it?"¹ For she says: "When I came back from the Supermind, I thought that with so stupendous an outpouring of light everybody would be lying flat. But, when I opened my eyes I found everybody sitting quietly and perfectly unconscious of what had happened."² The Mother explains this by saying that though they were sincere and in the best possible state yet their inner preparation was incomplete.

Now let us see how we can prepare ourselves to receive and utilise the supramental Force which is surrounding us. In the Mother's own words: "To hope to receive, use and form in oneself a supramental being, and consequently a supramental world, there must first of all be an expansion of consciousness and a *constant* personal progress: not to have sudden flights, a little aspiration, a little effort, and then fall back into somnolence. This must be the *constant* idea of the being, the *constant* will of the being, the *constant* effort of the being, the *constant* preoccupation of the being."³

In fact, the Mother says that the supramental transformation will be visible only when the inner states of the being have gone through a considerable change. So, one must not try to judge the presence of the supramental by physical appearances. For the physical being will be transformed last, and the supramental force can be acting in a being long before it is perceptible in the physical body.

But it is the descent and manifestation of Supreme Love, and the powerful ecstasy and Ananda which flows from it that alone can eventually effectuate the final transfiguration. For, as Sri Aurobindo says, it is "the Ananda that alone can heal the gulf between the highest heights of the supramental spirit and the lowest abysses of Matter, the Ananda that holds the key of a wonderful, divinest Life and even now supports from its secrecies the work of all the other Powers of the universe."⁴

And to quote the Mother's words: "When the day will come for the manifestation of the supreme Love, for the crystallised, concentrated descent of the supreme Love, that will indeed be the moment of Transformation. Because nothing will be able to resist That."⁵

Meanwhile, the evolutionary process goes on and the Mother's work to hasten that process is carried along, preparing the earth and humanity for the final transformation. And the world awaits her mission to be fulfilled with silent eagerness when the creation will step into the new world of a greater light and joy and harmony and peace and the Divine Life shall be realised in a Divine Body upon earth.

¹ *Collected Works of the Mother* (Cent Ed), Vol 8, p 132

² *Mother India*, March 1975, p 197

³ *Collected Works of the Mother* (Cent Ed.), Vol 8, p 205

⁴ *The Mother* (Cent Ed, Vol 25), p 36

⁵ *Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education*, February 1961, p. 91.