

MOTHER INDIA

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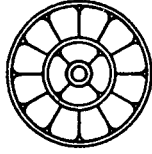
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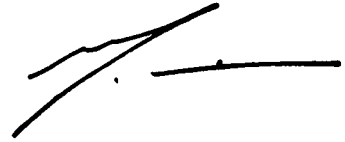


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled



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SRI AUROBINDO ON HIS OWN YOGA

I AM not doing an isolated Yoga.

If I were seeking my own liberation and perfection, my Yoga would have been finished long ago.

*

THE ASHRAM-LIFE AND THE ORDINARY WORLD

A REMINDER BY SRI AUROBINDO

A DIVINE life in the world or an institution having that for its aim and purpose cannot be or cannot remain something outside or entirely shut away from the life of ordinary men in the world or unconcerned with the mundane existence; it has to do the work of the Divine in the world and not work outside or separate from it. The life of the ancient Rishis in their Ashrams had such a connection; they were creators, educators, guides of men and the life of the Indian people in ancient times was largely developed and directed by their shaping influence. The life and activities involved in the new endeavour are not identical but they too must be an action upon the world and a new creation in it. It must have contacts and connection with it and activities which take their place in the general life and whose initial or primary objects may not seem to differ from those of the same activities in the outside world.

*

A WRONG EFFORT TOWARDS “DIVINISATION”

SOME INSTRUCTIONS FROM SRI AUROBINDO

YOU are persisting in a wrong effort which prevents the very object that you have in view. You want to have what you call “divinisation”; but you cannot have it in the way you are trying.

I will point out your mistake, please read carefully and try to understand rightly. Especially understand my words in their plain sense and do not put into them any “hidden meaning” or any other meaning which might be favourable to your present ideas.

The Divine Consciousness we are trying to bring down is a Truth-Consciousness. It shows us all the truth of our being and nature on all the planes—mind, life and body. It does not throw them away or make an impatient effort to get rid of them immediately and substitute something fantastic and

wonderful in their place. It works upon them patiently and slowly to perfect and raise in them all that is capable of perfection and to change all that is obscure and imperfect.

Your first mistake is to imagine that it is possible to become divine in a moment. You imagine that the higher consciousness has only to descend in you and remain there and all is finished. You imagine that no time is needed, no long, hard or careful work, and that all will be done for you in a moment by the Divine Grace. This is quite wrong. It is not done in that way; and so long as you persist in this error, there can be no permanent divinisation, and you will only disturb the Truth that is trying to come, and disturb your own mind and body by a fruitless struggle.

Secondly, you are mistaken in thinking that because you feel a certain force and presence, therefore you are at once divine. It is not so easy to become divine. There must be to whatever force or presence comes, a right interpretation and response, a right knowledge in the mind, a right preparation of the vital and physical being. But what you are feeling is an abnormal vital force and exaltation due to the impatience of your desire, and with this there come suggestions born of your desire, which you mistake for truth and call inspirations and intuitions.

I will point out some of the mistakes you make in this condition.

You immediately begin to think that there is no further need of my instructions or guidance, because you imagine you are henceforth one with me. Not only so, but the suggestions you want to accept go quite against my instructions. How can this be if you are one with me? It is obvious that these ideas that go against my instructions come from your mind and impulses and not from me or from any Divine Consciousness or from anything that can be called the Sri Aurobindo Consciousness

In this connection you write, "I see the difficulty that even when I am filled with you, the idea of obeying and following your instructions still works—even when you have made me yourself. I pray for the needful." The idea of following and obeying my instructions is not a difficulty, it is the only thing that can help you. That obedience is the thing that is needful.

What do you mean by saying, "You have made me yourself"? The words seem to have no meaning. You cannot mean that you become the same individual self as I; there cannot be two Aurobindos; even if it were possible it would be absurd and useless. You cannot mean that you have become the Supreme Being, for you cannot be God or the Ishwara. If it is in the ordinary (Vedantic) sense, then everyone is myself, since every Jiva is a portion of the One. You may perhaps have become conscious for a time of this unity; but that consciousness is not sufficient by itself to transform you or to make you divine.

You begin to imagine that you can do without food and sleep and disregard the needs of the body; and you forget my instructions and mistakenly call these

needs a disturbance or the play of the hostile material and physical forces. This idea is false. What you feel is only a vital force, not the highest truth, and the body remains what it was; it will suffer and break down if it is not given food, rest and sleep.

It is the same mistaken vital exaltation that made you feel your body to see if it was of supramental substance. Understand clearly that the body cannot be transformed in that way into something quite unphysical. The physical being and the body, in order to be perfected, have to go through a long preparation and gradual change. This cannot be done, if you do not come out of this mistaken vital exaltation and come down into the ordinary physical consciousness first, with a clear sense of physical realities.

Finally, if you want the real change and transformation, you must clearly and resolutely recognise that you have made and are still making mistakes and have entered into a condition that is unfavourable to your object. You have tried to get rid of your thinking mind, instead of perfecting and enlightening it, and have tried to replace it by artificial "inspirations and intuitions."

You have developed a dislike and shrinking for the body and the physical being and its movements; and therefore you do not want to come down into the normal physical consciousness and do patiently there what is necessary for the change. You have left yourself only with a vital consciousness which feels sometimes a great force and Ananda and at others falls into bad depressions because it is not supported either by the mind above or by the body below.

You must absolutely change all this, if you want the real transformation.

You must not mind losing the vital exaltation; you must not mind coming into a normal physical consciousness, with a clear practical mind, looking at physical conditions and physical realities. You must accept them first, or you will never be able to change and perfect them.

You must recover a quiet mind and intelligence. If you can once firmly do these things, the Greater Truth and Consciousness can come back in its proper time, in the right way and under the right conditions.¹

¹ *Letters on Yoga* (Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library, Vol. 23), pp. 1066-68

A TALK BY THE MOTHER

TO THE ASHRAM CHILDREN ON 8 AUGUST 1956

Sweet Mother, Sri Aurobindo writes "A psychic fire within must be lit into which all is thrown with the Divine Name upon it."

The Synthesis of Yoga, p 155

Isn't the psychic fire always lit?

It is not always lit

Then how to light it?

By aspiration

By the will for progress, by the urge towards perfection

Above all, it is the will for progress and self-purification which lights the fire. The will for progress. Those who have a strong will, when they turn it towards spiritual progress and purification, automatically light the fire within themselves.

And each defect one wants to cure or each progress one wants to make—if all that is thrown into the fire, it burns with a new intensity. And this is not an image, it is a fact in the subtle physical. One can feel the warmth of the flame, one can see in the subtle physical the light of the flame. And when there is something in the nature which prevents one from advancing and one throws it into this fire, it begins to burn and the flame becomes more intense.

"For devotion by its embodiment in acts not only makes its own way broad and full and dynamic, but brings at once into the harder way of works in the world the divinely passionate element of joy and love which is often absent in its beginning when it is only the austere spiritual will that follows in a struggling uplifting tension the steep ascent, and the heart is still asleep or bound to silence. If the spirit of divine love can enter, the hardness of the way diminishes, the tension is lightened, there is a sweetness and joy even in the core of difficulty and struggle."

Ibid , pp 154-55

How can one feel sweetness and joy when one is in difficulty?

Exactly, when the difficulty is egoistic or personal, if one makes an offering of it and throws it into the fire of purification, one immediately feels the joy of progress. If one does it sincerely, at once there is a welling up of joy.

That is obviously what ought to be done instead of despairing and lamenting. If one offers it up and aspires sincerely for transformation and purification,

one immediately feels joy springing up in the depths of the heart. Even when the difficulty is a great sorrow, one may do this with much success. One realises that behind the sorrow, no matter how intense it may be, there is a divine joy.

(*Silence*)

Is that all?

(*Mother shows a packet of written questions.*) My portfolio is getting fatter! More questions come to me than I can answer ... One, of a very practical kind, I shall answer first because it will be quickly over. Besides, it is a question which I have been asked very often, and perhaps I have already answered it several times. But still, it is always worth repeating

“Without conscious occult powers, is it possible to help or protect from a distance somebody in difficulty or danger? If so, what is the practical procedure?”

Then a sub-question

“What can thought do?”

We are not going to speak of occult processes at all, although, to tell the truth, everything that happens in the invisible world is occult, by definition. But still, practically, there are two processes which do not exclude but complete each other, but which may be used separately according to one's preference.

It is obvious that thought forms a part of one of the methods, quite an important part. I have already told you several times that if one thinks clearly and powerfully, one makes a mental formation, and that every mental formation is an entity independent of its fashioner, having its own life and tending to realise itself in the mental world—I don't mean that you see your formation with your physical eyes, but it exists in the mental world, it has its own particular independent existence. If you have made a formation with a definite aim, its whole life will tend to the realisation of this aim. Therefore, if you want to help someone at a distance, you have only to formulate very clearly, very precisely and strongly the kind of help you want to give and the result you wish to obtain. That will have its effect. I cannot say that it will be all-powerful, for the mental world is full of innumerable formations of this kind and naturally they clash and contradict one another, hence the strongest and the most persistent will have the best of it.

Now, what is it that gives strength and persistence to mental formations?—It is emotion and will. If you know how to add to your mental formation an emotion, affection, tenderness, love, and an intensity of will, a dynamism, it will

have a much greater chance of success. That is the first method. It is within the scope of all those who know how to think, and even more of those who know how to love. But as I said, the power is limited and there is great competition in that world.

Therefore, even if one has no knowledge at all but has trust in the divine Grace, if one has the faith that there is something in the world like the divine Grace, and that this something can answer a prayer, an aspiration, an invocation, then, after making one's mental formation, if one offers it to the Grace and puts one's trust in it, asks it to intervene and has the faith that it will intervene, then indeed one has a chance of success.

Try, and you will surely see the result.

But, Mother, when one prays sincerely for the intervention of the Grace, doesn't one expect a particular result?

Excuse me, that depends on the tenor of the prayer. If one simply invokes the Grace of the Divine, and puts oneself in His hands, one does not expect a particular result. To expect a particular result one must formulate one's prayer, must ask for something. If you have only a great aspiration for the divine Grace and evoke it, implore it, without asking it for anything precise, it is the Grace which will choose what it will do for you, not you.

That is better, isn't it?

Ah! that's quite another question

Why, it is higher in its quality, perhaps. But still, if one wants something precise, it is better to formulate it. If one has a special reason for invoking the Grace, it is better to formulate it precisely and clearly.

Of course, if one is in a state of complete surrender and gives oneself entirely, if one simply offers oneself to the Grace and lets it do what it likes, that is very good. But after that one must not question what it does! One must not say to it, "Oh! I did that with the idea of having this", for if one really has the idea of obtaining something, it is better to formulate it in all sincerity, simply, just as one sees it. Afterwards, it is for the Grace to choose if it will do it or not; but in any case, one will have formulated clearly what one wanted. And there is no harm in that.

Where it becomes bad is when the request is not granted and one revolts. Then naturally it becomes bad. It is at that moment one must understand that the desire one has, or the aspiration, may not have been very enlightened and that perhaps one has asked for something which was not exactly what was good for one. Then at that moment one must be wise and say simply, "Well, let Thy Will be done." But so long as one has an inner perception and an inner preference,

there is no harm in formulating it. It is a very natural movement.

For example, if one has been foolish or has made a mistake and one truly, sincerely wishes never to do it again, well, I don't see any harm in asking for it. And in fact, if one asks for it with sincerity, a true inner sincerity, there is a great chance that it will be granted.

You must not think that the Divine likes to contradict you. He is not at all keen on doing it! He can see better than you what is really good for you; but it is only when it is absolutely indispensable that He opposes your aspiration. Otherwise He is always ready to give what you ask.

Is that all?

(Silence)

There are three texts here which I have been asked to comment on or explain. The last one is a sort of continuation of what we have just said; I am going to begin with that:

“If one were in union with this Grace, if one saw It everywhere, one would begin living a life of exultation, of all-power, of infinite happiness.

“And that would be the best possible collaboration in the divine Work.”

Talk of 1 August 1956, p 251

The first condition is not very easy to realise. It is the result of a conscious growth, a constant observation and perpetual experience in life.

I have already told you this several times. When you are in a particular set of circumstances and certain events take place, these events often oppose your desire or what seems best to you, and often you happen to regret this and say to yourself, “Ah! how good it would have been if it were otherwise, if it had been like this or like that”, for little things and big things.... Then years pass by, events are unfolded; you progress, become more conscious, understand better, and when you look back, you notice—first with astonishment, then later with a smile—that those very circumstances which seemed to you quite disastrous or unfavourable, were exactly the best thing that could have happened to you to make you progress as you should have. And if you are the least bit wise you tell yourself, “Truly, the divine Grace is infinite.”

So, when this sort of thing has happened to you a number of times, you begin to understand that in spite of the blindness of man and deceptive appearances, the Grace is at work everywhere, so that at every moment it is the best possible thing that happens in the state the world is in at that moment. It is because our vision is limited or even because we are blinded by our own preferences that we cannot discern that things are like this.

But when one begins to see it, one enters upon a state of wonder which

nothing can describe. For behind the appearances one perceives this Grace—infinite, wonderful, all-powerful—which knows all, organises all, arranges all, and leads us, whether we like it or not, whether we know it or not, towards the supreme goal, that is, union with the Divine, the awareness of the Godhead and union with Him.

Then one lives in the Action and Presence of the Grace a life full of joy, of wonder, with the feeling of a marvellous strength, and at the same time with a trust so calm, so complete, that nothing can shake it any longer

And when one is in this state of perfect receptivity and perfect adherence, one diminishes to that extent the resistance of the world to the divine Action, consequently, this is the best collaboration one can bring to the Action of the Divine. One understands what He wants and, with all one's consciousness, adheres to His Will.

(Questions and Answers, 1956, pp 252-58)

A "CALL" FROM PONDICHERRY

We are republishing this vivid and valuable article from the joint November-December 1953 issue of Mother India. It was read out to the Mother and approved. But she had not been present during some of the events recorded here. On the basis of Nirodbaran's reports the editor has made a correction at one place

ON the evening of the 29th November 1950, as I was resting after a heavy day, a servant brought me a telegram which read: "FLY—URGENT—MOTHER". Never could I have imagined the amount of meaning there was in those few words.

Then it came to me—Is Sri Aurobindo ill?—Why otherwise would the Mother send such a telegram? Other thoughts crept into my mind and I could not decide how best to equip myself for the errand.

The next morning, 30th November, I flew to Madras, only to find that the next train for Pondicherry did not leave until 9-50 p.m., and so I would reach my destination by 7 a.m. the next morning. It was a torment to think that after travelling 1000 miles in 5 hours it was now to take me twenty hours to cover 100 miles. I looked at the telegram—read it once again—No! I could not waste time, so I hired a car.

It took me an hour to obtain a permit from the Police authorities, who looked me over thoroughly, trying to decide whether I was a smuggler or some thirsty drinker wanting a joy ride to French India. They finally decided however that I could go. The driver being assured of extras, my car literally flew along the roads to Pondicherry having only to stop twice at the inefficient and rude customs barriers—and by six in the evening I was at the Mother's feet in the Ashram playground. As usual She greeted me with her heavenly smile, saying She had expected me that very evening. She then told me of Sri Aurobindo's illness and asked me to examine Him; She added that She would be coming to his room after the programme was over in the playground

On the way Dr. Nirod of the Ashram and my young colleague Dr. Satya Sen acquainted me with the history and present condition of the Master. Softly but quickly I ascended the stairs and entered the room. There I looked on the Master, my divine patient, semi-recumbent on His bed, seemingly unconcerned, eyes closed, like a statue of massive peace I approached the bed, knelt by His side and made my pranams at His feet. Champaklal called: "Look, Master, who has come." There was a quiver on His face; heavy eyelids opened a little—then all was still again. But again Champaklal called: "Master, see, Sanyal has come." This time He opened His eyes fully, looked at me and smiled—Oh such a smile, serene and beautiful, it carried one to ecstasy, lighting the innermost corners of the heart.

He placed His hand on my head and lovingly patted it a few times—all thoughts vanished, it seemed my heart had stopped. I was overpowered with a

mighty peace and calm. He had closed His eyes—except for His respiration all was still and a great silence reigned. Then Champaklal whispered delightedly, “He has given you a Darshan Smile and Blessing.”—It was a blessing no words could describe, only one who has seen it and known it in his heart could appreciate what it meant, for it was an experience of the soul.

I waited for the opportunity to become the doctor. I asked Him what the trouble was and whether I could give Him any relief. I put to Him the regular professional questions, perhaps then forgetting that my patient was the Divine housed in a mortal frame, and He answered: “Trouble? Nothing troubles me—and suffering! one can be above it.” I mentioned the urinary difficulties. “Well, yes,” He answered, “I had some difficulties but they have been relieved, and now I do not feel anything.” Again there was silence.

We retired to the next room and I had a consultation with Nirod and Satya. His urine analysis report had arrived, showing slight albumen and sugar, sp gr a little above normal. The Mother now entered the room and stood in silence near the foot of the bed and watched Sri Aurobindo. Soon She called me out into the next room where I explained the position to Her, that He was suffering from a mild kidney infection—otherwise there was nothing very serious as far as could be judged from the urine report.

We thought that, *Deo volente*, continuous drainage would suffice and antibiotics would gradually improve the rest.

The following morning, 1st December, was very encouraging; our Lord was absolutely alert and responsive and His temperature was normal. After His sponging He took His simple breakfast and even cracked jokes with us. I was giving Him a scalp massage and enquired if He was liking it or not. He remarked: “I know you went to England for your Fellowship but where did you learn massaging?” I suggested that we would like to have His blood examined for a detailed bio-chemical examination, to which He smiled and retorted: “You doctors can think only in terms of diseases and medicines, but always there is much more effectual knowledge beyond and above it. I do not need anything.” All of us were very happy by this most remarkable improvement and the day passed on.

The next day, 2nd December, there was little change except for a rise of one degree in temperature towards the evening. The day was a heavy one for the Mother as it was the second day of the annual display in the playground; but as soon as the activities were over She came to His room and stood at the foot of His bed. Her countenance was very grave but She did not say anything. I suggested, as the urinary infection was again flaring up in spite of continuous drainage, that we should try Antibiotics and Infusion therapy. The Mother then warned me that orthodox methods of treatment were unsuitable for Him—not only would Sri Aurobindo not like them but they would be harmful. She also reminded me that my patient was the Divine, “He will work out whatever is

necessary." I could only give some simple medicines to allay symptoms if any.

We doctors were in a state of perplexity; true, our patient was an Avatar; true, He had cured innumerable ailments in the sadhaks as also in Himself several times—would He not now cure Himself?

Champaklal once entreated Him in a favourable moment: "Why don't you use your force and cure yourself, Master?" He kept silent and showed rather a dislike for such questions.

December 3rd—After a rather quiet and restful night He looked better that morning and when the usual morning routine was over Nirod offered Him some fruit juice which He enjoyed.

The temperature had dropped to normal and so much was our relief that at 11 a.m. while making my Pranams to the Mother I ventured to suggest that as the Master was steadily improving I might perhaps leave that evening. The Mother remained silent; She looked very grave. I looked into Her eyes and felt a quiver, a pain in my heart. What had I said? Was She not willing? Why did I suggest my departure instead of waiting for Her to tell me? I felt a wrench at my heart and I blurted out: "I would rather stay a few more days." A smile lit all Her face. "Yes," She said. In the afternoon the picture rapidly changed. The temperature had risen to 101 degrees. There was a definite respiratory distress. The Mother came into the room at 4 p.m. and stood watching. All the afternoon we had found it difficult to get Him to drink water or fruit juice, so now we sought Her help. She brought the spoon near His lips. Immediately He opened His eyes, took a few sips and lapsed back into unresponsiveness. The Mother came with us into the ante-room and then for the first time declared: "He is fully conscious within but is losing interest in Himself". We could understand very little and dared not question further. Satya was restless as energetic treatment could not be instituted. The Mother simply said: "It all depends on Him".

As the darkness closed in upon us our hearts grew heavier. At times Nirod or Champaklal would offer Him sips to drink and He would even remark on His choice of tomato or orange juice or something of that sort, then would lapse back into a state of unresponsiveness.

Not once would He say or at any time indicate that He was uncomfortable or thirsty, but if we changed His position or offered Him a drink He smilingly accepted it. The Mother came at 11 o'clock at night as usual, the moment She offered Him a drink He was all alert and obediently drank a cupful of fruit juice—then again He lapsed into a state of repose.

The distress continued now with little sign of abating and the Mother took me into the ante-room remarking: "I don't know, He has no interest in Himself." I suggested intravenous medication from the next day onwards, but She advised me not to disturb Him.

The long night passed, a long and worrying night. Nirod and Champaklal kept watch throughout.—If there is a quiver of the lips,—it may be that He

wants a drink. If a shake of the hand—perhaps He needs His handkerchief. They are there to serve Him, that is their sadhana—life dedicated to the service of their Master.—I remembered Sri Aurobindo one day telling me of his early days of sadhana, when he used to sit up all through the night. Champaklal, then a mere boy, would lie on the stairs below, waiting for any summons. On another occasion some time before, I mentioned to Sri Aurobindo that Dr. Nirod would change the medicine when needed; He remarked, “Nirod is no doctor to me.”

We continued keeping a careful watch on the urinary flow and He was still passing 50 ozs. in 24 hrs. at sp. gr. of 1012-1010. Nirod would sit by the bottle and watch each drop as it fell and if there was any delay, which was often the case, he would immediately draw my attention to it.

December 4th—At dawn His temperature had dropped to 99 degrees. The respiratory distress was negligible and He seemed bright and responsive. The morning duties were over and we settled Him in His usual sitting position. There He sat majestic and serene. At about 9 a.m., the Mother came and helped Him to take a light breakfast. As She walked into the ante-room, the room used for our consultations, I smiled to Her and said: “The Master seems cheerful again and taking interest.” The only answer She made was “Mmm” and then went out of the room.

I settled by the side of the bed and gently massaged the Master’s body while Nirod and Champaklal were attending to their duties. After a little while He opened His eyes and asked the time, I told Him 10 o’clock. I saw He was in a mood to talk so I ventured. “How do you feel?” He replied, “I am comfortable.” There was a pause; He looked at the clock and then asked how Bengal was faring, especially the refugees. I narrated to Him their pitiable plight and implored: “Surely the Divine can help them?” My Lord answered, “Yes, if Bengal seeks the Divine.” He closed His eyes and went into silence (samadhi).

But alas, it was only a brief lull—a belied hope. From midday the respiratory difficulty reappeared with greater amplitude and the temperature went up to 102 degrees. This time signs of distress could be seen in the face but there was not a word, not a protest.

The Mother came about 1 p.m. She watched for some time before entering the adjoining room with me. Then She said, “He is withdrawing.”

Though He looked apparently unconscious, whenever He was offered drinks, He would wake up and take a few sips and wipe His mouth himself with His handkerchief. To all of us it seemed apparent that a consciousness came from outside when He was almost normal, and then withdrew when the body quivered and sank down in distress. He was no longer there!

By 5 o’clock again He showed signs of improvement. He was quite responsive. We helped Him out of His bed. After which He walked to the armchair to rest. For the moment He seemed a different personality. He sat there with His eyes closed—calm and composed with a radiating consciousness.

We remarked on the majestic beauty of His form as He sat there; such calm and beatitude brought to my mind the Vedic Rishis. But this did not last long. After three quarters of an hour He became restless and wanted to be back in bed. Respiratory distress appeared with redoubled momentum. From midday onwards the urine output which had been good all these days definitely diminished and the distress was very prominent. Though He seemed to be unconscious He was not, which was evident by the fact that He drew Champaklal several times to His breast and kissed him lovingly. It may be mentioned that this emotional behaviour was evident here for the first time. He had taken nothing to drink that whole day.

The Mother came back after Her usual attendance at the playground. She laid her garland at the foot of the bed, a thing which She did daily, and stood watching Sri Aurobindo. She looked so grave and quiet that it almost distressed me. I went to the ante-room to wait for Her. She entered and I gave Her the report and told Her that Glucose had been given by Satya and we wanted to arrange for intravenous infusion etc. She said quietly and firmly, "I told you this is not necessary, He has no interest in Himself, He is withdrawing."

We sat round His bed, wondering why He was losing interest in Himself; He, if He so desired, could certainly cure Himself as He had done on so many other occasions,—Nirod has seen Him curing the illnesses of others. But now at this crucial hour He had no interest in Himself! Was He going to sacrifice Himself?

At about 11 p.m. the Mother came into the room and helped Sri Aurobindo to drink half a cup of tomato juice. A strange phenomenon—a body which for the moment is in agony, unresponsive, labouring hard for breath, suddenly becomes quiet; a consciousness enters the body, He is awake and normal. He finishes the drink, then, as the consciousness withdraws, the body lapses back into the grip of agony.

At midnight the Mother came again into the room, looked intently for some time as if there was a silent exchange of thought between them; then She left.

At 1 a.m. (5th) She returned and again looked at the Lord and stood at the foot of the bed. There was no sign of agony, fear, or anxiety on Her face. Not a thought, not a feeling could I fathom in Her expression. With Her eyes She asked me to go into the other room and She followed me in. She asked, "What do you think? Can I retire for one hour?" This is a significant hour: the Mother retires—Her consciousness leaves Her body, none are to call or enter Her room then. This is imperative.—I murmured, "Mother, this is beyond me." She said, "Call me when the time comes."

I stood behind the Master and started stroking His hair which He always liked. Nirod and Champaklal sat by the side of the bed and caressed His feet. We were all quietly watching Him. We now knew that anything might happen, any time, only a miracle could save us and the world. I perceived a slight quiver in

His body, almost imperceptible. He drew up His arms and put them on His chest, one overlapping the other—then all stopped. Death, the cruel death that was waiting so long—we had been keeping vigil for it—had descended on our Lord. I told Nirod to go and fetch the Mother. It was 1-20 a.m.

Almost immediately the Mother entered the room. She stood there, near the feet of Sri Aurobindo: Her hair had been undressed and was flowing about Her shoulders. Her look was so fierce that I could not face those eyes. With a piercing gaze She stood there. Champaklal could not bear it and sobbingly he implored, “Mother, tell me Dr. Sanyal is not right, He is alive.” The Mother looked at him and he became quiet and composed as if touched by a magic wand. She stood there for more than half an hour. My hands were still on His forehead. My mind wandered. He lay, my Guru, Rishi Sri Aurobindo, Avatar of the new era of the dawn, a thing past! Only a few seconds ago I was watching and hoping for a miracle to happen; could there be a more appropriate time than this? Sri Aurobindo is no more! He was alive, and now He is history. Thoughts kaleidoscoped in my brain. I could almost see thousands of people passing by the bed, whispering aloud—“Here lived Sri Aurobindo.” But it cannot be, I am standing here by His side, my hands almost touching Him, I am watching Him breathe, yes, every movement, all is much more quiet now,—I could not think any more. A sharp pain went through my head. I looked at the Mother. Softly She came to me and touched my head, stilled my thoughts, quietened my mind. No trace of agony was left, I could now think normally. I asked Her, “What is to be done, we have to arrange for the last offices.” She quietly said, “He will be given Samadhi, under the Prayer tree, in the place where the giant maidenhair plants are arranged.” So, this place had been earmarked beforehand; such is the way of the Divine!

The Mother also reminded me of the formalities that had to be observed, a French doctor must certify the death first. Then only members of the Ashram and the public could be informed. Nolini Gupta and Amrita were called and stood there as if stunned. Pavitra stood at the feet of the Master, tears rolling down his cheeks.

We were busy in dressing the Lord. The Mother had already agreed to my request to call the Ashram photographers (sadhaks) to take the last pictures.

The French physician of the Hospital, Major Barbet, examined the Master's body and we both signed the death certificate.

Now the sadhaks of the Ashram were to be informed. It was now dawn, the eastern sky was slowly getting clearer and clearer, a shaft of light appeared over the horizon. Quietly I left the Ashram.

As I sat by the window, bewildered, in my room at Golconde, I saw the hurried but silent progress of the Ashramites towards the Ashram.—Sri Aurobindo has passed away—I felt a violent pang in my heart. I looked at the sky. Look! . There, Sri Aurobindo is rising again—the eternal Sun bursting

forth with a million rays

As the day wore on, longer and longer became the stream of people, eager but calm and patient, to have a last Darshan of the great Rishi. In the afternoon I again entered the room where our Lord lay serene and majestic. A never-ending stream of people, laymen, clergymen, doctors, lawyers, rickshaw pullers, labourers, rich men, poor men, all filed past the sage, silent but inspired. At dusk the Ashram door was closed. The Mother blessed me, asking me to come again early in the morning. I left for Golconde. Champaklal and Nirod were keeping vigil night and day.

December 6th—I entered Sri Aurobindo's room before dawn. The Mother and I had a look at Him; how wonderful, how beautiful He looked, with a golden hue. There were no signs of death as science had taught me, no evidence of the slightest discoloration, or decomposition. The Mother whispered, "As long as the supramental light does not pass away, the body will not show any signs of decomposition, and it may be a day or it may take many more days." I whispered to Her, "Where is the light you speak of—can I not see it?" I was then kneeling by Sri Aurobindo's bed, by the Mother's feet. She smiled at me and with infinite compassion put her hand on my head. There He was—with a luminous mantle of bluish golden hue around Him.

With the morning came the procession of people, taking a last glimpse of the Divine Master. The Mother said to me, "People do not know what a tremendous sacrifice He has made for the world. About a year ago, while I was discussing things I remarked that I felt like leaving this body of mine. He spoke out in a very firm tone, 'No, this can never be. If necessary for this transformation I might go, you will have to fulfil our yoga of supramental descent and transformation!'"

After that night, there dawned on us the third day of Sri Aurobindo's passing. The Mother and I had a look at His body. As yet there was no sign of decomposition. The French surgeon corroborated the findings, this being required by the law of the state.

I was talking with the Mother, in Her room. In my own foolish way I voiced my apprehension for Her health and the strain She put on her fragile frame. She smiled at me, and asked, "Do you think I get all this energy from my frugal meals? Of course not, one can draw infinite energy from the universe when needed!" She also added, "No, I have no intention of leaving my body for the present. I have yet a lot of things to do. So far as I am concerned, it is nothing to me. I am in constant contact with Sri Aurobindo."

Sri Aurobindo's sudden decision of withdrawal stirred the minds of us all. Was it a retreat? Or was it a means used by Him to attain something for the earth? Who can answer?

With our limited mental logic, whatever we try to explain will only be part of the truth, or may even be a distortion. What we need is a supreme faith in Him.

that if many a battle is apparently lost the ultimate victory of the war is inevitable. Sri Aurobindo has no doubt withdrawn from us, from our physical eye, but the Mother is continuing the fight for humanity as the Mahashakti.

While we all feel as if we were sliding down the incline to disappointment,—for the world torn with dissension, distrust, hatred and greed, looking for a ray in the sky, a divine gesture—for the uplift of humanity—a transformed humanity—the Mother holds out HOPE.

I took leave of the Mother on the 7th evening—taking a last look at the Master's luminous body,—the Divine in a mortal frame, beautiful, calm, and still without a sign of decomposition I naively asked the Mother, "Why was I not allowed to treat the Lord as I would have done in the routine way, and why was I called in?" She consoled me by saying, "We wanted you to be here, not so much for treatment." The Mother blessed me three times and all my sorrows, my disappointments, my doubts vanished, and my mind was aglow with hope. I bowed at Her feet, and looked up to see the Divine Mother, the Mahashakti smiling at me

DR. PRABHAT SANYAL

IMMORTAL HUES

WHAT cruel twist of sombre Fate,
 What dastardly sin of man
 Have made the stars barren
 And burnt up bridges to heaven?
 Who has betrayed our days of their luminous gold
 Robbed our nights of their magic tracks
 Ruled by a perfect moon?
 Where have vanished our inward urges
 That once fathomed God's deeps?
 If we could colour our hearts
 With love and peace,
 Harmonious enchantments will relume
 Life's faded canvas
 With the Supreme Artist's immortal hues.

SHYAM KUMARI

THE DEATH OF SOCRATES

It is a most tragic irony of fate that a man like Socrates was condemned to death by drinking the hemlock. This incident of 399 B.C. is of special interest to us in the month of December which marked on the 5th in 1950 the passing of Sri Aurobindo, for we have heard from Nolini Kanta Gupta that Socrates was one of Sri Aurobindo's past births. He was accused of corrupting the youths of Athens with his unconventional debates about popular morality and religion. It would be better that he should die, said people like Anytus, "the democratic leader whose son had become a pupil of Socrates and had then turned against the gods of his father, and laughed in his father's face." Will Durant, author of the popular Story of Philosophy (Cardinal Edition, Pocket Books Inc., New York, 1965), from whom the above words have been quoted, writes (pp 9-12)

THE rest of the story all the world knows, for Plato wrote it down in prose more beautiful than poetry. We are privileged to read for ourselves that simple and courageous (if not legendary) "apology," or defence, in which the first martyr of philosophy proclaimed the rights and necessity of free thought, upheld his value to the state, and refused to beg for mercy from the crowd whom he had always contemned. They had the power to pardon him; he disdained to make the appeal. It was a singular confirmation of his theories, that the judges should wish to let him go, while the angry crowd voted for his death. Had he not denied the gods? Woe to him who teaches men faster than they can learn.

So they decreed that he should drink the hemlock. His friends came to his prison and offered him an easy escape; they had bribed all the officials who stood between him and liberty. He refused. He was seventy years old now (399 B.C.); perhaps he thought it was time for him to die, and that he could never again die so usefully. "Be of good cheer," he told his sorrowing friends, "and say that you are burying my body only." "When he had spoken these words," says Plato, in one of the great passages of the world's literature,¹

he rose and went into the bath-chamber with Crito, who bade us wait; and we waited, talking and thinking of .the greatness of our sorrow; he was like a father of whom we were being bereaved, and we were about to pass the rest of our lives as orphans.... Now the hour of sunset was near, for a good deal of time had passed while he was within. When he came out, he sat down with us again, ..but not much was said. Soon the jailer...entered and stood by him, saying: "To you, Socrates, whom I know to be the noblest and gentlest and best of all who ever came to this place, I will not impute the angry feelings of other men, who rage and swear at me when, in

obedience to the authorities, I bid them drink the poison—indeed I am sure that you will not be angry with me; for others, as you are aware, and not I, are the guilty cause. And so fare you well, and try to bear lightly what must needs be; you know my errand.” Then bursting into tears he turned away and went out.

Socrates looked at him and said. “I return your good wishes, and will do as you bid.” Then turning to us, he said, “How charming the man is, since I have been in prison he has always been coming to see me .and now see how generously he sorrows for me. But we must do as he says, Crito; let the cup be brought, if the poison is prepared; if not, let the attendant prepare some.”

“Yet,” said Crito, “the sun is still upon the hill-tops, and many a one has taken the draught late, and after the announcement has been made to him he has eaten and drunk, and indulged in sensual delights; do not hasten then, there is still time.”

Socrates said: “Yes, Crito, and they of whom you speak are right in doing thus, for they think that they will gain by the delay; but I am right in not doing thus, for I do not think that I should gain anything by drinking the poison a little later; I should be sparing and saving a life which is already gone; I could only laugh at myself for this. Please then to do as I say, and not to refuse me.”

Crito, when he heard this, made a sign to the servant, and the servant went in, and remained for some time, and then returned with the jailer carrying the cup of poison. Socrates said: “You, my good friend, who are experienced in these matters, shall give me directions how I am to proceed.” The man answered: “You have only to walk about until your legs are heavy, and then to lie down, and the poison will act.” At the same time he handed the cup to Socrates, who in the easiest and gentlest manner, without the least fear or change of color or feature, looking at the man with all his eyes, as his manner was, took the cup and said: “What do you say about making a libation out of this cup to any god? May I, or not?” The man answered: “We only prepare, Socrates, just so much as we deem enough.” “I understand,” he said; “yet I may and must pray to the gods to prosper my journey from this to that other world—may this then, which is my prayer, be granted to me.” Then, holding the cup to his lips, quite readily and cheerfully he drank the poison.

And hitherto most of us had been able to control our sorrow, but now when we saw him drinking, and saw too that he had finished the draught, we could no longer forbear, and in spite of myself my own tears were flowing fast; so that I covered my face and wept over myself; for certainly I was not weeping over him, but at the thought of my own calamity in having lost such a companion. Nor was I the first, for Crito, when he found himself

unable to restrain his tears, had got up and moved away, and I followed; and at that moment Apollodorus, who had been weeping all the time, broke out into a loud cry which made cowards of us all. Socrates alone retained his calmness. "What is this strange outcry?" he said. "I sent away the women mainly in order that they might not offend in this way, for I have heard that a man should die in peace. Be quiet, then, and have patience." When we heard that, we were ashamed, and restrained our tears; and he walked about until, as he said, his legs began to fail, and then he lay on his back, according to the directions, and the man who gave him the poison now and then looked at his feet and legs; and after a while he pressed his foot hard and asked him if he could feel; and he said, "No"; and then his leg, and so upwards and upwards, and showed us that he was cold and stiff. And then Socrates felt them himself, and said, "When the poison reaches the heart, that will be the end." He was beginning to grow cold about the groin, when he uncovered his face (for he had covered himself up) and said,—they were his last words,—"Crito, I owe a cock to Asclepius; will you remember to pay the debt?" "The debt shall be paid," said Crito, "is there anything else?" There was no answer to this question; but in a minute or two a movement was heard, and the attendant uncovered him, his eyes were set, and Crito closed his eyes and mouth.

Such was the end of our friend, whom I may truly call the wisest, the justest, and best of all the men whom I have ever known.

LIFE—POETRY—YOGA

PERSONAL LETTERS

YOUR inquiry about the *darshans*, in response to my article in the November *Mother India*, 1990, is such that I feel I have succeeded in putting my very soul into this piece of writing. That is always my aim in writing letters. Even if the subject is intellectual, it should be tackled not with the mere mind but always by the Dweller in the Depths who lives in the light of the Divine Presence at all times. Shouldn't something like this be expected of anyone who has had the supreme luck to have touched the feet of the Master who was a dispeller of all darkness and the feet of the Mother whose smile could heal every wound?

Memorable was the whole series of *darshans* but perhaps the most memorable was the last on November 24, 1950. And here I may speak of a reversal of the roles of the Master's look and the Mother's smile. Now it was the Mother whose look struck me. For even when I was at the door leading to the long passage at whose end was the *darshan* room, I saw her send a keen glance at me and the next moment she bent her head towards Sri Aurobindo and said something to him. Later I learned from her that she had said: "Amal is coming." When I reached the *darshan* room and stood with folded hands before Sri Aurobindo he started to smile. Never before, during the numerous occasions I had knelt for his blessing or devotedly faced him from a little distance, had he expressed his ever-present grace so pointedly. And I was told by my wife who was with me that he had kept smiling at me even when I had turned to go away.

After December 5 of the same year, the day of his departure from his body, I realised what this unique visible and sustained sign, at once grand and sweet, of his inner intimacy was meant to be. Over years this intimacy had been shown through wonderful letters continued even in the time—the last six years of his life—when, except with Dilip Kumar Roy, all correspondence had stopped. During those years I was away from the Ashram but Sri Aurobindo overlooked the whole distance from Pondicherry to Bombay and sent me some of the most personally warm as well as some of the longest letters (twice covering more than 20 typed sheets). Now I understood that the prolonged smile set an explicit seal on this intimacy by way of a direct personal farewell.

Of course, I am not the only one to receive a farewell-sign. Some others too received it—similarly without understanding it at the moment. It proved clearly that Sri Aurobindo had already resolved upon the parting that he undertook 11 days after the *darshan* of November 24.

I have said "farewell", but I should rather say "Au revoir" in the essential sense. For, though that prolonged smile was the only unusual gesture towards little me of his endless grace on the physical plane, I have had clear indications of his caring to stoop from his superb Himalayan height to show the same intimacy

in various ways from the subtle world closest to the earth, where, according to the Mother and also some dream-glimpses by her disciples, he has taken his stand—until, as the Mother has declared, his work of earth-transformation will be accomplished.

He—and now with him the Mother—will always be close to us. We are likely to forget this assured fact. But time and again come indications of it. And if through my writings I could produce the effect you speak of—“While reading this whole article my eyes were full of tears not out of sorrow but out of love for them and I began to love them more and more as my true father and mother who are always ready to help us, protect us and bless us”—surely I have not failed to impart something of the glorious truth about our Gurus that they are the soul of our souls, the inseparable source of our days and nights, no matter how difficult the days and how dense the nights. In one mode or another, directly or indirectly, my letters to my friends are meant to convey the eternal nearness of the supreme Transcendence that trod our dust and left guiding footprints for us to put our own steps into their moulds as if that Transcendence were one with us in our inmost selves. All we need to do is to tell them: “Be with us and never leave us.” They are even more anxious to be our parents than we can be to figure as their children.

Dear friend, the warm leap of your heart towards them through my words is the greatest compliment I could receive for publishing “Life—Poetry—Yoga”.
(23 12 1990)

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As you want me to help you, you must know how exactly I have been on the move. You wonder why my “prayer” for your success in the venture you had in mind did not get answered. Maybe it failed because of my own shortcomings which are legion. But you must remember that the main thrust of whatever prayer I have is to put you in the Mother’s hands as intensely as I can and the particular object you may have in view is carried along as a sincere recommendation but not pushed upon those hands. The main thrust tends to ensure that through whatever happens—outwardly favourable or not—the Divine may bear you closer to your soul’s fulfilment. If there is a result unfavourable in appearance, you must still have the faith that, when the Divine has been deeply invoked, the heavenly hands will always be stretched forth to you even across the apparent *contretemps* and you have to reach out to clasp them and be drawn wherever they want to take you. This is the secret by which a transmutation can be made of the most drossy circumstance and by which the most winding ways can still lead you—in the Wordsworthian phrase—to “God who is our home”.

This does not mean that we should easily accept the obstacles in our path. Having set our aim we have to combat them, but the combat itself is to be

inwardly dedicated to the Supreme. If it proves vain, we should not despair—much less hold that our prayer for achievement was poor and so God has turned it down. God may have refused to grant it for our own good which we have not yet comprehended—or else the passage has been blocked by the powers of Ignorance that still have a role to play in a universe the Supreme for a reason of His own has decreed to evolve from a starting-point the very opposite—the Rīgveda's "darkness wrapped within darkness"—of the divine plenitude. But never forget that once we have truly put our fate in His charge He will pierce through to us no matter what the obstacle and make that very obstacle a short cut for us to the grand goal: an ever greater nearness to His life-perfecting Presence. On our part we have to call out to Him: "Make me realise that You are hidden behind this baffling misfortune, reveal to me your boon and your blessing at the end of this rough road, flash on me the soul's good that you can bring about through everything if I but strive to feel with all my heart that its beatings cannot but resound to Your secretly approaching footsteps."

I don't think you really need me to bring to your attention the truth I have expounded at some length. Apart from your bewilderment at one desired project coming to nothing, your letter shows an attitude born of the soul's spontaneously profound wisdom. I would not be able to state better the keen devotion to the Mother's guiding light and the enthusiastic confidence in its being all-in-all for you. I note also the wide charity of your heart, the fervent good-will towards every creature. But your estimate of me seems too high. True, I have accepted you as a dear friend and I shall do my best to help you in your aspiration to go side by side with me spiritually, but you and not only I must pray that I may have the right illumination from the Mother to advise you. (2 2 1991)

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I was indeed overjoyed to have appeared to you in far France at 5 30 a.m. with such a heart-suffusing effect. You had, as you say, "a tremendous cardiac shock" because my own cardiac organ must have roared and raged with love to fly to you and mingle its own impassioned glow with the dawn-break of August 28

Evidently it was on a surge of the vital being—the strongest and the most vehement part of our instruments of expression on the earth-scene—that my soul suddenly came to you. It could not have been the mental being on a visit, for then the soul would have projected itself more calmly, more ethereally. Nor could it have been the subtle-physical's France-ward sweep, for then some of the marked characteristics of the gross-physical would have lingered. I would have at least slightly limped and there would have been a *soupeçon* of a small occasional impediment in speech.

It was quite fitting that the vital being was the vehicle of my visit. For it is through this component of the soul's many-aspected manifestation that the soul's

emotion gets most effectively conveyed. Transposed to spiritual values its movement has been made most memorable to me by some words of the Mother. She once told me that the surrender of the vital being to the Divine is the most glorious possible: it has an absoluteness of expressive force, a throwing of oneself at the Divine's feet with a thundering completeness, as it were, which no other part of us can equal. A more personal reference by the Mother to the vital being occurred when I wondered to her what had held me on to her through so many distracting vicissitudes of my career and despite such a multitude of frailties in me. She said: "Your vital being." I was quite taken by surprise. I said: "I thought it was my mind which kept in me some Godward balance." My vital being had always struck me as a part full of waywardness and easily tempted away from the straight path of sadhana. That it had such a secret strength as to keep me turned in the divine direction in the midst of a thousand distractions was indeed a revelation to me.

When I looked into myself and tried to feel the shape and structure, so to speak, of this vital being of mine I realised some characteristics. There was a certain rashness from the very beginning. I seemed to be accident-prone, but I had the tendency to laugh in the face of danger and ill-luck. The two virtues I most admired were Courage and Generosity. I was never a dynamic nature, I preferred to be at rest and did not court enterprise and constructive activity. Special stimulus was needed for the best possibilities to come forth. That was Sri Aurobindo's reading: he recognised in me a capacity for heroism but mostly when extreme circumstances served as a goad. What was more typical was the power of endurance and a resilience in the wake of physical illness or psychological misfortune. There was also a lightness of heart. When Nirodbaran asked Sri Aurobindo how it was that he felt mostly in the dumps while his friend Amal was always laughing, the Master pointed to a difference in temperament. This meant, I suppose, that the same adverse circumstances could draw a response of brooding depression on the one side and on the other a gesture of brushing away the burden with a smile, as if to say: "Oh, it's just a passing whiff of foul weather!" Both the attitudes came by nature rather than by thought-out practice. And it was the vital being that reacted in two different ways.

What the Mother communicated by those words which baffled one who was wont to take himself as predominantly a mental person was the fact that, once having found in the depths of me the sense of the Divine in Sri Aurobindo and her, the vital being refused to go under when its own pull towards outer things and its own daring to take risks landed it in mazy conditions. I may recall here my appeal to the Mother never to slacken her inner grip on me no matter how much I may loosen mine on her. The conviction that she would get me out of the worst predicaments was the vital being's—something instinctive and not reasoned out. The same instinct prevailed when I let myself go into whatever attracted me, however unsafe it might be. I must have overdone my confidence in her, or else

she would not have warned me once. "It is true, as you say, that we have saved you from various troubling or unsafe situations, but you are tending to exploit our protection. Don't do that "

The Mother's stress on my vital being has made me happy when I view it in terms of symbolism. You know that the Rigvedic Rishis figured the vital being in man as a horse and you know too that I have been a passionate lover of horses and that in spite of my lame left leg I have ridden them exultantly, relishing all dangers like "a giant's wine" before I joined Sri Aurobindo's Ashram at the age of 23. Even after entering the peace of the Ashram my love of those galloping glories continued inwardly. One rare day I caught sight of a huge horse passing with its rider under my first-floor window. I rushed down to the street and kept walking behind it until it grew a speck in the distance. The memory of this four-footed apocalypse haunted me for weeks. I even thought how marvellous it would be if I could have this horse living with me in my room! I believe that in a past birth I must have been the Roman emperor Caligula. He was a monster of cruelty but he had one transcendent redeeming feature. He had a horse which he adored. It was given the most luxurious apartment in the royal palace. Every day it was taken to the senate and privileged to have the decisive vote. All resolutions were accepted or rejected according as this paragon of supposed wisdom shook its head one way or another. Surely you will admit a Caligulan madness in me when I tell you what I thought on hearing the Mother once hold out the hope to me of having my lame leg cured some day by her supramental power. I was full of soulful gratitude, but the first thing I thought was "How wonderful it will be to have, without a care in the world, a big beautiful white horse between my thighs!"

Quite an earth-bound vision—but doesn't it hark back to the Vedic white stallion, Dadhikravan—symbol of "the purified life-energy", as Sri Aurobindo has taught us—marching ever towards the dawn, the first flush of the Divine Realisation, according to Sri Aurobindo's insight into India's most ancient scripture?

Some semblance of this Dawn appears to have called Sri Aurobindo's "Amal Kiran" ("The Clear Ray") to rush subtly to his dear friend's room far away at 5.30 a.m. to share in the birth of daylight (10.9.1991)

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Your sincere poignant letter has deeply moved me. I can see that Sri Aurobindo and the Mother are so shrined in your heart that nothing can ever remove them. I venture the paradox that even if you were let loose in a festive paradise teeming with enchanting *houris* and you took your fill of them, you would still be an ardent disciple of Sri Aurobindo, a fervent devotee of the Mother. How then can your fairly sparing conjugal life with a peaceful-minded, sweet-tempered and

spiritually helpful wife plunge you into “utter gloom and depression” for “the next few days” after each sexual act? You are not living in the Pondicherry Ashram where abstention from the common turns of human nature is expected and where the very atmosphere is conducive to it. Living as you do, in the role of a “householder”, the mental self-flogging and self-condemnation in such a violent way are out of place. Neither the Master nor the Mother would approve the fits of despair and depression which overwhelm you. A fall into them strikes me as worse than the periodic fall into what you feverishly consider devilish temptation.

These morbid reactions belong to the same level of the lower vital self as the moods of passion that trouble you every ten or fifteen days. I may go to the extent of saying that they are manifestations of the same force that sexually engulfs you—they are part of a manic-depressive syndrome and reappear in a subtle way the future upsurge of lust. It seems to me that you take them as if they were penalties you have to pay for your supposed sins. I would advise you to avoid them altogether. Be perfectly calm and inwardly offer to our Gurus what you have just done. You may object: “How can I offer to the Divine what I regard as an act of shame?” Surely, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother do not say: “Bring to us only your good points.” They say: “Put before us all your weaknesses, all your faults and failures, so that we may deal with them. By offering them to us, you put them out of yourself. If your soul belongs to us, then the whole of you—‘warts and all’—must be laid in our hands, a continuously willing gift, for us to remould it in our own manner and in our own time.”

A wide equanimity is what you badly need to cultivate. Let the moments of sex-indulgence be a mere interlude between a serene stand before and a peaceful poise after. As a result of this practice, you will find that during this interlude itself a background-consciousness will develop which will be mysteriously you, untouched in the midst of all the excitement in your surface being and leading gradually to less and less frequency of the cry for “sex”. Of course, the equanimity to be cultivated is accompanied by a remembrance of the Mother and by a gesture of offering one’s being and one’s doing. The slowly developing background-consciousness too will learn distantly to remember and offer.

Please give up your present fretting. You are a very normal householder doing Yoga. All the adverse effects on your health—“APD, colitis, symptoms of duodenal ulcer” and the general run-down feeling—are due to your hypersensitive fretting and not to your wrongly supposed demoniac lusting. I can assure you that fruitful Yoga can be done even by a householder outside the Ashram. I have lived as a married man outside the Ashram for ten years in Bombay: 1944-1954. So what I am telling you is from direct personal experience. Sincerity and a quietly burning aspiration and devotion will carry you through, step by step, towards your goal of *brahmāchārya*. (19 9 91)

Referring to *Savitri* as “a wide ocean” and your feeling that you “can touch a drop only”, you quote a *sloka* from the Gita: “Even a little of this *dharmā* delivers from the great fear ” The last two words ring a bell in my mind. This *mahato bhayāt*—this great fear ”—what does it evoke in the spiritual vision? Somewhere in the Upanishads there is a phrase with some such suggestion as. “Where there is one, there is no fear fear comes where there are two ” The Isha Upanishad asks about the spiritual seeker in whom the One Self has become all creatures: “How shall he be deluded, whence shall he have grief, who sees everywhere oneness?” Evidently, the delusion, the grief come from the common human state obsessed by cosmic multiplicity and lacking in the realisation of the unitarian Atman, the single Brahman who, in the Isha’s words, “has gone abroad” and manifested the diverse devious phenomena in which we are submerged. The “great fear” of your quotation strikes me as being the unilluminated condition of our life, what the post-Upanishadic Vedānta dubs *samsāra*, *māyā*, with their perils and pitfalls, in which the soul is ever liable to wander for ages away from its true goal. My idea gets confirmed when I read in the Taittirīya (II.7) that when a man has found the invisible, bodiless, indefinable and unhoused Eternal to be his refulgent firm foundation, then “he has passed beyond the reach of fear” If “fear” characterises or represents the phenomenal existence, the world of meandering multiplicity, surely Atman or Brahman, the ultimate Self of selves, the single supreme Reality would be the very opposite. And actually we have the Brihadaranyaka (IV 4 25) saying. “Brahman is indeed fearless. He who knows it as such certainly becomes the fearless Brahman ” Again, the same Upanishad (IV 2 4) figures Yajñavalkya exclaiming: “You have obtained That which is free from fear, O Janaka!” It is curious that, unlike Shankara and his ilk, the Upanishads rarely allude to *moksha* or *mukti*, “freedom, liberation” I can find only one reference anticipating in a general manner the sense of *mukti*. The Brihadaranyaka (IV.2.8) has the expression: “being freed ” Obviously the Upanishads are more psychological in a poetic way than philosophical in an abstract manner in rendering their spirituality. In this respect they connect up with the Rīgveda rather than the Brahmasūtras. In fact, I recall from the former some phrases aptly bearing on the theme I am discussing. The gods are said to bring about, by their fostering, the “fearless light”, *abhayam jyoth*, even in this world of fear and danger, *bhaya a cin mayabhu*. Furthermore, we hear about Swar, the divine “solar” plane, in terms of the usual cow-bull symbolism “The wide and fear-free pastures of the shining cows” (12th Hymn to Agni, verse 6)

Perhaps the compound adjective standing for the Rīgvedic attitude points to at least a strong strain in the original Indian spirituality which persisted in the Upanishads in the midst of some tendencies towards the future sense of world-illusion and differed markedly from the later Śhankarite complete intransigence towards earth-life. Freedom is sought not from earth-life as such but from what in it makes for fear—the fact that our existence does not rest on a sense of

oneness and is always aware of a multitudinous otherness which is a cause of fear. A synonym of the “fear-free” mark of the state desired, aspired after, is the epithet “wide” in the Rigvedic phrase, since “wideness” is all-covering and leaves no room for confrontation with anything outside oneself (10 9 91)

*

I am glad you liked in my series “Life—Poetry—Yoga” of the October *Mother India* (pp. 236-37) the summaries I have essayed of the various religions of the world. You feel particularly apt my glimpse of the religion to which you belong and which was also mine until I joined the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and found there a widening and deepening and heightening of the central urge of Zoroastrianism as well as an exceeding of it as of all other religions not only by a direct spirituality but also by what struck me as a new vision in even the spiritual realm.

Yes, what you say about the Parsi community has much truth. Though it has in certain respects a happy-go-lucky superficiality, it does have, as you observe, a general plasticity of mind and an instinctive drive towards whatever has a progressive prospect in it. But I wonder if our community has realised the most outstanding manifestation it has given of these qualities in their profoundest aspect. Even those who sing the praises of this microscopic yet distinguished group of less than a hundred thousand souls in a subcontinent teeming with hundreds of millions do not seem to have marked that manifestation. Let me focus it for you.

On 24 November 1926 Sri Aurobindo withdrew into privacy for a dynamic meditation towards a swifter descent of the Supermind upon earth and put the Mother forward to take charge of his disciples. Under her a regular Ashram in his name got organised. A little more than a year later—to be exact, on 16 December 1927—a Parsi couple, husband and wife who had got married only a few months earlier arrived to dedicate themselves to the Integral Yoga which, of course, involved, among other things, giving up the married life. At this time the Ashram had only forty members and two of them were Parsis! Just contemplate what this means statistically. Out of the crores of non-Parsis no more than thirty-eight were permanent Aurobindonians. The two Parsis made a percentage hundreds of times higher in recognising at almost the very start of the Ashram Sri Aurobindo and the Mother as Avatars of a new age in human history with a project and a process for a total transformation of earthly life.

Don't you think these two people brought the greatest glory possible to their minute community and rendered it thereby for the future the most promising component of super-multitudinous India? (2 10 1991)

AMAL KIRAN
(K. D. SETHNA)

THE ASHRAM CHILDREN AND SRI AUROBINDO'S LIFE

A DREAM-DIALOGUE

(Continued from the issue of 24 November 1991)

SRI AUROBINDO continued "So then, we reached Pondicherry in the afternoon of the 4th of April. There were the two of us, Bijoy Nag and I, waiting on the deck to see if anyone had come to receive us. Moni had come earlier to make all the arrangements for our stay here. He was a bright, intelligent young fellow, and I knew he would surely manage to find a place for us even though he was completely new to the place and didn't speak a word of the language. And that is just how things worked out. We found him waiting for us, accompanied by a local Tamil gentleman whose name was Srinivasachari. It was to him that I had sent Moni, to inform him that we were coming to Pondicherry. Much later, I was told that he found the news so unbelievable that he had believed Moni to be a Government spy, and had planned to have the boy well thrashed if the news were false. But when he saw me standing before him, he was indeed truly happy—and relieved also."

"Why did he find it hard to believe Moni?"

"Because Pondicherry was such a small out-of-the-way town, hardly a place that any well-known person would visit! (*Laughs*) But there we were, and he put us in a pony-drawn carriage which drove us to quite a nice house really, a three-storeyed building. In fact it was the only three-storeyed building in all Pondicherry! I was given the top floor. It was neat and clean, and very quiet, which was what I most wanted."

"How was it that you found such a nice house so easily?"

"Why 'easily'?"

"But you just said that he did not quite believe Moni."

"He did believe him somewhat, didn't he? That's why he had arranged for the carriage and the house as well, just in case. Better to be safe than sorry, as the saying goes. And the people of the South are always more careful and methodical in their ways than the northerners."

"Once word got around that I had indeed arrived, several people came to see me. They were full of respect for me, and Moni told me later that they wished to arrange for a special welcome reception but that he somehow managed to cancel that plan."

"Why did he do that? Was it such a bad idea?"

"Nothing wrong, really, except that a public reception would have been a very fine way of proclaiming to the world in general, and to the police in particular, my presence here!"

"Oh yes! That's right. I didn't think of that." (*Laughter*)

“As I was telling you, the house which obviously belonged to one of the wealthier citizens of Pondicherry was a very fine one and very convenient for me in every way, except for one thing; the bathroom was on the ground floor ”

“Shankar Chetty's house, wasn't it? We've seen it. We were told that Vivekananda too had lived there for a few days ”

“We lived there for six months and I never stepped out of it, not once. I didn't let Moni and Bijoy go out either, not for three months.”

“But why?”

“Because of the police.”

“But then, what about your food? How did you manage to eat?”

“Srinivasachari had arranged for two young boys to look after us, and their only business was to see that we lacked for nothing. Of course, Moni and Bijoy did the actual cooking. There was also a maid who came to clean the house and do the marketing. All told, the days went by quite uneventfully.”

“Didn't you find it boring with nothing to do all day?”

“I have never had any problems with my time, you know. In fact, yogis are never bound by time, they live in eternity. And then, I had so much to occupy me; there was my yoga and there was my writing. Perhaps my two young friends may have found it difficult, although they too were made in a different mould and, besides, they were accustomed to hardship.

“For our amusement the three of us would sometimes hold séances. You know what that means? We would call down the souls of dead people and have conversations with them, through the help of automatic writing.”

“Yes, yes, I remember you used to do the same thing sometimes in Baroda and in Calcutta too.”

“You are right. I wrote the book *Yogic Sadhan* entirely by automatic writing. When the book was almost wholly written, Raja Rammohan Roy appeared in his subtle body for a second, and then disappeared.”

“How strange! What does that mean?”

“It was he who was the real author of the book and I was only the medium. That is why the book has not been published under my name. Its author is called the Uttarayogi.

“This name too has a history behind it. It is said that a wealthy southern landlord or zamindar once heard about me from his Guru. It happened in the following manner:

“When the Guru was about to leave his body, the zamindar asked him how to proceed with his sadhana in his Master's absence. After a short silence, the latter told him that a great Yogi from the North would come to the South, seeking shelter, and that he would be recognisable by three very particular statements that he had made. These were, in fact, the three ‘madnesses’ that I had mentioned to Mrinalini in one of my letters to her. Somehow the zamindar discovered that I had come to Pondicherry ”

“But how did he know you were a Yogi?”

“Well, he must have read my Uttarpara Speech where I describe my Vasudeva experience. That speech had become quite famous all over India. So the zamindar sought me out and recounted to me all the secrets that his own Guru had revealed to him. That is why I decided that that book should be published under the name ‘Uttarayogi’. The gentleman also bore most of the expenses of the publication, as well as helped us out financially during those early lean years of our stay in Pondicherry.”

“Isn’t it extraordinary how Yogis can know all about the past or the future at will? This Yogi of the South could never have heard of you, or known your name or any other particulars about you and yet he gave such precise directions about how to recognise you, even to the extent of indicating the three specific statements!”

“There is nothing surprising in that, if you accept the notion that just as there are books and sciences which help us know more of the world around us, so also are there methods, systems and sciences that help us acquire knowledge of the worlds within us. The way of obtaining this knowledge is called Yoga. Also, you ought to remember that what happens on this earth, this material plane, has already occurred on an invisible plane beyond us. Those who can establish contact with that plane can easily say what is happening or will happen, where and when. This is the essence of the mystery. In comparison with the worlds beyond our sight, ours is like a small berry that one could hold in the hand. Or even like a grain of sand.”

“You must surely know about all these mysteries. You know everything!”

“Even what you have eaten for lunch or what you will have for dinner?”
(*Laughter*)

“No, not that. But I heard that you knew long ago that India would be free.”

“I do know a few things, certainly (*Laughter*) To get back to our story. One of the interesting events of those early days in Pondicherry was a fast that I undertook for twenty-three days.”

“But why!”

“Just an experiment. Scientists make experiments all the time. So did I. I wanted to see how long one could stay without food, and yet continue to do all one’s everyday work, I even continued with my daily walk of seven to eight hours. At the end of the twenty-three days, I didn’t feel the least tired and I broke my fast by eating a perfectly normal meal, though usually one is advised to resume eating very gradually after a long fast. That is what the doctors say.”

“Then the doctors are wrong and they ought to change their ideas.”

“No, they oughtn’t, because everybody is not Sri Aurobindo,” broke in a small but confident voice.

Sri Aurobindo smiled and continued: “After that long fast, though I didn’t feel weak at all, as I’ve already told you, I did lose a lot of weight. I found that

there was nothing else except food that could give me a well-built body. So I began eating again. I also realised that food was essential for existence in the body, at least as things at present are! But it was clear that some day man could go without it."

"How can he?"

"The same way that I lived for those twenty-three days, carrying on with all my work without feeling any tiredness or weakness. Since this was possible I decided that there must be a means or method by which one could some day be rid of dependence on food. That should be successfully realised when man is supramentalised."

"But even what you did during those twenty-three days seems hardly believable. How did you do it?"

"I have often told you that this material universe is not the only reality, that there are many other more subtle ones, such as the worlds of life and mind. From these worlds you can draw strength or energy. Haven't you noticed small children, animals too, who are restless and active all day without feeling the least tired? This is because they draw their energies effortlessly from the vital planes. Even food, what is it in fact? Doesn't Science tell us that it is the material form of energy? Have you understood something?"

"A little bit!" (*Laughter*)

"I have also spoken to you about my fast in the Alipore Jail."

"Please tell us again about it. We've forgotten the details."

"It was a period of intense yogic activity. I gave up eating, throwing away all the food I was given into the bucket. Naturally, the police officers knew nothing about it, but the wardens noticed what I was doing. They told themselves that I was probably extremely ill and would not live long in this world. I even slept only once in three days. All this made me lose almost ten pounds in weight, but my life-energy seemed to increase. I had no difficulty any longer in lifting a bucket of water above my head, something that in earlier times I could never do."

"Jatin Das is said to have fasted for sixty days or more. Is that so?"

"Yes, and there are others too who have done the same. The papers are full of instances of fasting. But I wonder if they too continued with their work and their walks. At least, as far as Jatin Das is concerned, it was never mentioned that he did his usual work during those sixty days. It is much more difficult to keep the body active and energetic while one is fasting, than to remain in bed, unmoving and passive."

"You must have tried out all kinds of experiments on your body?"

"I have, yes, of course."

(To be continued)

NIRODBARAN

(Translated by Jhumur from the Bengali)

SOME EPISODES FROM THE LIFE OF “AN EXTRAORDINARY GIRL”

A REPORT BASED ON ORAL COMMUNICATION

(Continued from the issue of 24 November 1991)

Nobility of my husband

AFTER all that I have said and shall say hereafter about my husband, I would like to recount one early story showing his nobility of spirit, despite many defects of his lower nature and even asuric propensities in the future.

Though I was supposed to be very pretty, I never knew any romance in my life, unlike many other young women. Nor did I ever fall in love. Even the ananda of true friendship escaped me, though I loved and was loved by my relatives and many girls of my age. But there was one incident where I felt an unusual degree of happiness, though not of a high enough order to be considered spiritual. It happened in the following manner

My husband had a friend, R., whom he had known since childhood. This young man fell in love with a girl of whom his family did not approve. The couple were frequent visitors to our own house. R.'s father knew about his son's love-affair, and had warned him that if he proceeded with such an unsuitable match, he would be disinherited. R. paid no heed, though even my husband attempted to bring him to his senses. Would R. be able to face the consequences of his father's displeasure? he asked. How would he support his wife and family after he had been disowned? All to no avail.

R.'s resolve, however, soon turned to water. A few months afterwards, his girl-friend came to our house, fell at my husband's feet, and begged him to save her. "He is deserting me and going to Delhi!" she cried.

"What?" my husband exclaimed. "Deserting you? But why?"

"Don't you understand?" she sobbed.

My husband's face was suffused with a mixture of anger and pity. He gently told her that she should go home, and that he would see what he could do.

A few days later when R. himself came to our house, my husband caught him by the collar and shouted, "It seems you are going to Delhi leaving your girl friend behind!"

R. replied that he had no other means of making a living.

"But what about marrying her?" my husband demanded.

"How can I?" R. whimpered, "I can't even manage for myself. How am I going to support her?"

"Why didn't you think of that sooner?" my husband exploded. "I had asked you that very question myself and warned you of the consequences of defying

your father. And now you're going to throw the girl on the street, into the bargain, and go away when you know very well that her parents won't take her back? That simply won't do "

R. was in despair. "What choice do I have? There's no other way "

It was my husband's finest hour as he rose to the occasion.

"I'll feed you myself," he declared. "You, your wife, and your future children. But you *must* marry her "

R. looked at him incredulously. "Are you serious?" he gasped. "Do you give us your word of honour?"

"Of course," my husband replied without hesitation.

When my mother heard of what he had done, she was both dumbfounded and dismayed. How would my husband fulfil such an enormous responsibility? But once his mind had been made up, he would not listen to her or to anyone else.

We secretly arranged the marriage in our own house. My mother, not wishing to be either implicated or included, left for Lucknow. Meanwhile, I and my husband arranged for the priest, invited a few friends, and married off the couple in fine style. It was the most social and worldly thing I had done in all my twenty-five years and, to add to it, we decided to travel to Delhi with the newly-weds to start them off on their honeymoon and married life.

It was after the four of us had boarded the train that our happiness reached its zenith. I think we made quite an impression on the other passengers, because none of them could make out which of us was married to whom, so mingled had our identities become, I might say one-souled. I had not experienced anything like this before.

Unfortunately, as always happens in this world, the situation changed, and the happiness of our companionship with it. Many years later my husband, in much altered circumstances, met R's wife. My husband's health had broken down and now he himself was destitute both of money and of friends, but the one he had given away long before as a bride passed him by as though he were a stranger.

Last days of my Uncle

Uncle's greatness too manifested in its own way. It will be recalled that at his last performance, which I described in a previous episode, his voice had given way and he had abandoned himself to an emotional outburst of bhakti, keeping the audience spellbound. I also mentioned how his body had deteriorated almost to the point of infirmity. That occasion was the last that I saw of him. I never visited his Ashram in Pune, nor for his part did he know anything of the ordeals of my own life. His focus of concentration was his own sadhana and his Ashram which had gained wide popularity and attracted a large number of

bhaktas from various parts of India

But what interested me was that his attitude towards the Mother was changing. He was writing letters to Nolini-da enquiring about the Mother's health, offering his pranam to her and praying for her blessings. He even wrote to her that he was getting old and his end was near, to which she replied that he need have no regrets for he would still live sufficiently long.

The Mother had kept his old Trésor House vacant for many years after he had left Pondicherry. Then some people mooted the idea of setting up a clinic there. When the Mother heard of it, she finally gave her consent to let them approach Uncle for permission to use the property for this purpose, and he readily agreed.

Similarly, he was pleased to hear that I had taken up residence in the Ashram.

The most pathetic yet exalted moment of his life came when Sri Aurobindo's relics arrived in Bombay. Uncle travelled there from Pune to have their Darshan. But when he came near them, he burst into tears and had an overwhelming experience, so much so that he lost consciousness and remained in that state for two or three days. It seemed he had the Darshan of his beloved Guru and both embraced each other. This story was authenticated by a number of his bhaktas.

An equally apocalyptic wonder was experienced by Nirod-da who relates.

I was sitting before my desk next to Sri Aurobindo's room in the early morning, and was preparing the manuscript for my prospective book, *Correspondence with Sri Aurobindo*. There were a number of letters exchanged between me and Sri Aurobindo concerning Dilip-da and I was quite perplexed as to what or how much of them to include. While I was lost in thought, all of a sudden a dhoti-clad figure appeared from Sri Aurobindo's room. He stood by the door next to my desk, looked at me, and then disappeared in the twinkling of an eye. I was transfixed. The apparition had a slender, luminous subtle body, with face and eyes aglow. He looked like an angel. My first thought was that it was Sri Aurobindo, but I corrected myself at once, realising that it was Dilip-da. At the same time, I found the answer to the problem that had been vexing me. Obviously he had come to silently give me the solution.

Recently, when I was thinking about Uncle, his chequered life, and his great love for Sri Aurobindo, Nirod-da's remarkable experience was confirmed by Sri Aurobindo himself. While revealing some inner secrets about Uncle to me, he told me that the Divine had sent Uncle to Nirod-da to convince him of the truth that the outer life was not always the criterion of a man's inner development.

(To be continued)

LABOUR OF LOVE

by

HUTA



(Continued from the issue of 24 November 1991)

ON 22nd February 1958 a card and a posy of white roses came from the Mother together with these words:

“To my dear little child Huta,
With the love that never fades and
the endless compassion ”

I was so entwined in my small self—ego and physical consciousness—that I could not feel her love and compassion. I only brooded over the present happenings and their results. The trail of negative thoughts was never-ending.

Nonetheless, I finished the last series of sketches on tinted papers.

The Mother showed her pleasure in all the pictures. For the last one she wrote

“This is a happy end of the story. The expression of the child is delightful. Let this happy conclusion be a lasting one.”

The Mother breathed life into these pictures. They were not as they seemed—flat figures on papers. There was a living spirit in each of them.

The spiritual Occultism and its mysteries are incalculable.

*

I stayed in Golconde from 10 2 55 to 24.4 58, exactly 3 years 2 months and 17 days, not as a guest. For, the money was offered directly to the Mother.

I did not move into my new apartment all at once but gradually from 12 2.58 to 24 4 58.

*

The month of March started. The inevitable cards on which the Mother inscribed the words of wisdom—sayings of old times—and white roses came from her.

As the days passed, my energy was sapped slowly—along with it, my

receptivity became dense. I saw nothing, felt nothing

Life was such a mass of tangles and contrasts—so filled with difficulties which at first sight one would have said could easily be overcome and yet when one tried to surmount them assumed giant proportions.

*

The Mother disclosed:

“I am quite conscious of the knot and it is to loosen it that I am working—it is closely associated with the ego, and it resists. But it has to go and it will go—if you can collaborate with a quiet confidence it will go quicker—come to see me regularly in the evening even for a short time—it helps.

With Love ”

On 18th March the Mother invited me to accompany her to an island—one of the properties of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram on the river at Ariyankuppam—a lovely, quiet and picturesque spot. Nolini, Dr. Sanyal, Udar, Amiyo, Pavitra, Pranab and Elenore Montgomery were also present.

I was sunk deeper and still deeper into unconsciousness. My body became so weak that I could not do any work. I often stayed in bed—sighing, weeping. I stopped seeing the Mother in the evening

The whole atmosphere was oppressive, strangling.

*

Now it was 1st April. For six successive days the Mother sent me these commands—each beginning with the words:

“To my dear little child Huta.

“Work only for the Divine ”

“Serve only the Divine.”

“Be attached only to the Divine ”

“Want only the Divine.”

“Seek only the Divine.”

“Only adore the Divine.”

These orders were too tall and tough for me to practise in daily life with all sincerity.

*

My health became worse than ever. The nagging anxiety and persistent unrest had drained my strength. Now I could not eat at all. My body failed even to stand liquid food.

The Mother wrote an urgent letter saying:

“My dear little child,
I have something to tell you—and will see you this evening at the Playground—come at 6.20. I shall wait for you.
My love and blessings.”

We met as arranged. She said soothingly:

“Child, your health will improve and you will be all right if you will go to Africa for a few months for a change. You know, I will always be with you. You must become absolutely well and I know that you will.”

Then she gathered me tenderly into her arms with all her love and compassion.

Her Force had always been active to fend the dark forces off. But the temporary relief was no solution to my problems.

My fourth brother Maganbhai who had gone to London came to the Ashram for a short visit. The Mother gave him an interview and told him about my going with him to Africa. He was glad and said to her that since he had some work in Bombay I could join him there, and then we would leave for Africa.

The Mother also informed my family in Africa about my travel.

On 8th May 1958 my brother and I flew from Bombay.

Some people thought I wanted to get married—I had many distractions—I had gone nuts—I had a loose character—so the Mother was sending me away. They also thought that I was totally possessed by the devil and fallen out of the Mother’s Grace for ever. Their tongues kept wagging about me.

I was also accused of moodiness—a peculiar nature. Every little incident was turned to my disadvantage, as people would do when they appear to be consumed by an all-absorbing jealousy and hatred.

I was going through a bad patch. I needed help—good will—not criticism. None tried to understand me—not even my own people.

During the period from 11th May to 2nd September 1958 the Mother sent me three hundred and twenty-nine handwritten quotations—her wonderful collection of sayings from various countries and times. Together with these scripts I received beautiful painted cards—all of them bearing her perpetual “Love and blessings.”

After many years these quotations have been printed by me in book-form under the title, *Gems from the Mother to Huta*.

The most interesting thing I now recollect is that all my letters to the Mother were posted by Mr. Milton Obote, afterwards the President of Uganda (Africa), who was the senior clerk in our office at Miwani in 1958

Mr Obote was extremely polite and courteous. When he became the President, he never lost his regard for our family. He who belonged to the Langi tribe was dethroned in a coup on 17th July 1985 by Tito Occalo who belonged to the Acholi tribe.

Later I was informed that the American Magazine *News Week* (March 10, 1986) had stated that during the regime of Mr. Obote 200,000 Ugandans were massacred.

I was very sorry. When one is in full power, one's consciousness becomes blurred. This is a universal fact.

(To be continued)

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WARREN HASTINGS ON THE GITA

WARREN Hastings, the first British Governor-General of India, once had occasion to write to his principals in the East India Company thus.

“I hesitate not to pronounce the Bhagavad Gita a performance of great originality, of a sublimity of conception, reasoning and diction almost unequalled. these (veises) will survive when the British dominion in India shall have long ceased to exist and when the sources which it once yielded of wealth and power are lost to remembrance .”

(Courtesy The Indian Express, 15 9 91)

SRI AUROBINDO—THE SOUL OF INDIA

(Continued from the issue of 24 November 1991)

AFTER “*Urvasi*” by Sri Aurobindo another mature narrative poem by him “*Love and Death*” comes forward. Somewhat shorter than *Urvase*, it runs to about 1,000 lines. It was not divided into cantos. According to Sri Aurobindo, it “was written in a white heat of inspiration during 14 days of continuous writing.”¹ He has also said: “I never wrote anything with such ease and rapidity before or after.”² The theme is taken from the *Mahabharata* Adi parva. In one of his letters Sri Aurobindo wrote: “The story of Ruru and Pramadvura—I have substituted a name [Priyumvada] more manageable to the English tongue—her death in the forest by a snake and restoration at the price of half her husband’s life is told in the *Mahabharata*. It is a companion legend to the story of Savitri but not being told with any poetic skill or beauty has remained generally unknown. I have attempted in this poem to bring it out of its obscurity. For full success, however, it should have had a more faithfully Hindu colouring, but it was written a score of years ago [1899] when I had not penetrated to the heart of the Indian idea and its traditions, and the shadow of the Greek underworld and Tartarus with the sentiment of life and love and death which hangs about them has got into the legendary framework of the Indian Patala and hells. The central idea of the narrative alone is in the *Mahabharata*; the meeting with Kama and the descent into Hell were additions necessitated by the poverty of incident in the original story.”³

Ruru, the grandson of the sage Bhrigu, fell in love with Priyumvada, daughter of sky nymph Menaca and the Gandharva king. K R Srinivasa Iyengar has said. “It is a beautiful Adam-Eve idyll but of an Indian Garden of Eden (the serpent, of course, not far away) ”

“In woodlands of the bright and early world,
When love was to himself yet new and warm
And stainless, played like morning with a flower
Ruru with his young bride Priyumvada.
Fresh-cheeked and dew-eyed white Priyumvada
Opened her budded heart of crimson bloom
To love, to Ruru; Ruru, a happy flood
Of passion round a lotus dancing thrilled,
Blinded with his soul’s waves Priyumvada.
To him the earth was a bed for this sole flower,
To her all the world was filled with his embrace.”⁴

Here is sensuous poetry, full of e’s undiminishing bliss: Ruru utters his experience of this joy with his bride

“...How good it is to live, to love!
 Surely our joy shall never end, nor we
 Grow old, but like bright rivers or pure winds
 Sweetly continue, or revive with flowers,
 Or live at least as long as senseless trees..”⁵

Their ecstasy was disturbed. Priyumvada was bitten by a snake and died. The disconsolate Ruru travelled “between grief and grief.”

G. M. Langley observes: “‘In Love and Death’ the Hellenic story of Orpheus and Eurydice is transformed into a tale of love Hindu in setting, sentiment and expression.”⁶

Ruru wandered through the forest but he controlled his sorrow with the resolve to confront death’s “şecrecy terrific, darkness vast”. He roamed “measuring vast pain in his immortal mind.” Even the Gods were impressed. Agni requested the Usvatha-tree to divert the boy’s wrath. Ruru invokes whoever the enemy of death might be. There appears to him “a golden boy Half-naked, with bright limbs all beautiful.” He was Kama “who makes many worlds one fire”

We have a speech of Madan (Kama) marked by a deep psychological penetrativeness:

“...Mortal, I am he;
 I am that Madan who inform the stars
 With lustre and on life’s wide canvas fill
 Pictures of light and shade, of joy and tears,
 Make ordinary moments wonderful
 And common speech a charm: knit life to life
 With interfusions of opposing souls
 And sudden meetings and slow sorceries.”⁷

After some decades when a disciple asked Sri Aurobindo about the whole passage beginning with these lines, Sri Aurobindo replied: “I do not think I have, elsewhere, surpassed this speech in power of language, passion and truth of feeling and nobility and felicity of rhythm all fused together into a perfect whole. And I think I have succeeded in expressing the truth of the Godhead of Kama, the godhead of vital love (...I mean the love that draws lives passionately together or throws them into or upon each other) with a certain completeness of poetic sight and perfection of poetic power...”⁸

Another superb passage we may mark in “Love and Death” is when Ruru goes down to the Underworld. In that region Ruru comes across a multitude of pale faces condemned to various penalties.

“Then Ruru, his young cheeks with pity wan,

Half moaned: “O miserable race of men,
 With violent and passionate souls you come
 Foredoomed upon the earth and live brief days
 In fear and anguish, catching at stray beams
 Of sunlight, little fragrances of flowers;
 Then from your spacious earth in a great horror
 Descend into this night, and here too soon
 Must expiate your few inadequate joys ..”⁹

Sri Aurobindo commented: “...I know that the part about the descent into Hell can stand comparison with some of the best English poetry; but I don’t expect any contemporaries to see it. If they do, it will be good luck or divine grace, that is all.”¹⁰

The God of Death (Yama) tried to persuade Ruru not to give up the mature “fruitbearing” years of his life in order to bring back Priyumvada’s life. He exhorts:

“Yet thou bethink thee, mortal,
 Not as a tedious evil nor to be
 Lightly rejected gave the gods old age,
 But tranquil, but august, but making easy
 The steep ascent to God Therefore must Time
 Still batter down the glory and form of youth
 And animal magnificent strong ease,
 To warn the earthward man that he is spirit
 Dallying with transience, nor by death he ends,
 Nor to the dumb warm mother’s arms is bound,
 But called unborn into the unborn skies ”¹¹

But Ruru was resolved to get back Priyumvada. At last love’s labour won Priyumvada got back her life in exchange for half of his own. And he was by her side,

“For many moments comforting his soul
 With all her jasmine body sun-ensnared
 He fed his longing eyes... ”¹²

In the book, *Sri Aurobindo—the Poet*, K. D. Sethna tried “to show the white harmony, so to speak, of ‘Love and Death’ in a kind of spectrum-analysis, how colours from Latin, Italian, Sanskrit and English verse had fused here together with an absolutely original ultra-violet and infra-red not to be traced anywhere.” In a letter to the Master he wrote. “Among English influences the most

outstanding are, to my mind. Shakespeare, Milton, Keats, and Stephen Philips In my essay I dwelt at length on the first two and on the magic way in which the passage about Ruru's sail along the Ganges and subsequent sea-plunge into Patala combines at the same time the early and later Milton and, with that, something of Shelley and Coleridge and Keats. Stephen Phillips I did not specially deal with. Keats seems to have added to the element of supple strength in your poem, while Phillips has tinged it with a certain poignant vividness and colourful delicacy More fundamental, however, than the effect of his manner was, I think, the spell cast by certain moods, as it were, of his *Marpessa*. But all this is guess-work—correct maybe in some respects, but I should like very much to have your own illuminating account of the matter... ”¹³

Sri Aurobindo answered: “I cannot tell you much about it from that point of view; I did not draw consciously from any of the poets you mention except from Phillips. I read *Marpessa* and *Christ in Hades* before they were published and as I was just in the stage of formation then—at the age of 17—they made a powerful impression which lasted until it was worked out in *Love and Death*. I dare say some influence of most of the great English poets and of others also, not English, can be traced in my poetry—I can myself see that of Milton, sometimes of Wordsworth and Arnold; but it was of the automatic kind—they came in unnoticed I am not aware of much influence of Shelley and Coleridge, but since I read Shelley a great deal and took an intense pleasure in some of Coleridge's poetry, they may have been there without my knowledge ”¹⁴

Sethna mentioned. “As *Love and Death* I have long since adopted as my poetic Bible owing to the consummate beauty of its inspiration and art, and as now I am just awakening to a capacity in myself for blank verse, I shall be really happy if you will tell me the way in which you created this poem—the first falling of the seed of the idea, the growth and maturing of it, the influences assimilated from other poets, the mood and atmosphere you used to find most congenial and productive, the experience and the frequency of the afflatus, the pace at which you composed, the evolution of that multifarious, many-echoed yet perfectly original style and a blank verse whose art is the most unfailing and, except for one too close repetition of the mannerism of the double “but” the most unobtrusively conscious that I have seen ”¹⁴

Sri Aurobindo replied: “ ..I can't very well answer—I have lived ten lives since then and don't remember. I don't think there was any falling of the seed of the idea or growth and maturing of it, it just came,—from my reading about the story of Ruru in the *Mahabharata*, I thought, ‘Well, here's a subject’, and the rest burst out of itself Mood and atmosphere? I never depended on these things that I know of—something wrote in me or didn't write, more often didn't and that is all I know about it. Evolution of style and verse? Well, it evolved, I suppose—I assure you I didn't build it. I was not much of a critic in those days—the critic grew in me by Yoga like the philosopher, and as for self-criticism

the only standard I had was whether I felt satisfied with what I wrote or not, and generally I felt it was very fine when I wrote it and found it was very bad after it had been written, but I could not at that time have given you a reason either for the self-eulogy or the self-condemnation. Nowadays it is different, of course; for I am conscious of what I do and how things are done. I am afraid this will not enlighten you much but it is all I can tell you.”¹⁵

(To be continued)

NILIMA DAS

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THE DOUBLE-NATURED NAME

WILLIAM Blake's "The Tiger" is a popular poem. It is often studied at school and college. But generally the poem is supposed to deal with the fearful animal suggested by the title. The line,

Did he who made the Lamb make Thee?

is taken as an address to God who made the carnivore as well as the timid creature. Actually, Blake addresses God, the Father, who begot the only Son who is at once the Tiger and the Lamb

That Blake refers to Christ as the Tiger is suggested by T. S. Eliot, who with a different focus writes in "Gerontion",

.. In the juvescence of the year
Came Christ the Tiger...

By "juvescence" Eliot means "juvenescence". The juvenescence or the early part of the year is the spring season in March-April, when Easter is celebrated. It is not usually remembered—the point is important to understand Eliot's focus in the lines—that Christ resurrected is a terrible power unlike the embodiment of love whose birth is celebrated in the mid-winter in December.

The twin-aspects of Christ—the Tiger and the Lamb—may be described in the memorable words of William Law, the mystical theologian.

This is the whole matter between God and the Creature. On one side, fire and wrath.. and on the other side, the meekness of the Lamb of God, the patience of Divine Love coming down from Heaven to stop and overcome Fire and wrath broken out in nature and creature. (Spirit of Prayer II)

But the poet who not only makes the twin-aspects of Christ a major theme in his poetry but reveals their identity is Gerard Manley Hopkins. In his poem, "The Wreck of Deutschland" (pronounced Doyshland) he speaks of "The double-natured Name" of Christ and reveals both the natures powerfully.

He has suffered, before undertaking to write the poem, great inward torture. What prompts him to write it is the news of five Franciscan nuns exiled from Germany drowning near the Thames Estuary after a shipwreck as they were sailing to America. He asks the Lord,

. dost thou touch me afresh?
Over again I feel thy finger and find thee.

Hopkins sees God as the Terrible and moves on to the vision of Him as the Loving and the Merciful. His final realization is that the very terror of the Lord is his love. He loves us most when He smites.

To understand it we must bear in mind that God's love is seen in saving our souls, taking us near to Himself. Commonly we believe with the proverbial housewife who knows that God is, if and when He fulfils her desire, say, to own a refrigerator God did not become the sacrificial Lamb to cater to our petty desires and bring us the trivial satisfactions of our daily life. It is to wake us up from such a state that he has to strike terror into our hearts. As Sri Aurobindo puts it,

Pain is the hammer of the Lord to break
A dead resistance in the mortal's heart,
His slow inertia as of living stone.

Hopkins vividly brings before us the terrible scene of the havoc of the storm.

Wiry and white-fiery and whirlwind-swivelled snow,
Spins to the widow-making unchilding unfathering deeps.

He shows the attempt of a man to save the wailing women and children in the cabin. The man is dashed to death. It is one of the five nuns, one tall in stature, not small in nature like the normal human being but noble and pure in devotion rising to call Christ And Christ answers her call. He alights on the ship and saves the souls of all the dying passengers. The Lord has a veritable harvest of saved souls. What else shall we call such a terror but his unbounded love?

For the nuns it is martyrdom; they have lived a truly Christian life in imitating Him. Dying, they live in the Lord for ever.

Hopkins also sees two aspects of Christ in a more familiar way—He is God and Man at once. In the wake of the founding of Christianity as a religion some saw Christ only as God and some only as Man. There has been a lot of theological speculation as to the precise manner in which the divine and human natures are united in the person of Christ ever since the dogma of Incarnation was accepted at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D. Without entering into the metaphysics of the question, Hopkins sees the simultaneous presence of God and Man in the Lord and remembers the two aspects along with the aspects of Love and Terror. Every time he sees a double-coloured object in Nature, he can only think of the two twin aspects of Christ.

Glory be to God for dappled things,

he says. After describing various dappled (double-coloured) things, he declares that all such things,

He fathers forth whose beauty is past change

Hopkins sees every object in Nature as an anagogy of Christ. The double-coloured objects are not Christ but reveal Christ's dual aspects. Even other objects and men themselves are fields for Christ to play in.

.. Christ plays in ten thousand places,
Lovely in limbs and lovely in eyes not His,
To the Father through the features of men's faces.

We can conclude only by adapting Hopkins's own words,

Glory be to God who fathers forth great bards
Who reveal to us the Lord's endless mystery

K. B. SITARAMAYYA

ANNOUNCEMENT

OUR regular contributor Mr. P RAJA has won the Michael Madhusudan Academy Award sponsored by the Michael Madhusudan Academy, Calcutta for the year 1991. The award was given to him by Hon'ble Mr. Ajit Kumar Sengupta, Justice of Calcutta High Court, in the function arranged at Great Eastern Hotel, Calcutta on Sept. 20, 1991, for his collection of poems *From Zero to Infinity*.

HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAYA

2. THE GLORIOUS POETIC FRUITION

(Continued from the issue of 24 November 1991)

How far have my hopes and prophecies about Harindranath Chattopadhyaya come true? At a moment of crisis in his personal life he joined the Ashram of Yoga which had sprung up in Pondicherry round Sri Aurobindo. Two years he lived there—two glorious years in which he did the poetic work of two lifetimes, so abundant and so uniformly excellent were the poems of various kinds he rattled off at breakneck speed on his typewriter. But this phenomenon came to a sudden halt when something in the man proved too rigid for the transforming pressure Sri Aurobindo was putting on all his disciples. Something refused to change and Chattopadhyaya, instead of humbly withdrawing from the “brave, new world” emerging in the Ashram, rose in revolt, flung away the luminous power that was lifting his poetic genius to its climax and plunged back into the melée of common life. He could have kept sweet his inner contact with the Master, even though the outer association had been split. Then the result of his departure would not have been a stop in genuine inspiration. The old mystical beauty of his work no less than the new light that had suffused it vanished: its place was taken by a communistic enthusiasm, a passion of the proletariat, turning out excited propaganda in verse relieved at extremely long intervals by the true poetic flash. Various concerns of an all-too-common kind also occupied the forefront of his mind. Art has an alchemic touch that can turn to gold anything on which its fingers may fall, but all men have not the capacity to carry the philosopher’s stone wherever they go. There are trends of genius as there are trends of character, and while Chattopadhyaya the mystic could voyage through magic seas of poetry and discover golden countries, Chattopadhyaya the “comrade” and commoner could not wield the sickle to gather any rich harvest and the hammer in his hand could only drive nails into a coffin for his own dying poetic spirit. This, to the mind of any critic who has seen his work under Sri Aurobindo, is the most appalling tragedy that has overtaken the world of art in our day.

After his break-away from Yoga, he has published two books compiled from the output of his Ashram days. They scarcely represent the many-sidedness and range of his creativity. As they are the only ones somehow allowed to slip from the stranglehold he has applied to his mystical penchant, the public cannot adequately appreciate what Yoga did for him. But even these meagre volumes are packed with supreme qualities. The poems are of an intense inner life figured forth in several styles. The most prevalent is a lyric fluency simple to the point of spoken speech yet alive with the most rich and profound suggestion. Perhaps this style is best illustrated by *Shaper Shaped*

In days gone by I used to be
 A potter who would feel
 His fingers mould the yielding clay
 To patterns on his wheel,
 But now through wisdom lately won
 That pride has died away,
 I have ceased to be the potter
 And have learned to be the clay.

In bygone times I used to be
 A poet through whose pen
 Innumerable songs would come
 To win the hearts of men;
 But now through new-got knowledge
 Which I hadn't had so long,
 I have ceased to be the poet
 And have learned to be the song.

I was a fashioner of swords
 In days that now are gone,
 Which in a hundred battlefields
 Glittered and gleamed and shone;
 But now that I am brimming with
 The silence of the Lord,
 I have ceased to be sword-maker
 And have learned to be the sword

In other days I used to be
 A dreamer who would hurl
 On every side an insolence
 Of emerald and pearl;
 But now that I am kneeling
 At the feet of the Supreme,
 I have ceased to be the dreamer
 And have learned to be the dream.

No finer and at the same time no plainer statement of the self-dedication which animates Yōga can be offered. The new Chattopadhyaya does not sing for singing's sake but because each song streams from the silence of the divine Spirit growing within and floats him into a yet deeper realm of the same Spirit. However, while the lyric light displayed by *Shaper Shaped* needs no interpretation, unfolding as it does its profundities like a bud opening into a flower—

exquisitely natural—and calling for no effort on the reader's part to respond to its revelation, the stuff of a poem like *The Shepherd* has a different quality and appeal. Here too is a natural felicity, a flowerlike process, yet we feel at once that this flower with the mystical aroma has not risen from the outer mind sown with seeds of the inner divinity. It is a growth in another region of consciousness than *Shaper Shaped*, a region where the inward is expressed not in an outward language but in a language that has itself the turn and rhythm of inwardness. The mind feels somewhat baffled, for an order of reality is imaged, which exists beyond our mind's usual vision of Nature. The mystical life is not presented here through earth-symbols so much as carried bodily out, as it were, from its profound plane. The symbols belong to an unknown dimension and may seem surrealistically incomprehensible in a strange luminous way instead of the murkily fitful way adopted by Surrealism in Europe. To a brooding attention, the poem loses its bright inconsequence and becomes concrete and harmonious, a masterpiece of what I have termed creative insight:

My soul is a shepherd
 Leading the sheep of hours
 Silverly across wide silences
 Strewn with singing flowers.

He is driving his lonely
 Old gray-silver sheep
 Towards the solitary fold
 Of inward-shining sleep.

They are gathered slowly
 Into the soundless fold
 Where they are long rows of silver
 Washed in hushed gold

Read the poem three or four times, not by the eye alone but with the ear attentive to a slow subdued intoning. The rhythmic effect is as important as the vision-stimulus, for the vision is of a "subliminal" region to which we are unaccustomed and, unless the rhythm is absorbed, the living thrill, the vibrant sense of the reality brought into view will escape. There is a deep voweliation throughout, and across it runs a thin or thick sibilance. wideness and profundity are suggested, with a sweep through them into a spiritual quiet. In the second and third stanzas the predominant vowel is the long *o*: it brings here a sense of entry into some large yet enclosed secrecy of inner space. Growing into a state of purity and calm "strewn" with lovely spontaneities of inspiration and concentrating all its awareness of the time-process into a movement towards the

Timeless, the consciousness is pictured as passing into a condition of trance wherein the diverse aspects of the purified human nature are steeped into a divine silence, a divine illumination—"long rows of silver/Washed in hushed gold " The sibilance of that closing phrase is remarkable. Added to the effect of washing and hushing, there is subtly indicated the increase or change from the soul's silver to God's gold by the deepening of the thin s-note into the thick sound of *sh*.

It is difficult to align this poem with any particular trend in English verse. The general stuff of atmosphere and rhythm has affinities with stray passages in Blake, but Blake has a more nocturnal touch, so to speak—he gives us mystery rather than revelation. Yeats's twilight, with its fairy and mythic hues, is also close to the tone here, but a more genuinely spiritual light is present in *The Shepherd*, an Indian rather than an Irish trance. The impression is as of something Yeatsian crossed with AE—not the magical occult but the mystical occult. Chattopadhyaya has struck a vein of far-reaching originality, with novel possibilities of poetic expression.

A poem equally out of the way on the whole, though not equally consistent in plane of inspiration with regard to the parts, is the sonnet entitled *Mask*. This sonnet is not exactly typical of Chattopadhyaya who writes as a rule from the plane of vivid thought: no doubt, mystical vision and spiritual experience grip that plane, yet they assume the form and rhythm of the thinking mind. No bit of poetic excellence is thereby lost. Only, the turn of language and the cumulative sound-suggestion are not such as would be found if he wrote directly from planes of consciousness above the mind—the planes that break upon us in the ancient Upanishads. The highest Upanishadic range is wellnigh impossible to catch except in a few isolated moments: no published work of Chattopadhyaya's shows it. The middle ranges are not beyond a spiritual poet's reach: it is their presence in *Mask* that makes it stand out from Chattopadhyaya's usual style. The usual style, when austere and not lavish, speaks thus of a spiritual realisation.

the naked everlastingness
Which nor by pleasure nor by pain is stirred,
Being a hush that bears no human word
Nor deed nor dream nor passion as a burden,
Since it exists unto itself, a truth
That ages not but, gifted with a youth
Won from the lonely Light of God as guerdon,
Its path is pure and smooth.

The substance is drawn from above the mind: the language and rhythm instead of leaping out straight from there are transposed to a mental key. It is high poetic utterance with the accent of a Sophoclean chorus without the precise choric

measure But the style is of the spiritualised mind: another style is possible, not more poetically perfect yet more spiritually vibrant. The peculiar excellence of that rare style can be gauged if we set the sonnet *Mask* side by side with the quotation just made and if we compare in its own octave or sestet the lines that are spiritualised mind to those that are sheer spirituality:

Beyond your many-coloured moods I bear
 The flowering white monotony of foam,
 The diamond dimness of the domèd air
 And the deep Mood which silence makes its home
 In me, the Timeless, time forgets to roam,
 Drunk with my poise, grown sudden unaware,
 Offering up its noontide and its gloam,
 Withdrawn in a lost attitude of prayer.

I have grown illimitably alien
 To the brief gaudiness of time and space,
 A thing immortal beyond mortal ken,
 Evasive essence that you cannot trace.
 Here, even here, amidst a crowd of men
 I hide the light behind a human face.

The inner state depicted is not altogether the same as that in the preceding quotation or even in *The Shepherd* Still, it has affinities with them which render a comparison fruitful. The inwardness suggested by

Being a hush that bears no human word
 Nor deed nor dream nor passion as a burden

carries a rhythm and motion of wings different from

Offering up its noontide and its gloam,
 Withdrawn in a lost attitude of prayer.

Though the former has a revelatory force of its own, I should say there is more subtle illumination in the latter, more intuitive breadth, more rapt closeness to the spiritual reality, even as there is more of these things in that picture of a high heavenly mood of night-coloured mystery—

The diamond dimness of the domèd air
 than in the picture of spiritual agelessness gifted with

a youth
 Won from the lonely Light of God as guerdon.

The same more and less of sheer spirituality is perceived if the close of the sonnet—

Here, even here, amidst a crowd of men
 I hide the light behind a human face

is weighed against the two lines immediately before it:

A thing immortal beyond mortal ken,
 Evasive essence that you cannot trace.

It is not merely the presence of images or of visual terms that constitutes the *differentia*. We can have a penetrating mystical figure, as in another poem—

Then life begins to know itself at last
 As an immortal moving pyramid
 Conscious of the arcane within it hid,
 A pyramid of glow which does not cast
 The shadow that it did—

and feel none the less that a quality of spirit-stuff—at once ample and intense, far-sounding and close-throbbing in the rhythm as well as in the word and the vision—draws a dividing line between the two kinds of mystical exaltation.

Between *The Shepherd* and *Mask* the dividing line is thinner in some respects. Even the products of the spiritualised mind have no absolute gulf separating them from those of sheer spirituality. Influences from the latter steal across, influences of amplitude and height. What, on the other hand, is common to *Mask* and *The Shepherd* is direct intensity and light. The feeling and seeing in both are spiritually intimate, the vision is so worded and rhythmised that it invades us with a tangible concreteness of the Unknown. But the Unknown has many domains, and there is missing in *The Shepherd* the wind of an eagle's passage through unbounded space. Its style is a dip shiningly inward, whereas that of the intuitive parts of *Mask* is a kindled soar upward in broad circles from an inward starting-point.

As pure poetry, however, all styles can sit on equal thrones. And Chattopadhyaya's work is full of throned inspiration. It would be a shame if he suppressed for good the immense bulk of verse to which his two years of Yoga gave birth. His later life having been out of tune with mysticism, he might not

have cared for so masterful an expression of spiritual truths. But what has art to do with the man's phases? Each phase can be, for art, of paramount value; art is any substance caught up in an insightful perfection of form; if Chattopadhyaya was still an artist at heart, no matter with what communistic or hedonistic bent blocking his outlet, he should not have muffled a voice from his past that had rung so beautifully true. Nor should he have let himself be cowed by the superficial tendency of the public to declaim against an artistic creation if it did not reflect the man as he might be at the moment. Few artists are on a par with the height and depth of consciousness opening up before us in their works. It would be crass folly for anyone to charge a spiritual poem with being pretentious, should the poet not be a practising saint twenty-four hours of the day. A good poem stands by itself. If it has inspiration it fulfils itself and is perfectly sincere. A poem's sincerity or truth lies in the verse being a faithful transcription of something fine in the heights and depths of our consciousness, regions that are mostly far away and hidden from our normal state—the sincerity or truth does not consist in whether the poetic revelation agrees altogether with the poet's day-to-day outer life or even with the actual experience with which the poem began. That is the first thing to understand about art. If Chattopadhyaya has written spiritual poetry of a truthful order in the artistic sense, why should he be debarred from publishing it? What can be pretentious about such a publication? If people want to measure one's outer life entirely by one's poetry, they are going the wrong way about a most delicate business. It is their fault and not the poet's or his poetry's. Great poetry does not pose: the simple reason is that it is truly inspired. In art, mere intellectual ingenuity, mere rhetoric, mere artifice of word and rhythm are the only poses. So true is this that if a man leading a non-spiritual life were in a spell of inspiration to dash off *Shaper Shaped*, *The Shepherd* and *Mask* they would nowise stand condemned as hypocritical. It is not in the least beyond possibility that such a phenomenon should take place. As Whitman said, each of us contains multitudes, and a personality at once poetic and mystical can very well appear in brief flashes among the jostling crowd within us of egotist and altruist, fool and philosopher, solitary and society-hunter. The man and the artist do not always coincide. art is often if not ever an outrush of hidden splendours of the subliminal and the supraliminal through one side of the man that is afire with a sense of beauty and quick with creative genius. Provided this particular side serves as a transparent medium, a work of art can be held as authentic, with no stain of pose upon it.

Only from one point of view the publication of the gigantic wealth Chattopadhyaya gathered during his Yogic years would cause a mood of bitterness. Knowing the wonders he created and dreaming of the miracles such genius would foreshadow, we should be bound to make a wry face. A man whose genius has at its roots the mystical aspiration ruins himself by shedding the mystic in him. Perhaps he cannot really shed that side, but he can keep it choked and

rob year after year of the most golden fruition Despite all weakness and obstacle he should treasure and cherish the mystical spark until the day when it can burst into a myriad tongues of flame The more he does that treasuring and cherishing, the greater will be his fulfilment. And what a superb fulfilment Chattopadhyaya could have had! The sorriest thing that can be spoken about him is such an exclamation. That is the epitaph of damning praise his admirers dread they would utter if they saw the mystic's magnificence which the "comrade" and commoner have kept unpublished.

One judgment, however, can be boldly pronounced No matter how short he has fallen of the empyrean accessible to him, the complete publishing of the poetry born in his two years of Yoga will prove Harindranath Chattopadhyaya the writer of the largest number of first-rate poems of brief length the world has been enriched with by one single man

(Concluded)

K. D. SETHNA

NEW AGE NEWS

COMPILED AND PRESENTED BY WILFRIED

The Crystal Clear

AIRLINE officials, customs and airport authorities were efficiently cooperating when the Matrimandir crystal arrived at Madras Airport on April 20, 1991. Within record time all the paper work was finished and the precious globe arrived at Matrimandir in the late evening. The next morning it was hoisted into the Inner Chamber. Workers and onlookers were witnessing the literally brilliant completion of a great project, carried out by a number of dedicated Aurovilians, helped by many donors and two specialized German firms.

The Mother had spoken in a talk of a globe of transparent material, with the play of the sun on it. This would be “the symbol of the future realisation ” After long deliberations the Aurovilians decided to choose a solid, transparent glass globe which would have a diameter of 70 cm, according to the Mother’s specification.

Auroville Today (August ’91) describes in a truly absorbing article (by Carel) the saga of this project, the search for a manufacturer, endless phone calls, enquiries, the collection of funds. Schott and Zeiss were the two companies eventually selected for the casting and polishing, respectively, perhaps the only firms on earth equipped to do this high-tech job. The rough casting alone took 15 hours, the cooling required a period of 5 weeks. Zeiss then did the polishing with its sophisticated equipment. After several months, on 26 January 1988, the work was completed and a delegation of Aurovilians visiting the firm gazed with speechless awe at the Crystal Clear, the magnificent master-piece of modern engineering, a symbol worthy and capable of its great significance.

Festival of India

The Festival of India in Germany was planned as “the largest cultural exchange program ever realized by the Foreign Office [of the Federal Republic]”, according to *Der Spiegel* (26-8-91). 35 cities will be covered by the program between September ’91 and May ’92. There will be dance and music, theatre, movies as well as seminars on literature, economy, ecology and other subjects along with a series of exhibitions. The best of them will feature 150 exquisite sculptures from the 3rd to the 13th century in the Charlottenburg Castle in Berlin. More details on the program may be given at a later stage

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Makarand Paranjape, Mysticism in Indian English Poetry, B. R. Publishing Corporation, New Delhi, 1988, 252 pages, price: Rs. 125/-

RECENT developments in literary theory on both sides of the Atlantic have sought to radically question some of the basic postulates of the earlier text-centred new Criticism, followed by Structuralism of the fifties, in the process redefining the relationship between the text and the context, the word and the world. A set of epistemologies whose divergence is as striking as their unity, these new approaches constitute what is commonly known today as Post-Structuralism. Many theorists of the Post-Structuralist school use insights at once from many disciplines, from thinkers as varied as Jacques Derrida, Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, Edward Said, Jacques Lacan, Terry Eagleton, Frederic Jameson, Julia Kristeva and Luce Irigaray. One of the powerful trends of Post-Structuralism, especially in the hands of neo-Marxists of varied persuasion, encompassing the psychoanalysts and the feminists alike, has been what is known as Cultural Criticism.

While Cultural Criticism offers a more sophisticated account of the Base-Superstructure relationship of the early Marxian paradigm, it has invariably laid a pre-eminent if not an exclusive stress on the study of the context. In this sense, Cultural Criticism is materialistic in its determination of history. Thus, Cultural Criticism tends to look at many movements, traditionally perceived as “psychological” or “spiritual” as basically stemming from sociological roots. It argues, for instance, that a phenomenon like the 19th Century Bengal Renaissance and the renewed interest in Indian spirituality were mostly a response which a colonized group was making in power equations in exclusively economic and political terms. It is natural, therefore, that Cultural Criticism does not view phenomena such as spirituality or mysticism favourably. In this sense, Makarand Paranjape’s *Mysticism in Indian English Poetry* appears to be a timely book. Functioning largely within the framework of traditional scholarship, Paranjape’s book makes a fairly comprehensive treatment of the theme of mysticism in Indo-English poetry. While Paranjape could be faulted for a near-total disregard of the Post-Structural thought (after all it is also the business of good criticism to meet the challenge of contemporary ideologies), the very fact that he has refused to jump wholesale into the latest critical band wagon, could be the single-most merit of the book.

In many respects, Paranjape’s is a pioneering study. While many commentators have seen the centrality of religion, spirituality or mysticism to Indian poetry and literature, unfortunately a systematic or comprehensive treatment of the subject has been lacking so far.

While Paranjape rightly exercises caution in defining such a complex

concept as mysticism, one feels that his definitions of mysticism as “a concern with the nature of ultimate reality” or “the quest for and the union with the Absolute” are perhaps too broad. Such omnibus definitions may well fit the cap of spirituality in general. Nor is his subsequent statement that “mysticism may be defined simply as the life of a mystic” particularly helpful. However, the author’s later view merits consideration: “A mystic is one in whom the state of realization is established as his constant, normal state. The mystical experience may be considered fully matured only if it affects a total, radical permanent change in the practitioner’s consciousness, not if confusion and ignorance return afterwards.” Paranjape considers the characteristics of mystical literature as basically three: simplicity, sweetness and efficacy.

The author makes a twofold distinction among his subjects, one set comprises those who are primarily poets, and secondly, there are those who are basically mystics but happened to write poetry as well. Paranjape considers Sri Aurobindo as belonging to the first category and J. Krishnamurti to the second. The author’s survey of mystical poetry in Indian English literature comprises fourteen figures in all. While some like Swami Vivekananda, Swami Rama Tirtha and Sri Aurobindo are fairly well-known mystic poets, the author has rightly brought in other major figures as well, such as Sri Ananda Acharya (1881-1945), Paramahansa Yogananda (1893-1952), Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895-1986) and Puran Singh (1881-1931). For the sake of convenience, Paranjape leaves out Indian English poetry available in translation. Despite being a perfect candidate, Tagore has been left out in this study apparently because Paranjape feels “Tagore has been extensively studied” and because he himself is handicapped by his lack of Bengali. Whatever the explanation, Tagore’s absence is a regrettable omission. For, no account of Indo-English mystical poetry would be complete without Tagore.

Paranjape sets a fourfold goal for himself. In making an assessment of each of the mystical poets he intends to study (1) the mystical experience itself; (2) the other goals of a poet’s mysticism in addition to the mystical experience; (3) the way to these goals and finally, (4) the incentives to spiritual life according to the writer.

Paranjape’s desire to treat self-realization as a basic criterion for determining mystical experience may be debated but there is apparent strength in his view that it is more fruitful to study mysticism as an inner rather than an outer process. As Frits Staal’s *Exploring Mysticism* says, “If mysticism is to be studied seriously, it should not merely be studied indirectly and from without, but also directly and from within.”

In combining biography, history and literature, Paranjape gives us a fascinating glimpse into the life and poetry of some of the leading mystical poets in Indo-English literature. There is, for instance, the exciting story of Sri Ananda Acharya, who was born in 1881 in Bengal as Surendranath Boral. Beginning his

career as a Professor of Philosophy in Maharaja's College, Burdwan, Boral left India at the age of 29 for Marseilles, France, never to return to his motherland. Spending most part of his life in the Scandinavian countries of Norway and Sweden, Boral's career saw his transformation into Sri Ananda Acharya. Apart from his philosophical writings, he is known for ten books of poetry, all of which are collected in two volumes: *Snow Birds and other Poems* and *Arctic Swallows and Other Poems*. Most of this poetry is in free verse or in poetic prose such as the following:

I heard not the sound of my heart
 nor saw the unseen Light
 That out of Nothing makes this glorious sphere,
 peopled with countless love-laden 'me's.
(*Snow Birds* 91)

Similarly, Paranjape reveals relatively unknown aspects of one of the most outstanding thinkers of modern India: Jiddu Krishnamurti. A man who was picked up as a boy by Leadbeater, a high ranking theosophist, to become the next world leader and who subsequently parted company with the Theosophical Society because he believed in the value of human freedom. As Krishnamurti explained his position in a revolutionary speech called "Truth is a Pathless Land":

No man from outside can make you free; nor can organised worship, nor the immolation of yourselves for a cause make you free, nor can forming yourselves into an organisation, nor throwing yourselves into work make you free... You can form other organisations and expect someone else. With that I am not concerned, nor with creating new cages, new decorations for those cages. My only concern is to set men absolutely unconditionally free.

Though Krishnamurti lived right up to his ninetieth year (he passed away on 16 February 1986) his poetical career covers only the years 1927-1931. His *Immortal Friend* and *Prose Poems* speak of an ecstatic union with the Beloved, clearly in a spiritual vein:

I am Thy Beloved
 My beloved art Thou
 Thou art my Companion of ages
 I am Thy shadow
 In the garden of eternity
Immortal Friend: XVI (76)

However, the best parts of Paranjape's book are clearly the two chapters devoted to the discussion of Sri Aurobindo's mystical poetry. Chapter four considers mystical poetry of Sri Aurobindo other than *Savitri* while the next chapter makes a fairly detailed analysis of *Savitri*. Sri Aurobindo has been sharply attacked, in the past, by many of the leading Indian English poets such as P. Lal and Nissim Ezekiel. It is, therefore, refreshing to see that Paranjape brings to bear in his treatment a measure of sympathy and balance, always necessary in considering anything alien to our normal experience. Maintaining that mysticism here is being used in a strict sense "as that poetry which conveys a direct, intuitive, transcendental experience of union with the Absolute", Paranjape emphasizes "the moment of self-realization rather than paranormal or occult experiences or states of mind prior to or after that." In this sense, the author's views seem to go counter to those of critics like Nolini Kanta Gupta or K. D. Sethna. Basing himself on Sri Aurobindo's *Future Poetry* and the mantra as the perfect form for the poetry of the future, Sethna in *The Poetic Genius of Sri Aurobindo* argues that "it is the rhythm that most decisively distinguishes one plane of consciousness from another, for rhythm is not a play of ordered sound; it is the thrill of the consciousness translating itself into sound vibrations." Paranjape sees no contradiction between the two and asserts that while rhythm and sound are important they must "operate in conjunction with and not arbitrarily independent of meaning."

Paranjape's observations on Sri Aurobindo's poetry and mysticism are almost invariably sound. He underlines the parallel growth of poetry and yoga in Sri Aurobindo. Several poems are examined: "The Invitation," "Who," "To the Sea," "Evening," "Revelation," "The Triumph Song of Trishuncou," "Meditation of Mandavya," as well as the sonnets of 1930-1950 such as "Liberation," "The Guest," "The Miracle of Birth," "Divine Hearing" and "Bliss of Identity." Several outstanding features of this mysticism are highlighted: the denial of death, the affirmation of the universal consciousness, the dissolution of the limited self and the realization of a higher consciousness. The important distinction that Sri Aurobindo makes between personal salvation and the ultimate transformation of earthly nature is correctly underscored. Paranjape makes a passing mention of Sri Aurobindo's metrical experiments in such poems as "Ascent," "Rose of God" and "Soul, My Soul." These poems that clearly contain the mantric quality are written, as Sri Aurobindo explained, in "Pure stress metre" in which "the arrangement of feet varies freely to suit the movements of thought and feeling in each line." One wishes that Paranjape had dealt a little more with this aspect. Nonetheless, he makes a twofold assessment of the mystical poems of Sri Aurobindo: in terms of thematic and poetic development he sees them leading naturally to *Savitri*. At the same time, he contends that these poems are by themselves quite successful; they are in no way "deficient in the quality or depth of their realization."

Similarly, Paranjape's assessment of *Savitri* is competently done. He is aware of the problems inherent in making sense of an epic essentially of the inner world. Many planes of the subtle world and many dimensions of existence are explored and, therefore, legend, myth and symbol form an integral part of the epic's overall design.

Paranjape focusses on three sections of *Savitri* which he considers as central: the yoga of Aswapathy, the sadhana of Savitri and the confrontation between Savitri and Death.

Though Paranjape has some admirable comments to make regarding the achievement of *Savitri* as one of the monumental achievements of all times, some of his views are not exactly identical to those of Sri Aurobindo. For instance, he concludes:

Ultimately *Savitri* remains a poetic work, mysticism only one part of its huge creative design. It is a work of imagination, an artistic creation, a work that records the world vision of its creator. It is not primarily a work of instruction or a guide book for someone who seeks self-knowledge and self-realization.

This is not quite how Sri Aurobindo meant *Savitri* to be nor is it in reality. As his essays in *The Future Poetry* and his innumerable letters on *Savitri* to K. D. Sethna testify, *Savitri* is not simply or primarily a poetic work, for the highest fusion of poetry according to Sri Aurobindo recognizes no boundary between poetry and mysticism. The form and the content become indissolubly one. It is significant that all forms of heightened mystical experience, as in the Vedas, always assume the tone of the Mantra. Similarly, while the tale is basically from the *Mahabharata* and Sri Aurobindo employs many legends and symbols across many cultural frontiers encompassing the east and the west, the epic is *not* a work of imagination. It is not a record of his vision, but, as he has declared many times, a chronicle of a set of concrete experiences. For this very reason, while *Savitri* is no guide book for self-knowledge in the narrow sense, it is certainly in the tradition of the Mysteries of ancient Greece or the Egyptian Book of the Dead, a valuable path-finder for a seeker of the obscure inner world.

All the same, *Mysticism in Indian English Poetry* remains an impressive achievement. Paranjape has performed signal service by focussing on issues and concerns that are considered "discredited" by Western academia today. For, despite the Post-Structuralist assertion of the decentred universe or the neo-Marxist's dismissal of mysticism as mystification, the decade following the nineties is bound to witness what has been aptly called the "epistemology of transcendence."

SATCHIDANANDA MOHANTY

Students' Section

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

Seventieth Seminar

21 April 1991

“WHAT ARE THE SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN
SRI AUROBINDO'S YOGA AND OTHER SPIRITUAL PATHS?”

Integral Yoga and Buddhism

Speech by Nandini Guthi*

OUT of the several spiritual paths I have selected Buddhism for comparison with Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga so as to show some important points of similarity and difference between them

Buddhism in its historical growth has developed many schools which interpret the original teachings of Buddha in different and often contradictory ways. This difficulty is further increased by the fact that Buddha himself was very much averse to making any elaborate metaphysical statement of his teachings. So it is very difficult to find out what precisely his original teachings were. If we try to ascertain them by studying their various interpretations by scholars we are bound to land in confusion. But here we have the advantage that Sri Aurobindo himself has given his statement and interpretation of Buddha's original teachings, and it is these that I have utilised for the purpose of my speech.

I propose to confine myself only to the fundamental points of Buddha's philosophy before comparing them with Sri Aurobindo's integral philosophy.

First, what is Buddha's conception of the world and of the individual within it? Here is Sri Aurobindo's concise answer to this question:

“What Buddha very certainly taught was that the world is not-Self and that the individual has no true existence since what does exist in the world is a stream of impermanent consciousness from moment to moment and the individual person is fictitiously constituted by a bundle of *samskāras* and can be dissolved by dissolving the bundle. This is in conformity with the Vedantic Monistic view that there is no true separate individual. As to the other Vedantic view of the one Self, impersonal and universal and transcendent, it does not seem that Buddha made any distinct and unmistakable pronouncement on abstract and metaphysical questions, but if the world or all in the world is not-Self, *anātman*, there can

* Revised and enlarged

be no more room for a universal Self, only at most for a transcendent Real Being. His conception of Nirvana was of something transcendent of the universe, but he did not define what it was because he was not concerned with any abstract metaphysical speculations about the Reality; he must have thought them unnecessary and irrelevant and any indulgence in them likely to divert from the true object. His explanation of things was psychological and not metaphysical and his methods were all psychological,—the breaking up of the false associations of consciousness which cause the continuance of desire and suffering, so getting rid of the stream of birth and death in a purely phenomenal (not unreal) world; the method of life by which this liberation could be effected was also a psychological method, the eightfold path developing right understanding and right action. His object was pragmatic and severely practical and so were his methods, metaphysical speculations would only draw the mind away from the one thing needful.”¹

From this statement of Buddha’s original teachings it is clear that, according to Sri Aurobindo, the Nirvana of Buddha is not a state of Nothingness or Void (Shunya) but of a liberation “of the individual in some transcendent Permanence that is not individualised.”² The Nihilistic school of Buddhism (Shunyavada) which later became predominant was a deviation from the true teachings of Buddha. Nirvana itself is not really a Void; it is only felt to be so by the mind when it first approaches the Infinite. It is a dissolution of existence as the mind knows it but not a dissolution of existence itself. There is a supreme supra-cosmic blissful existence unattainable by the mind, which Buddha called the Permanent, as opposed to our existence in the phenomenal world for ever afflicted by evanescence and suffering. But Buddha refused to enter into metaphysical discussions about it and so the later schools of Buddhism have often interpreted it as a Non-Existence or a Non-Being, a sheer Void. But such an experience of the Infinite is not obligatory for all because there are others like the Advaitins who have a positive experience of it, not as a void but as pure unrelated Existence or Being, timeless and spaceless. According to Sri Aurobindo, these two experiences are the negative and the positive sides of the same Reality. As he says:

“If certain schools of Buddhists felt it in their experience as a limitless Shunya, the Vedantins, on the contrary, see it as a positive Self-Existence featureless and absolute. No doubt, the various experiences were erected into various philosophies, each putting its conception as definitive; but behind each conception there was such an experience.”³

¹ *Letters on Yoga* (Cent. Ed., Vol. 22), p. 60

² *Ibid.* p. 66

³ *Ibid.*, p. 63

It is for this reason that Sri Aurobindo equates the Buddhist Nirvana with the Adwaitin's Moksha and the Brahma Nirvana of the Gita. To him they are the two complementary sides, negative and positive, of the same realisation. In some of his letters Sri Aurobindo has stated this very explicitly. So I quote some extracts from them here:

“Buddha, it must be remembered, refused always to discuss what was beyond the world. But from the little he said it would appear that he was aware of a Permanent beyond equivalent to the Vedantic Para-Brahman, but which he was quite unwilling to describe. The denial of anything beyond the world except a negative state of Nirvana was a later teaching, not Buddha's”¹

“The Buddhist Nirvana and the Adwaitin's Moksha are the same thing. It corresponds to a realisation in which one does not feel oneself any longer as an individual with such a name or such a form, but an infinite eternal Self spaceless (even when in space), timeless (even when in time). Note that one can perfectly do actions in that condition and it is not to be gained only by Samadhi.”²

“It [Nirvana of Buddha] is the same [as Brahma Nirvana of the Gita]. Only the Gita describes it as Nirvana in the Brahman while Buddha preferred not to give any name or say anything about that into which the Nirvana took place.”³

These extracts make it clear that Sri Aurobindo interprets Nirvana in a wider and more inclusive sense than is usually done. Usually Nirvana refers only to the Buddhistic realisation of dissolution of all sense of individuality and the world, but Sri Aurobindo applies it also to the Adwaitic experience of the Parabrahman, both of which are to him like two sides of the same coin. For this reason he prefers the Chinese description of Shunya or Nothingness by Lao Tse as Tao which is Nothing that is All.

It should be noted here that Sri Aurobindo has given his interpretation of Nirvanic realisation not from an intellectual standpoint but from his own direct experience of it which came at an early stage of his sadhana and which remained permanently with him even though it was followed by other realisations with which it got fused. He has mentioned this realisation in a number of his letters, but instead of quoting from them here I prefer to read a poem of his in which he has described this experience in words which are so potently charged that, if we read it with a silent and receptive mind, it can open our consciousness to a touch of that experience itself. Here is the poem

¹ *Ibid*, p. 62

² *Ibid*

³ *Ibid*

NIRVANA

All is abolished but the mute Alone
 The mind from thought released, the heart from grief
 Grow inexistent now beyond belief;
 There is no I, no Nature, known-unknown.
 The city, a shadow picture without tone,
 Floats, quivers unreal; forms without relief
 Flow, a cinema's vacant shapes; like a reef
 Floundering in shoreless gulfs the world is done

Only the illimitable Permanent
 Is here. A Peace stupendous, featureless, still,
 Replaces all,—what once was I, in It
 A silent unnamed emptiness content
 Either to fade in the Unknowable
 Or thrill with the luminous seas of the Infinite

I have explained to you Buddha's conception of the world and the individual and the dissolution of both in Nirvana to attain complete liberation as interpreted by Sri Aurobindo. Now I shall try to compare it with Sri Aurobindo's view on the same issues and show how, without denying its truth, he considers it partial and limited and how he incorporates it in his own integral view.

(To be continued)

¹ *Collected Poems* (Cent Ed , Vol 5), p 161