

MOTHER INDIA

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MARCH 1990

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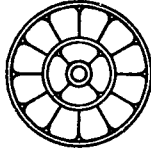
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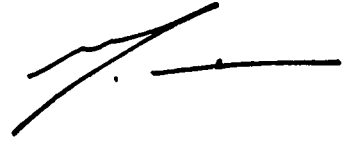


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled



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MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XLIII

No. 3

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
A TALK BY THE MOTHER TO THE ASHRAM CHILDREN ON 30 DECEMBER 1950	... 151
THE MOTHER WHOM WE ADORE IN THE LIGHT OF HER <i>Prayers and Meditations</i>	<i>Nilima Das</i> ... 154
DREAMSCAPE (Poem)	<i>Shyam Kumari</i> ... 158
LIFE—POETRY—YOGA SOME PERSONAL LETTERS	<i>Amal Kiran (K. D. Sethna)</i> .. 159
MAN: PRESENT AND FUTURE (Poem)	<i>Samar Basu</i> ... 167
"DYUMAN—THE LUMINOUS ONE" AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH <i>Compiled by Shyam Kumari</i>	.. 170
THE ASHRAM CHILDREN AND SRI AUROBINDO'S LIFE A DREAM-DIALOGUE	<i>Nirodbaran</i> ... 176
SOME EPISODES IN THE LIFE OF AN "EXTRAORDINARY GIRL" <i>Reported by "Satyam"</i>	... 179
MOOT COURT HEARING ON SHAKESPEARE AUTHORSHIP: WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE OR EDWARD DE VERE?	... 182
THE SECRET OF SECRETS: ITS MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE IN THE GITA	<i>N. Jayashanmukham</i> ... 187
A LETTER TO THE EDITOR	<i>Udar Pinto</i> ... 192

CONTENTS

“A GRAND OLD MAN” AN EXPLANATION	<i>K. D. S.</i>	... 192
SRI AUROBINDO—THE SOUL OF INDIA	<i>Nilimas Das</i>	... 193
CONVERSATIONS OF THE DEAD TRANSLATED BY SATADAL FROM THE BENGALI	<i>Nolini Kanta Gupta</i>	... 198
NEW AGE NEWS <i>Compiled and presented by Wilfried</i>		.. 201
THE TIDES A NOVELLA	<i>Chunilal Chowdhury</i>	... 203

STUDENTS' SECTION

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION TWENTY-SIXTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE 13 AUGUST 1989 “THE NEED OF THE HOUR OF GOD” <i>Speech by Rashmi Choudhury and Hema Shah</i>		... 211
MOTHER INDIA: INDEX 1989 PART ONE: AUTHORS <i>Shraddhavan</i>		

MOTHER INDIA: INDEX 1989

As before, this yearly index is divided under three headings Authors, Titles, Topics. In this section Sri Aurobindo and the Mother come first, followed by the other entries in alphabetical order. The numbers following the entries refer to the issue and page numbers. *i.e.*, 2:79=February issue, p. 79. Reference numbers indicate the issue and page numbers of Vol. 42.

I AUTHORS

SRI AUROBINDO

Two insights from Sri Aurobindo 'The Hour of God's movement', 'Great consequences' [*two quotations from Karmayogin*] 8 495

Message of the fifteenth of August 1947 [*original version*] 12.848-51

The Problem of the past, an old article *tr.* by Niranjana from Bengali 5 311-16

Sri Aurobindo's letter to his poet brother Manomohan Ghose . 1 9-18

compilations

The Image of 'ether' in Sri Aurobindo's works: practical aid in meditation, compiled by Shivabhai (*continued from 1988*) 3 216-17

'Sri Aurobindo's teaching and method of sadhana', selected by Ila Joshi and read at New Age Association 25th annual conference 14 8.88, 4 288-92

talks

Talks with Sri Aurobindo, from Nirodbaran's notebook [*concerning A and his experiences*] 10 8 41, 27 6 48, 1:19-24

THE MOTHER talks

Mental sincerity a talk by the Mother for Aurovillians in February 1968 5 300

A Talk by the Mother to the Ashram children *series continuing from 1988, each month a talk from the corresponding month in 1958, instalments in every issue*

words

Never forget the goal a reminder from the Mother 2 85

Truth versus falsehood a letter of the Mother 1:5

AMAL KIRAN (K D SETHNA)

untitled fragment of a poem 7 457

Invisible (poem) 12 782

Life-poetry-yoga personal letters, *series, sometimes entitled 'Poetry-life-yoga' or 'Yoga-poetry-life' etc ; instalments in each issue except March*

AMIN, SHIVABHAI

A Pilgrimage 2 113

(compiler)

The Image of 'ether' in Sri Aurobindo's works: practical aid in meditation, *comp.* by S Amin 3 216-17 (*contd. from 1988*)

ARYA, DEVANSHU

The Mother, creatrix of the new age, *speech read at the New Age Association 65 seminar 19 2 89* 6.428-31

BAMBA, VIKAS

Greatest mystery (*poem*) 11 721

O restless heart (*poem*) 1 24

With bated breath (*poem*) 3 178

BANERJEE, DHIRAJ (reviewer)

Sri Aurobindo the poet and thinker, by N Ghatak, *reviewed by* D Banerjee 8 555-8

BASHŌ

Two quotations from Bashō 2 128

BASU, SAMAR

Light shone forth (*poem*) 8 498

New Age (*poem*) 10 687

BISWAS, SOMOSREE (*jt author*)

The Avatar of the new age, by Deepa Hariharan and Somosree Biswas, *speech at New Age Association 25th annual conference 14 8 88 2 158-61*

The Mother, creatrix of the new age, by Deepa Hariharan and Somosree Biswas, *speech at New Age Association 65th seminar 19 2 89 5 364-7*

CHOWDHURY, CHUNILAL

O reveal thyself (*poem*) 11 749

The Tides a novella *serial, instalments in issues 7-12 (continuing)*

CHOWDHURY, RASHMI

The Mother, creatrix of the new age *speech read at the New Age Association 65th seminar 19 2 89 10 710-12*

DAS, ARAVINDA

What I have learnt from the Ashram, *speech read at the New Age Association 25th annual conference 14 8 88 3 227-9*

DAS, GUNANANDA

A Pioneer of the fight for freedom, *tr by Gourmohan Mohanta from Oriya 5 354*

DAS, NILIMA

The Mother whom we adore, in the light of her *Prayers and Meditations, serial, continuing from 1988, instalments in every issue*

Sri Aurobindo, the soul of India, *serial, continuing from 1988, instalments in even-numbered issues (translator)*

Prapatu a chosen soul, by R Panda, *tr N Das 9 610-12*

DATTATREYA

A permanent calendar 1 75

DEB, SURESH CHANDRA

Sri Aurobindo as I knew him some reminiscences of his political days 5 301-310

DEBANSHU

Look deep and behold (*poem*) 5 354

DESHPANDE, R Y

All about that big bang 9 617-23

The Message of Vyasa's *Savitri*, I—3 205-9, II—4 273-80

Savitri's house of meditation, serial, continuing from 1988 II—1 61-7, III—2 135-40 (reviewer)

Gavesanā Quest for Light, ed A Basu, *reviewed by R Y Deshpande 8 553-5*

Sri Aurobindo Circle 45th number 1989, reviewed by R Y Deshpande 10 704-7

DEVAN NAIR, C V

Socio-economic progress and the realm of values a needless dichotomy I—8 532-8, II—9 602-6, III—10 677-81

DUMASIA, HUFREESH

The Mother, creatrix of the new age *speech read at New Age Association 65th seminar 19 2 89 7-486-9*

DYUMAN

The Service Tree a talk 1.29-34

GOSWAMI, DIBAKAR

speech given at the New Age Association 26th annual conference 13 8 89 12 848-51

GUHA, MARTA

Ryōkan (*poem*) 11 753

Slowly the night hours wear on (*poem*) 3.170

GUPTA, G.S BALARAMA

The Novel and the common reader 4 281-4

GUPTA, SAMIR KANTA

Green Parrot (*four poems*) 6 421-22

Phantasmagoria (*a playlet*) 11 765-7

GURIAN, JAY

Eugene O'Neill the man who dared 5 339-44

HABBU, ARVIND

The Indian Belle 4 270

Meditation (*poem*) 3 178

Moon-mother (*poem*) 2:107

HARIHARAN, DEEPA

and BISWAS, SOMOSREE

The Avatar of the new age, *speech read at the New Age Association 25th annual conference 14 8 1988 2 158-61*

The Mother, creatrix of the new age, *speech read at the New Age Association 65th seminar, 19 2 89 5 364-7*

HINDOCHA, SURESH

Symphony (*poem*) 7.471

HUCHZERMEYER, WILFRIED

Heidegger dethroned 12 828-31

New Age News series, *instalments in issues 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11*

HUTA

The Mother's true servitor a reminiscence for Champaklal's eighty-sixth birthday 2 134

The Story of a Soul *serial, continuing from 1988, instalments in issues 1-10 (suspended)*

IYENGAR, K R SRINIVASA

A review-letter to Dr Indra Sen [*about his publication Integral Psychology*] 5 363

JAYANTILAL

A Letter to the Editor 10 676

JAYASHANMUKHAM, N A

The Gita and the significance of *yogakṣema* I—2 145-8, II—3 210-15

JHUMUR (*translator*)

The Ashram children and Sri Aurobindo's life a dream dialogue, by Nirodbaran, *tr from Bengali* by Jhumur; *serial, instalments in issues 8-12 (continuing)*

JONES, WILLIAM

No Myth (*poem*) 2·118

JOSHI, ILA (*compiler*)

Sri Aurobindo's teaching and method of sadhana, *selected by Ila Joshi and read at the New Age Association 25th annual conference 14 8 88 4 288-82*

K (*compiler*) [SHYAM KUMARI]

How they came to the Ashram *series, continuing from 1988, instalments in each issue*

KALA, ARVIND (*reviewer*)

The Indianisation of English, by B B. Kachru, *reviewed by A Kala* 4 287

KAMALAKANTO

A Passing away (*poem*) 9 616

MAGGI (*reviewer*)

Vignettes of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother , by Shyam Kumari, *reviewed by Maggi* 6 426-7

MAHAJAN, VEERAJ

Lost tribe with a Vedic past 6 407-9

MARUDANAYAGAM, P

The meaning of *The Cocktail Party* by T S Eliot 6 401-6

Romanticism and history a survey of some opinions I—7 475-8, II—8 542-5, III—9 607-9

MOHANTA, GOURMOHAN (*translator*)

A Pioneer of the fight for freedom, by G Das, *tr by G Mohanta from Oriya* 5 354

MOHANTY, BISWANATH

History of sociology 2·119-21

MOHANTY, SACHCHIDANANDA

True emancipation of women 10 682-4

MOOKERJI, Dr RADHA KUMAR

Some reminiscences of Sri Aurobindo 8 466-7

MUKHERJEE, MRITYUNJOY

Glimpses of Pavitra *concluding instalment of serial continuing from 1988* 1 43-47

MUKHOPADHYAYA, AJU

The New Horizon a midnight vision (*poem*) 4 254

N B

An Experiment in surrender my initial attempt and the Divine's response 4 267-9

NAGARATNAM

Nagaratnam's memories of Sri Aurobindo 8 503

NANDAN, DEVAKI

Sanctuary of beauty (*poem*) 9 623
They visit in my dream (*poem*) 8 513

NIRANJAN (*translator*)

The Problem of the past an old article by Sri Aurobindo, *translated by Niranjan from Bengali* 5 311-16

NIRODBARAN

The Ashram children and Sri Aurobindo's life a dream-dialogue, *tr by Jhumur, serial, instalments in issues 8-12 (continuing)*
Nirodbaran's talk at the annual conference of the Sri Aurobindo Society on August 15, 1988 2.101-7
Talks with Sri Aurobindo, from Nirodbaran's notebook 1 19-24

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

Conversations of the dead, *tr by Satadal from Bengali, series, instalments in issues 6-12*
Nolini Kanta Gupta on Sri Aurobindo compiled by Shyam Kumari The Greatness of the Great 1 68-72
Prayers and Meditations of the Mother an insight by Nolini Kanta Gupta 2 90-100

NOONAN, THOMAS D (*reviewer*)

Jung and Eastern Thought, by H Coward, *reviewed by T D Noonan* 3 225
The Spirituality of the future, by K D Sethna, *reviewed by T D Noonan* 3:225-6

PALANDE, DINKAR

The Fire is lit (*poem*) 5.316
The Heart's call (*poem*) 1 39
O Helen (*poem*) 2 133
Receding waves (*poem*) 8 552
'To Be' (*poem*) 10 687

PANDA, RAMNATH

Prapatti—a chosen soul, *tr N Das* 9 610-12

PATHRE, D S

The Divine Mother to the rescue a letter to the editor 2 141

PAVITRA

To a beginner in yoga a letter 12 781

PIRONNEAU, OLIVIER

In Memory of Shri M L Parashar 7 460-63

RAI, SUCHARU

The Mother, creatrix of the new age, *speech read at New Age Association 65th seminar* 19 2 89 9 634-7

RAJA, P

Haiku (*poem*) 6 415
O Breeze! (*poem*) 9 633

reviewer

A Bouquet of flowers for the Mother, by Amar Singh *reviewed by P Raja* 4 285-6
The Chessmaster and his moves, by Raja Rao, *reviewed by P Raja* 5 358-60

RAJESHWARI

Adoration (*poem*) 5 338

RATANLAL

"The Lion of Punjab"—Lala Lajpatrai a talk 1 73-4

REDDY, C RAMAKRISHNA (reviewer)

Gita for the modern mind, by B C Sen, reviewed by C R Reddy 12 846-7

REDDY, V MADHUSUDHAN

'Gloria'—Dyumanbhai's gift of conscious food 3 193-6

RICHMAN, ROBERT (reviewer)

New and collected poems, by Richard Wilbur reviewed by R Richman 6 416-20

ROY, SRIJITA

Essential requirements of the integral yoga, *speech given at the New Age Association 25th annual conference 14 8 1988* 1 76-9

The Mother, creatrix of the new age, *speech at New Age Association 65th seminar 19 2 1989* 8 559-62

S [SHYAM KUMARI]

Vignettes of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo *series, continuing from 1988, episodes in issues 1, 8, 9*

SANTHALINGAM, N

Angel with horns an introduction to François Villon—the man and his works 4 260-66

SARMA, V GURUNADHA (reviewer)

A Spirit indomitable, ed M Sarkar, reviewed by B G Sarma 11 769-71

SASTRY, P S S (reviewer)

Integral Psychology the psychological system of Sri Aurobindo by Dr Indra Sen, reviewed by P S S Sastry 2 152-3

Integrated healing arts, by Dr J M Jussawalla, reviewed by P S S Sastry 11 771-2

SATADAL (translator)

Conversations of the Dead, by Nolini, *tr by Satadal from the Bengali, series, instalments in issues 6-12*

"SATYAM"

Some episodes in the life of an 'extraordinary girl' I—12 822-4

SCHUMANN, MAURICE

An Unusual meeting with Sri Aurobindo 12 785-91

SEN, INDRA (reviewer)

Knowledge, value and other essays, by Dr H M Joshi, reviewed by Indra Sen 5 360-2

SETHNA K D

The Shroud of Turin and the biblical evidence 3 182-6

Super-Scientist 15 August 1972—5 December 1950 (*poem*) 8 498

SHAH, HEMA

What is our conception of integral perfection and how to attain it? *speech at the New Age Association 66th Seminar 23 4 89* 11 773-6

SHRADDHAVAN

Two quotations from Bashō 2 128

compiler

Golconde a look behind *serial, instalments in each issue*

An Unusual meeting with Sri Aurobindo 12 785-91

reviewer

Tales of Mulla Nasruddin, by P Raja reviewed by Shraddhavan 12 844-46

Tributes to Nolini Kanta Gupta, pilgrim of the Supermund, ed Nirodbaran, reviewed by Shraddhavan 5 357-8

SHYAM KUMARI

Atonement (*poem*) 1 60

Four close encounters with Nehru 11 750-53

In Memory of Shri M L Parashar 7 458-60

Into the night (*poem*) 2 100

Lost identity 12 834-5

Nameless (*poem*) 3 192

Nehru Birth Centenary Year 14 11 1899—14 11 1989 an account of Jawaharlal's three visits to the Ashram, with special reference to Himangshu Niyogi 3 187-92

Rider on the peacock (*poem*) 5 351

Snows of Siachen (*poem*) 10 691-4

compiler

How they came to the Ashram, *series, instalments in each issue*

Nolini Kanta Gupta on Sri Aurobindo 1 68-72

Vignettes of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo *series, continuing from 1988, episodes in issues 1, 8, 9*

SINHA, ABANI

Expectation (*poem*) 1 60

To die to ego (*poem*) 2 109

SITARAMAYYA, K B

Without and within (*poem*) 9 626

reviewer

Blake's Tyger a christological interpretation, by K D Sethna, reviewed by K B Sitaramayya 11 768-9

Petals and sparks poems and plays, by Kamalakanto, reviewed by K B. Sitaramayya 3 223-4

SONAL

Although (*poem*) 4 243

Fill me (*poem*) 3 186

SUNDARESON, R

Illusion (*poem*) 7 445

SWAMINATHAN, K (reviewer)

Wisdom for all time *The Kural*, English translation by P S Sundaram, reviewed by K Swaminathan 2.156-7

THADANI, SURESH

She (*poem*) 11 725

UDAR

A Correction from Udar 5 322

VYAS, G J

"Relax—let go" a sure way to health 3 203-4

X

Vidyapati, the bandit a dream-story 5 345-51

A TALK BY THE MOTHER

TO THE ASHRAM CHILDREN ON 30 DECEMBER 1950

“We are not aiming at success—our aim is perfection.

“We are not seeking fame or reputation; we want to prepare ourselves for a Divine manifestation ”

“Tournaments”, On Education

WHAT is perfection?

Some people put perfection at the apex. It is generally thought that perfection is the maximum one can do. But I say that perfection is not the apex, it is not an extreme. There is no extreme—whatever you may do, there is always the possibility of something better, and it is exactly this possibility of something better which is the very meaning of progress

Since there is no extreme, how can we attain perfection?

If we make some progress, could it be said that we are going towards perfection?

You are mixing up perfection and progress. You do not necessarily progress towards perfection. In progress there is perhaps a certain perfection, but it can't be said that progress is perfection. Progress is rather an ascent.

Perfection is a harmony, an equilibrium.

But what is equilibrium? Who has studied a little physics here?

In a balance, when the two scales are equally loaded, it is said that an equilibrium is established.

That's it. And so what do I mean when I say that perfection is an equilibrium?

When, in a given circumstance, what is against the realisation, that is to say the opposition, is conquered by a conscious force, the result is the manifestation of the realisation

Yes, it is more or less like that, but I should put it otherwise.

The idea of perfection is something which comes to us from the Divine, it descends from plane to plane; and we climb back from plane to plane.

This is still an evolutionary idea. It is always said that when a creation reaches its maximum possibility, this is perfection; but it is not that! And it is exactly against

this idea that I protest. All this is only a rung in the progress. That is, Nature goes to the extreme limit of what she has, and when she sees that she can go no further, can no longer stir, she destroys everything and begins again. This can't be called a perfection, for perfection cannot be demolished. Perfection will come only when Nature can no longer undo what she has begun. For the moment there is no instance where she has not successively undone what she had begun, believing that it was not enough or it was not that which she wanted to do. Hence it cannot be said that she has attained perfection in her creation. It would be the maximum only if she had no need to undo what she has done.

You say that we do not seek success, but is not success a sort of perfection?

For the ordinary human mentality success is perhaps a perfection, but not for us.

Perfection is not a static state, it is an equilibrium. But a progressive, dynamic equilibrium. One may go from perfection to perfection. There can come a state from which it would not be necessary to descend to a lower rung in order to go farther; at the moment the march of Nature is like that, but in this new state, instead of being obliged to go back to be able to start again, one can walk always forward, without ever stopping. As things are, one comes to a certain point and, as human beings as they are at present cannot progress indefinitely, one must pass to a higher species or leave the present species and create another. The human being as he is at the moment cannot attain perfection unless he gets out of himself—man is a transitional being. In ordinary language it may be said: "Oh, this man is perfect", but that is a literary figure. The maximum a human being can attain just now is an equilibrium which is not progressive. He may attain perhaps a static equilibrium but all that is static can be broken for lack of progress.

Is not perfection the fulfilment of the Divine in all the parts of the being?

No, what you are thinking of is again a rung in progress and not perfection.

Now we are going to try to find a definition which can fit all instances, that is, the individual, the collectivity, the earth and the universe.

We may say that perfection will be attained in the individual, the collectivity, on the earth and in the universe, when, at *every moment*, the receptivity will be equal in quality and quantity to the Force which wants to manifest.

That is the supreme equilibrium.

Hence, there must be a perfect equilibrium between what comes from above and what answers from below, and when the two meet, that is perfect equilibrium, which is the Realisation—a realisation in constant progress.

"It is better to be than to seem. We do not need to appear to be good if our

sincerity is perfect. And by perfect sincerity we mean that all our thoughts, feelings, sensations and actions should express nothing but the central Truth of our being."

"Tournaments", *On Education*

When you are absolutely sincere, you make a constant effort to live in harmony with the highest ideal of your being, the truth of your being. At every moment, in all that you think, all that you feel and all that you do, you try as perfectly as possible, as completely as possible, to put yourself in harmony with the highest ideal or, if you are conscious of it, with the truth of your being—then you have reached true sincerity. And if you are like that, if truly you do not act from egoistic motives or for personal reasons, if you act guided by your inner truth, that is, if you are perfectly sincere, it is absolutely the same to you whether the whole world judges you in one way or another. In this state of perfect sincerity you do not need to appear good or to be approved by others, for the first thing you experience when you are in harmony with your true consciousness is that you do not care what you look like. Whether you look like this or like that, whether you seem indifferent, cold, distant, proud, all this is of no importance; provided, I repeat this, you are absolutely sincere, that is, you never forget that you live in order to realise your inner, central truth.

Does not perfection consist in pleasing the Divine and no one else?

Yes, if you like, but when one is not absolutely sincere, one deceives oneself very easily, and if one feels comfortable, one says: "Oh, I am sure that I please the Divine."

(Questions and Answers 1950, pp 14-17)

THE MOTHER WHOM WE ADORE IN THE LIGHT OF HER PRAYERS AND MEDITATIONS

(Continued from the issue of 21 February 1990)

THE Mother told Purani on 7 October 1947: "The true Consciousness had already been reached. It was only the physical consciousness that now reached the complete identification with the Divine. It happened in Paris."

It was the time of the First World War in Paris. Her inner life during this period was in a "locked struggle" between the steady pressure of the spiritual Power and the "dogged resistance" of the material world. Perhaps this was needed for a new light to take charge of the body. "It was the hour before the Gods awake." The Mother's pen runs on behalf of the sorrowing world which was awaiting the New Dawn. A new world was going to be born.

During this period there were seven letters written by the Mother and Sri Aurobindo which expressed the common ideal and mission of both. We find in them the course of their spiritual achievements, a point of profound interest and significance for the future humanity. It shows the representative character of their yoga. Not only did they aspire for elimination of ignorance and suffering from the earth and for the revelation of the Spirit in their transfigured substance, but also for identification with the being of the earth. She constituted herself a practitioner of the Yoga for the earth's transformation. She prayed for a world-wide descent of the Light, Force, Peace and Harmony of the Divine.

She writes on 2nd November 1915 as follows:

"Errors have become stepping-stones, the blind gropings conquests. Thy glory transforms defeats into victories of eternity, and all the shadows have fled before Thy radiant light

"It is Thou who wert the motive and the goal; Thou art the worker and the work."

The next entry on 7th November 1915 goes:

"This sorrowful world kneels before Thee, O Lord, in mute supplication; Matter, tortured, takes shelter at Thy feet, its last and only refuge; and imploring Thee thus, it adores Thee, Thee whom it neither knows nor understands. Its prayer rises like the cry of one in a last agony, what is disappearing feels vaguely the possibility of living once again in Thee; the earth awaits Thy decree in a grandiose prostration. Listen, listen: its voice implores and supplicates to Thee...."

The Mother's mystical experience on 26th November 1915 was a most unusual adventure of her sadhana

"The entire consciousness immersed in the divine contemplation, the whole

being enjoyed a supreme and vast felicity.

“Then was the physical body seized, first in its lower members and next the whole of it, by a sacred trembling which made all personal limits fall away little by little even in the most material sensation. The being grew in greatness progressively, methodically, breaking down every barrier, shattering every obstacle, that it might contain and manifest a force and a power which increased ceaselessly in immensity and intensity. It was as a progressive dilatation of the cells until there was a complete identification with the earth: the body of the awakened consciousness was the terrestrial globe moving harmoniously in ethereal space. And the consciousness knew that its global body was thus moving in the arms of the universal Being, and it gave itself, it abandoned itself to It in an ecstasy of peaceful bliss. Then it felt that its body was absorbed in the body of the universe and one with it; the consciousness became the consciousness of the universe, immobile in its totality, moving infinitely in its internal complexity. The consciousness of the universe sprang towards the Divine in an ardent aspiration, a perfect surrender, and it saw in the splendour of the immaculate Light the radiant Being standing on a many-headed serpent whose body coiled infinitely around the universe. The being in an eternal gesture of triumph mastered and created at one and the same time the serpent and the universe that issued from him; erect on the serpent he dominated it with all his victorious might, and the same gesture that crushed the hydra enveloping the universe gave it eternal birth. Then the consciousness became this Being and perceived that its form was changing once more; it was absorbed into something which was no longer a form and yet contained all forms, something which, immutable, sees,—the Eye, the Witness. And what It sees, is. Then this last vestige of form disappeared and the consciousness itself was absorbed into the Unutterable, the Ineffable

“The return towards the consciousness of the individual body took place very slowly in a constant and invariable splendour of Light and Power and Felicity and Adoration, by successive gradations, but directly, without passing again through the universal and terrestrial forms. And it was as if the modest corporeal form had become the direct and immediate vesture, without any intermediary, of the supreme and eternal Witness.”

The above prayer affirms six steps of her evolutionary consciousness. First, the “.. being grew in greatness progressively, methodically breaking down every barrier, shattering every obstacle” Secondly, “Then there was a complete identification with the earth. Thirdly, it was “an ecstasy of peaceful bliss”. Fourthly, the consciousness became the consciousness of the universe. Fifthly, the consciousness became in fact one with the Divine who is all forms and is also beyond forms, who is Unutterable and Ineffable.” Finally, there is a return to the individualised Mother who is yet a direct embodiment of the supreme Spirit.

Such was the letter of the Mother to Sri Aurobindo. Sri Aurobindo answered on 31-12-1915: "The experience you have described is Vedic in the real sense, though not one which would easily be recognised by the modern systems of Yoga which call themselves Vedic. It is the union of the 'Earth' of the Veda and Puranas with the divine Principle, an earth which is said to be above our earth, that is to say, the physical being and consciousness of which the world and the body are only images. But the modern Yogas hardly recognise the possibility of the material union with the Divine."

There is another account of the Mother of an experience which has an affinity with what she has written to Sri Aurobindo. It is a report by Nolini Kanta Gupta, based on a talk by the Mother. We read: "I was seated, drawn in and meditating, I felt that my physical body was dissolving or changing. It was becoming wider and wider, losing its human character and taking gradually the shape of the globe. Arms, legs, head were no longer there; it became spherical, having exactly the form of the earth. I felt I had become the earth. I was the earth in form and substance and all terrestrial objects were in me, animals and people, living and moving in me, trees and plants and even inanimate objects as part of myself, limbs of my body. I was the earth-consciousness incarnate."¹

The Mother's achievement of the mystical phenomenon of 26th November 1915 could not be retained for a long time as there was a great resistance in the outer ordinary life caused by the horrors of the falsehood and ignorance of the groaning world. But she did not lose it completely. It came back. The pressure of everyday actuality did not weaken her spiritual life. The terrestrial and universal extension and identification with the Divine resumed on 15th January 1916. She expresses her remarkable experiences: "O Thou whom I call my God, Thou who art the personal form of the Transcendent Eternal, the Cause, Source and Reality of my individual being, Thou who hast through the centuries and millenniums slowly and subtly kneaded this Matter, so that one day it could become consciously identified with Thee, and be nothing but Thee; O Thou who hast appeared to me in all Thy divine splendour—this individual being in all its complexity offers itself to Thee in an act of supreme adoration; it aspires in its entirety to be identified with Thee, to be Thyself, eternally Thou, merged for ever in Thy Reality."

The following letter of 1916 by Sri Aurobindo to the Mother displays the unshaken faith which guides him to continue his yogic sadhana:

"The difficulties you find in the spiritual progress are common to us all. In this Yoga the progress is always attended with these relapses into the ordinary mentality until the whole being is so remoulded that it can no longer be affected either by any downward tendency in our own nature or by the impression from the discordant world outside or even by the mental state of those associated with us most closely in the Yoga. The ordinary Yoga is usually concentrated on a

single aim and therefore less exposed to such recoils; ours is so complex and many-sided and embraces such large aims that we cannot expect any smooth progress until we near the completion of an effort—especially as all the hostile forces in the spiritual world are in a constant state of opposition and beset our gains; for the complete victory of a single one of us would mean a general downfall among them. In fact by our own unaided effort we could not hope to succeed. It is only in proportion as we come into a more and more universal communion with the Highest that we can hope to overcome with any finality. For myself I have had to come back so often from things that seemed to have been securely gained that it is only relatively that I can say of any part of my Yoga, 'It is done.' Still I have always found that when I recover from one of these recoils, it is always with a new spiritual gain which might have been neglected or missed if I had remained securely in my former state of partial satisfaction. Especially, as I have long had the map of my advance sketched out before me, I am able to measure my progress at each step and the particular losses are compensated for by the clear consciousness of the general advance that has been made. The final goal is far but the progress made in the face of so constant and massive an opposition is the guarantee of its being gained in the end. But the time is in other hands than ours. Therefore I have put impatience and dissatisfaction far away from me.

“An absolute equality of the mind and heart and a clear purity and calm strength in all the members of the being have long been the primary condition on which the power working in me has insisted with an inexhaustible patience and an undeviating constancy of will which rejects all the efforts of other powers to hasten forward to the neglect of these first requisites. Wherever they are impaired it returns upon them and works over and again over the weak points like a workman patiently mending the defects of his work. These seem to me to be the foundation and condition of all the rest. As they become firmer and more complete the system is more able to hold consistently and vividly the settled perception of the One in all things and beings, in all qualities, forces, happenings, in all this world-consciousness and the play of its workings. That founds the Unity and upon it the deep satisfaction and growing rapture of the Unity.

“When the Unity has been well founded, the static half of our work is done but the active half remains. It is then that in the One we must see the Master and His Power,—Krishna and Kali as I name them using the terms of our Indian religions; the Power occupying the whole of myself and my nature which becomes Kali and ceases to be anything else, the Master using, directing, enjoying the Power to his ends, not mine, with that which I call myself only as a centre of his universal existence and responding to its workings as a soul to the Soul, taking upon itself his image until there is nothing left but Krishna and Kali....”²

The Mother's prayer of 26th November 1915 shows that there is no difference left between the individual Mother and the Divine. Truly speaking, they are the same.

(*To be continued*)

NILIMA DAS

REFERENCES

- 1 *Glances of the Mother's Life*, compiled by Nilima Das, Vol 1, p 165
- 2 *The Life of Sri Aurobindo* by A B Purani, pp 163-64

DREAMSCAPE

SOME ethereal elements
 Are the stuff of my making.
 Dreams are my true life,
 Unreal seems the waking.
 O love, lose not the moments
 Let not the golden moon
 Glide to the western verge.
 Come, let us string
 On wandering beams
 Pearls of pure ecstasy.
 For only at night
 Can I dare, to stand
 Unveiled before Thee.

SHYAM KUMARI

LIFE—POETRY—YOGA

SOME PERSONAL LETTERS

I AM glad you are reading my series “Life—Poetry—Yoga” with interest. The personal vein in which it is cast gives me a lot of liberty to express myself. And it seems to help people in their inner and outer problems. I receive encouraging words from several sadhaks when I go and sit my hour and a half at the Samadhi every afternoon. Generally it’s the only outing I have and even the walk from the Ashram gate to the chair under the clock and the return “Marathon” plod gateward are trying. It is so fine of you to ask me to consider your Bombay flat my home, and to tell me that I should come there if ever I need to visit my native city. But my legs refuse to get along with that kind of feat. They have become noticeably unsteady, which is natural when I use a “walker” at home and “Canadian Canes” outside. My arms get stronger and stronger and the legs lose their “kick”—except when they will have to kick the bucket. As I wrote to a friend of mine, the “Canadian Canes”, which are ordinarily my mainstay, become dangerous when the ground is wet from unexpected rain. I have to be very careful how I set them on the ground when picking my steps over the wetness. For, if I don’t put them vertical I would myself at once become horizontal!

Symbolically, this wouldn’t be undesirable. In our Integral Yoga the movement has to be both a vertical one from the earth-plane to the higher realms of consciousness and a horizontal one in which we widen out to embrace the earth-plane itself (though not necessarily in the sheer physical sense in which I sometimes do the embracing when I have a toss). Many sadhaks are content to soar into inner freedom and bliss but do not know how to be in their outer lives a centre of light from which their being may spread into a subtle oneness with the Universal Spirit and permeate with bliss all who come in touch with them. An in-drawn and up-drawn concentration is surely an important part of our sadhana, but the final test of success is to be an illumined soul come forward into the waking state and feeling the Divine Presence radiate forth in all one’s actions and relationships. At least this is the ideal I pray for and strive after in spite of repeatedly falling short of it. If I have any desire to go beyond my already excessive 85 years, it is to have a little more opportunity to realise my ideal.

(16.12.1989)

*

You asked me in the Ashram: “When our scriptures say that God is within us, do they mean what Sri Aurobindo calls our ‘psychic being’, the true soul in us?” I gave you a short answer on the spot. Let me make myself fully clear now. Our

psychic being is not the same as the Divine within—it is the Divine’s immortal delegate for evolutionary purposes. We may name it in our immediate context, at our present stage of evolution, the Divine projected in a subtle quintessential human form to manifest divinity in terms of mind, life-force and body—itsself serving as a centre to them of a profound sweetness and light and strength: it is their guide carrying God’s mandate of transformation. The Divine within is the psychic being’s eternal companion—not only companion but also its direct origin, the Secret Splendour from which it is put forth on a small scale with a gradually unfolding infinity. The psychic being is inwardly one with that Greatness but outwardly different as a developing entity.

When we become aware of it, we are bathed in a soft radiance, a warm happy glow is all about us and there is a constant intuition of the Divine’s presence and a ceaseless self-giving to it at the same time that we feel held within an intensely intimate yet all-transcending-vastness of purity and peace fused with power and rapture. From this unique experience, as if from an inexhaustible source, a warm stream of causeless inherently existing joy keeps running into the world around. Upon that stream every happening and everyone we come across are felt floating as a spontaneous offering from us to the Universal Lord and the Supreme Mother. No personal ego-sensitive reaction takes place and whatever we meet receives a silent blessing, an undemanding love. Not that we cannot discriminate between the good and the bad in the world before us so as to respond with the right insight, but there is no leap of superficial judgment. An invocation arises to the One who is beyond all error to intervene and help His Truth to find expression in the complex of earthly circumstances. Dynamic activity on our part is not ruled out; it is even imperative, at least at times. However, it issues across an inner passivity to the hearing of that Truth by our psychic being.

(17.12.1989)

*

Your letter of 21 November brought a number of significant themes—the chief being the grateful exclamation: “We have been so blessed in our lives, to be caught up in the blazing comet-trail of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, our life-span crossing a line of Earth’s destiny.” After creating such a vividly profound sentence you don’t have to bewail: “I don’t know how to express this. I wish I had your gift for words.”

What you posted on the 27th illustrates your own gift in another fashion—that enchanting birthday-present to me, your poem:

Go words! and dance your way across the paper!
 Make me a minuet to please my friend.
 Join hands, process and pont to stately measure—
 But vex me no more with meanings that depend

On dictionaries. Follow the deeper note,
 And weave a saraband or roundelay!
 Whirl me a waltz—a tarantella—gavotte—
 A galliard for Amal's natal day!

The ant embraces the ant in wordless greeting;
 A pulse of delight moves the delicate steps of the deer;
 All nature dances for joy at fortuitous meeting,
 And treads out a burden of bliss in the listening air.
 So words! I send you to Amal in Pondicherry.
 From bondage to reason and rhyme I set you free.
 Let your message of friendship, O words! be simple and merry:
 Dance my "pas seul" on the air of his ear like a bee

The very measure of the verse is exquisitely Terpsichorian. And the personal strain imaginatively woven into the word-pattern meant to celebrate a particular occasion, "Amal's natal day", sets us two—despite your "pas seul", your solo dance—delightfully together as partners tripping out of the poem into some subtle actuality to the rhythm of more than metrical feet. I don't know whether your conscious mind intended this overtone of suggestion, which is punningly there in the very words "pas seul" meaning "not alone" no less than "solitary step". But, as you know, poetry—even if deliberate workmanship has gone into it—is much more than the poet's doing and re-doing his speech. Yeats has somewhere said that though a lot of conscious labour may be spent upon a poem the result is worth nothing if it does not read like "a moment's thought". This "thought" exists originally beyond the poet's conscious mind, and if the latter toils, it is merely to dig a channel for that secret wonder to flow through, destroying all appearance of the passage prepared for it. And what breaks out from within carries often much more than the toiling poet is aware of. You have invoked "the deeper note" that goes past the "dictionaries", and I like the way you have delicately conjured up a sense of the ultra-real by bringing in the instinctive touches of movements that are earthly but outside the reality obsessing us—the human "bondage to reason and rhyme". Of course, "rhyme" in the present context spells the rational fitting of parts with a mechanical logic and not poetry's echo of things surprisingly blended by intuitive magic. I am charmed by the third quatrain about the ant and the deer, where such intuitive magic has play everywhere and not only at the rhyme-end of lines. The final "bee" too pleases me, for it hums its way to my ear, loaded with the honey of the heavenward heart of the poet in you

I think it's the first time that "Pondicherry" has figured in a poem. Originally I heard of this town in connection with a competition in an old *Times Literary Supplement*. That was before I joined the Ashram. Readers were asked

to invent a name for a book such as would never tempt anybody to buy and read it. The first prize was won by the title: "How to ride a tricycle." The second by the title: "The roads of Pondicherry." Evidently Sri Aurobindo was still unknown to the English public in general before 1927, the year of my Hegira. In literature proper the town had a minor place in Conan Doyle's second Sherlock-Holmes novel: *The Sign of the Four*. The four conspirators fixed on Pondicherry as their venue. This was still earlier than my *TLS*—much before Sri Aurobindo had made the capital of French India his Seat of Yoga. Now the name of the town is on everybody's lips, but none till the day of your verses has put it in poetry. You have even made it an end-word evoking the rhyme-phrase "simple and merry." If not for anything else your piece should be published for the sake of its making music with this name. The poem may also get noted for the phrase "Amal in Pondicherry." So far Pondicherry was associated thunderously with colossal Sri Aurobindo—now it may also be linked whisperingly with a tiny disciple of his.

I should like to dwell a little on your command to words to "be simple and merry" in their message of your friendship. Basically you have voiced here something appropriate and inevitable between us as followers of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and not only as two individuals who chime in unison and are joined all the more by both being in love with poetry. By the way, poetry itself is, according to Milton, "simple" no less than "sensuous and passionate"—"simple" in the special sense that it is a direct language rather than one that is complicated by speculative discourse—a fresh-welling utterance due, as Milton himself says, to dwelling

on thoughts that voluntary move
Harmonious numbers.

What dwells on such thoughts is something within us which has an intuitive drive bypassing the usual activity of the mind. Here, by a different route, we hark back to "a moment's thought" *à la* Yeats.

Now to my point about us as Aurobindonians. There is no single path for them to the goal, for the goal marks the convergence of all possible movements of human nature towards an all-fulfilling transfiguration. But there is a path which Sri Aurobindo names "sunlit". The naming reminds me of the closing lines of my poem "Psyche":

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

The true soul in us which Sri Aurobindo has called the Psychic Being represents

in terms of the evolving manifestation of the Divine on earth a central flame which has infinite potentialities. It is as if the Supreme Himself started as a luminous seed sown in the cosmic Ignorance and, with a nature of sweetness and light, exerted His secret strength against the surrounding darkness. The dynamic Truth that is the Supermind and whose symbol from the time of the Rîgvedic Rishis has been the sun of our planetary system is present as a diminutive delegate in the inmost part of us which is our true soul. The Psychic Being is the Divine Child in us: it turns spontaneously to the Eternal as to a creative Mother of the worlds. With no egoistic demand, with no complicated side-issues involved, it goes straight to what it feels to be the sovereign source of the true, the good, the beautiful. An instinctive simplicity of self-surrender to God is its distinguishing mark. And this giving of itself is an act of joy: there is nothing forced, nothing strained, for indeed its very stuff is a causeless happiness. Every movement of it is a smile—it is a smiling repose, it is a smiling activity, it smiles in solitude, it smiles in company—and with its inherent smilingness it transmits to others its own endless rapture—its interplay with people is a healing balm, a dispelling of their shadows. Thus, along with its childlike simplicity is a childlike merriment. No matter how difficult the outer life may be, no matter what adversities may come from day to day, it is bathed in bliss. So your wanting your words to “be simple and merry” in the hearing of Amal in Pondicherry is a mission given them to evoke in him a remembrance of his psyche. The sunlit path is the one on which the heart of man, surging out of its depths rather than floating on from its surfaces, can go dancing to the Divine instead of toiling towards the Transcendent. Perhaps we may even sum up the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother as being in its most concentrated and swiftest form an injunction to be sublimely simple and seraphically merry: that is to say, to bring forth the Psychic Being as the leader of the march from the limited human to the liberated superhuman. (18.12.1989)

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Your letter—deeply felt when written and as deeply felt when read—was most welcome. I have used the word “deeply” not just to indicate emotional intensity but also to point to a region of the being which goes beyond our separate outer selves, a profundity where all of us are one and where our oneness reaches into a single divine Source underlying everything. A sweetly vibrant touch of this double-aspected depth was there both at the time you wrote and at the time I read. For you have spoken as if you were the mouthpiece of a multitude, the representative voice of all those who turn to *Mother India* for a glimpse of Sri Aurobindo as their guide, a whisper of the Mother as their impeller. And you have spoken thus because you have intuitively caught the sense I often have of being a channel, however limited and imperfect of Sri Aurobindo’s light and the

Mother's love, two felicitous forces which have a universal movement behind every individual-seeming action and which through that universality bring to our fumbling and aching selves the hope of an all-consummating future, as envisaged in *Savitri*:

A Mind unvisited by illusion's gleams,
 A Will expressive of soul's deity,
 A Strength not forced to stumble by its speed,
 A Joy that drags not sorrow for its shade.

You have quoted what I wrote in the April issue of *Mother India* last year, p. 239. Nothing could have pleased me more to remember. My latest birthday wish was the same as the one you have appreciated so much. Only the words were not the same. My appeal to the Divine was: "Open me inward and upward to You more and more. Come through this opening and live in my heart with ever greater intensity. Then open me outward to You who are hidden in each of my fellow-beings and make me feel You opening them inward and upward to Your eternal Truth in all that changes, Your immortal Beauty in everything that passes."

The postcard you have sent me, reproducing the painting by Leonardo which hangs in the Munich gallery and whose frame you have reverently touched shows in the figure of the Virgin and the Child the Transcendental Beauty watching from above with meditative tenderness the image of the Supreme Truth it has created in our world in the form of a perfect littleness destined to grow to fullness in the course of time. Here in her lap is a transparent embodiment of what the Upanishads have visioned as "the Being in the heart no bigger than the thumb of a man, who is like a fire that is without smoke and who was in the past and is now in the present, the lord of his today and the lord of his tomorrow—the truth which thou hast to seek."

Leonardo's Virgin looks downward while the Child looks upward at some invisible point with both his little arms stretched forward to it. Again, an intent of forward striding is suggested in the way his two stretched legs are poised. One hand of the Virgin clasps the Child at the back, the other gently touches the last finger of his raised right hand as if to assure him of her subtle support. The Virgin's head is crowned with golden curls. On her right shoulder hangs a golden wrap which emerges more fully and brightly below as part of her dress, in almost the centre of the lower part of the picture. There seems to be some symbolism in this golden colour at the centre-top and the centre-bottom, for this is the colour of the divine Truth-light. Two other shades make up the Virgin's dress: a brown underjacket and over it a blue robe—emblems of earth and sky. Her slightly bent head is against a black background which is the middle of a wall with two arched openings on either side of the head. Through these windows we glimpse a

landscape of brown earth, greenish vegetation, blue mountain-rocks under a faint whiteness with light blue above it. The suggestion is of a slow several-aspected ascension made visible to us through those apertures in the dark background of the Virgin's fair face. All this appears to be significant of the varied conditions under which the Divine Mother consents to work in her earthly manifestation through the development of what we term the Psychic Being down the ages, the inmost Soul projected from on high to bring gradually the heavenly plenitude on the terrestrial scene.

If my understanding of Leonardo's lovely pattern at once of peace and mobility, of outer shape and inner sense has any validity, it may be because of what you remind me of Sri Aurobindo's having written to me that according to his impression I may have been present during the Italian Renaissance as well as in Restoration England and in ancient Athens. You have called to my memory my saying in one of my old talks to the Ashram members that I may have been "a footling of a painter" tutored by the master mind and revelatory hand which gave us "Mona Lisa" and "The Last Supper". Handing paint-brushes to that past manifestation of Sri Aurobindo, during the creation of those great visions, was perhaps my happy job.

At the Samadhi on November 25 I thought several times of the hour it would be in Grafelfing. Your information that 11.45 there would be 4.15 here and 13.32 in your wrist-watch be 5.30 in mine proved a good guide to my imagining what you might be doing at any particular moment in that span of seventy-five minutes. Once I imagined that you were at a window and the lines from my poem "Far Flute" floated into my mind:

What visionary urge
Has stolen from horizons watched alone
Into thy being like a fathomless smile?

It may interest you to know that the second line has been characterised by Sri Aurobindo as "Intuition with Overmind touch." May I mention a few of the other phrases in my poetry which have received the same touch, thanks to Sri Aurobindo's grace? I should like to quote them, because if one learns from Sri Aurobindo what plane is at work, one can absorb more livingly its atmosphere through the rhythm and the vision, and let not only the spiritually-turned aesthetic sense but also the very substance of the soul feel the impact and grow more Aurobindonian.

(1) The mute unshadowed spaces of her mind.
"Intuitive with Overmind touch."

(2) Flickering no longer with the cry of clay,
The distance-haunted fire of mystic mind...

“Illumined Mind with the Overmind touch.”

(3) An ocean-hearted ecstasy am I
Where time flows inward to eternal shores.

“Intuitive, Illumined, Overmind touch all mixed together.”

Now back to the Samadhi and you. A second imaginative look at you found you poring over a book, but the book seemed to be one in which the true essence of all things was gathered together. Recollecting this scene I am now put in mind of a particular aspect of Dante’s vision in the highest rung of Paradise. Slightly modifying the beginning of line 2, I may cite Laurence Binyon’s English rendering:

Leaves I beheld within the unfathomed blaze
Into one volume bound by love, the same
That the universe holds scattered through its maze.

I can only think of a “volume” like *The Life Divine* or *The Synthesis of Yoga* which in terms of earthly literature could reflect the state of Divine Consciousness Dante hints at, a state wherein the multiplicity and diversity of the phenomenal world interweave and blend to discover their all-transforming unity or, rather, meet in a warm and glowing union which discloses the truth of each in all and all in each.

I must cry halt now with my best wishes for you to move towards the healthy, the happy and the holy.

(30.11.1989)

AMAL KIRAN (K. D. SETHNA)

MAN: PRESENT AND FUTURE

'MAN IS an animal living in society',
For a school of bygone days.

'Man is a being, now in transit',—
Is what a modern Yogi says.

'He is not final', the Yogi adds;
'His destiny is his soul.'

'Where is the way?' asks the present man,
'That leads to his ultimate goal?'

'Take the next step towards the journey's end,'—
From above a sweet Voice rings.
Comes the retort, 'In my action-field
I'm great with earthly things.

'I am now at my journey's end,
Nowhere do I need to go;
For that is not my nature's will.
At least I think that's so.'

'*Man's greatness,*' says the Yogi,
'*Is not in what he is,*
But in what he makes possible:
Always remember this.

'And try to become, if you can,
All that you ought to be,
Nature's will you do not know,
Give up that falsehood's plea.

You are on a glowing ladder,
Matter is at its base;
Spirit is its golden peak
Beyond both time and space.

'In between this base and peak
There is the rung of mind;
A thinking creature there you are,
Like millions of your kind.

'You've to climb up the next rungs
To reach the golden top,

Arduous no doubt this journey is
Yet never must you stop.'

'I'm not happy with what I have,
But know not what I need;
I feel some urge to move ahead,
But how do I now proceed?'

'Hear again the Yogi's words,
For that will show the way!
A Voice comes here from far beyond
To the earthly man at bay.

'Man's effort cannot go past man,
From more than human source
He must seek aid: that Grace alone
Can curve out the right course

'That mounts to the next higher rungs
With a base on the rung of mind.
Upward Man shall move and move
Leaving his past behind.

'Name and fame and gold and wealth
Can no more fetter his feet,
For *something more* and *something else*
His earthly heart will beat '

'But how can ever man receive,
Aid save from a human source?
Is there an occult play behind
Or a play of Divine Force?

'O what am I to do for it?'
Questions the helpless soul.
'Where is the way that I should follow
To reach the final goal?'

'Aid of God's Grace may you receive
Through your being's inmost Guide.
Be calm and quiet and forgetful
Of outer ebb and tide.

'Sincere in all your prayer and act,
Have faith in the Guide within,

He'll show the way to the Light, the Peace,
Beyond the dark and din.'

'I'm groping in a clouded world
Nowhere a light do I find.
The falsity in which I live
Has made me utterly blind.'

Here we get the helpful words
Of our great Lord and Guide—
The Master Yogi of the modern world,
With Him let us abide:

Yoga must be revealed to man
To reach the journey's end;
Then only can we come to know
What is earth-nature's trend.

Let us invoke His power of Grace
And pierce the walls of mind
To usher in the Age of Truth
Whose passport He has signed.

The advent of this Luminous Age
Is now no empty dream;
It will ensure the reign of Love
And a flow of the New-Life's stream.

Soon shall Falsehood fly away,
And with it Darkness go,
Bliss and Beauty, Truth and Light
Shall march to us in a row.

Out of this very ancient world,
A New One will be born;
A New Race shall be growing up
Steadily from that morn.

This splendid future, the Master's Vision,
Waits for our humankind;
We then must onward press to merge
Our hearts in His Supermind.

“DYUMAN—THE LUMINOUS ONE”

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

(Continued from the issue of 21 February 1990)

Here is the inspiring life story of a great servitor of the Divine whom Sri Aurobindo named “Dyuman—The Luminous One”

To a certain extent it is the story of the growth of the Ashram, of “God’s Labour”, and the part taken in it by one to whom the Mother said, “You came down to serve.”

Compiler: SHYAM KUMARI

I USED to go to the market daily for purchases. On my return I would go to the Mother. One day when I went to her, she said to Vasudha, “Bring out the saris.” The saris were brought out and handed over to me.

There was a long line of boxes in the corridor. She said to me, “Take the saris away, take them away,”—and then she asked Vasudha, “How many saris are there now?” They were counted and found to be still less than one thousand. Then she said to Vasudha, “Bring out all the embroidered saris that you are holding back.” Vasudha went on crying and crying. The Mother’s old and young daughters had laboured every day to embroider these saris for her for ten, twelve hours a day or even longer, for years. Naturally Vasudha didn’t want them to be sold but the Mother was firm. “No, bring out all of them.” And Vasudha brought out these precious mementos from decades of loving labour. She pleaded with me in Gujarati, “Please don’t sell them.” The Mother asked, “What did she say?” Of course I could not and did not repeat to the Mother what Vasudha had said but reassured Vasudha, “I will see to that. O.K.?”

So all those who were familiar with the Mother’s saris and dresses, that is, Vasudha, Anusuya, Ichcha and Minu, they all sat down together in my room and decided which sari could go for what price. The hundred saris which she had used most I kept separately. Then we put prices on each of them from a hundred to two thousand five hundred rupees. I wanted that she should receive one lakh of rupees once again by their sale apart from the money sent by Navajata.

The Mother used to distribute saris to the ladies in the Ashram on each Darshan Day. Once she had said, “One day I will like to dress all my daughters in silk.” Now I heard that the Mother had again said to somebody, “I would like to give my saris to my people.” When I heard this, immediately I went to her and said, “Yes, Mother. You will have the saris.” I gave her back four hundred ninety-five saris for distribution. The Mother herself chose a sari for each one according to the lady’s age, nature, build, complexion, etc. and gave it to each one with infinite love and care.

In the early days we had very good relations with the French Government. In 1934 there was some difficulty due to the British who had put pressure on the French Government to search the Ashram. The Mother called me and said, “A search might take place in the Ashram. The police will raid and see everything. As the Dining Room is nearer to the Governor’s House, they might come there also. I will keep everything open and will tell them, ‘See whatever you want to see, take away whatever you want to take’. Keep everything open at the Dining Room also.” But the Mother’s brother was then the Governor-General in French West Africa. Owing to his influence and intercession nothing happened and the plans for a raid on the Ashram were dropped.

On the contrary the French Governor came to see the Mother. It was the first visit ever of a Pondicherry Governor to her. They became very friendly. The Mother went to the Governor’s house to return the call. And immediately afterwards a music party was held at the Dining Room, where the first hall used to be called the Music Hall. There was a piano there and some other musical instruments. The Mother was present. The Governor attended accompanied by his wife Dilip Kumar Roy sang some songs.

After this the Governor and his wife started visiting the Mother regularly, though the Mother didn’t go to the Governor’s House again after that one visit. Pavitra became the intermediary between the Governor and the Mother. Later a new Governor came and it became customary for a new Governor to pay a visit to the Mother. One of these Governors had been a subordinate of the Mother’s brother. Naturally, the attitude of all of them towards the Mother was reverential. In this context the only anxious time we had was during the Second World War. After Paris fell we were anxious whether the Governor here would obey the Vichy government headed by Pétain or De Gaulle’s “Free French” Government in exile. This anxiety was so great that we stopped sending money out because whatever little cash we had, we had to preserve for our day-to-day expenses. We started storing things because we didn’t know if trains from Madras would be allowed to come to Pondicherry or not.

Years ago Pondicherry had only three cars: one belonged to the Governor, one to the Ashram, and one to a Mudaliar of the town. The first car belonging to the Ashram, a yellow one, was donated to the Mother in 1927 by a Madame Potel who lived in the house opposite the Main Building. That house is now the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education. Madame Potel had two cars. The second one was a beautiful Lorraine, which the Mother later bought from her but for her own reasons never used.

The Mother used to go out for drives in the yellow car, with Pavitra as her driver; a second driver also went along, for in case the car broke down this other person would walk the few miles back to Pondicherry to get another one. Meanwhile in the Ashram Sri Aurobindo would be waiting anxiously. We would all stand on the road and wait. Sri Aurobindo would open his shutters and ask,

“Has she returned?” “No,” one of us would answer. After some time he would open the shutters again and ask, “Has the Mother come back?” and we would again say “No.” Then, if the second driver brought the news that the car had broken down, Amrita would go to the Mudaliar in the town, who always lent his car willingly to bring the Mother back.

Later Duraiswamy ordered a small Renault from France for his own use; but instead of using it, he offered it to the Mother. Then the Mother started using this car for her drives. Sometimes in another car she would take people such as Nolini, Amrita, Duraiswamy, and occasionally myself to accompany her on these drives.

When the Press was started, there were some problems at the beginning, so the Mother wanted to go there regularly. But how to go? For some reason, she no longer wanted to use that small Renault. At once Jayantilal said, “Mother, I will try to get another car.” And he brought a big car from a friend of his in Madras. It was used by the Mother.

After the Second World War, the American Consul once wanted to see the Mother. The Mother said that she would not go down. So she stood on the balcony, and the Consul stood on the road. Nearby was his car. It was a big blue Ford V-8. The Mother remarked, “If I had a car as big as that I would go out.” Jayantilal tried his best. Just then Dayabhai wrote to me that he was coming to Pondicherry, and towards the end of the letter asked as a courtesy if there was anything needed which he could do or bring. I wrote to him that we needed twelve thousand rupees for a car. He immediately sent the money, and within a few days after the Mother had expressed her wish we could get a blue Ford V-8 for her.

But I was not satisfied. I wanted to have a Rolls-Royce for the Mother. I even got a catalogue. One day Shankar Gauda, who was a very dear friend, came to my room and saw this catalogue. We decided to buy a Silver Queen Rolls-Royce for the Mother. We called the agent of the company from Madras. At that time the price of this car was seventy-five thousand rupees. The agent said, “Why do you want to buy this car? The roads are not made for such a car. If something happened, it would not be nice.” I felt the truth of what he said: we should be reasonable. The whole of my life I have kept this attitude—that we should keep a sense of proportion. The agent showed us the catalogue of a Humber car, and we bought one for twenty-six thousand rupees. The Mother approved of it and used it up to 1952.

Afterwards Navajata became friendly with the Prince of Darbhanga—a very wealthy man. Through Navajata the Prince sent three cars for the Mother to choose from. One was a Bentley, another a Mercedes, and the name of the third I do not remember. The Mother liked and kept the Bentley and the Mercedes. The third car was sent back. The Mother used the Mercedes mostly. It is still here

Before the accident to Sri Aurobindo's right leg in 1938, we used to brush the carpet while he was in the bathroom. But after he was confined to bed we could not use a brush to clean the room since it would raise dust. Udar got a small vacuum-cleaner from Madras. For some years Pavitra cleaned the room with this vacuum-cleaner. When he developed some knee trouble I had the opportunity to vacuum-clean Sri Aurobindo's room for five years. But while there I was not supposed to look at him. For five years I cleaned the room but never looked at him.

Once a carpenter-bee started boring in one of the beams of the room, right above Sri Aurobindo's bed. Dust and small splinters began to fall on it. The Mother asked me to remove the bee and seal the hole.

I had to do the work while Sri Aurobindo lay below on his bed. This was the greatest test of my life. Were I to drop something .. it was impossible to imagine!

I brought a step ladder, positioned it to one side of the Lord's bed; then I put the vacuum-cleaner on the top rung of the ladder and, standing on the treads, vacuumed the hole. The insect was sucked into the cleaner. Then with some iron nails I slowly plugged and sealed the hole.

It was the most difficult job of my life. My whole being became totally concentrated as I did it. I feel that the Mother did this through me, because humanly it was not possible: even a little nervousness or a little shaking of the hand, and something would have fallen.

The roof of Sri Aurobindo's room started to leak. It is an old building. With the passing of the years the number of leaks increased. Probably in 1944 the Mother gave ten thousand rupees to a disciple from Hyderabad to buy good wood to make new beams for Sri Aurobindo's room. One year passed but no word came. Reminders were sent but to no avail. Thus three years passed. The roof became a virtual sieve. Everywhere we placed dishes and bowls to catch the water—dozens and dozens of them.

In 1946 I could not bear it any more. One day while on my way to the market I asked my servant, 'Shivalingam, can you go to Cuddalore and find out the sizes and prices of different types of timber? I will give you the fare.' The servant went to Cuddalore and got the needed information about the length and the girth of good quality wood. I gave it to the Mother. She asked one of the Ashram engineers to go and select the wood. I said, "Mother, please send both Udar and Jyotindra Bal so that later there may be no disagreement." They went and made their selections. The wood was brought to the Balcony road and the Mother saw it from the window. She was pleased.

On 16th August we shifted Sri Aurobindo to the meditation hall upstairs. The roof of his room was totally new-made, the electric wiring was changed, the walls replastered and a new carpet was spread and all the furniture including his bed, were re-made. On 23rd November the Lord moved back to his old renovated room.

One of the French Governors, Monsieur Baron, was very close to the Ashram; in fact the Mother had wished him to be the Governor and had used her spiritual force to bring about his appointment. He could come to see her at any time. She had instructed me, "Wherever I may be, if he comes, call me immediately; even if I am in the bathroom, just come and knock." Even when the Mother was receiving *pranāms*, if the Governor came she was prepared to stop the *pranāms* and go to meet him.

In 1947 the Capitaine, the highest official of the French Police in Pondicherry, requested the Mother to let the Ashram participate in the celebrations on July 14, the Bastille Day. The Mother answered, "There may be trouble if we participate." But the Capitaine assured her that during the parade he personally would walk beside the Ashram Group. The Mother agreed. All the boys and girls of the Ashram participated with the Capitaine walking by their side. All went well and nothing happened.

About a month later was August 15, 1947—Sri Aurobindo's seventy-fifth birthday and India's Independence Day. We wanted to celebrate this momentous occasion in a befitting manner. But somehow all the townspeople turned against us, though we had always been helpful to them. The Communists were always against the Ashram. There was palpable tension in the air; everyone was apprehensive. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother were naturally aware of it. Nevertheless, on that day for the first time the Mother's flag was hoisted on the terrace-roof of the main Ashram building.

On the 15th August, the Darshan finished at about 5 p.m. and we heaved a sigh of relief that nothing untoward had happened. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother asked, "Is it all over?" "Yes." Then they retired. After the Darshan, the Mother was to come to the terrace above my room, while we would sit in the courtyard below. It was decided that as the Mother came onto the terrace we would greet her with the words, "Jai Hind", and she would reply, "Jai Hind". But suddenly stones started being hurled inside the Ashram courtyard. The gates of the Ashram were closed. Then we received the news that Mulshankar, a sadhak and attendant of Sri Aurobindo, had been stabbed. His body was brought to my room, and then taken to the hospital, where the doctors said, "It's too late now."

We had made arrangements for celebrations on the 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th. On the 16th there was to be a Garland Distribution. But how to continue after that tragedy? Then the Governor sent word and the Capitaine sent word, "We are coming. Continue your programme. Only one thing you must do: let the people not gather but let them come and go." Both of them came and stood by the Mother's side during the distribution, and the programme went on in spite of the grievous blow.

On December 5, 1950, after Sri Aurobindo left his body, the Mother said, "I want to put him in the Centre of the Ashram." Then in the same breath she

said, “Go down ten feet, put him there, put a slab, raise the walls five feet, then put another slab to place flowers on.” When she left her body it was such a relief to have a place ready; we did not have to debate, “Where?”

Years before, in 1930, three tanks had been made for washing bricks and making lime during the construction in the Ashram. After the work was over we suggested that the tanks be removed; but the Mother did not agree. She said, “Cover them up and keep ferns over them.” They were covered with corrugated tin sheets and ferns were put on the sheets; but sometimes something would fall on the tin sheets in the night and there would be a big noise. Again we asked her permission to demolish the tanks, and again she refused; she said, “You might remove the corrugated sheets, and put the fern pots on upturned empty pots.” So the place for the Samadhī was already there.

After Sri Aurobindo left his body she said, “Remove the wall between the first and second cisterns, and make them one; the last one will remain as it is.” And the last one has remained the same—the one towards the western staircase up to Pavitra’s room. Tulsi leaves are kept there. The structure of the cisterns remained, only we plastered them. But then the cement began to get oily and stained. Someone suggested that we could put marble, it would be better; someone else suggested that we should have a big umbrella-construction over it. The Mother refused. She said, “I do not want anything—only flowers in simple vases.” She would not even allow silver vases. White marble was put about twenty years later with the Mother’s consent.

After Sri Aurobindo left his body some photographers took pictures of him which they began to sell for thirty or forty rupees each. Many sadhaks who had no money to buy them came and expressed their regret to me. I assured them, “You will have photographs.”

I went to the Mother and told her everything. Immediately our own photographers took pictures, and on 12th December we gave a photograph of Sri Aurobindo to everybody. Then everybody breathed a little. We were all of us as if lifeless. No one had imagined that he would ever leave. People had not seen the Mother from the 5th to the 12th of December. Then on the 12th she came to the meditation hall upstairs to distribute the photographs, and a glimpse of her in that semi-darkness revived us. And the photograph of Sri Aurobindo’s Maha-samadhī became a great support for his shattered children.

(To be continued)

THE ASHRAM CHILDREN AND SRI AUROBINDO'S LIFE

A DREAM-DIALOGUE

(Continued from the issue of 21 February 1990)

THE next evening Sri Aurobindo turned to one of the girls and remarked: "What is the matter? Why the sweet secret smile?"

The girl's laughter then rippled forth, unable to contain itself any longer. The others looked at her embarrassed at such lack of respect before the Lord. But he continued to look at her smilingly. Finally she said:

"When we returned home last evening we told our friends about your reciting poetry to us. Immediately they pounced on us, asking, 'How was it? We'd like to hear.' And then, one of us began to recite, trying to imitate your voice and tone. Though he spoke rather slowly, his rendering had neither the true feeling nor even the articulation. In fact, it was hard not to laugh "

"Perhaps he wasn't serious. But then, recitation in English is not easy, particularly for us Indians. A clear smooth expression, distinctly articulated and without sentimentality—we're too emotional a race for this."

"Exactly. Some recorded readings of poetry that we have heard sometimes seemed to us so flat, hardly expressive recitations. They sounded just like plain readings. That is because, as you say, our perception of feelings is different. Did you do a lot of reciting in your early years?"

"Not at all. Only the compulsory poetry recitations in school. Nothing else. But there I heard others read poetry. Yes, I have spoken a few times in the debating club, though you could say that that was more a reading out of my essays than making speeches "

"Essays on what?"

"Literature, quite often. A schoolboy is hardly qualified to discuss politics! No, the purpose of the debates was to discuss the plays and poems of Shakespeare and Milton and others."

"At that early age! Goodness! We have next to nothing to say about things like that!"

"That is because you are not taught to do so. Poetry has to be read aloud in order to appreciate the sound effect. On the other hand look how well you sing and dance and act in plays. I am sure if I were asked to sing it would be as bad as if you were asked to recite poetry." (*Laughter*)

One of the children broke into laughter with a question:

"There is something I would like to know. In that poem of yours about the horse-carriage, it is evident that the Divine was with you and He knew there would be danger against which He protected you. Isn't that so? But this was without your calling Him or praying to Him. How is that?"

Sri Aurobindo smiled as he explained. "The Divine is always with us, whether we know it or not, believe it or not, and He acts always for the best. So what if we do not pray to Him or even believe in Him? He is there all the same. At the time of the incident in Baroda, I myself did not believe very positively in God! But He doesn't react like human beings, you know, and say—'Why should I help you, since you have no faith in me?' Besides, I willed that nothing should happen to me."

"If the Divine acts as you say, then how do dangers and difficulties come into our lives?"

"That is a very complicated matter. I would have to explain the whole of *The Life Divine* to you in order to give you a satisfactory answer. For the present, let me tell you that our life here is a battlefield of many opposing forces which you may describe as divine and anti-divine or asuric powers. The poor human being is a mere puppet in their hands. But though he may be a puppet, there are certain factors that cannot be overlooked, such as the weight of his past Karma, his free will and so on. Hence, it is the combination of all these complex forces that will tilt the balance for the individual here. If, for example, you walk on the path of Truth, if your mind is preoccupied with pure thoughts then naturally the divine powers will lay their claim on you. This, in short, is the general law. But life is far too complex to be subjected to the influence of any one law. In your case, there is, accompanying each of you, a power of the Divine Mother, what one may call an emanation. Through it, Mother remains in constant contact with you, and protects you from all danger and difficulty. That was why I have said: 'Always behave as if the Mother was looking at you, because, indeed, She is always present.' So you see, on one hand, though the Divine saved me from certain death in Baroda, on the other He seemed to have turned His face away from me and my brothers during many months of our stay in England when we were starving, we had fallen behind with the payment of our school fees, and the dream of pursuing farther studies at Cambridge or Oxford seemed completely hollow. It even happened, later, that the old lady with whom we were living till then left us stranded. Imagine the desperate situation for three young boys in a foreign land! Should you then say that the Divine Grace had left us? Sri Ramakrishna used to say—'Do not try to understand the Lord's ways, your fate would be like that of the small figure made of salt which thought it could measure the ocean. As soon as it entered the water, it ceased to be!' (*Laughter*) He used to also say—'Not a leaf moves without His will.' What do you say to that?"

"What did you do after your quarrel with the old lady?"

"That is when our life as strangers in a foreign land really began. Until then we had lived in the shadow of Mr Drewett and his family. Now, we were like fledglings who were made to leave the nest. Fortunately for us, it happened during the school holidays and we immediately left for the Lake District.

“The Land of Lakes?”

“Yes. Wordsworth’s birthplace. Haven’t you read about it in his works? You must have heard about his sister Dorothy and his friend Coleridge.”

“Of course we have. Coleridge who wrote the ‘Ancient Mariner’—isn’t it so?”

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free,
We were the first who ever burst
Into that silent sea.

What marvellous poetry! And his ‘Kubla Khan’ too is very beautiful. We’ve heard that the Lake District is a wonderful place. Something like our Kashmir? ..”

“Yes, you may say so.”

(To be continued)

NIRODBARAN

(Translated by Jhumur from the Bengali)

SOME EPISODES IN THE LIFE OF AN “EXTRAORDINARY GIRL”

A REPORT BASED ON ORAL COMMUNICATION

(Continued from the issue of 21 February 1990)

Black Magic with Poles

Now I would like to narrate the story of how black magic was employed. It was an incident I witnessed with my own eyes.

Once, some extremely valuable gold and silver utensils were stolen from our house. They were treasured heirlooms of our family, and Father was particularly disturbed at their disappearance because such a loss was a sign of dishonour to the family. He resolved to catch the thief by any means possible. He was sure that the theft was the work of one of the servants, for no one from outside would dare to enter a house occupied by so many people, open the almirahs and steal such a large number of things—unless a servant was in league with a gang of outside thieves.

Father questioned all of the servants, but each one of them denied any knowledge of the theft. Now he became more anxious, and informed the police. At the same time he called in a Muslim fakir who had a considerable reputation. It was said he could call forth ghosts by his mantric power. If a culprit was to be found, the fakir would summon such a ghost, and put a stick or a rod in the ghost's possession. Then he would give the stick to someone, who would be led by it to the wanted man.

On the day the fakir had been called to our house, all the servants were made to gather on the lawn. Two long, sturdy poles were procured. When the fakir arrived, he selected two of our most trusted servants, and instructed them to hold the ends of the poles, one man in front and one behind. They were to go wherever the poles took them. My father seated himself nearby with a whip in his hand. It was his intention to whip the thief the moment he was caught. Many people had gathered to watch the performance, and I was standing on the first floor verandah with my mother. I was about nine or ten years old.

The stage was set. The fakir began to mutter a mantra and sprinkled water on the poles. Suddenly, they began to move, even though the servants were holding them firmly. Imagine the excitement of the spectators! Now the poles began to pull the two servants along, making them stop before one servant after another. In this way they passed by all the servants, and were then compelled by the poles to climb the stairs to the first floor. There the poles led them to the almirah where the stolen goods had been kept, then sought to return to the ground floor. Here the servants found themselves in trouble, for the poles,

rather than descending by the stairs, tried to jump down by leaping over the rails. The servants who were still doing their best to hold onto the poles barely escaped a bad fall. Again the poles led them to the ring of servants waiting on the lawn, and again made them stop in front of each, until they came to an old servant.

Now something unbelievable happened, and I would not have believed it possible unless I had seen it with my own eyes. The two sturdy bamboo poles bent by themselves in the middle so that they encircled the old man's neck like the hands of someone trying to strangle him.

Upon seeing this, my father jumped up and started lashing him with his whip. He was certain that the thief had been found. The old man fell to the ground, but still my father went on whipping him mercilessly.

Watching from the verandah upstairs, I was unable to bear this brutality, and fainted. Now my mother shouted to father, "Do you want to kill my daughter as well as that old man? Stop it at once!"

By now the servant's whole body was lacerated and he was groaning pathetically. He confessed his guilt and said he had sold all the utensils. My father was wild with rage, not only for the loss of the stolen goods, but because he had believed for years that this particular servant was his most faithful. He had been the custodian of my father's money, but had never lost a pice. Now father couldn't understand what had possessed him, what greed or dire temptation, to break open the almirah and steal such a quantity of the family's valuables.

My mother, however, gave no thought to the old man's crime, and nursed him day and night till he was cured. She did this despite constant friction with my father. Her viewpoint was clear.

"I can't see a man die before my eyes," she told him, "even if he is a thief. You can drive me out of the house for it if you like. But this man has paid heavily for what he did, and I can't bear to see him in this condition or hear his cries of pain. Think how many years he has served us faithfully—surely that has some value. It must be reckoned with."

After he recovered the servant left us. In spite of all he had suffered, he returned after some years to beg pardon of my father, but my father was unrelenting. "Beware," he told the old man. "Never come before me again. If you do, I won't spare you. I haven't forgotten your treachery and I doubt if I ever will."

I recall a story that was told to me of another servant. While my mother was awaiting my birth, a man approached my grandfather. He had a number of recommendation letters which he showed, saying that he would like nothing better than to serve in my grandfather's house as a servant. Grandfather was pleased with his certificates and told him, "Very well, when my daughter-in-law's child is born, you can help to look after it."

The man was extremely happy with this appointment, and spared no pains to make me happy. He came to love me dearly, and I reciprocated his affection.

Even when I grew to marriageable age, he would still follow me like a shadow. He would watch over me to such an extent that he would hang about even while I was with my friends, especially when my mother was not about. This would often annoy me, but he would not be concerned about whether I minded or not.

Aside from his devotion to me, he was so trustworthy that we gave him the freedom of the house. He knew where we kept our money and our valuables, but, unlike the servant who had been unmasked by the fakir, he never touched or stole anything. When I was married, he accompanied me to my father-in-law's house. But unfortunately I had to dismiss him later when my life took a different turn.

In modern times, the stories of such servants will be looked upon as utter make-believe, but, if one reads writers such as Rabindranath Tagore, one will realise that such incidents were far from rare fifty to a hundred years ago.

(To be continued)

"SATYAM"

MOOT COURT HEARING ON SHAKESPEARE AUTHORSHIP

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE OR EDWARD DE VERE?

(Continued from the issue of 21 February 1990)

Few readers of literature know of a recent event of great interest to the literary world. On September 25, 1987, the American University, Washington, held a trial to decide a question that has vexed scholars for over three centuries. Mother India has the privilege to serialize the fascinating proceedings, thanks to the enthusiastic help of our friend Mr. William W. Jones of Memphis, Tennessee, U.S.A.

JASZI—Another possible approach to the issue of Shakespeare's cultural literacy is to examine the question of his reading or, as the case may be, non-reading. Many educated men of his day, clergymen, even actors, left as part of their estate's books particular volumes to individuals in particular. Shakespeare's will, which we have and which is a competently executed and devised legal document, is entirely blank of any reference to a personal library. No book, in fact, has ever been traced to Shakespeare's possession. Moreover, it seems to me, quite apart from the question of what Shakespeare or Shakspeare might have learned at the grammar school in Stratford, there are other aspects of his plays and poems which would be difficult to explain given his birth, status and class background. His knowledge of the arts of war, of legal terminology and concepts, of hunting and hawking and music and landscape gardening and a range of other upper class pastimes. Moreover, the Shakespeare remembered in Stratford was an extroverted jolly sort of individual, a good companion with a store of ready jokes, and this hardly seems to tally with the brooding introspective quality of many of the works.

JUSTICE—But he did spend ten years, did he not, in London?

JASZI—That is correct. He was present in London from some time in the middle fifteen-nineties, into the next decade

JUSTICE—And wasn't he, during almost all of that time, in one way or another associated with acting or producing plays?

JASZI—We have little if any evidence to suggest that Shakspeare of Stratford was an active or significant player in the Lord Chamberlain's company. He was a sharer.

JUSTICE—But he was also associated with their activity, was he not?

JASZI—He was a sharer in that company and had attained a financial stake in it. Most probably by making a cash investment. It is certainly by no means impossible that he was in his early years in London a player in a small way—but

there are no records contemporary with that time of his having played important parts, or taken important roles. When questions were asked after his death, the only Shakespearean role which could be associated with his name was the six-or-eight-line part of Hamlet's ghost. So to premise the fact of his having achieved . . .

JUSTICE—Didn't he play in some of Jonson's plays?

JASZI—He is listed in the cast lists of two of the plays of Ben Jonson, and I believe in that of *Everyman out of his humor* in the collected edition of Jonson's works. This edition was put through the press by Jonson himself in 1616, and I might say parenthetically that there is no indication that the playwright of the Shakespeare plays made any similar effort to care for the publication of his own works. Now, as I will argue, Ben Jonson was in all probability knowledgeable about the secret of the authorship of the plays we attribute to William Shakespeare, and Ben Jonson's prefatory poem to the 1623 first folio is best explained as a part of the larger effort master-minded by the earls of Pembroke and Montgomery to perpetuate the text of these plays while concealing the fact of their true authorship by Montgomery's relation by marriage to the Earl of Oxford. Surely if Jonson was involved in the effort of the first folio in that capacity it is not difficult to imagine his having inserted the name of Shakespeare in the cast lists of his 1616 collected plays for the same reason.

JUSTICE—You say its not hard to make that jump?

JASZI—Given the initial assumption—mainly that Jonson was knowledgeable of the true facts of the authorship of the plays, something which I think my argument necessarily assumes

JUSTICE—Of course he had to do that a few years before the first folio came out.

JASZI—That is true. But some years after the death of the Earl of Oxford in 1604, and after such events as the unauthorized publication of the sonnets in 1609.

JUSTICE—Who are the people that you would associate with Jonson as members of the conspiracy to conceal the true authorship?

JASZI—Parenthetically, I would say that I reject the notion of a conspiracy because to me it implies a much more peculiar and unusual effort than that actually involved here. The family members of the Earl of Oxford—in particular his daughter Susan, who in turn was married to the Earl of Montgomery, whose brother, another of the Herberts, was the Earl of Pembroke and who with the Earl of Montgomery were the dedicatees of the 1623 first folio—were, I think, among those involved in what I would characterize as an effort to preserve the text while concealing the socially unacceptable fact of de Vere's authorship.

JUSTICE—Who else was in on the concealment?

JASZI—I don't think it's necessary to think that anyone in particular was in on this act of concealment. .

JUSTICE—Well, wouldn't the Queen have had to be?

JASZI—I certainly do not believe and do not contend necessarily that the Queen took any part in such an activity.

JUSTICE—How about Cecil?

JASZI—I think it is likely in the case of William Cecil, Lord Burghley, Edward de Vere's guardian and father-in-law and long-time adversary in matters of all sorts. He is the figure caricatured as Polonius in *Hamlet*, and Cecil's sons would have a real interest in containing knowledge of de Vere's authorship.

JUSTICE—Part of your theory is that they would be a part of the plan?

JASZI—I do not contend necessarily that they would have been a part of any particular plan with respect to the first folio but that their interests would have coincided.

JUSTICE—Do you think that there were two separate plans or just one? I mean wasn't this a plan which must have been started while de Vere was still alive?

JASZI—While de Vere was alive it seems clear to me there were very real reasons for him personally to . . .

JUSTICE—I'm not trying to get the reasons, I'm trying to get your theory. Was he himself a part of the plan to conceal his own authorship?

JASZI—Of course.

JUSTICE—Do you think Shakspere was a part of it?

JASZI—I think it's reasonable to assume that at some time in the career of Shakspere of Stratford, he was privy to de Vere's efforts to conceal himself behind the Shakespeare pseudonym.

JUSTICE—And how about Hemmings, or however you pronounce his name, and Clondell, the two legatees in Shakespeare's will?

JASZI—I do not believe that it is necessary to assume the long-term involvement in any plot or plan, if plot or plan there was, of Hemmings and Clondell, no.

JUSTICE—It's not part of your theory that they were aware that...

JASZI—At the time of publication of the first folio, which includes dedicatory epistles signed in their names and, almost certainly according to most reputable scholars, written in whole or in part by Ben Jonson, I think it is likely that Hemmings and Clondell would have known that something was afoot. Whether they would have known exactly what, it seems to me beyond our ability to tell.

JUSTICE—What I'm leading up to is, I just wonder under your theory of the case to what extent was there a close association between Shakspere and de Vere? Were they both participants in this plan?

JASZI—I think that it is impossible to speculate anything like a certainty as to their association. Several possibilities exist. One is that the original assumption of the Shakespeare pseudonym by de Vere could have been purely coincidental with the name of the man from Stratford, and that the man from Stratford, learning somehow of this circumstance, could have made an effort to 'cash in'. Another possibility is that some time in his early literary career, as he was beginning to write for publication and for public performance, the taboos of the period prohibiting him from doing so under his own name, Edward de Vere may have met in the literary, and in particular theatrical circles which he patronized,

a young provincial from Stratford, William Shakspere, and may have seized on him as the appropriate vehicle for the concealment of his, Edward de Vere's, role as an author.

JUSTICE—And paid him a thousand pounds to keep his mouth shut?

JASZI—I think the sum is debatable indeed. We have no positive way of knowing whether anything passed between the two of them. One thing we do know is that Shakspere became rapidly an extremely wealthy man, wealthy beyond, in so far as we can tell, the prosperity that could have been earned in the regular way from his participation in theatrical affairs. He may have had other sources of income, but we do not know what they could have been. I think it's important to note, too, Edward de Vere would have had good reasons for choosing the Shakspere pseudonym as his own. The appearance in one of his subsidiary crests of a lion brandishing a spear, the address to de Vere in Oxford or in Cambridge when de Vere was age 27 by Gabriel Harvey, in which that poet and literary man, urging de Vere to give up his incipient literary career and begin his life as a soldier, told him to throw away the insignificant pen and envisioned his marshal future with the words 'Thy countenance shakes a spear.' It seems to me entirely plausible that the young de Vere, about to begin in earnest his literary career, could have seized on the pleasant irony presented by Gabriel Harvey's address to him and taken from it, borrowed so to speak, the word Shakespeare as a pseudonym. It's also important to note the Shakespeare name as it appears on title pages, and elsewhere in the Quartos of *Hamlet* and *King Lear* and in the 1609 edition of the sonnets is hyphenated. This form, so far as we can tell, is characteristic of no other author's name used in the Elizabethan period nor indeed of any other Elizabethan surname in common use, save for those formed by composing two different family names that had been joined together through marriage. The hyphenated use of the Shakespeare-name seems to me clearly indicative of the emblematic character of the pseudonym that de Vere had adopted. Shakspere of Stratford was poorly qualified to be the author, de Vere was eminently well qualified.

JUSTICE—Well, before you get to that—Oxford died in 1604 did he not?

JASZI—That is correct.

JUSTICE—And so far as we know *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Othello* and *The Tempest* all came to light after his death, did they not?

JASZI—That is true. Indeed a number of the plays came to light for the first time after 1616, the year of William Shakspere's death.

JUSTICE—Yes, well, how—or when—were those plays written?

JASZI—I must of course assume that all the plays of the Shakespeare canon were written before the death of my client Edward de Vere in 1604.

JUSTICE—Can you point to any evidence that that was so?

JASZI—There is clear evidence that many of the plays were written before that date.

JUSTICE—^{*}I am asking about those three—*Cleopatra*, *Othello* and *The Tempest*.

JASZI—I have made an effort to study up on the question how the plays of the Shakespeare canon have been dated and I must say that although I can present no affirmative evidence tying those plays to a date of authorship earlier than 1604, I'm equally convinced that the conventional Stratfordian account of the chronology can point to no affirmative evidence of their having been written after that date

JUSTICE—Well, it seems to me as I said at the outset, you have to prove that these were written by Oxford before his death.

JASZI—The case of *The Tempest*, for example, comes to mind. *The Tempest* has been...

JUSTICE—Would you answer that question?

JASZI—The question of the existence of the affirmative proof of the authorship of the plays after or prior to 1604—no, I cannot produce affirmative proof of their authorship prior to that date. They can be tied to contemporary events occurring before that date *The Tempest*, for example, which is traditionally dated late, due to its presumed association with a shipwreck in the Bermudas occurring in 1609, can with equal facility be related to a shipwreck occurring in the Bermudas in 1603 Which belies 1603 or 1604, the last years of de Vere's life as an appropriate time for this valedictory play to have been written The one body of works as to which there is evidence, clear evidence as to the affirmative date of their composition, is the sonnets attributed to Shakespeare The so-called Dating Sonnet, Sonnet 107, contains clear references to the death of Elizabeth and has by most scholars on that basis been dated to the year 1603. Now significantly, throughout the sonnets, there were repeated references, hints and intonations of the author's mortality, "Death to me subscribes" he says and he depicts himself throughout those sonnets as an old and in some respects diminished individual. The Earl of Oxford died in 1604, the year following the composition of the so-called Dating Sonnet The man from Stratford had, so far as we can tell, more than a decade of happy, prosperous life before him at that time.

JUSTICE—Of course this isn't done usually in the literary world, is it? I think *Billy Budd* came along a long time after Melville's death

JASZI—It is certainly not unusual for manuscripts to be held back on one basis or another, as the manuscripts of the plays of Shakespeare might have been held back by his theatre company even though they were all in being prior to Oxford's death in 1604.

(To be continued)

THE SECRET OF SECRETS: ITS MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE IN THE GITA

(Continued from the issue of 21 February 1990)

4. The Importance of the Gita's Teaching

A. *The True Teaching of the Veda:* The Vedavadins are the founders of the Vedic school. Their theory is that the aim of the Veda is to found sacrifice as the universal law of life. As long as man does not live in harmony with the gods of the world and looks upon himself as an independent entity, he is subject to sin and suffering. If he learns to subordinate his desires and enjoyments to the gods, he is in harmonious relation with the world. As the Gita says, man and the Gods are in eternal interaction through the law of sacrifice. It is a process of mutual giving and receiving, helping one another in their workings and satisfaction. In this process man, freed from sin and suffering, obtains the supreme good, *śreyah param* (3-11). He enjoys material prosperity here and on his departure from the world the joy of heaven in the world of the gods.

Whatever the merits of this theory, it is not true to say that the Vedic goal of human life is to obtain material prosperity and the joy of heaven through the law of sacrifice. Though sacrifice, when viewed superficially, may be a physical process meant to fulfil the material aims of life, it is truly a profound psychological or spiritual law which enables man to pass from the world of mortal existence to the vast world of immortal Spirit. It is indeed the path to immortality, *amṛtavāya gātum* (1.72.9.). It is described as the great journey which demands on the part of man an absolute self-giving *advara yajña*. As this self-giving involves the whole human existence, the seat of sacrifice is not restricted to the physical but extended to all aspects of man's life. This is referred to as enlarging the seat of sacrifice (5-2-12). Therefore, sacrifice in the Veda represents a wider or a symbolic process for rising into the highest spiritual status, *sadanam ṛtasya*. Even in the Upanishads the symbolic character of sacrifice is easily discernible. For example, the Brhadaranyaka refers to the total identity between man and sacrifice indicating the fact that his entire life is governed by the law of sacrifice, *puruṣo vāva yajñah*.

As for the gods of the world, the Veda does not consider them as the highest object of pursuit and worship. For they are only helpful participants in the journey towards the supreme goal—That One, the greatest of the embodied gods, *tadekam devānām śreṣṭham* (5-62-1). The seats of immortality, Truth and Bliss, are to be found in the supreme Deva, *yatrāmṛtāsa asate* (9-15-12) He who has attained immortality is no longer governed by the gods and lives in his world of absolute freedom, *svarājye* (5-66-6). As the Upanishad points out, by virtue of his oneness with the Supreme, man is able to outgrow his original limitations in

such a way that the gods themselves become powerless against him, *tasya ha na devāśca nābhūtyā īśate*. Apart from that, this is not a goal to be reached elsewhere at the end of our earthly existence, but here in this very life, *yannūnam* (5-64-3).

It is true that the theory of the Vedic school does not find support in the hymns of the Veda. But it is also true that no attempt was made to reexamine the Vedavadin's position on the Veda. On the contrary, Sayana's commentary on the Veda placed a final seal of approval on the Vedavada. There are two important reasons why the Veda was not subjected to an independent scrutiny before the interpretation of the Vedic school was accepted. First, the inner side of the Veda is so subtle and elusive that even a great authority like Sayana could not pierce through the external sense of its words and images. Second, once the Vedic school placed its whole emphasis on the Brahmanas and subordinated the Mantras to the former, all subsequent Vedic scholars unquestioningly followed this example and identified the Veda with the Brahmanas as if the Mantras did not have an independent message. This was precisely the reason why Sayana was motivated to read the ritualistic ideas of the Brahmanas into the hymns of the Rigveda. It is in this context that we have to understand the Gita's reinterpretation of sacrifice and its rejection of the Vedic school.

In the Gita's view the principle of sacrifice was not properly understood by the Vedavadins, *avidhipūrvakam*. Hence it tries to go into the subject and unfolds its true significance. It begins with the conventional view that living beings, food, rain and sacrifice are interdependent. All living beings depend upon food, for without food they cannot survive; the supply of food depends upon rain, for without rain food crops cannot grow; and finally the harmony between the three depends upon the law of sacrifice, for in the absence of the law they cannot maintain their mutual relationship. Having stated the conventional view, the Gita works out the implications of the concept of sacrifice. Basically, the Gita says, sacrifice originates from the workings of Nature, *karmasamudbhavaḥ*, for by itself sacrifice is not work, but a way of participating in the workings of Nature. The workings of Nature proceed from the Brahman manifest in Nature *brahmodbhavam*, for all becomings of Nature have their ultimate source in Brahman. The Brahman manifest in Nature is born of the immutable Brahman in whom the energy of Nature is unmanifest, *aksara samudbhavam*, for all manifestations proceed from a prior unmanifest state. From this the Gita concludes that the all-pervading Brahman is established in the sacrifice, *tasmāt sarvagatam brahma nityam yajñe pratisthitam*.¹ In other words, the supreme Brahman extended in the two aspects of His cosmic existence—the mutable Brahman in Nature and the immutable Brahman beyond Nature—is the ultimate foundation of works and therefore of sacrifice. He who determines all

¹ *The Gita*, 3-14 and 15

works in the world is the supreme Brahman, and therefore, unto Him only all works must be sacrificed. By implication, the gods who come into existence as part of the process of manifestation are not the foundation of works, and therefore, it is wrong to worship the gods with the sacrifice of works. It may be noticed that the principle of sacrifice, which was originally presented as one of harmony at the physical level, is finally turned into a wider or a symbolic process which takes us into the deepest level of spiritual harmony between man and the supreme Brahman. Naturally, the benefits which follow from this wide movement of sacrifice are also spiritual. He who does works as a sacrifice, in accordance with the true law, reaches the Supreme even here, *thaiva*, and is freed from the ills of mortal existence.

We must note that this interpretation of sacrifice is in accordance with the teaching of the Veda. The author of the Gita himself proclaims that he is the knower of the Veda, *vedavit*. Therefore we cannot rule out the possibility that he was in possession of the true sense of the Veda. Sri Aurobindo himself inclines to think that the old Vedic knowledge finds its true expression in the teaching of the Gita. "To know this Divine," writes Sri Aurobindo, "all-pervading and established in sacrifice, *sarvagatam yajñe pratiṣṭhitam*, is the true, the Vedic knowledge."¹

If, as the Gita clarifies, the all-pervading Brahman is the ultimate goal of sacrifice and not the gods, if man can ascend into the imperishable status of the Supreme even here, then we are obliged to disregard not only the Vedavadins but also their interpretation of the Veda. For that seems to be the aim of the Gita's comments on these exponents of the Veda. They are described as men without discrimination, *avipaścitah*, men who do not admit anything beyond what they have said, *nānyad astīti vādinaḥ*. Obviously the true knowledge of Veda or of Vedic sacrifice cannot be found by men whose knowledge is very limited and whose vision very narrow.

B The True Teaching of the Vedanta: While presenting the doctrine of the supreme Purusha, the Gita affirms that He is not only what all the Vedas seek to know, *vedaśca sarvair ahameva vedyah*, but also the very essence and the true origin of the Upanishads, *vedāntakṛt*.² Since the Gita is one of the foundational texts of Vedanta, we may take this statement as a literal fact and try to discover where and in what form the idea of the supreme Purusha occurs in the Upanishads. We shall not entertain doubts about the success of our endeavour, because Sri Aurobindo himself has made a positive observation to the effect that the idea of the supreme Purusha can be developed out of the teachings of the Upanishads. "In reality," he writes, "the idea of the Purushottama is already announced in the Upanishads, though in a more scattered fashion than in the Gita."³

¹ *Essays on the Gita*, p 110

² *The Gita*, 15-15 ³ *Essays on the Gita*, p 85

Nevertheless, it is a formidable task, because we have to go through a substantial mass of writings before we are able to lay our hands on the right texts in the Upanishads. It is not enough if we are able to select the relevant texts, but it is very necessary that they must be arranged in the right order in which thought reaches its culmination through a process of natural development. We depend on the Gita not only for the valuable light it sheds on the true content of the Upanishads but also for the practical help it can give us in selecting and arranging the texts, for without its assistance we are likely to falter in our steps and fail to arrive at the right interpretation of the Vedantic texts.

As the idea of the supreme Purusha is stated in the Gita in relation to the two Purushas in the world, we shall first concentrate on the corresponding texts in the Upanishads. Of the two Purushas, the mutable comes first, *kṣara*. What does the mutable Purusha signify? The Gita itself clarifies that this Purusha is all beings in the world, *sarvāni bhūtāni*. It is manifest in all mutable forms of Nature as the moving and supporting principle.

There are several texts in the Upanishads which deal with this Purusha. The Self is verily the world of all beings, *sarveṣāṃ bhūtānām lokah*.¹ These gods, these beings, and all this are this Self, *idam sarvam yad ayam ātmā*.² The Self is indeed all this world, *ātmaivedam sarvam iti*.³ Brahman is indeed this universe, *brahmaivedam viśvam*.⁴ As this Purusha is identified with Nature, he is hardly distinguishable from her forms.

Now we shall turn to the other Purusha, the immutable one, *akṣara*. What does he signify? And how is he different from the mutable Purusha? The word *akṣara* (other than *kṣara*) itself contains the clue. The immutable Purusha is other than the mutable forms of Nature in so far as it is without mutations, without form, without beginning, without end, without attributes. But yet he is present in Nature, because he is inherently superior to all that exist in the world. In virtue of this superiority, he is not limited by the forms and powers of Nature. Hence the Gita refers to him as the high-seated, *kūṭastha*.

There are frequent references to this Purusha in the texts of the Upanishads. This is that great unborn Self, *ajātmā*. That Self is not any of the things that exist here, *neti neti ātmā*. Apart from these descriptions, the texts abound with words which signify the immutable Purusha: immutable (*akṣaram*), imperishable (*avyayam*), immortal (*amṛtam*), without body (*akāyam*), ungraspable (*agrāhyam*), without family (*agotram*), without caste (*avarāṇam*), without eyes and ears (*açakṣuḥśrotam*), without hands and feet (*apāñipādam*), without parts (*niṣkalam*), without form (*arūpam*), without sound (*aśabdām*), without touch (*asparśam*), without beginning (*anādi*), without end (*anantam*), without measure

¹ *Brhad*, 1-4-16

² *Ibid*, 2-4-6

³ *Chānd*, 7-25-2

⁴ *Mund*, 2-2-12

(*amātram*), without activity (*niṣkriyam*), without blemish (*nirañjanam*), without attributes (*nirgunam*).¹ All these words establish in one way or another that the immutable Purusha is other than the forms of Nature and unconditioned by their workings and qualities.

While referring to the immutable as the *kūṭastha*, the Gita intends to emphasise that this Purusha, though higher and other than all beings in the world, is at the same time present in them as their one Self; whose position in the world is really the highest. Right from the beginning the Gita insists upon this aspect of the immutable Purusha. This higher Purusha, *para puruṣa*, is described as the dweller in all bodies, *dehī*, and the supreme Self, *paramātmā*.² Therefore, in the Gita's view, the two Purushas, though fundamentally different from each other, are not mutually exclusive; on the contrary, they are "a dual status of one eternal and universal existence".³

(*To be continued*)

N. JAYASHANMUKHAM

¹ *Brhad , Katha , Śvetas , Mund*

² *The Gita*, 13-22

³ *Essays on the Gita*, p 424

A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

DEAR Sir,

I refer to the article *Golconde. A Look Behind* on p. 89 of your Special Issue of the 21st February 1990.

In this article, "No. 13. Conclusion" it is stated: "Golconde is often referred to as a 'Guest House of the Ashram', but we have seen that it was originally intended to house permanent members of the Ashram. Thus the architects designed it as a 'Dormitory' or 'Hostel'."

Then follows Mrityunjoy's Note: "As I said at the beginning, Golconde, today a Guest House of the Ashram, was not originally intended for that purpose .."

I write to correct Mrityunjoy's impression. The original intention that Golconde was a "Dortoir" or "Dormitory" has not been ever changed. It has always remained such and GOLCONDE IS NOT A GUEST HOUSE. The Mother has made this very clear and there should be no attempt to indicate any change in Her intention. This is not a trivial matter as, first, it contradicts what the Mother has so very forcefully stated and then, again, it would complicate the accounting system of Golconde if it is considered as a Guest House. It is just one of the residential buildings of the Ashram and is maintained wholly by the Ashram and its expenses met by the Ashram.

I shall be grateful if you would please publish this correction as it is of importance to Golconde.

UDAR PINTO

"A GRAND OLD MAN" An Explanation

My obituary note under this caption on p. 120 of the February *Mother India* and without the name of the person concerned has naturally proved quite a puzzle to readers unacquainted with him. The fact is that the name "Indubhusan Roy" was the original title of the note but when it was replaced by the general descriptive one it failed to be transferred into the body of the informative matter. I apologise for the slip, though I am sure Indubhusan Roy himself with his happy humorous temperament must have enjoyed the mystery on looking earthward from the Divine Mother's glorious ambience.

K.D.S

SRI AUROBINDO—THE SOUL OF INDIA

(Continued from the issue of 21 February 1990)

IN the preceding chapter Swami Dayananda was mentioned. Sri Aurobindo considered him as “a God-appointed messenger”. He picked him out from the galaxy of the nineteenth-century luminaries in India and highlighted him as one of the very few to have discovered the true line of his people’s self-development and to have assured them that they might find their true self and past glory by following that line. Dayananda had in him a combination of intuitive mind and high intellect. The former helped the latter to grow effectively. It proved one of the causes of his wonderful success in keeping the ancient ideal of the Vedic Dharma. This was the mark of a new life for India and brought an affinity with the other leaders of the Indian Renaissance. Sri Aurobindo pointed out: “To be national is not to stand still. Rather, to seize on a vital thing out of the past and throw it into the stream of modern life, is really the most powerful means of renovation and new creation.”¹ Dayananda emphasised Vedic monotheism which compelled Christian missionaries to change their attitude towards the Hindu religion.

About his work and life Sri Aurobindo says: “Among the great company of remarkable figures that will appear to the eye of posterity at the head of the Indian Renaissance, one stands out by himself with peculiar and solitary distinctness, one unique in his type as he is unique in his work. It is as if one were to walk for a long time amid a range of hills rising to a greater or lesser altitude, but all with sweeping contours, green-clad, flattering the eye even in their most bold and striking elevation. But amidst them all, one hill stands apart, piled up in sheer strength, a mass of bare and puissant granite, with verdure on its summit, a solitary pine jutting out into the blue, a great cascade of pure, vigorous and fertilising water gushing out from its strength as a very fountain of life and health to the valley. Such is the impression created on my mind by Dayananda.”²

A new movement already started by Raja Rammohan Roy, Devendranath Tagore and Rajnarayan Bose had more or less identical aims and ideals but the work of Dayananda Saraswati had a distinction of its own. It may be regarded as the emergence of a new India. His ideals are reflected in the social, cultural and religious life of India.

Dayananda’s Life

Dayananda was born in 1824 in the old town Moroi of the Gujarat-state. His father, an orthodox Brahmin and a devout worshipper of Siva, gave him the name Mulasankar. At the age of five he commenced learning Sanskrit. When he

was fourteen his father took him to a temple on the Sivaratri night to observe some rituals: fasting the whole day and then keeping a night-long vigil. He had the hope to see God Siva who was said to appear to his devotees that night. Young Mulasankar kept awake while others fell asleep but he was amazed to see that a mouse was running over the Siva-image and eating the offered food placed before it. This event set the boy thinking. The divine touches the soul in different ways. A doubt arose in his mind. He woke up his father and asked him "How could this image of Shiva in the temple be considered as identical with Mahadeva, the great God of the Scriptures? I feel it impossible to reconcile the idea of an immanent and transcendent God with this idol? It is a helpless inanimate idol which has no capacity to protect itself from a mouse." That night was full of discussion between him and his relatives. He gave up his fasting. From that day he lost faith in traditional teaching and rituals.

Within a few years of this event a sister of his and later his uncle died. These bereavements proved to him the transitory nature of human life. These two deaths gave a completely new turn to his life. He asked many learned people how death could be overcome. These thoughts troubled him all the time. Some asked him to practise yoga; by that one could get salvation. Then he came to the conclusion that one should not waste time by throwing oneself into the unstable bliss of the worldly life. It is better to have salvation in this life. At the age of twenty he felt an ardent aspiration for seeking God. In no time the mind started to quest for the soul. In observing the attitude of Dayananda his father arranged to get him married. Dayananda clandestinely left home, accepted a sannyasi life, and wanted to solve the mystery of life and death. For fifteen years he wandered all over India and practised yoga all the while, sometimes for days without food. He received education in Kashi from Swami Birajananda, who was a master of classical Sanskrit literature and a heroic soul. Birajananda used to dislike image-worship. Dayananda found that his ideas were reflected in him. His inner search to find a guru came to an end here. When he completed his study, he wanted to give his usual fees to his Guru. But the worthy disciple had a worthy Guru. So he told him that instead of giving fees he should go and teach the true sastra and devote his life to incessant warfare against the prevailing falsehood of that age. These words of the teacher opened the inner gate of Dayananda's heart and kindled a fire in him and gave him an outline of his future work. He took up the task of a New Reformation. He founded the Arya Samaj to fulfil his mission. He thought that the Vedas have to be taught in Bharatavarsha in a new light.

Dayananda stood on the authority of the revelatory symbolism of the Vedic hymns. He was the pioneer of a Vedic Renaissance. He envisaged this Renaissance not only in India but also for the whole world.

"In accepting the Vedas as the only authority Dayananda was practically on a line with Raja Rammohan Roy. But while the Raja accepted the authority of

the Vedas as interpreted by the exegetes and apologetics of ancient Hinduism, Dayananda altogether rejected the commentaries of Sayana and Mahindra and did not consider any other commentary as binding on anyone. Dayananda therefore gave his own interpretation and though theoretically every member of Arya-Samaj was free to form his own conclusions in practice, the Samhita of the Rigveda as interpreted by Dayananda in his book mentioned above, formed the bed-rock on which stood the entire structure of the Arya Samaj.”³

The Aryan idea was a universal ideal, not only for India but for the ultimate redemption of the whole world. The teaching of Aryan ideals went against the Western impact and tried to wash out in an Indian way the evils of society. The Brahma Samaj had a similar movement in other parts of India. But the most important factor was the Arya Samaj. It was based on a rationalistic movement and its aim was to attract the attention of the English-educated people and form an elite.

Dr. K. M. Munshi says: “the most characteristic feature of the Ārya Samāj is the emphasis it laid upon the work of *Sūddhi*. This means the reconversion of those Hindus—millions in number—who had once been willingly or forcibly converted into other religions like Islam or Christianity, but were now willing to come back to the fold of Hinduism. Orthodox Hinduism had always barred its door against them; the Ārya Samāj threw it wide open. As a matter of fact, this aspect of the Ārya Samāj excited the greatest interest in it among the people outside its own ranks. It was strongly resented by the Muslims and was a source of almost chronic feud between the two. At the time the Suddhi was looked upon by the Ārya Samāj as a potent instrument for effecting the religious, social, and political unity of India which came to be cherished as its great ideal by the Ārya Samāj.”⁴

Dayananda proved himself an Aryan worker, Sri Aurobindo wrote: “To be clear in one’s own mind, entirely, true and plain with one’s self and with others, wholly honest with the conditions and materials of one’s labour, is a rare gift in our crooked, complex and faltering humanity. It is the spirit of the Aryan worker and a sure secret of vigorous success.”⁵

Sri Aurobindo has the invocation: “May his spirit act in India pure, unspoilt, unmodified and help to give us back that of which our life stands especially in need, pure energy, high clearness, the penetrating eye, the masterful hand, the noble and dominant sincerity.”⁶

According to Sri Aurobindo Dayananda was “a man with God in his soul, vision in his eyes and power in his hands to hew out of life an image according to his vision.”⁷

“... the works that derive from him, however they depart from received traditions, must needs be profoundly national...”⁸

Dayananda and the Veda

“The absolutely authoritative character of Vedas, and Vedas alone, formed the fundamental creed of Dayananda. At first he included within the Vedas both Brahmanas and Upanishads, but when it was pointed out that the Upanishads themselves repudiated the authority of the Vedas, as the highest or the only revelation, Dayananda modified his views—ultimately the Samhita portion of the Vedas, and particularly the R̥gveda Samhita, was alone held to be the real Vedic revelation at least for all practical purposes.”⁹

“... The nature of scriptural authority in Hindu culture differed from the scriptural authority recognised by the other great world religions in this, namely, that while Christianity or Islam claimed more or less exclusive divine authority for their own books, the Vedas never put up any such claim. Modern Hinduism suffered in some sense from a great disability as compared to Christianity and Islam, owing to the Universal Character of its Scriptures, particularly of the Vedas. Dayananda Saraswati recognised this disadvantage and was evidently moved by the militant spirit of evangelical Christianity and Islamic missionary propaganda to create and foster a similar militancy in Hinduism itself.

“He was, therefore, moved to advance for the Vedas exactly the same kind of supernatural authority and exclusive revelation, which was claimed by the Christians for their Bible and by the Muslims for their Quran.”¹⁰

Sri Aurobindo's interpretation of Dayananda and the Veda is well expressed in the following passages from his writings: “Dayananda accepted the Veda as his rock of firm foundation, he took it for his guiding view of life, his rule of inner existence and his inspiration for external work, but he regarded it as even more, the word of eternal Truth on which man's knowledge of God and his relations with the Divine Being and with his fellows can be rightly and securely founded. This everlasting rock of the Veda, many assert, has no existence, there is nothing there but the commonest mud and sand; it is only a hymnal of primitive barbarians, only a rude worship of personified natural phenomena or even less than that, a liturgy of ceremonial sacrifice, half religion, half magic, by which superstitious animal men of yore hoped to get themselves gold and food and cattle, slaughter pitilessly their enemies, protect themselves from disease, calamity and demoniac influences and enjoy the coarse pleasures of a material paradise. To that we must add a third view, the orthodox, or at least that which arises from Sayana's commentary; this view admits, practically, the ignobler interpretation of the substance of Veda and yet—or is it therefore—exalts this primitive farrago as holy scripture and a Book of Sacred Works”¹¹

“... A nation grows into what it shall be by the force of that which it was in the past and is in the present, and in this growth there come periods of conscious and subconscious stock-taking when the national soul selects, modifies, rejects, keeps out of all that it had or is acquiring whatever it needs as substance and

capital for its growth and action in the future; in such a period of stock-taking we are still and Dayananda was one of its great and formative spirits.”¹²

(To be continued)

NILIMA DAS

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CONVERSATIONS OF THE DEAD

TRANSLATED BY SATADAL FROM THE BENGALI OF
NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

10

Woman, Man

Woman

You longed for me, that's why, you see, I have come. Let us go then to earth and enjoy that untasted delight. Now we have been permitted.

Man

Did I long for you! Why? I don't recall anything at all! I don't even remember that I have ever seen you. Surely, you are mistaken.

Woman

But a mistake cannot occur in this world. Well, have a look through your mind's eye. There flows the Trisrota with a strong current—the full monsoon is on, waves are abundant. Dark clouds are gradually spreading over the evening-sky. A young man was hurrying along the bank of the river on foot—some anxiety writ on his thoughtful face, some sort of vague agitation was in his gaze. Suddenly he stopped short, possibly for a moment—for a moment only his gaze fell upon the half-bare young woman sitting on the landing of the bathing-ghat unmindful of herself. For a moment only they exchanged glances, then the young woman turned away her face, the young man too went along his way. Can you tell me who that young man was? And who do you think was that young woman?

Man

Were they you and I perchance? By the melody of your words something like a dream is trying to come up on the surface from some fathomless depth of my heart. Yes, now I recollect. That was a picture which appeared so sweet to me. Light and shade of a calm and cool evening—the sun is about to set on the other side of the darkening waters below the clouds—on this side a woman, like a still flash of lightning, with dishevelled hair, careless of the empty jar beside her, unruffled like an ascetic, was gazing steadfastly to that far beyond, towards the mystery of the infinite. Who wouldn't wish to have a look at such a picture, for a moment forgetting everything else?

Woman

For that very moment you longed for me with all your heart. I too for that very

moment accepted you. At that very moment the seed of our karma was sown. Now the time has come for collecting its fruit, that's why I have been ordained to call you to be with me.

Man

But in reality I did not long for you. A new poem, a novel portrait, a snatch of a song unheard of—I was charmed with the marvellous artistry of the divine artist, was eager to savour it—this much only. I had neither greed nor desire for anything more.

Woman

Nothing more is required. That much enjoyment of savour is the origin of all creation. That much appreciation of the soul calls for the heart's enjoyment. Your appreciative soul made your heart thirsty. Only a consent from my side was needed, that too the young man got. The wave of your heart swung my heart, brought in a flow of sweetness into my soul from yours. The desire awakened in the man in you, the created being, stirred a subtle movement of action, and my woman-force received it to give it a form. The force of delight, which we together invoked consciously or unconsciously, must be satiated to the full; we can't refuse it even if we want to.

Man

But as directed by the Creator who has sent me to earth today, I am going to perform a special mission. This time there is no life of enjoyment for me, my field of work, my course of dharma will be of a different kind. I doubt whether there will at all be any place for woman. So, I think there is no justification in giving an expression to such a thing in the waking state which has already been enjoyed as a momentary dream.

Woman

The course of karma is not so simple and straight. In the setting of life thousands of threads are intimately intertwined in different directions and diverse patterns. The directive given by your life's Creator may be true; but why should you take that truth to be the whole truth? My life's Creator also is telling me that this time my earthly play is jointly with you.

Man

But will that play of yours be successful? Can my mission satisfy all the demands and cravings of desire for which you are calling me? Instead of a life of satiety and ease, ours might become one of discontent and pain. Our yearning for happiness might bring in only sorrow. Failure might show its face in the midst of our union.

Woman

The delight of union is in union alone—not in happiness or sorrow. Happiness and sorrow, satiety and discontent, relief and pain—all these are petty things, solely external. Through these dualities the delight and appreciation of the soul finds its play. The fulfilment of your longing and mine too can never be a deterrent to inner fulfilment—all else probably will prove the accessories of its preparation

Man

Who knows what the mystery of creation is! In what form, in which way moves the course of karma? Let us go then, we are simply marionettes in the hands of an unknown power. When that power is pushing us, we have neither the capacity nor the will to resist it.

NEW AGE NEWS

COMPILED AND PRESENTED BY WILFRIED

(Continued from the issue of January 1990)

Les Français et le Surnaturel

THE sober French politics-oriented newsmagazine *L'Express* (27-10-89) dedicates seven full pages to a story titled "The French and the Supernatural". On p. 30 it publishes the results of a poll which gives most detailed information about the esoteric inclinations of the people. Thus we learn, for instance, that 40% of the interviewees believe in telepathy, 22% in horoscopes and 5% in ghosts. When the question was asked, "Do you think that there are realities for which there cannot be any scientific explanation?", 51% answered "Yes, certainly", only 8% "Surely not". When belief in the supernatural was analyzed according to the level and line of education, there was no very significant difference. The rate was 54% for "Supérieur littéraire", 46% "Supérieur scientifique" and 41% "Primaire".

These results are surprising, as the journal states in its commentary. Especially the figure of 46% for individuals with a diploma in sciences is astonishing. Obviously, relying on science alone for anything like a satisfying *Weltanschauung* does not suffice in their view. "Esotericism often presents global interpretations of the Universe which can satisfy those who are no more attracted by religion, but who remain in search of another spirituality," explains *L'Express*.

The journal also gives an opportunity to two prominent believers/non-believers to make their case. The publisher Robert Laffont cites several personal experiences such as premonitions or healings. He advocates a balanced supra-rationality: "I believe you have to be receptive to the signs, the non-rational forces, the vibrations, without giving them any excessive importance."

Albert Jacquard, professor at Paris University and author of a dozen books, is a non-believer, quite simply "because the verb *to believe* does not make part of the scientific vocabulary." He presents the "old" strict viewpoint of science working by set rules and acknowledged procedures. For him, there is not any verifiable proof for supernatural phenomena, and therefore "the parasciences are to science what parasites are to their victim."

In the next paragraph we learn the reason for this slightly emotional outbreak. He believes that esotericism mainly serves to give an imaginary support to human beings and often enslaves them by making them dependent and fatalistic. In fact, numerology and astrology have already entered the field of business where personnel managers secretly or openly examine the data of

applicants with the help of their astro-computers. "We are sorry, but you can't get this job, because you are a scorio," this was the shocking reply received by one highly qualified applicant. And here precisely Albert Jacquard's criticism comes in with a great force of conviction. Actually, an enlightened and humanitarian agnosticism may often be more progressive than any half-enlightened new-ageism. Can we not fully agree with Jacquard in his conclusion?

"When shall we accept to be enlightened (*lucide*) and to understand that the special characteristic of man is that he can take charge of his destiny? Tomorrow is not written in the planets nor in the numbers. Tomorrow shall be what we decide today."

Voilà the mantra of a brilliant scientist. From the integral viewpoint, astrology and numerology also have some limited truth in them, but if (due to incomplete understanding) they should hamper our evolution, we might indeed fare better without them.

Many Swallows Making a Summer

Casinos and places of gambling are not known to be the seats of Truth and Nobility. All the more astonishing is the following incident that took place in Hamburg in the late spring '89.

The directors of a casino ordered an industrial enterprise to renovate their building. Soon the workers discovered that twelve pairs of swallows were nesting underneath the portal, at the pillars. The directors were consulted about this "obstacle" and then issued a statement that all further renovation was postponed until September, since the swallows should not be disturbed.

Here, indeed, it was not the question of making money, but making a summer, in liberal Hamburg.

(See *Badische Neue Nachrichten*, 14-6-89)

THE TIDES

A NOVELLA

(Continued from the issue of 21 February 1990)

IX

It took quite a few seconds for us to recover from the shock of the surprise. Then Mr. Roy opened his mouth, "Dada, please excuse me for my rude behavior at my first meeting with you after ages," and prostrated himself at his brother's feet. Startled, the elder brother stooped down and lifted the younger up by his hands, saying, "Never mind Uma, my behavior was also no less rude. But I wonder how Deepu could be so irresponsible. He had not even informed me that you were coming." Now Manju Devi approached her great uncle and bowed down at his feet, murmuring, "It's my fault, Jedamashay, I had not informed him at all that we were coming."

"Fault! no, my dear child. You have done a thing of the greatest happiness in my life." He embraced Mr. Roy with deep affection and delight and then addressed one of the girls, "Rekha, please escort them to Deepu, I am just coming after finishing an urgent piece of work." The tall, slim and dignified girl, Rekha, led us across the lawn towards the north. The place was lonely and an extraordinary silence prevailed all around. As we crossed the rows of trees we were face to face with the village pulsating with life. It was as if the green garb of the mother had been drawn aside and the suckling baby started smiling and playing by moving his limbs. First we came across the school area. The students were busy, talking and playing. Perhaps it was their noon-time recess. The light-gold colour of the houses and their new and novel pattern astonished us. On being asked, Rekha replied that they were fashioned out of a special kind of processed ripe bamboo and cane. One by one she showed us playground, gymnasium, art-house and ponds for swimming. Everything was plain and simple, bearing an air of sacredness. Finally she showed us a big house and requested us to wait there till she came back with Deepu.

Inside the house the object of attraction was a fine photograph placed at the other end of a room. It was the photo of a young man with bright eyes, sharp nose and thin lips which spoke of his firm will and iron determination. It reminded me of Deepu and his father and I wondered how and when they had met and undertaken to materialise this lofty ideal...

"You will have to wait a little more before Deepu-da can come." Looking backward we saw at the doorway the man whose photograph we had been observing. I remarked, "That's all right, but I should say that your photograph is

very fine indeed ” “No, that’s not my photo but that of my father.”

“Then surely you are Rasu, Deepu-da’s boyhood friend. Isn’t it so?” “Yes, but how do you know that?” “From Dandibaba’s statement in Deepu-da’s diary, that you resembled your father, a freedom-fighter who died due to police atrocity.”

Meanwhile Rekha came with Deepu, a simple, healthy young man dressed all in white. He bowed down to Mr. Roy uttering gently, “Kakababu, I am happy beyond words that all three of you have come.” Then he approached me and taking my hands into his with deep affection, observed, “Who could think then that we would meet again? God’s way is beyond our understanding. However, it seems that you have not changed at all, I could have picked you out even from amongst a hundred men.” “But you have changed a lot, quite a different man from the one I had seen at Ghazipur,” I remarked. Manju Devi, while stooping to touch her brother’s feet, asked jokingly, “Can you guess who I am?” Deepu at once said, “No pranam, Manju, my sister. You may be younger in age but are much superior to me in education and learning.” “Superior! what do you mean, Deepu-da? You are educated in the University of Life, whereas I am simply a student of classrooms.” “Manju, let us all go now to see my mother,” he changed the topic. The words lit my heart with an intense longing to meet the adorable lady as soon as possible

We then stepped into an area with trees and bushes where chirping birds, grazing cattle and barking dogs received us. Deepu had to quieten the dogs with sweet words. Then they became friendly. After that we reached the residential part. The decent hay-roofed houses of different sizes had each a tidy courtyard surrounded by symmetrical flower plants. Deepu led us to the door of a big house and called, “Ma, come quickly and see who have come.” The mother opened the door, a fair old lady with grey hair tinged reddish near the forehead due to constant use of vermilion for years. She was all surprise and her bright eyes behind silver-framed spectacles ran over us not knowing what to do or say “Ma, don’t you remember what I told you about Kakababu of Allahabad?” reminded Deepu. Light of recognition dawned in her deep penetrating eyes. She came forward and clasped Manju Devi and kissed her forehead. After a formal exchange of greetings she led us into the house and said, “Deepu, please go and see if you can catch some fishes from the big pond. In the meantime let me make arrangements for cooking.” Mr. Roy said, “Baudi, please don’t worry about that. Simply show things to Manju, she will do everything.” Just as Deepu went away with Rasu for the fishes, his father entered grumbling against Deepu to his wife, “A blunder, what a blunder Deepu has made! Should he not have informed me? Otherwise how could I know?” The thing which I failed to do at first I did that now. I went near the great patriot and touched his feet in obeisance. He placed both his hands on my shoulders in a friendly way and observed, “Yes, I heard about you, thank you very much. Now-a-days such people are rarely

found. Everybody is busy with his own affairs. You are kind-hearted and your help to Deepu was very timely.”

Needless to say that all others had finished their food already. The cooking for us three was complete within an hour and a half. The items were simple and limited. Khichuri, fresh fish-fry, papad and mango pickles. Lunch finished, we assembled in the middle of the house after about two hours. The great patriot, of course, took his leave after a few minutes, saying, “I have urgent work, you please take rest now. In the afternoon we shall go round the whole village and observe everything ” Thereafter, Deepu and Rasu also were about to go but Manju Devi objected, “Deepu-da, come and sit amongst us. You have to tell us the whole episode after you left your benefactor’s house at Ghazipur. We are quite in the dark about it.” “Excuse me, telling in that way is beyond my capacity. Rather you should ask my mother, she knows everything.” The two friends went out hand in hand

I entreated, “Yes, Jathaima¹, please tell us what happened after Deepu-babu escaped from your old house beside the Ganges.” She heaved a deep sigh and asked, “How do you know what happened in the old house?” “Why, from Deepu-da’s note book,” replied Manju Devi. “O yes, I understand now. Now listen,” she started telling the episode:

“As you know, Deepu’s father was in an abnormal state of mind and had mistaken him for a police spy. He was intent upon shooting Deepu. I stood in the way and obstructed him. He got terribly annoyed. Then I also said angrily, ‘O.K. Come and kill your son with your own hand.’ The words acted magically, as if they had hit his head directly. He kept on brooding for a while with lowered head and then when he raised it, his eyes were clear, soft and compassionate. I took the opportunity and added gently, ‘Listen, he is none else than our son Deepu. I have seen the cut mark on his head which he had got as a baby due to a fall from your arms.’ His eyes sparkled, he shouted ‘Food, quickly bring some food and let’s go. Who knows for how many days he will go without food?’

“We entered the other room to find it empty, Deepu had escaped. Immediately his father broke down into incessant weeping and lamented, ‘Oh, what have I done...?’ I helped him go to the inner room and made him lie down on the bed and ran my fingers through his hair consoling, ‘Please don’t weep, I am sure he will come back. How can he keep away leaving us alone? Now try to sleep a little.’ He closed his eyes, I caressed his forehead and sang in a low voice his most favourite song. Before long he went into a deep sleep But I myself became restless, a storm started within me and I went on praying, ‘O Lord, please bring him back, I have assured his father ’ Instantly I was inspired to go out in the darkness in search of him with a lantern in hand, followed by our pet dog. I looked for him hither and thither without avail and then approached the

¹ Aunt

big ghat and sat down under the tree nearby. The dog also rested just in front of my feet.

“As I sat absorbed brooding over my misfortune, the twinkling stars above showered their thin rays on me through the thick foliage of the tree. The crickets and other insects created a symphony along with the splashing sound of waves on the Ghat. The magic of nocturnal nature made my heart pray again unawares, ‘O my God, during my eventful risky life I never wanted anything from you for personal gain. Now at the last stage of my life let me pray to you for one thing and only one thing. I have given assurance to my husband that our son will come back. O Lord, please bring him back to us and that as soon as possible.’

“Suddenly the sleeping dog sprang up barking at something on the last step of the Ghat. The shadowy object I saw there made me shiver in fear and nervousness. Moreover I felt chilled by a sudden blast of cold wind. Was it a ghost or a hungry crocodile trying to come up? I thought and prepared to leave the place. Just then I heard a murmur in the depth of my being, ‘Why do you fear? That is your Deepu.’

“ ‘Deepu, Deepu, my Deepu...’ I rushed to the Ghat and started descending the steps. But a warning came from below, ‘Ma..., wait, please wait, don’t come down any further. The steps are very slippery, you will fall. I myself am just coming up.’ He came up and I wiped his wet body with the end of my sari and, letting him sit down beside me, asked, “Deepu, from where do you come now floating in such a dangerous river? How do you know that I am your mother?” He thrust his face into my lap and clasping me with both hands remained motionless for a long while and then whispered. ‘That was an unbelievable mysterious event but to me as real and tangible as daylight. Let me tell you from the beginning. I escaped from your house, dived into the Ganges, swam against the current and got deadly tired. Fortunately I reached a Ghat and rested on one of its steps.

“ ‘A kind gentleman found me and led me to his house and gave me his own share of food to eat and then wanted to know about me. (At this stage Jedaima cast a tender and compassionate gaze at me.) While he was busy in the kitchen I wrote down in his note-book all that had happened, and slept on his bed without my knowing it. During sleep I dreamt, rather it was a vision, I dreamt that I was floating on a sea, a sea engulfed in dense darkness. The sea was stormy and turbulent, my death was imminent. I was so afraid that my body became stiff like a piece of wood. However, with a terrible effort I stretched my hands upward and sought help from heaven. The pitch-black sky, without even a speck of light, remained heedless and indifferent. Then I cried out in despair—O my mother, sweet mother, whom I had intensely longed to see from my childhood, please show me thy face once and only once at this hour of my death so that I may die in peace and with deep satisfaction.

“ ‘Just as I finished, lightning flashed and a deafening thunder cracked the

tar-black sky. Through the opening came down a flood of multi-coloured light red, gold, pink, blue, green, orange, etc. Suddenly all light mingled up to form a radiant white halo and at the centre of that I found you standing with tearful eyes. A voice murmured deep within me—That is your mother, should one flee from one's own mother out of fear? My sleep broke, I jerked myself up, went out of the house, reached the Ganges and jumped into the water ' "

Jathama stopped, utter silence prevailed in the house. Then Mr. Roy slowly approached his sister-in-law, dropped himself near her feet and observed, "Baudi, really it was an extraordinary dream, very significant You are divine, let me take the dust of your feet " "Nonsense, this was simply the play of the All-merciful," she covered her feet with her sari. "Then what happened, Jedama?" asked Manju Devi. "That is difficult for me to tell you, wait a bit, let me see if I can find the diary. Deepu speaks very little but notes down everything " "

She came back with a bound note-book and gave that to Manju Devi to read. She hesitated as she was poor in reading Bengali handwriting. I said, "Jedama, we shall appreciate it more if you please read it yourself." "All right, as you wish," she took back the note-book and started reading it:

Keeping my head on my mother's lap I stretched my bare body on the ground like a new-born baby. Beside me the holy Ganges flowed with fury and vigour to meet the sea, its destination. Above me the vastness of the starry sky gave me the feeling of infinity. Below, the loving touch of mother earth charged the cells of my body with intense joy and energy and the cool breeze of the deadening night caressed me with a soothing hand. My heart was fully happy without any care and anxiety, ringing with only one note, 'Ma...'

Suddenly something cropped up in my mind disturbing this peaceful poise. I sprang up and asked, "Ma, how are you related to that old man who wanted to kill me with his revolver?" "You will know it afterwards, in due course. The night is going to end, now let us go back to our house." "House? You mean that dangerous place from which I escaped? No, no, Ma, let both of us go somewhere else, I cannot go there any more " "That is not possible, my child. Why are you afraid? Believe me, he won't do any harm to you, rather the opposite, he would be extremely pleased and happy to see you."

I accompanied my mother reluctantly followed by the dog and reached that ugly, dangerous house. She said, "Go to the other room and take rest, it is almost morning. Let me take my bath and arrange for tea." Stepping into the other room I stood still, as the man who lay on the bed was he who had wanted to kill me. His head-side window was open and through it the goddess Dawn stretched her hand to sanctify the face of the sleeping man. His appearance was calm, poised and peaceful. His wrinkled forehead, thin lips and the shape of the chin expressed his iron will, yet his overall figure betrayed a soft tenderness, as if a delicate, fragrant flower was hidden somewhere in his heart But this was he who had wanted to kill me. Now, of course, it seemed that by risking his own life

he could save mine from any kind of danger.

Suddenly my eyes met his, he was observing me with half-opened lids, and then he sat up on the bed slowly. With folded hands he bowed his head to the rising sun for a long while and then he signed to me to sit beside him. I obeyed. "I knew that you would come," he observed in a grave voice, "Your mother's words can never fail." He ran his fingers lovingly through my hair and got startled as he touched the cut mark. He remarked in a calm voice, "God's way is mysterious. While a baby you had fallen down from my arms and got this deep cut. Then I considered God merciless, now I correct myself and say he is all-merciful. But for this cut mark, how could we get you back?"

Mother entered, fresh after bath, with a tray of lovely flowers to be offered to her deity. She asked, "Deepu, have you made pranam to your father?" I uttered spontaneously, "Father, my father! was he not killed during the police atrocity like Rasu's father?" "Oh no, the police could not catch me," replied my father. My heart leapt in unspeakable joy and recited within, "My father, my father, he is just beside me." I felt like singing at the top of my voice. My father continued, "Another piece of good news, the constant pinching pain near my temple which when aggravated used to make me mad, is no more since I woke up. I feel that I am cured for good." An unearthly light descended on my mother's face, she closed her eyes, concentrated and prayed mutely. Then she said, "Everything is possible by His grace."

I was curious to know and asked, "In the train I saw you as a Sadhu. From where were you coming, father?" "I went to Mahmudpur, a village in Burdwan." My mother intervened, "O yes, I had no opportunity to ask you about Mahmudpur. How did you find the place?" "Good, very good but everything depends on the consent of Didi and Jamaibabu: will they agree to come here in exchange for our property there?" "Please don't worry about the matter. Asit is there to tackle the affair with them. We are supposed to be still behind the screen." "O yes, you have reminded me, I had already forgotten, we have to leave this hiding resort and go to Benares tomorrow. Asit will be waiting there for us, that was what we had agreed upon." "We can easily manage that, there is ample time. But before that please let me know from where did you pick up Deepu?" "Of course, that is a question. Deepu, where were you going by the Benares Express, empty-handed and like a vagabond?" asked my father.

"Nowhere in particular, I was simply absconding from the hands of the Police." "From the Police? For what crime?" "No crime, in fact I had not killed the Burra-Sahib, but the circumstances were too dead against me to prove my innocence." "Was there any seeming proof that you had killed him?" "Perhaps not, but it was very difficult to know. It happened thus: I had been on night-duty alone near the railway-yard. Burrah-Sahib, fully drunk, came out on his round of inspection and found me waiting for the train to come. What he thought God knows, but he insulted me with most humiliating words. On the spur of the

moment I gave him a good blow in reply. He fell down unconscious but not dead, because I examined his heart-beats and found them perfectly normal. Terribly annoyed with him I left the place thinking that he would return to his senses shortly. Next day the rumour came to me that the Sahib was dead."

"How was his relation with the other workers?" asked my father. "Bad, very bad. Particularly the coolies were dead against him due to his nasty and notorious dealings with them." "I understand, please don't worry about what you did. Let's go to Benares and disclose everything to Asit. He will look into the matter and sort it out."

Jathaima stopped reading for a while when Deepu and Rasu entered with a gentleman, at the sight of whom we were simply dumbfounded. He was the saintly man who had been our co-traveller in the train upto Asansol. Manju Devi exclaimed, "A strange coincidence indeed, but you got down at Asansol station. How is it that you are here?" "Yes, I have come here to make the relation permanent with you," he replied in the manner of a riddle. Mr. Roy was prompt to compliment, "That's very kind of you, to be intimate with persons like you is a matter of great good luck for us." Jedaima asked, "Asit, after finishing your work at Asansol, have you come directly by bus?" "Yes, Baudı, you have rightly guessed."

"Asit! that means Dandibaba. But where is your ochre robe and long stick?" I could not but exclaim. "I have dedicated them to the Ganges at Benares. But how could you know about my personal dress? From Deepu's diary, I suppose." "You are quite correct." Just then Jedamashai came back and announced, "Now all of you get ready to go out to see the village." Jedaima said, "This is that Mahmudpur village about which I read some minutes earlier, renamed Mahanandapur to commemorate Rasu's father Mahananda-da." Mr. Roy added, "Yes, I anticipated something like that."

Shortly after, we all went out in a group to visit the village. Asit-da was friendly with most of the villagers and he introduced us to them. Many of them, young and old, men and women, joined our group to go round the village. After seeing everything, when we assembled in front of the Art House in the school area it was almost dark. Suddenly Deepubabu asked me, "How have you found our village?"

"Very good, perhaps this is what is called the ideal village. Everything is decent and as it should be. There are fishes in the ponds, milking cows in the shed, plenty of paddy in the fields. The houses are not broken, but nice, clean, tidy and uncongested. And the people appear to be happy and healthy, free from cares, anxieties, diseases and discomforts. Of course this is my outer assessment and in such a short time I could not judge their subjective side or inner nature." Asit-da added, "So far as I know, they don't indulge in mutual hatred, jealousy or fighting but when attacked or insulted they know how to rise to the occasion and take proper steps. They give importance first to their own village, then to

their District and Province and finally to India as a whole. But they have no antagonism towards the people of other villages, districts or provinces. On the contrary they are always ready to help and cooperate with them in all respects. Because they know and sincerely believe that that is the only way to bring about integral social or national progress and development. On the other hand they have realised that the growth and development of India in the true sense of the term are not meant for herself alone but for the whole world."

As he spoke his face was aglow with the spirit of hope and aspiration for the future. Suddenly the appearance of a lady from the Art House nearby quietened the whole atmosphere and all hearts seemed to vibrate with intense expectancy to hear her. Apart from her fine figure and rare beauty of appearance she had a convincing personality and inner calm. It was difficult for me to shift my eyes from her. Still I whispered in Deepubabu's ear, "Who is she?" He replied in the same low voice, "Smriti-di, my guru in this line." "Yes, I know, but where is Saroj-da?" "He has been touring abroad to learn in depth about modern technology and agriculture "

Smriti-di invited us into the Art House. I went on thinking over Saroj-da's plight. What might be the utility of modern technology for such an ideal village?

(To be continued)

CHUNILAL CHOWDHURY

Students' Section

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

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(Continued from the issue of 21 February 1990)

THE NEED OF THE HOUR OF GOD

Speech by Rashmi Choudhury and Hema Shah

WE are holding this Conference to celebrate Sri Aurobindo's 117th birth anniversary. For our speech on this occasion of profound significance for earth and humanity, we have chosen a subject of the utmost importance, especially for his disciples and devotees. Our subject is: "The need of the hour." And since the present hour in earth's history is also "The hour of God", we may as well call our subject: "The need of the hour of God."

The present hour of God is the hour when the Supermind, which manifested in the subtle-physical atmosphere of the earth on 29 February 1956, is pressing with an increasing urgency to emerge in the external consciousness and life of the world. But this cannot happen unless at least a small part of humanity opens to and receives the supramental Truth-Power that has manifested and lets it transform the whole being. This is the urgent call, the imperative need of the present hour of God. Also, the receptivity or response to it must be pure and sincere; otherwise, the descending Truth-Power may get mixed with the impurities of the lower nature and create perturbations.

Among the different parts of man's nature it is the psychic being in him which gives the readiest and purest response. I read here a few lines from a letter of Sri Aurobindo in which he states this point very clearly:

"... it is the psychic being that gives *the readiest response* [to the supramental influence]—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."*¹ (*Italics added*)

¹ *Letters on Yoga* (Cent Ed , Vol 22), p 288, fn

The last sentence of this quotation makes it pointedly clear that the descending supramental power can fix itself in the earth-life only if the psychic is awake and in front to receive it in its purity. Therefore, to awaken the psychic being and bring it in front is the imminent and imperative need of the present hour.

Since this is the need of the hour, in this speech we propose to speak to you about it at some length. What is the psychic being? What is its origin, its essential nature, its evolution, its mission, its aspiration and its fulfilment? How to bring it in front? And, finally, why is it indispensable for the fulfilment of the aim of the Integral Yoga? These are some of the points we shall try to explain.

First, it is necessary to explain what Sri Aurobindo means by the word “psychic” for, as he himself says:

“People do not understand what I mean by the psychic being, because the word psychic has been used in English to mean anything of the inner mental, inner vital or inner physical or anything abnormal or occult or even the more subtle movements of the outer being, all in a jumble; also occult phenomena are often called psychic. The distinction between these different parts of the being is unknown.”¹

To clear this confusion, Sri Aurobindo gives his own precise meaning:

“The psychic part of us is something that comes direct from the Divine and is in touch with the Divine. In its origin it is the nucleus pregnant with divine possibilities that supports this lower triple manifestation of mind, life and body. There is this divine element in all living beings, but it stands hidden behind the ordinary consciousness, is not at first developed and, even when developed, is not always or often in the front; it expresses itself, so far as the imperfection of the instruments allows, by their means and under their limitations. It grows in the consciousness by Godward experience, gaining strength every time there is a higher movement in us, and, finally, by the accumulation of these deeper and higher movements, there is developed a psychic individuality—that which we call usually the psychic being.”²

This quotation from Sri Aurobindo not only gives the precise meaning of the word “psychic” but also explains the distinction between the psychic essence or the spark-soul and the psychic being or the psychic personality. This distinction is very necessary to bear in mind for a proper understanding of the two aspects of the psychic in Sri Aurobindo’s terminology. As he himself puts it:

¹ *Ibid* , p 290

² *Ibid* , p 288

“The psychic has two aspects—there is the soul principle itself which contains all soul possibilities and there is the psychic personality which represents whatever soul-power is developed from life to life or put forward for action in our present life-formation. The psychic being usually expresses itself through its instruments, mental, vital and physical; it tries to put as much of its own stamp on them as possible. But it can seldom put on them the full psychic stamp—unless it comes fully out from its rather secluded and overshadowed position and takes into its hands the direct government of the nature. It can then receive and express all spiritual realisations in its own way and manner.”¹

For a precise understanding of Sri Aurobindo’s terminology it is also necessary to note the distinction between what he calls “the central being”, the psychic essence (or the soul) and the psychic being. The psychic being is usually called our central being, but in Sri Aurobindo’s terminology it is more appropriately a representative of the central being, which term he applies to the Jivatman, the individual self or spirit which is our true or original being beyond all manifestation and of which the psychic is a projection or a representative in the lower manifestation. Here again it is best to explain this distinction in Sri Aurobindo’s own words:

“The Jivatman or spirit, as it is usually called in English, is self-existent above the manifested or instrumental being—it is superior to birth and death, always the same, the individual Self or Atman. It is the eternal true being of the individual.

“The soul is a spark of the Divine which is not seated above the manifested being, but comes down into the manifestation to support its evolution in the material world.... This spark is there in all living beings from the lowest to the highest.

“The psychic being is formed by the soul in its evolution... At first it is veiled by mind, vital and body, but as it grows, it becomes capable of coming forward and dominating the mind, life and body... When the psychic being can by sadhana become dominant and freely use its instruments, then the impulse towards the Divine becomes complete and the transformation of mind, vital and body, not merely their liberation, becomes possible.”²

Thus, according to Sri Aurobindo, though the psychic being is there in all men, it remains mostly secret behind the thick and dense veil of the external nature. Only in a few, when it is fully awake and developed within, it tears open the veil and steps forward and, taking up the control of the outer nature, turns it upward and gives it a Godward orientation. As Sri Aurobindo says in *Savitri*:

¹ *Letters on Poetry, Literature and Art* (1988 Edition), p 74

² *Letters on Yoga* (Cent Ed , Vol 22), pp 282-283

“Our soul from its mysterious chamber acts;
 Its influence pressing on our heart and mind
 Pushes them to exceed their mortal selves.
 It seeks for Good and Beauty and for God;
 We see beyond self’s walls our limitless self,
 We gaze through our world’s glass at half-seen vasts,
 We hunt for the Truth behind apparent things.”¹

When the psychic being comes forward, it not only gives a single-pointed Godward orientation to the whole nature but subjects it to a radical purification which makes it fit for the reception of all higher spiritual experiences. However, this purification is not of the nature of a moral control or a religious or ascetic austerity, which mostly bring about an uncertain and precarious change by fixed, rigid and arbitrary rules. It is a profound and thorough-going cleansing of all the layers of our being. The psychic being is able to do this because it has an inherent and intimate discernment “which at once lights up the thoughts, emotional movements, vital pushes, physical habits and leaves nothing there obscure, substituting the right movements for the wrong ones”.²

This process of psychic purification or transformation of the external nature is so very vividly depicted by Sri Aurobindo in a passage in *The Life Divine* that I cannot resist the temptation of quoting it in his own marvellous words:

Here is the passage:

“As the crust of the outer nature cracks, as the walls of inner separation break down, the inner light gets through, the inner fire burns in the heart, the substance of the nature and the stuff of consciousness refine to a greater subtlety and purity... the psychic personality reaches its full stature. The soul... takes up its greater function as the guide and ruler of the nature. A guidance, a governance begins from within which exposes every movement to the light of the Truth, repels what is false, obscure, opposed to the divine realisation: every region of the being, every nook and corner of it, every movement, formation, direction, inclination of thought, will, emotion, sensation, action, reaction, motive, disposition, propensity, desire, habit of conscious or subconscious physical, even the most concealed, camouflaged, mute, recondite, is lighted up with the unerring psychic light, their confusions dissipated, their obscurities, deceptions, self-deceptions precisely indicated and removed; all is purified, set right, the whole nature harmonised, modulated in the psychic key, put in spiritual order. The process may be rapid or tardy according to the amount of obscurity or resistance still left in the nature, but it goes on unflinchingly so long

¹ Centenary Edition (Vol 29), p 485

² *Letters on Yoga* (Cent Ed, Vol 24), p 1096

as it is not complete. As a final result the whole conscious being is made perfectly apt for spiritual experience of every kind, turned towards spiritual truth of thought, feeling, sense, action, tuned to the right responses, delivered from the darkness and stubbornness of the tamasic inertia, the turbidities and turbulences and impurities of the rajasic passion and restless unharmonised kinesis, the unenlightened rigidities and sattvic limitations or poised balancements of constructed equilibrium which are the character of the Ignorance.”¹

The psychic purification or transformation of our nature, described in the long passage I have just read, is necessary in our yoga because without it the complete transformation of our nature by the supramental Power cannot be achieved. This complete or integral transformation has three stages—the psychic, the spiritual and the supramental, but the second and the third cannot bring their full results unless they are preceded by the first, the psychic transformation. Not only so, but Sri Aurobindo goes to the extent of saying that without the psychic transformation even the biggest spiritual realisations gained through mind or vital would not bring success in our yoga. To quote his own words:

“One may practise yoga and get illuminations in the mind and the reason; one may conquer power and luxuriate in all kinds of experiences in the vital; one may establish even surprising physical Siddhis; but if the true soul-power behind does not manifest, if the psychic nature does not come into the front, nothing genuine has been done. In this yoga, the psychic being is that which opens the rest of the nature to the true supramental light and finally to the supreme Ananda. Mind can open by itself to its own higher reaches; it can still itself and widen into the Impersonal; it may too spiritualise itself in some kind of static liberation or Nirvana; but the supramental cannot find a sufficient base in a spiritualised mind alone. If the inmost soul is awakened, if there is a new birth out of the mere mental, vital and physical into the psychic consciousness, then this yoga can be done; otherwise (by the sole power of the mind or any other part) it is impossible.... If there is a refusal of the psychic new birth, a refusal to become the child new-born from the Mother, owing to attachment to intellectual knowledge or mental ideas or to some vital desire, then there will be a failure in the sadhana.”²

We have spoken at some length about the psychic being because, as we said at the beginning, its awakening and coming to the front to transform the nature is of crucial importance at the present hour when the descending Supermind is urgently calling for our response in order that it may securely establish itself in

¹ *The Life Divine* (Cent Ed , Vol 19), pp 907-908

² *Letters on Yoga* (Cent Ed , Vol 24), pp 1095-96

our life and fulfil the age-long human aspiration for the divine life upon earth. To do this is, in fact, our Master's present demand on his disciples and, therefore, on this occasion of his anniversary we can do no better than to sincerely resolve to make this psychic awakening and psychic transformation our all-engrossing constant preoccupation

We conclude our speech by reading a few lines from Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* in which again he reminds us of this need in very forceful words:

“Earth must transform herself and equal Heaven
Or Heaven descend into earth's mortal state.
But for such vast spiritual change to be,
Out of the mystic cavern in man's heart
The heavenly Psyche must put off her veil
And step into common nature's crowded rooms
And stand uncovered in that nature's front
And rule its thoughts and fill the body and life.”¹

¹ Centenary Edition (Vol 29), pp 486-487