

MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

OCTOBER 1989

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The sudden rise in printing costs because of an unavoidable change-over from letter-press to photo-offset from the March issue obliges us to raise our inland subscription by a small amount—that is, from Rs 42 per year to Rs 47 and accordingly our inland life-membership from Rs 588 to Rs 658. Those who have already become life-members need not pay anything more unless they themselves feel inclined to do so. Our subscribers, both old and new ones, are requested to understand our difficult situation and be kind enough to send us Rs 5 more. We shall be very thankful.

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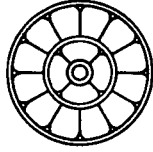
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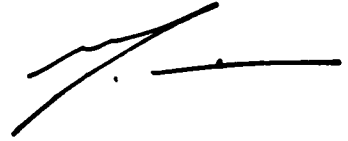
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,
A new light breaks upon the earth,
A new world is born.
The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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TWO TALKS BY THE MOTHER

TO THE ASHRAM CHILDREN ON

1 October 1958

Sweet Mother, what is an ideal of moral perfection?

THERE are thousands of moral perfections. Everyone has his own ideal of moral perfection.

What is usually called moral perfection is to have all the qualities that are considered moral: to have no defects, never to make a mistake, never to err, to be always what one conceives to be the best, to have all the virtues—that is, to realise the highest mental conception. To take all the qualities—there are many, aren't there?—all the virtues, all that man has conceived to be the most beautiful, most noble, most true, and to live that integrally, to let all one's actions be guided by that, all the movements, all the reactions, all the feelings, all .. That is living a moral ideal of perfection. It is the summit of man's mental evolution.

Not many people do it.. but still. there have been some and there still are. This is what men usually take for the spiritual life. When they meet a man of this type, they say, "Oh! he is a great spiritual being." He may be a great saint, he may be a great sage but he is *not* a spiritual being.

And yet it is already very good and very difficult to realise this. And there comes a time in the inner evolution when it is very necessary to try to realise it. It is obviously infinitely higher than to be still guided by all one's impulses and ignorant outer reactions. It is to be already in a way the master of one's nature. It is even a stage through which one has to pass, for it is the stage when one begins to be the master of one's ego, when one is ready to let it fall away—it is still there but sufficiently weakened to be nearing its end. This is the last stage before crossing over to the other side, and certainly, if anyone imagines that he can go over to the other side without passing through this stage, he would risk making a great mistake, and of taking for perfect freedom a perfect weakness with regard to his lower nature.

It is almost impossible to pass from the mental being—even the most perfect and most remarkable—to the true spiritual life without having realised this ideal of moral perfection for a certain period of time, however brief it may be. Many people try to take a short-cut and want to assert their inner freedom before having overcome all the weaknesses of the outer nature, they are in great danger of deluding themselves. The true spiritual life, complete freedom, is something much higher than the highest moral realisations, but one must take care that this so-called freedom is not an indulgence and a contempt for all rules.

One must go higher, always higher, higher; nothing less than what the highest of humanity has achieved.

One must be capable of being spontaneously all that humanity has conceived to be the highest, the most beautiful, the most perfect, the most disinterested, the most comprehensive, the best, before opening one's spiritual wings and looking at all that from above as something which still belongs to the individual self, in order to enter into true spirituality, that which has no limits, which lives in an integral way Infinity and Eternity

8 October 1958

Sweet Mother, will there not be any intermediary states between man and superman?

There will probably be many

Man and superman? You are not speaking of the new supramental race, are you? Are you really speaking of what *we* call the superman, that is, man born in the human way and trying to transform the physical being he has received by his ordinary human birth? Are there any stages?—There will certainly be countless *partial* realisations. According to each one's capacity, the degree of transformation will differ, and it is certain that there will be a considerable number of attempts, more or less fruitful or unfruitful, before we come to something like the superman, and even those will be more or less successful attempts.

All those who strive to overcome their ordinary nature, all those who try to realise materially the deeper experience which has brought them into contact with the divine Truth, all those who, instead of turning to the Beyond or the Highest, try to realise physically, externally, the change of consciousness they have realised within themselves—all are apprentice-supermen. And there, there are countless differences in the success of their efforts. Each time we try not to be an ordinary man, not to live the ordinary life, to express in our movements, our actions and reactions the divine Truth, when we are governed by that Truth instead of being governed by the general ignorance, we are apprentice-supermen, and according to the success of our efforts, well, we are more or less able apprentices, more or less advanced on the way.

All these are stages, so . In reality, in this race to the Transformation, the question is to know which of the two will arrive first: the one who wants to transform his body in the image of the divine Truth, or the old habit of the body to go on disintegrating until it is so deformed that it can no longer continue to live in its outer integrality. It is a race between transformation and decay. For there are only two stopping-places, two things which can indicate to what extent one has succeeded: either success, that is to say, becoming a superman—then of course one can say, "Now I have reached the goal" .. or else death Till then, normally, one is "on the way"

It is one of these two things—either attaining the goal or a sudden rupture of

life—which temporarily puts an end to the advance. And on the road each one has gone more or less far, but until one reaches the end one cannot say what stage one is at. It is the final step that will count. So only the one who comes a few hundred or thousand years later and looks back, will be able to say, “There was this stage and that stage, this realisation and that realisation.. ” That is history, it will be a historical perception of the event. Till then all of us are in the movement and the work.

How far have we gone and how far shall we go? It is better not to think too much about that, for it cripples you and you can't run well. It is better to think only about running and nothing else. That is the only way to run well. You look at where you want to go and put all your effort in the movement to go forward. How far you have gone is not your concern. I say, “This is history”, it will come later. The historians of our effort will tell us—because perhaps we shall still be there—will tell us what we did, how we did it. For the moment what is necessary is to do it; this is the only thing that matters.

(Questions and Answers 1958, pp 409-12)

THE MOTHER WHOM WE ADORE

IN THE LIGHT OF HER *PRAYERS AND MEDITATIONS*

(Continued from the issue of September 1989)

THE Mother's prayers and meditations fall under three categories 1 The Individual 2 The Universal 3 The Transcendent.

They come to us from these three planes according to her experiences and aspirations. They are exhalations and inhalations of her soul, of the spirit that is in her, and sometimes they keep an integrality and unity of the three planes. When she meditates, mankind meditates by proxy, when she prays for mankind, she prays that mankind may be saved.

Sri Aurobindo's exposition of this theme runs:

"There are three ways of being of the Mother of which you can become aware when you enter into touch of oneness with the Conscious Force that upholds us and the universe. Transcendent, the original supreme Shakti, she stands above the worlds and links the creation to the ever unmanifest mystery of the Supreme. Universal, the cosmic Mahashakti, she creates all these beings and contains and enters, supports and conducts all these million processes and forces. Individual, she embodies the power of these two vaster ways of her existence, makes them living and near to us and mediates between the human personality and the divine Nature."

Writing on November 3, 1914 the Mother records one of her transforming experiences:

"For quite a long time, Lord, my pen had fallen silent.. Yet hast Thou given me hours of unforgettable illumination, hours in which the union between the most divine Consciousness and the most material grew perfect, hours when the identification of the individual being with the universal Mother and of the universal Mother with Thee was so complete that the individual consciousness could perceive simultaneously its own existence, the life of the entire universe and Thy eternity beyond all change. Beatitude was at its height in an ineffable and infinite peace, the consciousness luminous and immeasurable, complex and yet one, existence all-powerful, master of death. And this is no longer a fleeting state, attained after a long concentration, vanishing as soon as it is born; it is a state that can last long hours full of eternity, hours at once instantaneous and interminable, a state brought about at will. That is to say, one which is permanent, one with which the most external consciousness comes into contact as soon as any occasion allows it, as soon as it is no longer occupied with a definite intellectual or physical task. In all work, constantly, there is the perception of Thy invariable presence in Thy dual form of Non-Being and Being, but as though behind a fine veil woven by the indispensable concentration upon the work that is done; while in the hours of solitude the being is immediately enveloped by a

marvellously powerful atmosphere, limpid, calm, divine; it lies merged within it, and then the life of splendour begins again in all its amplitude, all its complexity, all its sublimity, the physical body is glorified, supple, vigorous, energetic; the mind is superbly active in its calm lucidity, guiding and transmitting the forces of Thy divine Will; and all the being exults in an endless beatitude, a boundless love, a sovereign power, a perfect knowledge, an infinite consciousness. It is Thyself and Thou alone who livest, even in the least atom of the body-substance itself.

“Thus the solid foundations of Thy terrestrial work are prepared, the substructure of the immense edifice built; in every corner of the world one of Thy divine stones is laid by the power of conscious and formative thought; and in the hour of realisations the earth, thus prepared, will be ready to receive the sublime temple of Thy new and more complete manifestation ”

Her dreams and visions, her waking thoughts and plans, all are filled with the needs, aspirations and hopes of hungry Man, hungry for perfect existence, knowledge and beatitude. The Mother is the link, the intercessor between the hungry obscure phenomenal world and the pure blissful reality. On 31st May, 1914 she writes:

When the sun set in the indrawn contemplation of the calm twilight, all my being prostrated itself before Thee, O Lord, in mute adoration and complete self-giving. Then I was the whole earth and the whole earth prostrated itself before Thee, imploring the benediction of Thy illumination, the beatitude of Thy love. Oh! the kneeling earth that supplicates to Thee, then is ingathered in the silence of the night, waiting in both patience and anxiety for the illumination so ardently desired. If there is a sweetness in being Thy divine Love at work in the world, there is as great a sweetness in being the infinite aspiration which rises towards that infinite love. And to be able to change thus, to be successively, almost simultaneously, what receives and what gives, what transfigures and what is transfigured, to be identified with the painful darkness as with the all-powerful splendour and, in this double identification, to discover the secret of Thy sovereign unity, is this not a way of expressing, of accomplishing Thy supreme will?..

“O my sweet Master, my heart is a flaming chapel, and Thou art seated there permanently like the sublimest of idols; so it is that Thy form appears to me, clothed in magnificence, in the midst of the flames consuming my heart for Thee, and at the same time, in my head, I see Thee, know Thee as the Inconceivable, the Unknowable, the Formless; and in this double perception, this double knowledge, lies the plenitude of contentment.”

(To be continued)

NILIMA DAS

REFERENCE

- 1 *Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library*, Vol 25, p 20

GOLCONDE: A LOOK BEHIND

(Continued from the issue of September 1989)

9. THE BUILDERS

(5)

This series is an arrangement of material about Golconde that has been deposited with the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Archives and Research Library. The compiler and the Archives would be happy to receive additional information about this exceptional building and those who were the Mother's instruments in realising it.

SHRADDHAVAN

George Nakashima Sundarananda

It seems that Nakashima first came from Japan in July or August 1937 and stayed for about one month. He returned to Pondicherry later that year in November, a few weeks ahead of Sammer and the Raymonds. He left on his hazardous journey back to Japan in October 1939, and seems to have returned to the United States shortly afterwards—before Pearl Harbour.

This is the account of him that Mrityunjoy gives:

MRITYUNJOY: Our first contact with a foreigner who arrived in the Ashram to help in the Golconde work was with George Nakashima, a young architect, Japanese by parentage and tradition, but American by nationality, born in Spokane, Washington in 1905, and a Christian. He came towards the middle of 1936, and was received by Pavitra with full Japanese-style cordiality. Pavitra himself had lived in Japan for three and a half years, and always said that he liked Japan more than his own country, France.

Very soon this handsome, short-statured young man became intimate with some of us, through his childlike, lovable nature. But as he came on a special mission, a study of the building-site of Golconde, he devoted himself immediately to his job. The August 15th Darshan was not far off. We had forgotten that he was a visitor, not here for Yoga but on 'his Tokyo-master's mission', so we asked the Mother whether he also could come upstairs that day for the darshan and pranam to Sri Aurobindo and herself—in those days we still had the chance of receiving Sri Aurobindo's blessings with the touch of his soft palms on our heads. But the Mother said, "You must not suggest it to him. You need not even tell him that there will be something like Darshan. If he comes to know and

asks of himself we shall consider it " So I was particular not to tell him anything about it But to my delighted surprise, within a few days I found that he had come to know all about it, had asked for permission and got it already. On the auspicious day we saw him clad in a white dhoti and punjabi, looking like a beautiful young Indian but for the typical Japanese cut of his face!

I had not so much to do with Nakashima as Chandulal the engineer had; I was simply deputed to look after all his small needs and report them to Pavitra so he could tell the Mother I made regular visits to his room and I found contact with him very pleasant—simple and enjoyable without any unnecessary fuss. Pavitra told me that the Japanese are a race of people who rarely express their emotions, even their children do not cry

When Nakashima returned to Japan after finishing his observations regarding the building, his boss Antonin Raymond, the head architect of Golconde, wrote to Pavitra about his own increasing curiosity to discover the mystery behind the Ashram! Pavitra, the promising and brilliant French engineer, had befriended Raymond in Japan, and then got stuck here in Pondicherry Now Nakashima, this young Japanese lad, a miserably pessimistic type, always a misfit and dissatisfied with everyone and everything, returns from the Ashram and tells Raymond that he wants to go back there, in fact he suggests that Raymond should send him as his assistant to continue the work, saying that otherwise he would resign from his Tokyo service and return on his own to the Ashram!

Fortunately Raymond was generous enough to select him as one of his assistants, and assigned him here for quite a few years On Nakashima's second visit I had closer contact with him as gradually the work on Golconde began to develop in multiple forms His job was that of assistant architect; he had to follow his master's bidding and do the day-to-day planning of details, the calculations and drawings He also supervised on site the erection of the form-works for the concreting, and being himself a first-class carpenter, worked alongside the local Tamil carpenters. He had to deal with coolies also Since they did not know each other's language, this became difficult sometimes Yet he seemed to be managing them better than I did my coolies and mechanics, whose language was fairly familiar to me. But he was very friendly with the workmen. Even though my work was more with the concreting machines (the crude-oil engines, winch, hopper and vibrator) and with the steel-framework (bending, laying, and tying the iron rods of different diameters), I was in fairly close contact with him, and so I had a good opportunity to observe and appreciate the neat, meticulous, concentrated, hardworking and cheerful spirit of the typical Japanese character Gradually I noticed that not only was his work going on outwardly for the construction of the building, but work was going on inwardly in him too, for the construction of himself The fact that he would not miss the pranam and meditation, that he stopped taking pocket-money for his work, that he took his food in the dining room like all the rest of us, even that Sri

Aurobindo gave him a new name, "Sundarananda", by which he came to be known to us thereafter, all speak for his sincere inner work '1

(To be continued)

REFERENCE

1 *A Look Behind* by Mrityunjoy Mukherjee unpublished ms with Sri Aurobindo Ashram Archives and Research Library

YOGA—LIFE—POETRY

TWO PERSONAL LETTERS TO A SADHIKA ABROAD

READING your letter I find a great affinity with you. I am reminded of the occasions when the Mother asked for a definition of Yoga from those Ashramites who had the good fortune to form a happy semi-circle in front of her every evening just before the Soup Distribution which was a part of the Ashram's daily life for a few years in its early period. My definition was. "To feel always a warmth and a glow in my heart in my relation with the Mother." One may have expected from a supposed "intellectual" a more brainy attitude—a definition bringing in "a heat and a light in my head" But, as I said in one of my talks to the students here, I had lost my head over Sri Aurobindo and the Mother the moment I had seen them and that was surely the heart's doing. Since then the chief motive-power has been something other than the thinking mind. Not that I have renounced thought, but thought has been a winging rather than a pacing or even a running that it usually was. The change was due to the inmost kindling that took place in the presence of the two Gurus I had found—or, more accurately speaking, who had found me, a wanderer on the world's labyrinthine way, and pulled straight to themselves.

"The inmost kindling"—the adjective in the phrase is important and significant. For the heart has a within and a without. The latter is often a blind whirl, a dangerous movement, but hidden in it is a shining enchantment which leads to a beauty drawing one to the eternal truth of things. Such seems—esoterically—the disclosure in that line of Sri Aurobindo's which I can't help quoting and re-quoting

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

In the midst of what I have termed "a dangerous movement" is the "within" to the emotional self and there glides forward the divine flute-player who is the unfailing saviour calling us to himself and guiding us to our own being's secret plenitude. In this secret plenitude the essence of our whole existence, our entire multiform activity, is treasured. From that concealed core emanate the warmth and the glow I have spoken of—the real sense of the Yoga to me. Please don't fancy that I experience these wonders in their fulness all the time. I wish I did. But by the grace of my gurus something of the marvels has been gifted and if that something were to vanish I would be as good as dead.

Forgive me for writing so much apropos of my definition of Yoga. It can be a long preamble to a brief answer to your query about how "the stress of the Yoga put on the most external consciousness" mentioned by me in October 1985 has acted in the succeeding year. One or two things I may say in general. The

external consciousness, with its turning this way and that and its looking at a hundred sources of stimuli, realised one day—May 15, to be precise—that the true joy lies exclusively in the mysterious place whose physical entrance, as it were, one feels in the middle of one's chest and which I have designated the heart within and differentiated from the emotional self, the heart without. An intense awareness of an everlasting "paradise" which alone gives point to the word "bliss" came up with an extra dimension to the warmth and the glow I have been writing about. I have known this paradise in various aspects and to diverse degrees all these years but never with the uniqueness and absoluteness that was granted to me now.

"Paradise" is a Persian word and means "garden", particularly a royal one. We always talk of the Garden of Eden, don't we?—and the term "paradise" is used for Eden as in the title of Milton's epic, *Paradise Lost*. And I think the garden-concept is rather appropriate because there is a natural sense of flower and fragrance in connection with the profound consciousness of the psychic being. Yeats has sung how all things uncomely and broken and cruel "wrong thy image, O Rose in the deeps of my heart". Especially the sense of a rose is spontaneous since the physical heart is associated with blood, the crimson stream of life which is gathered and dispersed from the cardiac organ. Perhaps it is truer to say that the heart's blood is red and the poetic imagination brings up the rose-sense because in mystical experience a vast rose is actually glimpsed and felt both in the deep heart of God-love and in the high "overhead" of God-delight. Does not Sri Aurobindo make one of his most Mantric poems dilate through five stanzas on the "Rose of God"?

When I awoke, as never before in so concentrated and concrete a manner, to the secrecy in the middle of the chest, as if the body itself were feeling the psychic being at that spot, I could not help the rose-vision in a poem which took shape. I hope you won't be bored if I quoted the verses:

AT LAST

At last the unfading Rose—
Felt mine yet sought afar
In the flowering of forms
That proved but surface sheens,
Mirrors of a Mystery
That never broke to a star.

Now wakes a sudden sky
In the centre of my chest
Bliss-wafts that never die
Float from a petalled fire

Rooted in godlike rest.
 They spread in the whole world's air,
 Gold distances breathe close.
 Worship burns everywhere,
 Life flows to the Eternal's face.

Unveiled within, Light's spire,
 At last the unfading Rose.

Let me come now to some other questions of yours. My health is good. Several people have my welfare at heart. The greatest care is lavished on me by my young American friend Minna. By luck I have still my own teeth and my eyes are giving fair service—of course through glasses, thick ones after the removal of cataracts years back. Only my legs are rather troublesome. But I make it to the Samadhi every afternoon—not walking from my flat but from the Ashram gate to which a friend drives me in a car. Left safely there, I go on my own to a chair under the clock opposite the Samadhi. In walking I have to take the help of what are nicely termed “Canadian Canes”. I spend nearly an hour and a half in that chair—from a little before 4.15 to just past 5.30, trying to be suffused with the sense of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. My memory is almost as good as before inasmuch as important things are concerned. Much of it has to do with a lot of poetry that keeps coursing through it from mostly my old reading. But in the midst of it, names and faces from the past and present bring a quiet smile to my lips and a great affection goes forth to people near and far, in India and abroad. Among them one of the most precious is you. (5.11.1986)

*

You are a real beauty of a soul! The qualities natural to the psychic being are in most active play in your life. The three outstanding qualities are: sweetness, light, strength. Yes, strength in addition to sweetness and light, for the inmost soul is the secret cavern where burns the godhead Agni. This godhead's tongues of flame not only illumine us with divine mysteries which guide us in the right direction, not only taste at all hours a hidden paradise—thus shedding both light and sweetness: they also keep at bay with this holy heat the adversary Wolf and temper the will in us to bear the strokes of fate or else cut through opposing circumstances. In some people, one quality or another out of the basic three predominates but I see in you on most occasions all of them jointly at work. The way you are facing your body's troubles without losing even an iota of faith in the Divine Mother and with actually finding in them subtle opportunities to have a more intense relationship of love with her shows how strong the sweetness is and how radiant the strength and how calm and warm the light. It is this intèrfusion

of the three qualities and their well-proportioned co-presence that led to the exclamation I make in the first sentence of my letter.

It makes my heart happy that you believe I have been of some help to you in your crisis of illness and tests of faith. There is not an afternoon at the Samadhi when I have failed to conjure up a sense of you near me and to offer you into the Mother's hands. A warmth streaming out from some depth within me envelops my sense of you and bears you towards that silent fragrant fountain of Grace which is the Samadhi. While reading your letter, on reaching the words—"a renewed change of my disease for the worse which was so intense as never before"—I could not go further a few minutes, for a powerful inwardness seized me and a dumb intense cry went up to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother to protect you always and improve your health and prolong your life. It was not in my power to come out of this inwardness at will. So I just sat with eyes half-closed and waited for the Divine-ward movement to come to its own intended end. Then I resumed reading. I seemed to live with you the vicissitudes of your ailment, especially as I could feel from your words the Mother carrying you onward through the grim shadow which ought to have darkened into death but which gradually began to thin away towards the end of March and abruptly yielded to a change for the better which your new homeopath doctor had been expecting. I feel thankful at the same time to this doctor and the one who was treating you earlier, for it was honest on her part to admit that she could go no further, even though she had still the confidence that nothing short of such a desperate strait would make her confess failure.

To aspire after good health is nothing unspiritual. At one period in the past there was the notion that a sickly and weakened body was a help to the soul's development. Of course, anything that happens to us can be made a path to the Divine, but to put a premium on suffering and sickness in order to advance spiritually is to be both ignorant and sick in mind. Such an attitude forgets that the body too has the Divine in its substance and such an attitude has its eyes set chiefly on the life beyond. All this is old-worldly. In reaction to it science has put an over-stress on the body, particularly as it has serious doubts whether anything of us survives physical dissolution. The right balance is preserved by the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

It has three intuitions. First of all, the present life is not the only one: a series of embodiments has preceded it and a series will follow because God is to be realised and established on earth. As the Koran splendidly makes Allah say, "Think you that I have made all this universe for a jest?" Here is a truth not properly gauged by Allah's own followers. Though they have rightly felt a great vital force released by their Prophet, their goal is still the life beyond just as in Christianity and Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Buddhism, except that Buddhism for all its emphasis on a supra-cosmic Nirvana as the *summum bonum* has the doctrine of reincarnation which implies a sustained interest in earth-life rather

than a looking forward to a heaven at the close of merely one brief experience in physical existence. Hinduism too is reincarnationist but has in addition the insight unforgettably expressed by the Mundaka Upanishad (in Sri Aurobindo's translation): "The Eternal is before us and the Eternal is behind us and to the north and to the south of us and above and below and extended everywhere. All this magnificent universe is nothing but the Eternal." Then there is the sentence in the Svetasvatara Upanishad: "That green bird hopping about, that other with the red eye, even that old man bent over his stick—these too are Brahman." The underlying godhead, the essential sacredness of Matter itself has always been part of the Hindu faith. Greatest of Matter's phenomena is the recurrent Avatarhood visioned by Hinduism—the series of special descents of the Supreme in a human form. In a more generalised shape we have the statement of one of the mightiest Avatars, Sri Krishna, in the Gita: "They who disdain or misuse the body forget that I am seated within it." All this prepares for the culminating truth revealed by Sri Aurobindo that the very tenement of clay which has so far been found, even by Hinduism, subject to disease, degeneration and death has a divine destiny—a perfect body waiting to come down from the Supermind which holds the archetypes of all things and a corporeal perfection waiting here in embryo for development out of the profundities of the Supramental Power involved in Matter and seeking to evolve from them and assimilate in terms of earth the substance of heaven.

I am afraid I have made rather a detour to arrive at the importance Sri Aurobindo attaches to the body and to the life terrestrial as the final scene of God's manifestation. So health should be our aim, but health so as to provide us with the chance to do to the maximum the work of belonging integrally to the Mother. A spur towards such a stand is the Mother's reminder that in the adventure of earthly evolution bodily life is naturally the only field of sadhana. The main object of a sound body living as long as possible is an ever-increasing openness to the realisation of the fourfold ideal of our Yoga as flashed forth in that stanza by Sri Aurobindo which hails from the highest plane of spiritual inspiration available to us, the sheerest Mantra in which a vast yet precise vision takes up a deep and intense yet poised emotion and fully expresses it in revelatory word and rhythm:

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

Read these lines clearly and slowly, letting each verbal vibration surround and penetrate you. A Mantra like them has both an illuminative and a formative power in the highest degree to evoke the soul and open not only the mental and

the vital being but also the body to the Ineffable that presses towards us to make all things new and true.

In the midst of the inner and outer atmosphere created by such lines, the idea of death grows shadowy, for the sense of immensity is all about us in which our small selves with their little bits of physical stuff lose the usual importance we give them. There is no room left for fear. For that immensity is not an alien grandeur. Within it are the Sri Aurobindo and the Mother we know and within them is the truth of each of us. A calm viewing of death, as well as of life, results. No desire remains for the former as a cure of our ills nor any shrinking from it as if the cure were worse than the disease. From what you write I have the impression that you have the correct attitude towards both life and death. Serenely and happily you have left them to the Mother's decision, yet realising that persisting health is necessary for enough time to proceed on your path to the Divine. The "order", along with the assurance, you heard in April when awakening from a nap—"Surely, I will help you, but you must not be impatient!"—is, without any doubt, the Mother's own voice. What you did, on hearing it, is a moving act: "I offered at once this impatience, which is one of my various weaknesses." I am glad you didn't repeat the famous prayer to God by a man lacking patience: "Please cure me of my impatience—at once!" (21.6 1989)

AMAL KIRAN
(K. D. SETHNA)

THE STORY OF A SOUL

BY HUTA

(Continued from the issue of September 1989)

The Mother's Message

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



Vol. Four 1960

No. 2

Now it was February 1961.

I was busy making a beaded hand-bag and a gown for the Mother

Every day the Mother sent me white roses and prasad. She told me that she had put a special force in it.

In the afternoons I went to see her.

Savitri-reading with Mr Purani was going on well. In comparison with this wonderful subject, all other subjects fell flat.

Still there was no indication from the Mother about commencing the work of *Savitri*-paintings.

I felt unsettled. In answer to my letter the Mother wrote on 7 February

“Huta, my dear little child,

You ask me what you must do. It would be better to ask what you must be, because the circumstances and activities in life have not much importance. What is important is our way of reacting towards them.

Human nature is such that when you concentrate on your body you fall ill, when you concentrate on your heart and feelings you become unhappy, when you concentrate on the mind you get bewildered.

There are two ways of getting out of this precarious condition.

One is very arduous; it is a severe and continuous tapasya. It is the way of the strong who are predestined for it.

The other is to find something worth concentrating upon that diverts your attention from your small personal self. The most effective is a big ideal, but there are innumerable things that enter into this category. Most commonly people choose marriage because it is the most easily available. To love somebody and to love children makes you busy and compels you to forget a little your own self. But it is rarely successful, because love is not a common thing.

Others turn to art, others to science, some choose a social or a political life, etc., etc.

But here also all depends on the sincerity and endurance with which is followed the chosen path. Because here also there are difficulties and obstacles to surmount.

So in life, nothing comes without an effort and a struggle.

And if you are not ready for the effort and the struggle, then it is better to accept the fact that life will be dull and unsatisfactory and submit quietly to this fact.

This, my dear child, is the first point I must make clear to you before proceeding any further.

With my love and blessings.”

The Mother read out this letter to Satprem who recorded it on 7 February 1961. She, taking up the theme of my letter, made various comments about her body and the trials it had gone through.

Readers may note that many of the things the Mother told Satprem about spirituality and occultism—especially in connection with the cells of her body

and their transformation—she told me also, a shade differently but essentially covering the same truths. In addition, she gave me concrete experiences of both the higher and the nether worlds—particularly when she started to teach me *Savitri*-paintings in October 1961. My account of the matter will be packed with things splendid as well as things that must cause a shudder.

The *Savitri*-paintings, named by the Mother—“Meditations on *Savitri*”—are her own creations through me, which she has put in front of the whole of humanity, so that all may perceive, grasp and realise the Truth

She wanted to bring down upon earth through paintings the visions seen by Sri Aurobindo and herself.

Each painting has its own history. The Mother commented on many pictures. She has also written letters on them.

After “Meditations on *Savitri*” the Mother and I took up another work concerning *Savitri* which she named “About *Savitri*”. In it she has disclosed her vision of the New World expressing the Supramental Light, Consciousness, Force and Delight. Here she has revealed their effect on the cells of the body. Her comments have been tape-recorded by me. Whatever has not been tape-recorded was taken down by me and she read and corrected every report.

White Roses is only for the general reader, because it touches on subjects of universal interest. Apart from these letters the Mother has written many more personal ones which unfold unknown things.

To continue: I found it extremely hard to comprehend and assimilate her teaching in her letter. Nevertheless, I tried to get my scattered thoughts into some sort of logical order.

Whether I liked to undergo the hideous difficulties or not, I was compelled to accept them to purify my whole being and to prepare myself for the higher Consciousness.

I was inspired to write a letter to the Mother on the 9th expressing that I should make my life worth living by doing something concrete and genuine which might be profitable to others. The Mother replied:

“Huta, my dear little child,

I have read your excellent letter and mostly agree with what you write

The best, indeed, is that we should have a good talk together.

So I shall see you tomorrow the 10th at 10 a.m.

With all my love and blessings.”

We had a talk about what I should do and become. I knew that the Mother would see me through despite obstructions and oppositions from the dark forces

My soul’s prayer to her was “O Mother, make me your true and perfect child, and use my whole life for your purpose ”

She held my hands, looked into my eyes for a long unfathomable moment and then said:

“I will take you to your goal. Your aspiration will be fulfilled.”

And she smiled reassuringly. She went into a trance for a few moments, then opened her eyes and said.

“Behind all troubles, behind all difficulties, there is the Divine Grace. When you are on the point of falling down and actually fall, the Grace appears ”

Sri Aurobindo has written something similar:

“The Divine holds our hand through all and if he seems to let us fall, it is only to raise us higher.”

*

On the 15th there was heavy rain. The weather was unpredictable. But now the climate changed. It was getting very warm.

I was absorbed in reading detective stories. It seemed half of the night I became a detective searching for the criminal and the other half I sojourned in unknown worlds

Sometimes I painted certain “studies” according as the inner feeling guided me.

The Mother and I were anxious to get from Bombay the prints of my pictures along with my original paintings. Meanwhile one picture went to Germany for a colour block and prints.

*

Usually before Darshans the Mother came to the Meditation Hall downstairs to distribute saris and napkins to people

On the 19th, Sunday, she did so.

The Mother’s birthday was approaching: she would be 83. I went to her and offered the gown and the beaded bag. She liked both of them enormously and said enthusiastically that she would carry the bag when she went out.

*

On her birthday she handed this message to all in the Meditation Hall upstairs. As always the atmosphere was heavenly.

The message ran:

“Once the connection between the supramental and the human consciousness is made, it is the psychic being that gives *the readiest response*—more ready than the mind, the vital or the physical. It may be added that it is also a purer response; the mind, vital and physical can allow other things to mix with their reception of the supramental influence and spoil its truth. The psychic is pure in its response and allows no such mixture.

The supramental change can take place only if the psychic is awake and is made the chief support of the descending supramental power.”

SRI AUROBINDO

In the evening the Mother went to the Playground for the programme of music played by the children and finally the Band. It was a pleasure to see my bag in her hand.

*

Days passed too rapidly.

I sent to the Mother one of my paintings. She commented on the 28th:

“Huta, my dear little child,

This painting is *so* nice—I like it very much. I have started revising your ‘report’ and will give it when it is completed.

I read your letter and *understand* not only what you mean but also what you want.

With all my love and blessings.”

And that was the end of the month.

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A NOTICE FROM HUTA

Dear Readers,

Since the following chapters of *The Story of a Soul* require serious concentration and considerable time, I feel the need to discontinue *The Story* for sometime in order to carry out the work with precision. So I ask to be excused.

No part of *The Story* which I have written so far may be reproduced in any manner whatever without my written permission.

Thanks for your appreciation and good will.

HUTA

THE ASHRAM CHILDREN AND SRI AUROBINDO'S LIFE

A DREAM-DIALOGUE

(Continued from the issue of September 1989)

“YOUR father must have loved you especially ”

“I think he loved us all equally, and not only us, he loved everyone because he was very large-hearted. But perhaps he had a special fondness for me because he knew me to be exceptionally good at studies and as he hoped that some day I would become an important man—for example, a Judge or a Magistrate. In those days, to become a Judge or a Magistrate was to attain an ideal heaven. But he didn't know of the failure in the riding test for the I.C.S examination ”

“What? What is that?”

“You haven't heard the story? Then what *have* you heard? Well, I must keep this one too for later. Anyway, my father was misinformed about the ship in which I was to return and when the newspapers reported that it had sunk near the coast of Portugal with lives lost, he soon died of the shock.

By the way, do you know why he had called me ‘Aurobindo’?”

“No.”

“Father had decided that his son would have a name that was as new as it was unique, nobody had ever been called ‘Aurobindo’ before. And he had hoped that his son would be as unique and unequalled in his life and character as he was in his name. Nowadays of course this name is given quite commonly to boys, I find And then there are also Arvindbalas and Arvindbabus, Arvind Mills and even Arvind Restaurants. Is any of you here called Arvind?”

“No, but others in the Ashram are. (*The children exchange quick glances.*) Sir, how could your father leave your mother alone in London and come back home?”

“Well, father was like that. And she wasn't quite alone, really. He had left her in the care of a friend of his, an English doctor And my mother wasn't a typically timid Bengali girl, either Firstly she was a Brahma. In those days, the Brahma Samaj allowed its women both education and freedom. My grandfather had seen to it that his daughter studied literature and several other subjects Secondly, after father married her, she was encouraged by him to be very modern and she met and ate with her many Indian and English friends very freely. She could even ride a horse. Did you know this?”

“Did she dress like an Englishwoman when she was in England?”

“Not at all! Only nowadays, after Independence, Indian women are up to date and wear Western clothes. My mother always wore a sari and when she walked down the street dressed in a sari people on either side really stopped to stare! Because she was, as Barin used to say, terribly beautiful! And when this

beauty was wrapped in a sari, it was as though Mother Lakshmi herself had come down on earth. In Rangpur, she was known as the Rose of Rangpur. The sari is so very graceful, though Nirod might say that it is a useless beauty. (*The children turned to smile sweetly at me and said—'There he is, trying hard not to smile'.*) Someone told me that nowadays our girls wear skirts instead of saris?"

"So do we!"

"You all are still very little; you are not old enough to understand the mysteries of the sari. Anyway, let's talk of other things. Where was I? Oh yes! So father came back home, leaving our mother in London and us three brothers in Manchester. Barin was born a few months later. She had already been expecting him when she had arrived in England. Do you know what Barindra means? It means 'The Sea', Lord of the Sea and he was born almost on the coast, and that was why he was given this name. It was very fortunate that he was born in England, otherwise he would be hanging from the gallows."

"How's that?"

"Well, in all the films about Swadeshi and Independence that you have seen, haven't you noticed how many youngsters were hanged?"

"Oh! so that's what you meant when you said 'gallows'. We were wondering what sort of structure it was. By the way, why would your brother Barin have been hanged?"

"Good Lord! Your question sounds very much like Nirod's! He asked me once—'Sir, were you a leader of the Swadeshi movement?'! Barin too was a great leader. In fact, in those days we had both become so well-known that my elder brother Manmohan used to say—'There are only two and a half really great men in India today'—i.e., the two of us, Barin and I counted for two, and Tilak stood for half." (*Laughs*)

"Who is Tilak?"

"A very great man—certainly not half but a whole man, in fact more than a whole. Few sons of India have been as great. I'll tell you about him by and by... Well... My mother came back home a little while later."

"Weren't you sad?"

"I'm not very sure. Are boys' hearts as sensitive as those of girls? Also, right from our earliest childhood we were being brought up to be English gentlemen away from home and we weren't really very close to our parents. And so now we set about becoming perfect Sahibs by studying as hard as we could. My two elder brothers went to school, but since I was only seven years old, I studied at home."

"Goodness! You were only seven, and you stayed there away from your parents?"

"But I had my two brothers with me. And, for that matter, so do you too stay away from your parents. Mr. Drewett, the master of the house, taught me English and Latin, and his wife Mrs. Drewett . . ."

"How could she teach you anything?"

(Laughs) "You forget that at that age I was as ignorant as you are now. She taught me French, History, Geography and Drawing. Do your mothers know all these subjects?"

A fat chance they have of knowing anything! All they really know is how to scold." (Laughter)

"Really? Well, in a refined European household things are somewhat different. Mr. Drewett was deeply religious as well as learned, and always a perfect gentleman in his manners and his conduct. Of course, his old mother was a little bit different. She was old-fashioned and so, pretty narrow-minded. The family consisted of these three. Perhaps because the Drewetts were childless, they grew easily fond of us. And I think the gentleman was rather more fond of me than of the others not only because I was the youngest but also because I enjoyed my studies. He took great pains to teach me well. This is one of the remarkable qualities that Westerners have—whatever they do, they do it as thoroughly and sincerely as they can. And I had a few Western traits in my character, for example I was rather reserved and quiet.

"Are the English like that?"

"Not exactly, but their actions speak louder than their words. I'll tell you a funny story. Tennyson, the English poet, was a great friend of Carlyle's. Surely you know Carlyle? His *French Revolution* is truly an admirable book. I believe Nolini, even in his early teens, had already read this book in all its parts. Anyhow, when these two writers met, they often sat by the fireside for more than two hours without exchanging a single word. And when Tennyson got up to leave, they both remarked that they had spent a wonderful evening. Do you think this kind of silent conversation would be possible here? Just look at me, see how I am talking continuously."

"Oh! that's just to bring yourself close to us. Otherwise you are ever so serious. For example, during the Darshan, your look is so stern that some people really get frightened. If Mother hadn't been sitting beside you there, no one would have dared go for your Darshan!"

"Good Lord! Is that the reputation I have? And I was never like that! Of course I've always been a man of few words, that I do not deny. My brother Manmohan was a radically different temperament.

"By the way, did you three brothers ever quarrel?"

"Well, what brothers don't ever quarrel? This is how the family patterns are drawn, aren't they?—that brothers will quarrel, the weeping sister be rebuked by her mother and the father will come in, bringing back a smile to every face. Do you think that we were all ideal human beings right from birth, each one a Yudhishtir? Of course neither were we as wicked as Duryodhan or Duhshasan, and so the fights were never bloody. The people here believe that I was born pure and perfect and wise, that I never had to undergo the burden of pain or error or ignorance. Not at all so. I was like any one of you, someone with defects

as well as qualities, only I overcame my imperfections through personal effort and sadhana. But about that I'll tell you another day. My eldest brother Benoy did indeed possess something of Yudhishtir's character, he was quiet and deep, diligent and affectionate and I was very close to him. Moreover, both Mr and Mrs Drewett were wise and kind, the quiet strength of their natures left a fine impression on our child consciousness. It is by their encouragement that my love for knowledge increased and I could make so much progress so early. It was at that age that I started reading Shelley, Wordsworth, Shakespeare and other great poets."

"Did you understand them?"

"Not everything, perhaps, and not very clearly. But then poetry is not always something one understands with one's mind. Children understand better with the heart, it is the heart that opens the doors of the intelligence. Of course my intelligence was not very negligible. Therefore, after finishing my studies, I used to sit at home absorbed in all these books."

"And what about games?"

"In those days, one didn't pay much attention to games. I may have played some cricket, but that's all. I also wrote some poetry, though it was rather poor. Our motto used to be then that "Students should live for their Studies." Or 'chhātrānām adhyayanam tapah'. Did you follow? You study Sanskrit, don't you? Sanskrit is the language of the gods, and if you do not study the language of the gods how can you grow up to become gods?"

"You know Sanskrit too?" (*An older child signs to the young questioner to keep quiet.*)

"How could I ask you to learn what I never did?"

"Pujalalji is teaching us how to recite in Sanskrit. But how many languages are we to learn—there's already English, French, the mother-tongue."

"What is your mother-tongue?"

"Bengali—"

"Gujarati—"

"Hindi—"

"Oh! is that so? I always thought it was French."

"Why? O-oh! Yes. And our father-tongue then is English! (*Laughs*) But Mother speaks both English and French. So we have got to learn English and French, our native language and Sanskrit, how is it possible?"

"Why not? Didn't I learn English, French, Latin and Greek? In childhood learning *is* as easy as child's play!"

"You learned so many languages, read so many books! You must have been at your studies all day! Goodness, we'd never have been able to, we'd have been bored to death. Didn't you ever play with the English boys?"

"There weren't very many occasions to, really. I was made to stay at home, mostly, you see. And you know, don't you, that the English are not very

outgoing or easily friendly.”

“But Norman-da is so friendly with us! Of course his son, who is as straight and tall as a palm tree, walks about taking long solemn steps and wearing a very serious air. Do you know, he even speaks Bengali!”

“Bengali? But Bengali is such a difficult language.”

“No, no, of course it isn’t! (*unanimously*) We all speak Bengali. Nowadays, though, there’s Hindi too.”

“So, then, you see how easy it is to learn languages! The English people, however, find it very difficult to pronounce other languages correctly. Their own hard language tends to make their tongues rather stiff. Indians have much more supple tongues, relatively speaking. That is why, perhaps, they talk so much more too. So whenever the Drewetts received friends and relatives at home, the latter were always terribly impressed by our accent. ‘Oh! How well they speak English!’ was always what they exclaimed, so much so that we had got really fed up with hearing that compliment.

“Do relatives visit one another in the West?”

“Surely they do! But not as they do in our country where you may suddenly find uncles and aunts with their entire households on your doorstep, without any warning. You see, there people have a strong sense of self-respect. If they want to see one another, they have their clubs where they do it. Have you read *The Pickwick Papers* by Dickens?”

“No-o-o.”

“If you had, then you would have understood something of the English temperament. There is a saying that an Englishman’s home is his castle into which one cannot easily trespass. Just as an Indian’s home is his kitchen!” (*Laughter*)

“Er, Sir, does one *have* to eat beef in England? Did you too—”

“Why do you hesitate to ask? We ate whatever was served, without making any fuss or distinction. Children rarely do. Besides we had no voice and don’t forget that I left my homeland at a very early age, so that I had hardly any occasion to relish Bengali dishes like ‘spicy spinach’ and ‘chochchori’. The food I ate at the Drewett’s was very plain, very different from the infinite variety of our Bengali cooking. In fact, one should not be very interested in food; so long as one gets healthy nourishing food, it is enough. To dwell too much on the pleasures of the palate is harmful. Our ancient forefathers, the Rishis, had always advocated fresh, clean nourishing food for a straightforward and simple life. This, they said, maintains purity in the heart and mind and helps one to attain Godhead. Even in our Ashram, Mother has not left too much scope for greed, where food is concerned. So was it also at the Drewett’s, for not only was it an English house, it was also a priest’s home where simplicity and cleanliness were the law.”

“They must have been very religious, weren’t they?”

“That they were, very much so. They were always singing hymns and going

to Church Especially old Mrs. Drewett, our tutor's mother. She was an almost fanatical church-goer She even took us along."

"You went to church?"

"Of course, since she took us. And anyway, at that age, there is hardly any difference between a church and a temple."

"How did you find it?"

"Terrible, I was so bored listening to those long dry sermons the priests gave that I would be ready to doze off. But the old lady always kept a very strict eye on us. I think she wanted to convert us into very devout children. This reminds me of an amusing incident. I told you, didn't I?, that she was an extremely religious, almost a fanatical Christian. According to her, Christianity was the one true faith and by converting others to that faith she would be opening the gates of Paradise for them as well as for herself. With this in mind, she once took me to a big gathering of Christian priests. I had no idea of what she had in mind, and even if I had had, I could have done nothing about it. Anyway, once the prayers and psalms were over and the meeting broke up, she took me to a small room. A priest came in and began asking me rather strange and peculiar questions. Annoyed at being unable to make head or tail of them, I remained glumly silent. Then suddenly the two of them cried out in unison—"The boy is saved! His soul is saved!" The priest then asked me to pray. I had never been used to praying. All the same I mumbled some words mechanically, at the end of which I was told that I had become a Christian. I was ten years old at the time.

"So you became a Christian?"

"What did I know of Christianity at that age? I remember, my brothers also scolded me, and called me stupid and other such names. But I don't think Mr. Drewett approved of forced conversions I lived so many years with him, but I don't remember him ever talking to me about religion. Anyway, I've already told you that the memories of my childhood are all rather hazy. All except one, a memory which seems to have been etched in stone. I was eleven then, in the last year of my stay in Manchester. I was sitting alone. Everything around me was very quiet and still, even my thoughts seemed to have gone to rest. And then came a powerful feeling, a conviction that a time was fast approaching when the earth was going to undergo a great change, an unimaginable transformation And that I would be at the centre of that revolution. Do you follow me?"

(The children look at one another).

"Have you seen a tropical storm in April? Or a cyclone? You have? Then you must have seen how the whole sky gets gradually covered by big black clouds There is no wind, not a leaf whispers. The birds fly back to their nests. It seems as if the whole earth is waiting, with bated breath. Then the storm bursts, all Nature is shaken by the battering of rain and wind But when it's over, it feels like a fresh clear world A new creation

"I understood that my path would be very different from those that others

trod I would have to live for a great ideal. But what that ideal was, was not at all clear at the time."

"Did you call the Mother to help you in such moments?"

"The Mother? Was she even born at the time? In any case didn't I tell you that for years and years I was not at all drawn to God? Well, that's another mystery. But after that experience I began to feel the stress of a new change within me. Perhaps my brothers noticed it, though since my temperament had always been rather aloof and uncommunicative, they did not ask me anything. Even I myself did not bother my head too much about it.

"It is not my nature to dwell too much on anything or to worry unduly. But when I am convinced as to what my duty is, I do it in a single-minded and unshaken manner.

"Well, then, to return to our story. It was the last year of our stay in Manchester. My elder brothers were to end their schooling, and all three of us were to go on to London. And since it was the final year, Mr. Drewett seemed to intensify my study-courses."

"Were you very pleased with the prospect of going to London?"

"Very pleased? I really can't say. Though, of course, I was happy to think that I was going to new places, new things, and would see with my own eyes the famous London Town of which I had heard and read so much. But what brought a special thrill was the knowledge that I would finally be free to go out of the house, to a school where I would meet other students and teachers. Actually it was my brother, Manmohan, who was terribly excited. Either he would lecture at length to me about where we were going, or he would sing with a Shelleyan effusion the praises of London and the Houses of Parliament, of the river Thames spanned by the famed London Bridge. And then, it is always a matter of pride to think one is going to study at St. Paul's."

"Why?"

"Because it is the finest school in London. It has the finest students from all over England. But I did not know then that happy days would soon be over to be replaced by misery and gloom. Mr. Drewett gave us no inkling of this. In fact, right up to the end he looked after us with all affection and care."

"Then did you not feel a wrench when the time came to leave him?"

"A little bit, yes, naturally. Though, we were not the age to be soft-hearted. And it may be said that even our characters were shaped in the English mould!"

"You were talking of misery and gloom.?"

"Oh yes, though that was a different kind of misery. I will come to that when I tell you about my life in London which began after my stay in Manchester was over."

"We'd really love to see you as a boy of eight or nine, the clothes you wore, the way you walked."

"The dolls I played with...!"

“The dolls I played with .!”

“No-o-o. But all the same, it would have been wonderful if we had even a few photographs. Do you know that now we have got photographs of the Mother as a little girl? Oh, what a lovely child she was!”

A sweet smile began playing around Sri Aurobindo's lips.

(To be continued)

NIRODBARAN

(Translated by Jhumur from the Bengali)

HOW THEY CAME TO THE ASHRAM

LALJIBHAI'S STORY

The Mother's Yoga in the Material World

LALJIBHAI started looking for a suitable place for his Sugar Factory with Udar whom the Mother had asked to help him. They took photographs of different locations and every day showed them to the Mother. When she was shown the photograph of the place where the Sugar Mill is situated now she liked it and said, "This is the place. Construct the factory here."

The Mother asked Udar not only to help Laljibhai in the selection and purchase of the land, but also to introduce Laljibhai to the various government officers. Udar helped him in the purchase of land and later took a great part in the construction of the factory. The Mother came for the foundation-laying ceremony. On the occasion she gave the message, "Faithfulness is the sure basis of success."

She had earlier at the time of the registration of the Company given the name—"The New Horizon Sugar Mill."

Time and again on different occasions as problems kept cropping up, one after another, she would say, "Laljibhai, have some faith, faith, faith." Once he replied, "Mother, I have faith." The Mother said, "No. It is a mental faith. It is not from the heart. It must come from the heart. Then it is a real faith." Laljibhai replied, "Mother, I will try."

When the Mother's Force acts so powerfully and the instrument so devoted, nothing can withhold success. The New Horizon Sugar Mill was ready on September 15, 1960. The Mother came for the opening ceremony. Toward the end of the ceremony it started to rain and the Mother's dress became a little wet. Laljibhai said in distress, "Mother, I am very sorry that this has happened." The Mother stopped him, "Don't say such a thing. This is an agricultural industry and I wanted to know whether Mother Nature is collaborating in this enterprise. She has given her blessings by sending rain. Now you don't have to worry."

And so it proved. Laljibhai says that in the past thirty years they never had any problem with the weather, with lack of rain or shortage of water either for the factory or for the crops of the farmers associated with the factory. This is an extraordinary example of how the Mother's Force works.

After the opening ceremony of the Sugar Mill, the Mother came and sat in Laljibhai's office (at the Sugar Mill). Laljibhai, his family and many others came to offer *pranam*.

Next day when Laljibhai went to see her the Mother said, "Laljibhai, I was so pleased yesterday that I have given salvation to you and to all of your family members and to all others who came to do *pranam* to me. I am very happy, very happy."

The Bible says that one who asks will receive. Laljibhai asked and received guidance and help from the Mother at each step. He asked her, "Mother, where should we put the bore-well?" The Mother replied, "Go and ask water-diviners." Laljibhai said, "Mother, I do not trust water-diviners. Sometimes they succeed and sometimes they fail. Mother, *please* you do it for me." The Mother asked for the blue-print of the factory-area. She spread out the blue-print and marked two places for the digging of tubewells. The tubewells dug at these two spots are giving plenty of water even to this day. By her Grace the water-level has never gone down.

At the opening ceremony there were some subtle forces getting together which tried to create trouble. They challenged the Mother, "We will never allow you to run this mill." At first the Mother didn't answer and returned to the Ashram after the ceremony. They all started coming to the Mother and complained to her, "You are not kind to us. Why are they crushing us? We don't like it and we will never allow this factory to run at all." The Mother said to them, "Keep quiet. You are all good beings, nice ones—you must try to help the factory which has my blessings. What you want I can give you." But the forces were obstinate and they never believed the assurance the Mother had given and started creating trouble. After the opening ceremony there was to be a celebration. Just before the celebration some part of the machinery broke. Laljibhai was worried. How was he to show the factory to the ministers and other distinguished guests? Thinking, "If the Factory is not running, the function will be a fiasco," he went into his office room and started praying intensely, "Mother, help me. Mother, help me, help me," and at once the machinery started working.

Later the Mother revealed, "That afternoon, exactly at half past three, I felt that I had to make a little concentration. So I paid attention and saw Laljibhai praying to me. He was praying, praying, calling me—such a strong call that it pulled me. I was taking my bath (you know what happens when I'm strongly pulled—I'm stopped right in the very midst of a gesture, then the consciousness goes wandering off, and I can't do anything, it stops me dead. That's exactly what happened to me in the bathroom.) When I saw what was happening I straightened things out. Then they must have had their ceremony, for suddenly I felt, 'Ah, now it has calmed down, it's all right.'"

Next day when Laljibhai went to the Mother and told her that just before 3:30 the machine had stopped and how he had started praying at 3:45, the Mother said, "Oh, I know." Then she explained to him the power of prayers and how they are answered if they are sincere.

The Mother explained also about the piles of sugarcane which were thrown into the machine to be crushed. When they are thrown in, they are living, full of vital force, during the crushing the vital force is hurled out with extreme violence. This force is quite angry, like a snarling dog. It kept accumulating and piling. The Mother thought that this angry force would have some effect on the people. Being beaten out it might pose a certain danger. And as she had foreseen

the next day the machinery broke down. The Mother was informed. It was repaired immediately. Again it broke down. It happened three times during that night.

The next day the Mother disclosed, "During the day I had thought: why not attract these forces to our side, take them, satisfy them and give them some peace and joy and use them? I thought about it, concentrated a little, but then I didn't bother any further. At 10 o'clock they came upon me in floods—they kept coming and coming and I was busy with them the whole time. They were not ugly (not so luminous either), they were wholesome, straightforward, honest forces."

The Mother worked with them for one hour and then stopped. As soon as she stopped the machine broke down at the factory. Then the Mother made a pact with them. As there were always new vital forces coming out from the newly crushed cane she saw the need of a permanent formation over them to take and absorb them, to calm them down and scatter them a little. She told Laljibhai that she had established friendly relations with these forces and had asked them not to create trouble and, instead of making the factory stop, to help it. The Mother also gave these forces the charge to stop people of ill-will from staying long in the factory compound and to protect the machinery, to protect the factory in every respect, so that bad forces might not enter and disturb the working of the factory. Laljibhai says that these beings are still working in the factory as guards and keep away unfriendly people.

Laljibhai understood that the Mother could help anybody in need, if they had faith in her and called her sincerely.

He wanted to build a house for the Mother in the factory compound, so that she might go there on week-ends for an outing. He asked the Mother's permission. She said, "Why do you want to build a house for me, for I will not be using it at all?" Laljibhai said, "Mother, at least give us permission. If you come there even for a day it will become a place of pilgrimage. It will be like a temple." The Mother graciously agreed. Laljibhai said further, "Mother, please visit the factory and show me the place where I should build the house." She replied, "It is not necessary for me to come. You go around the place. Where you feel my Force and Pull, stop there and that will be the place where you should build the house."

Laljibhai went around the factory compound for a whole hour without feeling any sort of Force and Pull. Then he reached a spot where he felt so great a Force and Pull that he stopped for a few minutes and realised it was the place where he should build this house. He took a photograph of the place and showed it to the Divine Mother, who said, "Yes. It is quite suitable." When the house was ready, the Mother came there for the opening ceremony. She said, "In this house four months ago before it was completed I was sitting on that window-sill and meditating." She then wrote a message for that house:

"A beautiful house, in a beautiful place, offered by a beautiful heart."

An image of Lord Ganesh was placed in the house. On seeing it the Mother

exclaimed, "Oh! you have come even before me!"

It is but human that Laljibhai wanted to know the Mother's impressions of the house. So he asked Vasudha, the Mother's companion, "What were her impressions?" Vasudha said, "The Mother liked the bathroom very much and said, 'If I had that bathroom here it would be better.'" The very next morning Laljibhai went to the Mother and said, "Mother, it would be better if we have a bathroom exactly like that here on the top (second floor)." The Mother said, "All right." Then Laljibhai discussed it with Udar and they jointly made a replica of the bathroom for the Mother's use on the second floor of the Ashram main building.

A golden champa tree was planted near the Mother's house at the factory. The Mother even had touched this tree on that visit. The Divine Touch gave an extraordinary vitality to the tree. It grew quickly and bore many flowers. For years Laljibhai daily carried a tray of these flowers to the Mother. She said about them, "I like these flowers because when I put all these golden champa flowers on the window the breeze flowing over them brings me lots of energy." She asked that a great number of flowers be brought to her.

Then due to illness she stopped seeing people. So for some days Laljibhai did not see her. But she asked Champaklal whether he had brought the flowers or not. When Champaklal said this to Laljibhai he made it a point to carry a tray of flowers for the Mother every day without fail. If the Mother would be indisposed Champaklal would come out of her room and carry and offer the tray of the flowers to her. She revealed, "They give lots of energy during my illness."

After the passing of the Mother this tree stopped flowering. Laljibhai wondered, "How can it be? The tree was flowering profusely only two days back. Now all of a sudden it has stopped." After fifteen days he went to the Mother's house in the Sugar Mill and stood near the tree. He started praying to the tree, "Every day you offered your prayers through flowers to the Mother when she was present in her physical form. The Mother may no longer be with us in her physical body, but she is here in her subtle body. Why don't you offer your prayers through flowers as before and I will put the flowers on the Samadhi." Laljibhai says, "I really, sincerely prayed to the tree. And the tree responded. After ten or fifteen days flowers came in abundance. I was so surprised to find that even trees have consciousness. They also pray to the Divine and receive our messages. For me it was a wonderful experience."

When the New Horizon Sugar Mill started production some politicians of Pondicherry became jealous and created trouble for Laljibhai. They incited farmers to hold meetings outside the factory and issued pamphlets against him. Laljibhai reported all this to the Mother and read out to her the translations of their nasty pamphlets. She said, "Laljibhai, never mind. It is a foolish thing. Let them do it." And then within six months one of the leaders of these agitators died and the other one lost a limb and has never been seen here till today.

The then Chief Minister Mr. Goubert remained aloof until 1962. Then

during the China War all the industrialists, businessmen and the prominent citizens of Pondicherry were invited to the Raj Bhavan. The Chief Minister asked them to donate certain sums to the War Fund. He asked Laljibhai to donate five thousand rupees. Laljibhai exclaimed, "Why not twenty-five?" The Chief Minister was so overwhelmed by this generous offer that he kissed Laljibhai on his cheeks and said, "Thank you, Laljibhai, thank you very much." He praised Laljibhai and then said, "Laljibhai, I want to come to your factory." Laljibhai said, "You are welcome. We have nothing against you. When we invited you to the opening ceremony you didn't come. You are welcome. The Mother has taught us to love everybody as far as possible and not to allow human nature to react."

Later the Chief Minister came to the Sugar Factory and said, "I am very happy I was misguided by my bad advisers and that is why I didn't cooperate." Laljibhai replied, "Please forget about it. The production is still going on. Give your blessings. If there is any administrative obstacle from the Government please try to remove it. This is my earnest request to you." He said, "All right." Laljibhai says he was a true gentleman and kept his word. He instructed all the government departments, "Give the directors of the New Horizon Sugar Mill whatever they ask. Don't create problems for them."

But for five years Laljibhai faced nerve-wracking labour trouble. There were strikes and lock-outs. He reported everything to the Mother, took her blessings, but the situation remained painful. Once he said, "Mother, all this is happening here. In Africa we never saw such things. It gives us a sort of ill-feeling—why are we here?" The Mother would always encourage him and say, "Never mind. Everything will be all right." Laljibhai prayed sincerely. Every time the Mother would give him blessings but nothing seemed to work. One day he was truly disheartened. He went to the Mother. On seeing how anguished he was the Mother said, "Why are you so disheartened and discouraged?" Laljibhai replied, "Mother, you know best. For five years I have been reporting to you, taking your blessings, still nothing happens. I cannot bear this suffering." The Mother said, "Laljibhai, have you lost patience?" "Mother, for five years the struggle has continued!" he replied in dejection. The Mother said, "I was testing your endurance." Laljibhai exclaimed, "O my Lord! Mother, please don't test me. It is really painful and difficult to bear. It is agony." Then the Mother reassured him, "All right, things will not happen like that." And then things took a harmonious turn. The agitation ended. Since then nothing has happened. All labour-trouble ceased and strikes became a thing of the past. Laljibhai says, "Now we live and work like a family. But for this sort of action of Grace to be possible we have to approach the Mother with the sincerity and faith of a child."

About the New Horizon Sugar Mill Laljibhai has to say this, "Truly speaking, I have done nothing myself. Everything was done by the Mother—the Company was floated by the Mother, and the Mother gave spiritual help to bring

the finances for the construction of the Sugar Factory, the foundation stone was laid by the Mother, the opening ceremony was performed by the Mother, all the problems solved by the Mother and the prosperity that has come, that is also brought by the Mother. We are only the instruments and workers, working as she wanted us to ”

Laljubhai had given the reins of his life to the Mother. He never did things without the Mother's permission, for if anything went wrong she would scold him, “Why didn't you inform me?” So whatever or wherever he felt necessary he informed the Mother. In connection with his business he had to go out of Pondicherry many a time. Once he said to her, “Mother, people here say that if you want to go outside Pondicherry to Madras, etc , you should take the Mother's permission. But I am a businessman. I do not know when or where I would have to go. And at odd times I cannot come and disturb you to ask for permission. So please tell me what I should do.” The Mother said, “Many people say many things in my name. Do not believe them. If there is any problem, ask me straightaway and I will explain. For business it is necessary to go whenever you have to go. In such cases you have no need to ask permission.” Laljubhai says, “The Mother was very practical. She didn't work only on the mental or emotional level. She would not interfere in business or other things but would guide if I went and asked her.”

In 1957 she said to Laljubhai, “Don't go out of India. You will go only in 1981 and I will make arrangements. Afterwards you may go as and when you like.” Before '81 she would allow him to go out of India only for the bare necessary time for the work. Laljubhai says, “Maybe she thought that I might be polluted by the outside atmosphere, that her work in me might be undone. Probably I didn't have then the needed maturity.” For ten years he had not even seen the Pondicherry Railway Station.

(To be continued)

Compiled by SHYAM KUMARI

An Apology

Shyam Kumari sincerely regrets that almost the whole of p 601 and about one-fourth of the preceding page of her “How They Came to the Ashram” in the September *Mother India* happened to be Huta's writing. It was taken inadvertently by Shyam Kumari from an old typescript which had been given to her for use and which did not have Huta's name to it but was mistakenly supposed to be an article by Nirodbaran written a long time ago. Huta's writing had appeared in her “Story of a Soul” in *Mother India*, May 1984. Of course, if the matter had been Nirodbaran's, an acknowledgment to him would have been due as much as is now to Huta.

A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I READ with interest Dr Radha Kumud Mookerji's message written in 1963 relating his memories of fifty-five years earlier, *i.e.*, 1906-07, when Sri Aurobindo was known only to a few of the élite of Calcutta. It was only after mid-1907 that he came up for public recognition during the *Yugantar* Case. Sri Aurobindo, however, was not shy of the public and attended many public and private meetings before and during this time, and even went on tours with Bipin Chandra Pal. It is quite possible that he might have asked his associates or one of them if he should accept a particular invitation, but it is evidently doubtful if he would have made a prior condition to his friends about reporting his speech. This seems most unlikely from what we know of Sri Aurobindo.

Even if this story is accepted, connecting it with the Uttarpara Speech seems far-fetched. From the beginning of 1908 Sri Aurobindo was a different man and still more so after May 1909, when he came out of jail. We know from him that after 1908 he followed an inner guidance only. His decisions did not rest on the advice of others. The Uttarpara Speech was an inspired message that he was directed to give from within as he stood before the public.

I think that Dr. Mookerji is mixing up events and circumstances with what might have happened in 1906/07. All public events were reported in the media even before 1906. The Uttarpara Speech was fully recorded for the Government political files and also published in the *Karmayogin* on 19/20 June 1909, as well as in the *Bengali*. It appears hardly credible that this report of the speech was prepared by Dr. Mookerji.

The incident mentioned by Dr. Mookerji of Sri Aurobindo being possessed by a spirit called Manik needs some clarification. We know that Sri Aurobindo was trying automatic writing and the planchette even at Baroda. He wanted to find the truth behind these phenomena. But we have never heard of him being possessed by a spirit. It is true that the spirit which contacted him called itself Manik: we have written evidence of this, belonging to 1907. The spirit appeared even in 1914. But it is difficult to verify its dictating a whole article. If we had been given the exact indication of this spirit-dictation from a particular issue of *Bande Mataram* in which it had been published, it might have thrown some light.

JAYANTILAL

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROGRESS AND THE REALM OF VALUES—A NEEDLESS DICHOTOMY

By C. V. Devan Nair

(Continued from the issue of September 1989)

THE human spirit blooms in splendour only in the sunlight of a free society. On the other hand, the most revealing index of social and political folly in any society is the impoverishment of spirit, and the bankruptcy of artistic and intellectual creativity which inevitably ensue from the absence of a climate of freedom. Something is terribly wrong in a society when men have to look over their shoulders before expressing opinions. Only bigotry and intolerance flourish in the fields of spiritual darkness.

The Mother once compared the effects of mental and intellectual development with musical instruments, "one of which has a limited number of notes and the other ten times as many. It is certainly easier to play an instrument of four or five notes but the music that could be played on a complete keyboard is obviously far superior. We could even compare this to an orchestra much more than to a simple instrument. A fully developed human individuality is very much like one of those stupendous orchestras which has hundreds of players on a variety of instruments. It is obviously no easy task to control and conduct them, but nonetheless more than worth the effort. The result can be marvellous."

However, leaders of governments often distrust orchestras. They prefer the dull monotone of a solitary single-stringed instrument. One consequence of the primacy of economic growth in this industrial and technological age has therefore been an excessive regulation of the citizen's life. Sri Aurobindo might have been speaking of contemporary trends in several parts of the world when he wrote, several decades ago: "(If) the free play of the intelligent will is inhibited by the excessive regulation of the life, then an intolerable contradiction and falsity will be created. Men may bear it for a time in consideration of the great and visible new benefits of order, economic development, means of efficiency and the scientific satisfaction of the reason which the collectivist arrangement of society will bring, but when its benefits become a matter of course and its defects become more and more realised and prominent, dissatisfaction and revolt are sure to set in in the clearest and most vigorous minds of the society and propagate themselves throughout the mass... The State can only combat it by an education adapted to its fixed forms of life, an education that will seek to drill the citizen in a fixed set of ideas, aptitudes, propensities as was done in the old infrarational order of things and by the suppression of freedom of speech and thinking so as to train and compel all to be of one mind, one sentiment, one opinion, one feeling; but this remedy will be in a rational society self-contra-

dictory, ineffective, or if effective, then worse than the evil it seeks to combat.”

One might as well attempt to force square pegs into round holes. Square pegs will be forcibly hewed and chiselled out of shape so that they may fit into round holes. The human spirit is crushed and mutilated, and we get social impoverishment including, let us note, scientific and technological anaemia. All this could threaten economic, political, and worst of all, spiritual death.

To quote Sri Aurobindo: “For a thoroughgoing scientific regulation of life can only be brought about by a thoroughgoing mechanisation of life... (But) Life differs from the mechanical order of the physical universe with which the reason has been able to deal victoriously just because it is mechanical and runs immutably in the groove of fixed cosmic habits. Life, on the contrary, is a mobile, progressive and evolving force.”

Which explains well enough why Life regularly discards the human systems devised to contain it, much as a snake sloughs off an outworn skin. This is not to suggest that we should forthwith disband all systems, and that snakes should have no skins at all. Social life would be reduced to anarchy if we did not have a system to live by. “Systematise we must,” wrote Sri Aurobindo, “but even in making and holding the system, we should always keep firm hold on this truth that all systems are in their nature transitory and incomplete.” History bears abundant testimony that the growing human spirit always bursts the boundaries of formulas. But the powers-that-be take pride in the impeccable logic of the arrangements they make for everybody else. Alas! Sri Aurobindo’s verdict is devastating: “Logic is the worst enemy of Truth, as self-righteousness is the worst enemy of virtue, for the one cannot see its own errors nor the other its own imperfections.”

Society has a right to expect a contributory loyalty from the individual. Quite simply, it is the debt of loyalty we owe to our fellow-men. But should the individual therefore be entirely conditioned and limited by his society? Must he be irrevocably tied down to being merely British or French, Indian or Chinese, Japanese, Russian, American or whatever? Sri Aurobindo’s answer is unequivocal: “If by a part of himself he belongs to his nation, by another he exceeds it and belongs to humanity; and even there is a part of him, the greatest, which is not limited by humanity; he belongs by it to God and to the world of all beings and to the godheads of the future.”

Criticism of the aberrations of governments and economic planners can itself be aberrant and silly. The baby is thrown out with the bathwater. Pitfalls are not absent in the realms of the spirit. There is a negative culture of defeatism which equates material success with spiritual failure. But if spiritual success is only attainable in heavens beyond, then this sad world must be left to the tender mercies of the Devil and his cohorts, and we will never achieve human fulfilment on earth. Fortunately for us, there is a more positive culture which sees material success and physical perfection as part and parcel of a truly integral spiritual

adventure, and declines to abandon the material fields and concerns of Life for a posthumous salvation. "No salvation should be valued," said Sri Aurobindo, "which takes us away from the love of God in humanity." And again "This is a miracle that men can love God, yet fail to love humanity. With whom are they in love then?"

Desirable social change, quantitative and qualitative, is certainly possible through economic growth. Not merely desirable, but also terribly urgent where developing countries, in particular, are concerned, and for more reasons than one. Indeed, it is precisely to such changes, and not to satisfy egomaniac delusions of power and grandeur, that leaders and economic planners should address themselves. Surely it is a necessary and praiseworthy aim to increase the productive capacity and skills of the population, through education and training, for wealth-creating projects, and thereby to eradicate areas of poverty, squalor and deprivation. Yet once more Aurobindonian aphorisms help to shatter the delusion that material problems do not come within the province of the spirit. One goes "The existence of poverty is the proof of an unjust and ill-organised society, and our public charities are but the first tardy awakening of the conscience of a robber." The other reads: "Help the poor while the poor are with thee; but study also and strive that there may be no more poor for thy assistance."

There are no hard and fast definitions of the non-economic objectives of economic growth. It is not a formula that we ought to seek, for a formula is always a partial truth caught and sealed in a capsule. And a truth entrapped is no longer true. We have had enough of dogmas sealed and insulated from Infinite Reality. It is surely a spiritual victory here on earth itself that we ought to seek, a conquest, a transformation, not an escape from the mechanised world of modern science and technology. It would be a grievous betrayal of the human spirit to allow it to become enslaved, the master to become the servant of his instruments. The Machine must serve Man, not Man the Machine. One recalls the faith of the great American inventor, Thomas Alva Edison: "What Man's ingenuity can conceive, his character can control."

The conquest that we ought to seek is, really, a victory over ourselves. For the dismal truth seems to be that the technocrat presiding over his computers is no more advanced in spirit than the Neolithic hunter gloating over his stone implements. The only difference is that the modern technocrat's capacity for mischief is vastly greater than that of his Neolithic ancestor.

Evolution is an immense journey from the worm to the god. The human reason was not the first principle of life on earth. It succeeded long infrarational stages in the prehuman evolution of plant and animal. Nor can reason be the last and supreme principle of life on earth. The entire history of modern civilisation attests to its hopeless inadequacy as a governor of life. The record of reason as a problem-solver reminds one of patching holes in a rotten boat, for each patch applied, two more leaks spring up.

Reason boasts a dubious distinction—its versatile readiness to serve as a mercenary in any and every cause. It can be a brilliant advocate for capitalism or communism, democracy or totalitarianism, atheism or religion. At its best, it prepares the way for the suprarational birth in man. At its worst, it can justify the cause of demôn and asura.

When we watch two excellent lawyers argue brilliantly against each other in a law court, one for the prosecution, the other for the defence, followed by a judge on the bench giving an eminently reasonable judgement, and find that all three are handsomely paid for their work, we see Mother Reason at the kind of play she enjoys. Which prompted one wit to remark that we can be absolutely certain of only one thing—whatever else God might be, He certainly is not a lawyer.

The rational age in which we live is really no more than a half-way station between the infrarational past of evolution, and the suprarational future. But a half-way station is a most uncomfortable place to be in. We shouldn't tarry there too long. For we bring along, clinging tenaciously to us, slimy things from stations already left behind, as well as the promise of more salubrious stations which lie ahead. Which is why man is described as half-animal, half-god.

Three components of being are mixed pell-mell in each of us—the infrarational, the rational and the suprarational—which manifest in widely varying proportions in all our thoughts and activities. The infrarational is our animal heritage, and the rational the present achievement of the race, as manifested in our science, our computers, and our skyscrapers among other things. The suprarational has given us powerful hints of its presence in rare individuals whose scattered examples shine as bright beacons of promise in the general darkness of history. The Indian spiritual heritage assumes a very profound significance in this regard, for nowhere else has there been such an extraordinarily rich profusion of incursions from what may be called the Fourth Dimension, invasions of Divinity which have persisted right down to modern times, as in the examples of luminous beings like Sri Ramakrishna and Ramana Maharshi. Such men are not manufactured on the forge of technology, nor are they made in the lecture halls of our polytechnics and universities.

We make a dreadful mistake if we dismiss the Upanishads and the Gita as voices from a dead and irrelevant past. On the contrary, from an evolutionary perspective, they are voices from the tomorrow of the earth, a tomorrow which awaits precipitation into the present. Trikaladrishti, the simultaneous vision of past, present and future, is a fact of spiritual experience. The future is already present in dimensions invisible to mortal sight. What materialises on earth was always present in the supreme Being. Otherwise it could never be born in physical time and space. The rational scientific assumption is that the past determined the present, in the same way that the present will shape the future. But it is radically otherwise to the suprarational intuition. It is the future that has

determined both past and present. Evolution is only possible because of the involution of the entire future at the very source of creation. Wordsworth probably did not realise how profound he was when he wrote: "The child is father of the man."

In this sense, nothing is useless in the world. The rungs of the ladder of evolution we have climbed were necessary for our ascension. Our errors were catalysts which speeded up our growth. Our pains are the ransom for the release of a captive delight. By the same token, the offspring of the Rational Age, science and technology, and the economic development and progress they have made possible, serve a greater purpose which we are as yet unable to fathom. A memorable pronouncement from Sri Aurobindo comes to mind:

"The changes we see in the world today are intellectual, moral, physical in their ideal and intention: the spiritual revolution waits for its hour and throws up meanwhile its waves here and there. Until it comes the sense of the others cannot be understood and till then all interpretations of present happenings and forecast of man's future are vain things. For its nature, power, event are that which will determine the next cycle of our humanity."

We can, if we choose, collaborate with the spiritual revolution which awaits its decreed and inevitable hour. If we wish to deserve a higher individual and social freedom, we have to confront an uncompromising reality. The entry and release into the great liberations we aspire for is conditional on the satisfaction of exacting demands. We cannot bribe our way past the keepers of the Divine gates. Let Sri Aurobindo speak the last word on the subject. I quote:

"A large liberty will be the law of a spiritual society and the increase of freedom a sign of the growth of human society towards the possibility of a true spiritualisation. To spiritualise in this sense a society of slaves, slaves of power, slaves of authority, slaves of custom, slaves of dogma, slaves of all sorts of imposed laws which they live under rather than live by them, slaves internally of their own weakness, ignorance and passions from whose worst effect they seek or need to be protected by another and external slavery, can never be a successful endeavour. They must shake off their fetters first in order to be fit for a higher freedom."

We must shake off our fetters first. If we heed the counsel of the Divine Mother, the best way to collaborate in the spiritual revolution is to begin with ourselves. Tomorrow begins today—with ourselves.

(Concluded)

TRUE EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN

WHAT are women really fighting for? Decades of exploitation and “stay at home” mentality have made them bitter and weary of all “reforms,” turning them first restless, then anxious and now desperate to seek a militant and effective redress. Perhaps the impressive slogans and rhetoric create a martial spirit, make them feel they are winning a battle. But mere war cries have seldom replaced a sound strategy. It is time we asked what this battle is all about. The struggle is apparently for liberation, for equality. But questions more to the point would be: A liberation from what? An equality with whom?

We notice that women are essentially fighting on two fronts: to determine their role in the family and secondly, their status in society. Traditionally, barring matriarchal societies, the woman in the family has been subordinate, playing a servile role to her father, husband and son, catering to their needs, ministering to their desires. In society at large, her role has been marginal. She has been despised and debased, barring exceptional times and rare circumstances.

Much of the reason for this treatment, indisputably, lies in the unfair bias of men towards what Simone de Beauvoir called “the Second Sex”. History records mostly the deeds and accomplishments of men, portraying women archetypally as corrupt and degenerating influences, embodied best in Helen of Troy. In ancient Greece, they were no better than slaves and aliens. Indeed, many literary feminists in America today, such as Elaine Showalter and Sandra Gilbert of Princeton University, show that the literary works of many outstanding women writers have not received sufficient attention at the hands of predominantly male literary historians. Kate Millet’s *Sexual Politics* (1970), Spack’s *The Female Imagination* (1975), Ellen Moer’s *Literary Women* (1977) and Showalter’s *A Literature of their Own* (1977), despite occasional aberrations, demonstrate the harmful effects of a sexist bias in literature upon an unwary reading public.

The acceptance of a lower self-esteem and internalization of a secondary role have gone on for so long and with such a devastating effect that today we paradoxically find women as mothers and mothers-in-law harming the interests of fellow women. It is also true that women have at times used their frailty as an asset, perhaps forgetting in the process that looking up to men has made them more dependent and vulnerable. This has been, as the Mother says, “their sole defense, sole weapon, to attract attention, to please and to be quite pretty, quite seductive”

It may be argued that harking back to the so-called “Golden Age” of sexual equality may not be very helpful. There is no doubt that women in ancient India enjoyed a high esteem, but it is also true that the Indian success has not stood the test of time. It may be that Indian religion and philosophy have traditionally

extolled women. It is Durga, the rider on the lion, that must revive and redeem this ancient nation, the creative aspect of the Universe is Aditi, the Divine Mother. Without Prakriti, the manifested play comes to a standstill.

True, an idyllic state of man-woman relationship was not a mythic fantasy in India. Such a relationship was possible not on account of an ingenious family framework based on a large-hearted good will and domestic fellowship, but because marriage in the Vedic Age had a spiritual significance and sanction. As all social practice was governed by a supernatural order, so also the relation between Man and Woman was determined by an esoteric symbolism, between the Purusha and Prakriti (in the Vedas *Ṛi* and *Gnu*). In later times, when Prakriti played a subordinate role, the status of women too followed a corresponding decline, so that by the time the doctrine of Maya was propounded by Shankara, and Prakriti or Nature held responsible for the bondage of Man, women had fallen from their high pedestal.

In a sense, it could be said that the first phase of the social evolution in India was more or less the same as in most early esoteric societies like the one in which flourished the highly mystical cults of ancient Greece, woman became the high priestess or the social pivot. But soon a sharp demarcation took place. In the West, after a brief lapse into an Age of Conventions, the cycle entered into a Rational Age. Outward circumstances too favoured, the Industrial Revolution that ensured female employment, a universal education that made women class-conscious to demand a universal franchise. On the other hand, in India a general withdrawal from life, set into motion by the Illusionist philosophy, synchronized with the Islamic invasion whose impact was widely felt, and affected especially women. The breath of Reason did occasionally drift into the musty chamber but could never gather sufficient force to sweep off the conventional cobwebs.

The demand for an emancipation, rooted in an aggressive individualism and voiced with stridency, has increasingly led the sexes in the West to a position of mutual hostility and confrontation. The problem of women is not to be seen in an isolated manner but in the total perspective of the world crisis. The human quest for liberty and urge for equality are actually a reflection of the struggle within, and the failure to resolve this conflict. As long as this inner conflict persists, no amount of external equalisation can *really* help. It is true, there ought to be a firm removal of the sexist bias from our social, cultural and political life. Indeed, aside from certain physiological differences, there is little distinction between men and women. Given the right help and opportunity, women have all but neutralised the effects of age-old suppression and have even made a dent into domains traditionally considered a male preserve. Today, women can not only stand proudly atop Mount Everest but also face the hazards of outer space. According to modern psychological views, even moral, emotive and psychological traits, long since considered "masculine" or "feminine," are more or less equally distributed among the sexes.

Whether they like it or not, men and women in society are destined to live in a perpetual alliance. Only the choice is whether to make it an association of mentalised animals, the inhabitants of the Huxleyan *Brave New World* or to found the relationship on a different footing. As the Mother aptly remarks.

Woman is the slave of Man because of the attraction she feels for the male and his strength, because of the desire for a home and for the security it brings and lastly because of the attachment to maternity. Man too, on his part, is a slave of Woman, because of his spirit of possession, his thirst for power and domination and because of his desire for sexual relations and because of his attachments to the little comforts and conveniences of married life.

True emancipation of women—as indeed of men—is an emancipation *within*. It is a long battle that needs to be fought on a sustained basis till there is the annihilation of the ego from human affairs.

SACHCHIDANANDA MOHANTY

SRI AUROBINDO—THE SOUL OF INDIA

(Continued from the issue of 15 August 1989)

THE BRITISH IMPACT ON INDIA, THE BIRTH OF NATIONALISM, THE RENAISSANCE AND SRI AUROBINDO

THE ancient visions realised themselves through the teachings of the incarnations of God, the God-men and God-lovers, poets and artists and philosophers. They have hallowed this land from time immemorial upto this day and given their priceless treasures of heaven for the well-being of the human race on earth. It is they who have kept flowing the spiritual current of India's soul and have helped her historic evolution through the ages.

When we turn the pages of history they show us that the wealth of India attracted greedy barbarians of the borders, who burst upon the peaceful people and carried away their riches quite a number of times. The ruffian hordes plundered civilized men, who were living a higher life of light and truth, but were militarily unorganised. It was too late for the people to wake up and mend the situations. At that time there was no integral collective life. The country was divided into small political units, self-centred and self-blinded by individual tendencies. In consequence of India's centrifugal attitude the effect became disastrous. Dr K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar says: " Bharatavarsha became anaemic and wasted and diseased and degraded. It looked as though the twin movements, Vaishnava and Saivite, for the revival of Hinduism, and only a memory of God-intoxicated singers like Eknath and Kabir and Tulsidas and Chaitanya and Farid and Nanak lay behind to keep the obscure embers of Indian spirituality yet alive."¹

Dr Karan Singh says. "When the British entered the Indian political scene the country was in one of her periodic phases of turmoil. The grand Mughal Empire had disintegrated, and though several great Mahratta states held sway over large territories the country was by and large balkanized and administrative chaos was a common feature."²

Dr. Karan Singh refers us to K. M. Pannikar's statement: "The second half of the eighteenth century had witnessed over large areas of India a breakdown of civilization which has but few parallels in the history of the world." (*A Survey of Indian History*, Second Edition, p. 212).

Professor D A Buchanan (U S.A) seems to have said somewhere that "in maintaining peace, unifying the country, developing communication and setting up a standard of integrity and industry", the British Government had "accomplished more than could have been expected of any other government, Indian or foreign, during this period."³

The British came to India with the impact of a new force. Truly speaking, the result of the British conquest is a vast subject. The English came, says

Sisir Kumar Mitra, "at a crucial stage of India's evolution to fulfil a will of the Shakti that guides her destiny" ⁴

Dr. Karan Singh has mentioned "In order to facilitate the export from India of raw material to Britain, as well as the distribution in India of British goods, a vast communications system was set up including both roads and railways"

The introduction of English Education into India brought a new light in the national mind creating an intelligentsia in India. English was, as Pannikar remarks, "in fact the language of Hindu reformation and without it, though the Hindu religion would no doubt have been reformed and society reorganised, any movement would have been regional and the unity of India would have been further broken up". It is to be considered that English is the language of the greatest reformists like Rammohan Roy, Vivekananda, Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, Swami Dayananda, Keshab Chandra Sen and Sri Aurobindo. Truly speaking, India is greatly obliged to the English language for bringing about the unity of India and the creation of the modern Indian Nationalism.

Due to the British impact on India, a great resurgence was seen. That is why the early Nineteenth Century is known as the Renaissance in India. In its later phase Sri Aurobindo played an important role. This is the glimmering of the dawn which broke over the country at the beginning of the present century.

In order to feel India, says John Masters, "You must become Indian, gain one set of qualities and lose another. As a race we don't do it as we can't" ⁵

So when the British came to India it was a critical posture of events.

Sri Aurobindo says, "A new activity came in, but this was at first crudely and confusedly imitative of the foreign culture. It was a crucial moment and an ordeal of perilous severity, a less vigorous energy of life might well have foundered and perished under the double weight of the deadening of its old innate motives and a servile imitation of alien ideas and habits. History shows us how disastrous this situation can be to nations and civilisations. But fortunately the energy of life was there, sleeping only for a moment, not dead, and, given that energy, the evil carried within itself its own cure. For whatever temporary rotting and destruction this crude impact of European life and culture has caused, it gave three needed impulses. It revived the dormant intellectual and critical impulse; it rehabilitated life and awakened the desire of new creation; it put the reviving Indian spirit face to face with novel conditions and ideals and the urgent necessity of understanding, assimilating and conquering them. The national mind turned a new eye on its past culture, reawoke to its sense and import, but also, at the same time, saw it in relation to modern knowledge and ideas. Out of this awakening vision and impulse the Indian renaissance is arising, and that must determine its future tendency." ⁶

(To be continued)

NILIMA DAS

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- 3 *Op. cit.*, p. 11
- 4 *Resurgent India* by S. K. Mitra, p. 35
- 5 *Op. cit.*, p. 12
- 6 *Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library*, Vol. 14, p. 408

'TO BE'

EACH corner of the eyes
 Is a source of past and future,
 And their blue-violet centres—
 Where the infinite gazes unto the finite,
 Where love and humour and joy and laughter
 Dance and twinkle—
 Are the pools of an ever-existing present.
 To be, is to dissolve therein
 At once to be Her child and Her Self

DINKAR PALANDE

NEW AGE

Notwithstanding the Mayavadin's philosophical view
 And the Materialist's theory of dialectics,
 Earthicans must endeavour to think anew,—
 Is all this Maya or Matter's tricks?

Whether this Creation is Matter's play,
 Or of a creator,—yet not known,
 And whether the mind of man is made of clay
 Or by Nature's working it has grown

Glory to those who are resolute and brave
 To break the barriers of Reason's cage,
 Enlightened souls can only save
 And lead this world to a luminous age

SAMAR BASU

CONVERSATIONS OF THE DEAD

TRANSLATED BY SATADAL FROM THE BENGALI OF
NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

5

Isha Khan, Kedar Roy

Isha khan

INTERNAL strife has been the cause of our ruin. Otherwise, would it be possible for Mansingh to dare face the twelve Adityas?¹ None of us singly and separately was less valiant than that great warrior. Each one of us has directly proved over and over again that gloriously proud utterance of yours—*tathāpi simhah pasureva nānyah*, yet the lion is nothing but an animal. In spite of that our victory did not last. Bengal did not become one and independent.

Kedar Roy

Why should she? A kingdom of virtue can never be established on sin. A person who does not know how to respect a woman, who can defile a helpless woman to satisfy his lust, can never perform a great deed, however valiant and victorious in hundreds of battles he may be; all his efforts are found to be futile, he foils even the efforts of others at the end.

Isha Khan

Referring to your sister, aren't you? But she is my lawful wife. I had begged of you for her hand righteously. You rejected my appeal, not only that, you mounted an attack on my kingdom in reply. I resisted to save myself. And nothing did I do without the consent of your sister. This needs no proof—she has given her life fighting along with me against you.

¹ The word "Aditya", a Hindu concept, means the sun or the sun-god. Here the reader may be puzzled as to how Isha Khan, a Muslim, can be an Aditya. The answer is this: At the time of Akbar, the Moghul emperor, Bengal was divided into twelve principalities, each one ruled by a powerful zamindar. These twelve rulers or kings were independent, and maintained each a strong army and navy, and were famous as twelve "Adityas" because of their brilliance of spirit. They did not accept the overlordship of Akbar. They even foiled the repeated attacks by the Moghul emperor to subjugate them. But since they were not united in their bid to counter the Moghuls, since each one wanted his principality to be the sole centre of power, when Mansingh, the great Rajput warrior and the chief of Akbar's generals, came with a huge army to capture Bengal, he could easily instigate one Aditya against the other and manage to defeat them one by one to bring the whole of Bengal under Akbar's rule. Isha Khan belonged to the group of invaders earlier than the Moghuls who had settled in India and become Indian Bengalis. He was one of those heroic "Adityas" who managed to fight victoriously against Mansingh but found it a necessity to come to a treaty with the Moghuls and accept the overlordship of Akbar in order to safeguard his independence.

—Translator's Note

Kedar Roy

You are an alien, an infidel—how can you understand the heart of a Hindu woman? If you capture her by force, being a woman what else can she do? She fell into the clutches of diabolic circumstances, saw no way out and simply did her timely duty. She had no other way, had she?

Isha Khan

Your society was responsible for that. Anyhow, Kedar, you are no doubt a great hero, but where is the befitting wideness of your mind? Man is above caste, country is above society. That's why I said that, being unable to understand this simple thing, we failed to do anything against our common enemy, even though each one of us was an Aditya; we did not achieve siddhi in the sadhana of the one cherished object of all of us. The enemy have very easily succeeded in instigating us one against the other.

Kedar Roy

Yours was then the right path! You never did hesitate to defile a woman, and that was your social ethics. And politics? It is you who have embraced Mansingh as a friend to show your own generosity, have accepted alms from the hands of the emperor—the Moghuls have taken advantage of you in all possible ways

Isha Khan

I had sought for a partner of my life and work. That's why I did not look into her lineage, descent, caste or religion. I had sought my country, and as I was ever ready to fight the enemy as a service to her, in the same way I did not turn my face against a treaty if that was needed. Kedar, your dream of a Hindu kingdom may be great, but its possibility is very small. Bengal must have unity of race and religion, unity of all the different power-centres. I had extended my hand for a friendly relation with you but you did not accept it. So, I was waiting for an integral unity. So long as that did not materialise, a treaty with the Moghuls was a necessity; I did not like to waste my force uselessly. Besides, I did not beg for a treaty after a defeat, I offered a treaty after my victory.

Kedar Roy

Can there be a treaty with an alien, an infidel? Bengal is the kingdom of Hindus, of Bengalis—whether it is you, Isha Khan, or emperor Akbar in Delhi, you all are from a different country, a different race, you cannot have an inherent affection for this country. It is you who have brought this religion-distinction and mixture of heterogeneous races in our country. The life of a country is its society, when there is no unity in the society, there cannot be any unity in the country. You people are responsible for the split and disintegration in the society of Bengal. Unity is never possible in so many separate centres; a single centre of

force, a single source of inspiration is a “must” for unity, only one living brain is needed for a single body, not more than that. It is impossible to have friendly terms among too many centres and forces; if at all there be some amicability it is short-lived, it can bring some advantage for the time being but no lasting union is found, nothing great is served by it. I had wanted Shreepur to be the only centre of power for the society as well as the state of Bengal.

Isha Khan

You had wanted Shreepur, Pratapaditya had wanted Jessore, Sitaram had wanted Mohamedpur, Shobhasingh had wanted Burdwan, that was why all of you had to accept failure one after the other. We should have mobilised together the various centres towards a single goal sacrificing the greed for a single centre. With that end in view I had wanted to marry your sister, with that end in view I had made a treaty with the enemy quite easily before we were fully prepared. Your own fate is a sign as to how far one can proceed depending solely on physical force without assessing the situation, without paying heed to realities.

Kedar Roy

God was displeased, probably I had not that ultimate capacity—but the unshakable unity of culture, society and religion of Bengal must be kept intact, the power of the Bengalis must be monocentric. He who looks at the situation, becomes eager to make a treaty in advance, will not receive the power, nor will be able to create any advantage. I have sacrificed my life, but I did not make a treaty. Life is to be sacrificed to awaken life. Otherwise, once you start making treaties, is there any end to it?

Isha Khan

You are a dreamer, the imaginative heart of Bengal. But I am also a son of this very soil. Whatever may be my past, I have brought its treasures for this motherland. If that is accepted, the country will be benefited rather than impoverished, and accepted it must be for there is no way out to deny the infallible, the grace of Allah.

Kedar Roy

I am still waiting for the proof of your utterance.

SNOWS OF SIACHEN

THE Yesterday haunted him,
with that moan; that faint moan
Now frozen forever
In the icy crevasse
of the merciless Siachen
And those stony gods
of the snows of Siachen
Sat tight,
Leasing terror,
Through hail,
Through snow,
Through crevasse,
Through the roaring avalanche,
And through the furies of winds
That tore
The skin off his face,
Exposed for a moment
When he opened the visor
To wipe that
Flood of tears.
He was deaf,
deaf to the screech
Of the winds of hell
On the razor-edged ice, deaf
To the Winds of tempest
That hurtled tons of snow
From the glazed peaks.
He heard,
Only that faint moan
In his ears,
In his heart,
As he inched forward
Hand over hand,
Eyes closing of themselves,
His vision limited
To a foot or two.
Tied and trussed up
In his harness,
The soldier hung
From the rope

Fastened to clamps
Driven in a sheer slope.
Straining to hear
That faint voice,
That suppressed groan,
He had heard yesterday
When they had strained to listen,
In the awful silences
Of the bowels of earth.

*

Only the day before,
on the night-march,
His friend, his buddy
Had told him the news
A son had been born to him
Who now lay entombed
In the treacherous gloom
Of the fathomless crevasse.
Yesterday as they had
joked and laughed
The ice had broken
Without warning,
Without groan or crack,
Plucking three of them
Into the sudden mouth
of the dark hell
Inside the crevasse
Whose gaping jaw
Seemed like an evil fairy
Who had merged in the ice
And who with bated breath
Waited to trap the unwary traveller
As in tales of old
The three tumbled into that live hell
Instinctively their elbows stretched out
To save the head
From the jagged sides
Then the benign gods

Fought the design
 Of the evil ones,
 For the rope held
 And they found
 An inch-wide ledge, a small mercy,
 An invisible toe-hold.
 And their radio had still worked,
 The contact was instant,
 For the watcher
 In the fibre-glass hut
 Had seen the patrol vanish
 Succour was on the way
 Before being asked for
 On twenty-four-thousand-foot high
 Peaks, where the moon smiled wanly,
 Staking their own lives, to
rescue them,
 Their comrades arrived,
 Playing with their lives
 Willingly, for
 If it will be,
 Death will be,
 When it will be
 The living worked
 With fervent prayers
 In that mute hell of ice
 To rescue they descended
 In slow motion,
 For speed was impossible
 On those rarified heights
 It took an hour,
 A seeming eternity,
 To pull the first one up
 He, our soldier of this tale,
 Was in the middle
 Each minute was an agony of
apprehension
 But at last he too was rescued.
 But now the benign gods lost the battle
 To the evil one's fury
 Day dawned,
 A harbinger of death

For his friend,
 Whose son had been born
 On the new-moon day
 A week back
 He now moaned
 From some lower
 Invisible depth
 But alas!
 His rope was sheared
 By some rock,
 His life's thread
 Was cut
 By the rising sun
 The precious cover
 Of night was fading fast
 And the sun was
 The adversary,
 For in the light of day
 The enemy could see
 And annihilate both the rescuer
 And the rescued.
 When they signalled
 With the rope for
 The last one
 No answering tug came—
 But only a faint far moan
 The silence of what had been
 Was broken by the walkie-talkie
 In staccato,
 "Return, order, return at once,
 Enemy activity sighted,
 Abort further attempt to rescue"
 The commander had kept
 His voice purposely
 Bland, pushing back
 The raging storm within,
 A storm more fierce
 Than the one raging outside
 Caking the weary soldiers
 With ice
 They had condemned
 A comrade, still alive

To an icy grave
 In the cavernous crevasse.
 "Why do they make boots
 Heavy as a ton?"
 Thought our soldier
 On his way back
 Each step such a torture
 That he wondered vaguely:
 Unknowingly had he been injured
 Though all seemed intact?
 But he was past caring
 Only that moan, heard only once
 And thereafter imagined,
 Tortured his mind's pathways
 Of memory
 Down below
 For a moment
 They had hoped
 Oh! Ask this not
 To abandon,
 To leave behind
 Ask if you must
 For willing sacrifice
 The Evil One
 Had mocked, upon hearing
 The words
 of the base commander,
 In answer to their pleadings,
 "No! it is a command,
 Return.
 For it is many versus one."
 Oh! how cruel can be numbers!
 How heart-rending
 the arithmetics.
 O woe to the dead
 And thrice woe
 To the living

*

Next night
 The Evil One

Was in a vengeful mood.
 Ice under foot broke
 With the sound
 of a hundred pistols.
 "Soldier! what if your foot slipped?"
 Answered He, "What if it slipped?"
 Damned would be he
 If he would allow to let Death crow.
 The soldier chided himself
 As gently fluttered the little flag
 He had put on the side
 of the crevasse,
 To mark his friend's
 Resting place.
 Then a spirit indomitable,
 A present from the Goddess Durga,
 Surged in our soldier
 One does not lament
 For the martyrs!
 For honour demands
 Sacrifice, and blood
 Flowing free and bright.
 What greater fate,
 Could a warrior pray for
 Than thus on the battle-field to die.
 Our soldier forgot
 The many small heaps of stones
 Marking the scattered forlorn graves
 All over the vale of Siachen
 Siachen! thou relentless glacier
cold and harsh,
 The spirit of man
 Has conquered thy titan might
 Thy furies,
 Astride the screech of thy winds,
 Astride the roar of thy avalanche
 May bury in mushy snow,
 May maim with frost,
 May blind and bedevil,
 May push the mind to its limit
 Again and yet again
 Push to the brink,

With all their cruel-cut facets.
 The monstrous sentinel cliffs
 May annihilate and overpower,
 Yet they cannot cower
 The brave soldiers of India.
 For Death is but a face
 Of eternal life.
 O glacier thou hurtlest
 Tons of ice.
 No friendly fire,
 No warm bivouac
 Thou allowest.
 The lone sentry
 pushed back
 The lone tear
 Unshed.
 And drove like
 An invincible god
 The pitons, the crampons,
 So that nothing
 May dislodge and trap
 His comrades, his fellow-soldiers.
 This change of mood,
 This surge of courage,
 This coursing of adrenalin
 Pleased the true gods.
 A furry animal,
 The uncanny dog
 Of Ladakh,
 Pressing flat its ears
 Suddenly whined
 And our soldier
 Ducked and darted in time,
 As to claim him,
 The awesome Goddess of snows

Rode an avalanche,
 She who is
 Always hungry
 For more and yet more,
 But who now roared by,
 Deprived,
 For life still smiled,
 As he stood aside
 In the snow spray,
 Yet living, yet safe.
 He witnessed his comrade's soul
 Gathered to Durga's golden bosom
 And she said to him,
 "This is not
 A burial ground,
 But a cradle of the brave.
 From fighting
 Impossible odds
 A new chapter
 Of high endeavour
 Is being inscribed here
 By India's hero sons."
 Reassured and smiling
 Stood his ground
 The lone sentinel.
 And clad in an inner silence,
 He prayed,
 "O Mother of the Worlds,
 Lay Thy hands of peace
 On the battle ground
 Of the high Siachen.
 End this futile confrontation
 Between these two halves
 Of what is yet One Nation!"

SHYAM KUMARI

NEW AGE NEWS

COMPILED AND PRESENTED BY WILFRIED

(Continued from the issue of September 1989)

The Truth about Dowzers

DOWZERS (German: Wunschelrutenganger; French: radiesthesistes) are known in many countries of the world. Equipped with a so-called dowsing-rod they go around and claim to locate hidden sources of water and radiation. Some of them operate mainly in their home countries to help people escape from unknown sources of radiation that may disturb their well-being, as they say. Others go to developing countries and help discover the best locations for digging wells. But it has never been known whether all this is superstition or esoteric reality.

On behalf of the German Ministry of Science and Research 14 scientists undertook a most comprehensive series of tests in which they examined 500 dowzers. The latter had to walk blindfold over unknown terrain and locate natural or artificially placed sources of water. The result of this unusual research project has been published now: dowsing is not bogus. Prof. H.D. Betz of the Institute of Physics of Munich University stated that out of the fifty dowzers who reached the final test series, 20% showed reactions which could not in any way be explained by chance or accident. "Blindfold they were able to locate water streams under the earth of which they had no knowledge at all." Moreover, whenever they were moving in artificially created magnetic fields, the rods of these test persons reacted with unflinching certainty.

Prof. Betz admits that the scientists from nine different research institutes were very sceptical at the beginning. But after two years of testing they had to conclude that man must have a sense organ hitherto not known to medical science. "As carrier-pigeons and birds of passage in the animal world have enormous capacities, there must be likewise fundamental faculties in human beings which make them react."

The piece of wire held in the hands is only meant to translate physical reactions in the muscles of the arms into visible signals. Every beginner can learn the technique within half an hour, but only a few of them are sufficiently gifted to become successful dowzers. "You would hardly believe it," says Betz, "but there are men who are able to find water in developing countries in this way or trace it in the mountains in small chasms and clefts."

However, Betz clarifies that the whole test was only meant to establish the validity or non-validity of the dowsing technique as such. It remains to be examined whether the fields of radiation located by dowzers are really harmful. Actually, many people put expensive protective gadgets into their rooms which

are said to neutralize "evil radiation". In concluding Betz said that now it is up to biologists, physicians and geologists to have a closer look at the phenomenon.

(Source *Badische Neueste Nachrichten*, 12-7-89)

Food as Medicine

American doctors and scientists are doing research on food as medicine. The following are the latest results:

- 1) *Cancer blockers*. The best cancer blockers are carrots, spinach, grapefruit and cabbage. Large-scale population surveys in several countries have shown more recently that cabbage especially is a formidable colon cancer preventive food.
- 2) *Heart disease*. Physicians at the University of Maryland have discovered that oat bran cereal is as effective in treating high cholesterol as pharmaceutical drugs (Bran is the outer covering of grain separated from flour by sifting.) Both can bring down the level by about 20%, but oat bran was found to be five times less expensive than drugs. Grapefruit and yoghurt (in India, curds) are also highly recommended. A cardiologist at Tufts University prescribes onions for his heart patients, after he found that they thin the blood and retard clots.
- 3) *Kidney stones*. Japanese researchers recommend eating rice bran, about one-third of an ounce twice a day, as an excellent way to prevent calcium kidney stones. The effectiveness was tested and confirmed by tests on a great number of patients.
- 4) *Longevity*. Yoghurt has long been known as most effective. Cabbage and olive oil are more recent discoveries.
- 5) *Chili Pepper*. The research on the medicinal value of chili was done by a professor of medicine at the University of California, Los Angeles. The American new Age Journal lists the following possible therapeutic benefits: Excellent medicine for the lungs; acts as an expectorant (helps to throw out phlegm); prevents and alleviates chronic bronchitis and emphysema, acts as a decongestant, helps dissolve blood clots; kills pain; induces euphoria.

Unfortunately, many Westerners afraid of burning their tongues can't share the euphoria. But it is good news for everyone that otherwise all the food medicines are said to be without side effects.

(Source: New Age Journal, Brighton, USA Sept 88)

THE TIDES

A NOVELLA

(Continued from the issue of September 1989)

IV

BACK in Benares I was occupied with the thought of the responsibility I had taken up from Mr. Roy. While considering the ways and means to execute the task I had a sudden revelation. I felt that an unseen hand had been working from behind to guide me in respect of everything that took place uptill now. So I was inclined to pray to that power to direct me in my future pursuit also. The result was immediate. The calm, serene and at the same time humorous figure of Dr. Bose of Ghazipur appeared in my mind. Not that I did not think about him at other times. But that was random, without rhyme or reason, whereas this time his appearance involved a specific purpose. As such I decided to go to him next day.

I alighted from the train at Ghazipur station next evening. My heart rejoiced at the sight of familiar things and faces after about three years. I hired a *tonga* and within half an hour was in front of Dr. Bose's dispensary at the heart of the city. He was busy with his patients, but seeing me at the door jumped up from his chair and exclaimed, "Oh it's you! Come, come, tell me what makes you remember me after so many years." "I remembered you often, Bose-da, but could not make time to come. Tell me, how are you? How about our Bela-di?" "I am fine, as you see, but about your Didi, better ask her yourself. Go straight to our house and make yourself comfortable. I shall be there in no time, maybe before you get ready for tea."

During my stay at Ghazipur Dr. Bose was my friend, philosopher and guide in each walk of life. A famous physician and resident of the place for many years he was praised and respected by one and all there and his door used to remain always open to me. I met Bela-di, his wife, at the main gate of his two-storied building. She announced my arrival loudly to her children. Alok and Archana rushed out cheerfully to greet me.

After having a wash, just as I was sipping a cup of tea Bose-da came in a youngish and care-free mood. He asked me aloud, "Now, tell me, brother, what you will prefer to eat—egg, fish, meat or some milk preparations?" "Eat! excuse me, Bose-da, at the moment I have no choice in food. Anything will serve me equally well. In fact I have come to you for advice regarding a task I have undertaken." "Nonsense, food is to be considered first always, then everything else. However, spell out your trouble and let me see if I can be of help to you."

"It is in respect of my one night's guest and the strange couple of the

dilapidated building.” “What! do they haunt you in dreams even today?”

“No, not only in dreams, they are haunting me now in the waking state also. Just recently I came to know that the old man was perhaps the revolutionary Kalishankar Roy of *Agniyuga*! “Absurd, impossible, who told you this nonsense? Listen, a time was when the name Kalishankar and his fiery speeches used to electrify each patriotic heart of India, particularly of Bengal, with hope, strength and courage. Thereafter, suddenly his voice died down, nobody could see or hear him for a long time. Consequently some concluded that he had died in an encounter, others maintained that he killed himself to escape capture. But very few believed that he was living.” Suddenly Bose-da grew very serious and grave. I muttered, “Amongst these very few is perhaps his younger brother Mr. Umashankar Roy, advocate of the Allahabad Court.” Then bit by bit I told him all that had happened to me in Allahabad. At this Bose-da grew still more grave and thoughtful..

All on a sudden, throwing aside his melancholy mood he pulled himself up and said, “No, there is nothing to despair about, come along, there is time still. The responsibility you have taken up is not yours alone but of each and every individual of independent India. Because, but for the dedicated, difficult and undaunted effort and work of great patriots like him, the freedom of India would have been far still. They were the vanguard to awaken the dormant spirit, power and strength of a dominated nation into action, life and vigour. Do you understand?” “But, Bose-da, some give credit mostly to non-violent means for bringing about India’s independence.” Bose-da remained silent for a long while and then added smilingly, “I don’t want to argue with you about which brought what. Arguments lead nowhere. One has to have the vision of the truth and that cannot be reached by arguments. So leave all aside and let us start our work in right earnest. The great patriot must be found and brought to open light from his unwanted seclusion. Probably he is not sufficiently aware that India is free now and his coming out is very much welcome. Or it may also be a fact that he considers it better to serve India from seclusion.”

“But, Bose-da, how to start with our work? After so many years should we go first to that dilapidated building again?” “Yes, but not by boat. Please try to find out the land-route. Next you should write to Mr. Roy requesting him to send us Deepu’s diary, if possible. You are interested in your strange guest, we can get some clue about him from that. Moreover, we shall have a broader basis of knowledge about the related family for our work.” “Well, Bose-da, I forgot to ask Mr. Umashankar Roy about his family background. Don’t you know the early life of the great patriot?” “No, I know just a little about his struggle for the freedom of India, nothing more. Yes, that is a very salient point. So you can also write to Mr. Roy to let us know about their family background.”

I did as Dr. Bose had wanted me to do without any delay, wrote a letter to Mr. Roy as desired by him.

I thought that it would not be very difficult for me to find out the land-route to that old building, but actually it happened otherwise, because I presumed that the said building must be somewhere near the Ghat whence I had picked up the fugitive Deepu. No, it was not there. In fact at Ghazipur by the Ganges there were a number of Ghats. So my task to find out the route to the old couple's building grew laborious, lingering and uncertain....

Meanwhile we got Deepu's diary from Mr. Roy but no letter complying with our request to know about their life. According to Bose-da's wish I read it at random from the middle. But Alok and Archana insisted on my reading it from the very beginning. So one night after our dinner we sat together including Bose-da and Bela-di and I started reading Deepu's diary from the outset.

DEEPU'S DIARY

This nicely bound diary I received years ago as a token of affection from Saroj-da whom I adored with all my heart and soul. I did not feel then like keeping a diary. But now that I have made up my mind to maintain it, the thoughts, events and encounters of that time come crowding to my memory. So I note them down without any dates, as their sequence I have totally forgotten. Not only that, the first thing I want to express has also escaped my mind. I do not know the name of my birth-place! I doubt if Saroj-da knew it or not!

In fact the beginning of my life is shrouded in mystery. Not to know the time and place of one's birth is not something peculiar only to me. No one remembers these things unless they are told about them later on by relatives. Perhaps I had no relatives to tell me these things.

I have no mother and, as it appears, no father, either. I don't know why I have no mother or what happened to her—when, how, where she went or was lost to me. I also did not ask anybody about my parents as asking for information about my affairs was not in my nature. As a result I have always been haunted by a suppressed sorrow and anguish for not knowing facts which others of my age normally do.

I feel myself aloof from the family I live in. Somehow or other I am obsessed by the idea that this is not the place where I was born and there is none here whom I can call my own.

As a child I used to wake up in the morning with a choking sorrow in my chest and felt like crying at the top of my voice but could not do so for fear of being punished by my uncle (the husband of my Pisma, father's sister). If he would hear me crying he would rush to my bed-side and give me a good thrashing even at that early hour of the day. But on days when it was beyond my power to check myself from bursting into a cry I used to hurry to the terrace where the green-gold morning-smile of nature magically wiped away my tears. I looked at

the belt of green vegetation around the village and the eastern sky washed with molten gold. They soothed my heart and appeased my yearning for my lost mother. It was as if the bounty of her love and blessings for me dripped through them from an unknown source to infuse bliss and gladness in me.

But alas! this happy state would not last for long. The morbid mood of mind would return unawares and I would suffer from anguish throughout the whole day. Happily towards the evening the mystery of twilight would draw me again into its consoling bosom. The sounds of auspicious conchs from all around announcing the advent of nocturnal rest and peace impelled me to pray—to whom and for what I have forgotten, but its effect I remember to this day. The painful choking pressure in my chest diminished and I felt fresh and free. I always marked that the green grandeur of our planet vibrant with pulsations of life and voices of creatures and sanctified with the fragrance of flowers, earth, rain and water were a balm to my suffering heart.

Perhaps human words are incapable of expressing the profundity of the misfortune to have no mother; at least it was so with me. Hence I shall simply narrate some episodes of my boyhood so far as I remember and as exactly as possible.

It was morning, I was in my study with an open book before me on the table. But my mind was busy elsewhere. It was concentrated on a basket of fresh and ripe liches beneath my table and my nose feasted on their fine smell. My mouth watered and I wondered how the basket came there instead of being kept in the fruit-room as usual. Just then my uncle, angry and excited, stepped in with a sharp, thin cane in his hand. “Why have you stolen the liches?” he shouted and without waiting for my reply started beating me with the cane at random. I endured the painful strokes with clenched teeth. Being beaten so often I had developed an unusual power of endurance. Moreover, I knew that he would be tired soon and stop beating.

Nearby my Písima was busy doing her household work. She could hear her husband shouting and also the whacking sound of the cane. But she neither came to my rescue nor forbade him to beat me. Heedless of everything around her she went on with her work as if she were deaf and dumb. She was like that, I do not remember to have seen her smiling at any time whatsoever. She always wore a grave, sombre and tired countenance.

I have already stated that I didn't feel anyone around me as my own. The only exception to that was my Písima. She was a source of mystery to me. I longed to know more about her, nay, even to love her. But she remained a closed book to me with her absolute indifference and grave personality. At the beginning, for quite a number of years, I hardly associated with the neighbouring children and would not take part in their games played every afternoon on the vast grassy field at the southern side of our pond. I would rather go to the cemetery a little away from the playground on the right. There I would observe

each and every tombstone, muths and monuments erected in memory of the dead I would read the inscriptions on them with care and attention but all in vain. Because I could never get from them any indication of my lost mother. Of course that did not hinder my going there almost daily and scrutinising the writings over and over again.

(“Please skip some pages, these don’t seem to be of much importance,” suggested Bose-da “Oh no, papa, we want to listen to everything,” insisted Alok and Archana. Bose-da shrugged his shoulders helplessly I went on reading.)

Apart from this, another resort of my rest and leisure was the spacious garden beside the towering Muth of Lord Shiva, the abode of peace, goodness and beauty put together. Often I would go there alone and roam about in the garden for hours Only at times Rasu from Hari Pal’s shop would come running to me and request straightway, “Deepu-da, please tell me a story ” I would tell him stories, those that I had read in books. He would listen to them with rapt attention. Intelligent as he was, he understood everything, though he had never been to any school Occasionally on being asked he would also tell me stories, the legends and fairy-tales that he had heard from the village elders. I enjoyed them very much, even better than my book-stories Those were the golden moments for both of us.

One day at about ten in the morning I was having a stroll all alone in the garden. I took a fancy to caress each flower-plant and fruit-tree with my fingers and to my surprise felt without a shade of doubt that they responded to my feeling of love and affection I had a fascination for greenness. The tall grasses encircling the garden area attracted me and I stepped towards the side beyond which there was an open spot where fishes and vegetables were being sold every morning As I neared it I was astonished to find an unusual tossing of grasses at a certain place. “Are they showing thus their friendliness towards me?” I thought and then went to that particular spot. I parted the grasses and wondered about the real reason Two turtles, not bigger than the size of a pocket watch, were advancing slowly into the garden Perhaps they were a part of the debris thrown away by the fishermen from their baskets. Due to the scorching rays of the sun in the open market, the poor little things were instinctively creeping towards the shadow of the garden. Pity welled up in me for the thirsty and helpless little creatures Quickly I picked them up and hurried homewards. First I dropped them into a bucket full of water. They swam excitedly under water and then exhaled chains of small bubbles. I stooped to observe their tiny limbs and happy movements. They in turn raised their muzzles above the water and looked at me as if to express gratitude. I was possessed by a special kind of liking for them. I dug an aquariumlike device in the courtyard in front of the kitchen. Then I and the young servant Gopal filled it up with water, weeds, pebbles and bits of floating water—hyacinth. Finally I lifted the small turtles from the bucket and

released them into the water of their new abode. My heart sang with joy to look at their aquatic feats.

Just then my uncle appeared with a cane in hand angry and excited as the other day. This time without accusing me directly he asked me in an attacking mood. "Who has dug the ditch here? Is it you?" I could not but smile within me, seeing his new mode of treatment and the reason also I could follow. That day I had not stolen the liches, the fact he knew afterwards from Rasu who had actually seen the real culprits, the other boys of my age, in the very act of stealing. But then he was not at all repentant for punishing me unnecessarily nor did he utter a kind word to me. The boys wanted to delude my uncle. Was he actually deluded to see the liches under my table? Or was it simply his pretext to utilise the occasion to beat me?

This time I had dug the ditch openly and everyone had seen me doing it, yet he asked, "Is it you who dug the ditch?" Strange, very strange indeed is human nature. However, I did not know why, for the first time in my life, I looked straight at his eyes and replied, "Yes, I have done it, what of it?" He got startled and stood dumbfounded for a while and then abruptly started hitting me right and left shouting at the same time, "What of it, eh? This is for that. I shall uproot your tongue if you repeat it again." I endured the strokes with clenched teeth as ever and then...

"Saroj, you have come after all, but you did not write that you were coming so soon!" Hearing Pisima's affectionate voice my uncle stopped beating and left the place hurriedly. I thought, "Good Lord! Pisima also can speak so endearingly? But to whom is she pouring the sweetness of her heart?" I turned round to find Pisima stretching loving hands to greet a good-looking healthy young man. Her eyes glittered in deep joy and satisfaction. Her happy feeling permeated me and my stricken heart got bathed in gladness, and tears of joy flooded my eyes.

At the next moment I felt like clasping Pisima with my both hands and asking, "Pisima, tell me how this fine young man is related to you!" But before that the young man neared me and kept his hands on my shoulders affectionately and murmured, "How silly, does a big boy like you weep on being punished by elders?" Alas! how could I make him realise that I did not weep for the whipping! Moreover at his loving touch tears surged up again profusely in my eyes and to hide them I turned my face and, to his utter surprise, ran away straight to the Muth-side garden, my refuge and consolation. The green nature and the soft breeze received me into the sweet fold of their embrace. I regained my normal poise in no time.

After a while Rasu joined me. He whispered into my ears from behind, "Saroj-da is waiting for you there. Let's go." He led me by the hand to Saroj-da who was waiting in front of the Muth. As we reached him, he showed me the cracked and broken parts of the Muth-wall and suggested that I mend them as soon as possible. Puzzled, I looked at him vacantly. It became clear at the next

moment He placed his arm tenderly around my shoulders and accused me mildly, "How is it that I, a guest to your house, have come after years and you fled away leaving me here alone?"

"My house!" I exclaimed sharply. "Yes, who else's? Let us make a move and have a look at your garden . Fine, really fine! You know, the atmosphere of your garden is working as a soothing balm to my tired heart and mind." Thereafter he remained silent for a long time and then added very slowly, "You know, I could not recognise mother at first, she has absolutely changed during these years " "Your mother? Is my Pisima your mother?" I became stiff and unmindful.

"You didn't know that? What's the matter with you?" He scrutinised me and smiled, "Silly boy, what's there to be afraid of? By the way, why did you dig a hole in the courtyard?"

"To keep the young ones," I answered meekly. "Young ones of what?" he asked. "Of turtles " "Nonsense, are they worth tending, the ugly ones? Do throw them away to the big pond and level the part you have dug."

"Oh no, they are beautiful, how gracefully they swim! I like them, Saroj-da." "Is it really so? Then I shall see to it that you may keep them as your pets "

("Stop it for today," announced Bose-da, "Don't worry, it will be read another day," he assured his children)

(To be continued)

CHUNILAL CHOWDHURY

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Sri Aurobindo Circle: Forty-fifth Number. Sri Aurobindo Society Annual 1989
Editor: Kishor Gandhi. Published by Sri Aurobindo Society, Pondicherry

It is often said that the classicism of Carnatic music is unique. The musician has to be more than an artist and a practitioner of the profession. He has to be a Sangeeta Yogi with the full command over his instrumentation and with an access to the occult. What could be in lesser hands heavy and ponderous, he has to make subtle and sensitive and soul-appealing. A sublimity couched in simplicity then turns out to be the rare gift of such a creative spirit's Yoga-sadhana. This is indeed what we witness in the *Sri Aurobindo Circle* that has become a classic in its own lifetime. If we are to understand the 'classical' in the spirit of Herbert Read's 'profundity', then that description fitly applies to this Annual whose forty-fifth number is presently in front of us. To maintain that uniqueness of classicism year after year for forty-five years is no small achievement, although it may look kind of a well worked-out formula.

The present issue, like the earlier ones, can be broadly divided into four major sections: photographs and facsimile-reproductions, a topical selection from the writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, a few well-chosen old and new poems essentially falling in the category of mystical poetry, and some perceptive studies bringing out clearly and forcefully the Aurobindonian vision in diverse fields.

Placed after the four photographs of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo is a sketch of a mother and a child drawn by the Mother herself in 1958, which is of unique significance to all spiritual seekers. An appropriate caption could be what the Mother wrote in 1971 to the sadhika for whom this sketch had been made: "I hold you to my heart and keep you there."

The photograph of Sri Aurobindo's typewriter, the haloed machine that had the wonderful privilege of being the first to receive *The Life Divine* directly in the physical, reminds us of K. D. Sethna's lines

As if the blue voice of the Unknowable
Broke through its sleep..

The Master-Yogi sitting as a typist must have been a very rare sight for the Gods to crowd in the sky to watch it! A picture to conjure with indeed! Similarly, a calm surge of joy inundates the whole being when one sees in the Mother's own hand. "my love is always with you to help you", bringing with it the surest assurance that ever can be given; the divinely endearing comes so close to us with its warmth that no mortal fears need trouble us.

In the section devoted to Sri Aurobindo's prose-writings there are two

distinct parts, one dealing with the general spirituo-yogic aspects in the scheme of things and the other a straight compilation of letters about the action of Sri Aurobindo's force. Thus the passage from *The Synthesis of Yoga* imperatively stresses the need to eliminate the five-fold falsity of the ego, life, senses, heart, and thought so that in an integral self-fulfilment their true absolutes may be discovered and established in our being. The same truth is brought home more philosophically in a quotation from *The Life Divine*: our mind has to finally recover its divine light in the all-comprehending Supermind, soul its divine self in the Ananda, life its play in Consciousness-Force, and Matter open to its divine liberty as a form of the divine Existence. While we appreciate the efforts of the editor to focussedly bring out some of the writings of the Master-Yogi, this reviewer feels that there should also be a representation from the mantra-charged Word of the Master-Poet. After all, Sri Aurobindo was a Poet first and then everything else. More than that. In his grand epic *Savitri* he has disclosed several new things not to be found in his other works; it is therefore necessary that these be studied in their ever-deepening implications

The two selections from the Mother's volumes are pertinently concerned with her Yoga of Transformation of the Physical. That the body-consciousness should feel no difference between itself and the Divine is the last battle against falsehood to be won; it is a unique achievement in the entire spiritual history of the earth. When the body is convinced that the Presence can, in spite of all terrestrial oppositions, abide in it, then, says the Mother, it just means that it has made a tremendous progress. The *Circle's* highlighting the achievement is significant indeed.

In his series on the theories of social development as presented to introduce Sri Aurobindo's *The Human Cycle*, Kishor Gandhi comes, in the present instalment, to the stage of evaluating Marx's theory of class-struggle, his prophecy regarding international socialism, and the theory of economic exploitation. Class-struggle as an instrument of social change is quite understandable up to a certain point, but to miss the fact that the more fundamental struggle is between the individual and the society—or as in the classic example of Antigone, between the individual and the state—is also to deny him the power to revolutionise the social order which he has done so very often. The author has argued well to demolish the "myth" of such a Marxian approach by seeing the problem from several angles. Similarly, the thesis of bringing prosperity only by abolishing economic inequality is thoroughly exposed. Looking straight into the problem, and without mincing words, the analyst arrives at the following conclusion: "Marx's conviction that by dethroning capitalism by a violent revolution and enthroning socialism in its place the new millennium will arrive in human history is a vain delusion, however much Marx may try to substantiate it by his so-called scientific doctrine of historical materialism." The roots of failure lie in the "scientific doctrine of historical materialism." It would have greatly enriched our

understanding of the entire process had this scientific doctrine been exegesised in the full context of the present discussion

Professor K R Srinivasa Iyengar's address-cum-essay on Sri Aurobindo as a *Poet and Prophet-Saviour of the Future* is a sort of quick resumé of his monumental biographical work *Sri Aurobindo*. But strictly from a historical point of view we do not know whether Sri Aurobindo saw, when he "wrote" to his disciple Pavitra in 1926 (the author puts it in 1925) about the solar fire or *saura agni*, that it was "brought about by fission" The fission event as physics knows it came much later in 1939 Actually, the Talk recorded by Pavitra is regarding the five elemental states of Matter as understood by the ancient Indian mystics-physicists. However, Prof. Iyengar's assessment about *Savitri* "carrying perhaps a charge of supramental force" is very perceptive In one single wide sweep he also brings to us the glory that this "many-dimensioned" epic is: "If the *Iliad* be the Primer of Tragic Art, if *Ilion* and the Mahabharata are veritable epics of Doom spelling out the grammar of human fatality, if Dante's triple world of Inferno, Purgatory, and Paradise adds up to a Divine Comedy, Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* is the symbol and dynamic of soul-change and world-change, the Epic of the Future..."

The next two articles in the issue are complementary to each other in the sense that if one deals with some aspects of Greek poetry, the other provides a refreshing look at the Puranic times in India K D Sethna's *Sri Aurobindo and Greece*, after having traced how the "vexed question" of giving a quantitative hexametric mould to English poetry has been fully answered by Sri Aurobindo, analyses his *Descent* written in Sapphics. Sethna writes: "The poem comes with a gorgeous-sounding yet clear-phrased power" which at times makes a "most magnificent picture, Vedic and Upanishadic in its symbolism" receiving language and rhythm from "the immense overworld known to the ancient Rishis". It is a pity that modern aesthetes have not opened themselves to these Grecian-English verses overflowing with illumination and inspiration.

Prema Nandakumar delves into the Puranic tradition which, with its new "psychic experiences", has so powerfully moulded India's national character and temperament that what was purely esoteric and accessible only to the initiates became broad-based retaining the essential truths of the former. But her posers, e.g., "whether the Alvars influenced the writing of the Bhagavata or they were inspired by the Bhagavata", certainly need an extensive research in the history of the Puranas which is very sadly lacking

A.S. Dalal's article is almost a kind of straight compilation of the various concepts in Sri Aurobindo's Yoga-psychology The author has of course discussed these in the context of the present-day Western pioneers in the field; he has shown how the vast region of the "Unconscious" in its higher reaches has remained unexplored with them We believe that these comparative studies will also be extended to the various systems which were prevalent in ancient India.

Sri Aurobindo Circle has no doubt provided a great forum for such in-depth studies in the several aspects of Sri Aurobindo's work. But should it also not devote itself to the Mother's contributions in the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo, the Yoga that remains unfulfilled without her? We have no doubt that these studies too will be forthcoming in the subsequent issues. The authority with which the *Circle* presents the articles will go a long way in establishing the value of their findings. It may perhaps be necessary to increase the size of the journal, at least to what it used to be until a couple of years ago. I am told that finances have put constraints on the editor, but it is hoped that these will not come in the way of the quality-publication that *Sri Aurobindo Circle* is.

R. Y. DESHPANDE

RESPONSE TO *IDEAL CHILD AND IDEAL PARENT*

Senior Medical Officer,
Funafuti,
Tuvalu,
Papua New Guinea.

Date: 24 4.89.

Shri Keshavji,

I wish to refer to your letter of 14th December, 1988. I learned through it that an International Year of the "Family" has been declared. It is a very important aspect of life; the bringing up of children who are the future humanity ought not to be a task but a privilege and a pleasure to the parents, because there is so much that they themselves can learn by it.

So with this end in view on behalf of our Association we like to put forward our thoughts that those two Booklets you mentioned are most relevant to our nation. Please send them to us as sample copies for our Association.

I would be grateful if you could take up the matter as soon as possible.

Thanks,

With regards,

Sd/-
LAUPULAKA SIAUMAU

Oto Lijadu,
Bos 7415 Marina,
Lagos Nigeria.
16th May 1989.

Dear Mr Keshavji,

Words fail me to express my grateful thanks for the two copies of the *IDEAL PARENT*—a real "Something new", for the contents have not only imbibed me with divine inspiration, they have also given me a new aspect of motherhood, a true maternity. I am arranging for my Association to hold a workshop on both the *Ideal Child* and the *Ideal Parent*. We are inviting girls from a secondary school to join us. A committee has been formed to look into this and I will let you know how it goes.

The cosmos is full of goodness and we should be thankful whenever it unfolds any of it to us. May we always be open to the essence of the Divine.

My greetings to all who read this beautiful 'Ideal Parent'

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-
OTO LIJADU

L.M Ghose,
Bhasakosh lane,
Cuttack - 2.
17 7 89

Dear Shri Keshavji,

Since I have lost my eyesight your kind letter was read out to me and I heard it with great pleasure. The present boys and girls who are the future citizens of India should be so trained and taught that Indian Independence will be maintained and the road to the final aim of independence will be prepared. The final aim of independence is to place India as an exemplary country in the world. Our country will set an example in the world for permanent peace, joy and security for mankind I have handed over your letter to certain members of Sri Aurobindo Circle of the Cuttack Rural College I request you to have further correspondence in this matter with Dr (Mrs) Shyama Kanungo, C/o Matru Bhavan, Sri Aurobindo Marg, Cuttack - 3.

With my profound respects,
I remain

Yours sincerely,
Sd/-
L.M. GHOSE

Students' Section

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

Sixty-fifth Seminar

19 February 1989

(Continued from the issue of September 1989)

THE MOTHER—CREATRIX OF THE NEW AGE

Speech by Rashmi Chowdhury

EVOLUTION is a progressive cyclic movement that leads the terrestrial existence to ever higher levels of consciousness and life through a succession of new stages. Today we are at the threshold of the new age of the Supramental Truth. But before it can fully manifest in the life of humanity, an integral transformation of the human consciousness is indispensable. To bring about this integral transformation the Mother has laid down a fourfold discipline or tapasya

The four disciplines are Tapasya of beauty, Tapasya of power, Tapasya of knowledge and Tapasya of love. Among all these the tapasya of love is the most difficult, because in the sphere of love we have the sense of the inevitable and irresistible, something from which we cannot escape. In fact we can say that there is hardly any sphere of human life in which there is greater blindness and folly than in that of love. As the Mother says: "In the name of love the worst crimes have been perpetrated, the greatest follies committed."¹

To control and transform this force of love a greater, higher and truer power of love is necessary. In the Mother's words: "Only love can rule over love by enlightening, transforming and exalting it. This is because, of all the forces at work in the universe, love is the most powerful, the most irresistible. Without love the world would fall back into the chaos of inconscience. Consciousness is indeed the creator of the universe, but love is its saviour."²

Because the Divine Love plunged into the Inconscient, this vast universe is moving progressively, in spite of its apparent disorder and disunity, back to its divine origin. Love is the mediating link between the Creator and the creation. For without this Divine Love penetrating and upholding each atom the creation would have long crumbled to pieces. As the Mother says: "Love is, in its essence, the joy of identity, it finds its ultimate expression in the bliss of union. Between the two there lie all the phases of its universal manifestation ... On

¹ Collected Works of the Mother (Cent. Ed.) Vol. 12, p. 65

² Ibid.

one hand there is the supreme power of attraction and on the other the irresistible need for absolute self-giving.”³ This is the secret drive impelling Nature to arrive through slow and gradual stages at its ultimate goal.

Love, as the ordinary man knows and experiences it, is the physical passion or vital attachment or the sentiment of the heart or affinity of the mind. It is fundamentally egoistic and self-seeking. True love on the contrary is a complete, unreserved self-giving. It is motiveless and loves for the sake of loving, not expecting anything in return. It is simply a giving of itself with total abandon. It has the effect of liberating us from the narrow confines of the ego, of widening and enlarging our consciousness to bring a great surge of light and joy and elation in our life.

When the Divine Love awakens in us in its purity, it takes the form of psychic love. But too often it gets deformed and corrupted in the human relations because they are governed by egoistic vital desire and passion. To find this true psychic love we must reject the wrong movements of vital egoistic desire and liberate the pure passion of psychic love which lies buried or mixed up under them.

But this does not mean that vital love is always impure and false and must be entirely rejected to find the true psychic love. Vital love in itself is not necessarily false and impure, it becomes so only when it acts as the instrument of the ego for its selfish ends. But it can also become the instrument of the psychic love, and when this happens it is a powerful means for manifesting the psychic and the Divine Love in human life. It gives a flaming ardour of pure passion and rich fullness of dynamic force to the psychic love. So we should never say that only psychic love is true and the vital love is false, but that there is also a true vital love,—as there is a true physical and true mental love,—which is a necessary part of the integral expression of love in life. We have only to reject the limitations and degradations imposed on the vital love by the ego to convert it by the psychic urge into its original nature where it can play its proper role in the total expression of Divine Love.

But this can only happen when human love is directly turned towards the Divine. For however noble and pure the love may be in human relationships, it cannot fulfil itself in its deepest longing. In the words of the Mother: “However beautiful and pure they may be, they cause a kind of short circuit and cut off the direct connection with the Divine.”⁴ And she also says: “For one who has known love for the Divine, all other forms of love are obscure and mixed with pettiness and egoism and darkness. Moreover, it is a well-known fact that one grows into the likeness of what one loves. Therefore if you want to be like the Divine, love Him alone.”⁵ And once you have tasted this Divine Love all human love

³ *Ibid* . pp 65-66.

⁴ *Ibid* . pp 68-69

⁵ *Ibid* . p 69

seems insipid and dull and feeble in comparison.

It is this pure Divine Love that has to be realised upon earth for the earth to become the habitation of the Divine Presence. And man must know that only when this Divine Love manifests all his sufferings will end and the burning pain of separation from the Divine will be assuaged.

Before bringing upon earth this Divine Love the establishment of Supramental Truth is necessary for without it the unregenerated egoistic nature of man will sully and degrade the Divine Love.

And to preparè ourselves for this final victory when the Divine Love will express itself freely in the world and as first steps on the way we must, as the Mother advises, “replace it in our relations with others by a total, unvarying, constant and egoless kindness and goodwill that will not expect any reward or gratitude or even any recognition. However others may treat you, you will never allow yourself to be carried away by any resentment; and in your unmixed love for the Divine, you will leave him sole judge as to how he is to protect you and defend you against the misunderstanding and bad will of others.”⁶ In short, you will expect everything from the Divine. He will be your friend and lover, your mother and father, your consoler and protector. So one has to reject all emotional attachment for a person or family or country or anything else and exclusively attach oneself to the Divine Reality. And if you do this, the Mother tells us “This concentration will culminate in an integral identification and will be instrumental to the supramental realisation upon earth ”⁷

Therefore he who aspires to find true love must turn to the Divine alone, for it is only in the personal relation with the Divine that love in its pristine purity can be found.

To sum up, we may say that Love is not only the Origin and the Cause of the universe; it is also the Redeemer and the Saviour, the Victor and the Transfigurer of life and its ultimate goal and supreme perfection. Its advent and establishment in the world is therefore the highest aim of Integral Yoga. As Sri Aurobindo says: “To bring the Divine Love and Beauty and Ananda into the world is, indeed, the whole crown and essence of our Yoga ”⁸

⁶ *Ibid* , p 70

⁷ *Ibid* , p 71

⁸ *Letters on Yoga* (Cent Ed , Vol 23), p 753