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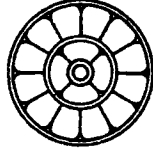
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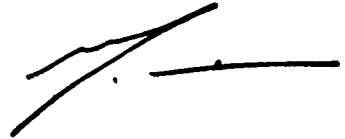
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,
A new light breaks upon the earth,
A new world is born.
The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

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No. 10

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WORDS OF LIGHT

LETTERS FROM THE MOTHER

NOTHING IS inevitable. At every moment an intervention may come from a higher plane into the material one and alter the course of circumstances. But in this particular case there is a conflict between a very powerful mental construction founded on medical opinion and your faith in the divine Grace.

The power of this medical suggestion lies in the fact that it insinuates itself into the subconscious and acts on the body from there, undetected even by the conscious mind unless it is in the habit of scouring the subconscious with the vigilance of a detective.

So there we are—I cannot promise you that your faith in the Grace will be intense and unshakable enough to overcome the harmful effect of these medical suggestions; and I feel that I have no right to tell you, “It is nothing,” when everything in your material consciousness is crying out, “Danger!”

Rest assured that our help and our blessings are always with you

Collected Works of the Mother, Vol. 17, p. 189

24th March 1937

Sudden conversions are usually neither integral nor lasting; they are flashes of lightning which most often dissolve into smoke. Slow and steady effort and persistent striving for progress are more reliable: “Piano ma sano”. (slowly but surely)

And recalling what happened during your sleep is certainly not indispensable to the discovery of your soul.

I am glad you are feeling well.

Be sure that our help and protection are always with you.

Ibid., p. 190

29th May 1937

Do not let yourself be overwhelmed by the sense of vastness; bathe in it, rather, with joy and serenity. Were we confined inescapably within the four walls of our personal consciousness, that would indeed be sad and overwhelming—but the infinite is open to us; we have only to plunge into it.

Ibid.

29th May 1937

Do not worry. You have not done anything wrong, either consciously or

unconsciously. I was referring to a set of inner and outer circumstances, a set of circumstances which is the inevitable outcome of the preceding set, and so on. Only yogic power, the power of the one divine Consciousness, can break this chain of consequences

You must leave with your heart full of peace and your mind full of hope. You must leave with the assurance that our help and our force are going with you, and that our blessings are with you and will always be with you.

Ibid , p. 191

14th September 1937

Here, for each work given, the full strength and Grace are always given at the same time to do the work as it has to be done. If you do not feel the strength and the Grace it proves that there is some mistake in your attitude. The faith is lacking or you have fallen back on old tracks and old creeds and thus you lose all receptivity.

Ibid , p 209

1st October 1952

I have spoken a little “severely” last night so that the mistake is not reproduced—but to say the truth, the consequences of it are already effaced and what I wanted to give you *is given*—it is left to you to make the proper use of it.

I consider you already as a *true servant*, but I want you also to become a *true child*, so that you may have the full joy of it.

Ibid , p. 212

27th January 1957

Behind all ambitions there is a Truth waiting the opportune time to manifest. Now that the ambition is gone, it is time for the truth (the capacities and abilities) to manifest

Take great care not to become “swollen”, but I am with you, helping you, in order to do something that may be interesting.

Ibid , p 221

1962

Q. I have been teaching some beautiful poems about Radha and Krishna. Radha seems to be so living. The scholars of the modern age say that Radha is a very recent addition to the Krishna cult. Can you tell me whether Radha existed or not?

A. Surely she has lived and is still living.

Ibid., p 282

8th February 1966

Q If a soul has taken birth as a boy in one life, does it always remain a boy in future lives, or can it be born as a girl?

A. Theories differ greatly according to school and sect, and each teaching gives excellent reasons to support its contentions.

Certainly there is an element of truth in all these statements; and not only are all cases possible, but they must have occurred in the course of the earth's history and still do

The only thing I can speak of with certainty on this subject, is my own experience.

According to my experience, the soul is divine, an eternal portion of the Supreme Divine, and therefore it cannot be limited or bound by any law whatever, except its own. These souls are emanated by the Lord to do His work in the world, and each one comes on earth with a particular purpose, for a particular work, and with a particular destiny; each has its own law which is binding on itself alone and cannot be made a general rule.

So in the eternity of the becoming, every possible case, imaginable and unimaginable, must obviously occur.

Ibid , p. 362

14th July 1960

I have gathered my dreams in a silver air
 Between the gold and the blue
 And wrapped them softly and left them there,
 My jewelled dreams of you
 "A God's Labour", Sri Aurobindo.

The silver air is the spiritual realm. The gold is the supramental and the blue is the mind.

The "dreams" means all the unrealised expectations that have to be realised in future—these "dreams" are kept softly and lovingly protected for the possibility of their realisation.

Ibid., p. 363

26th July 1969

(1) *It is said that "a God's Labour" describes Sri Aurobindo's own experiences on earth. Is that true?*

(2) *You have explained that " 'the dreams' means all the unrealised expectations that have to be realised in future". In the last line of the stanza Sri Aurobindo says "My jewelled dreams of you". For whom does the "you" stand?*

It is better to keep what Sri Aurobindo wanted us to understand God speaking to his creation, the earth.

Ibid., pp. 363-64

27th July 1969

I know that it is impossible to change one's nature overnight, but what you can understand and accept immediately is that losing your temper and getting upset is a sign of great weakness. And, as I told you, my force is with you from the moment you decide to overcome this weakness which is unworthy of you. So I ask you, from now on, to use this force I am giving you to control your reactions and to remain quiet until your anger has passed. This is the first indispensable step. Afterwards, I shall gradually help you to understand that your anger is unjustified and has no basis.

With all my love, I ask you to please make the effort necessary for this great progress to be achieved; it will open the door to transformation.

Ibid , p 364

August 1969

My mind is in such a turmoil these days that I don't feel any contact with my psychic being. I don't think that I have a psychic being any more.

Don't be sad, my dear child; your psychic being is still there, for if it had gone away, your body would not be able to live.

You may no longer be very conscious of its presence because your mind has become rather noisy, so you are no longer quiet enough to feel the psychic presence. But this can be cured. And since you told me that you would like to try, yesterday I chose this quotation from Sri Aurobindo to send to you:

"Aspiration, constant and sincere, and the will to turn to the Divine alone are the best means to bring forward the psychic."

Fix a time every day when you can be free and undisturbed; sit comfortably and think of your psychic being with an aspiration to enter into contact with it. If you don't succeed immediately, don't be discouraged; you are sure to succeed

one day. I only ask that you let me know what time you have chosen so that I can help you more consciously.

Ibid., p. 369

25th March 1970

To know how to smile in all circumstances is the quickest way to Divine wisdom.

It is the ego that gets angry and upset, and this ego obscures your consciousness and impedes your progress.

The ego does not change because it feels sure that it is always right.

Ibid , p. 373

24th November 1970

Most of the difficulties that people have are due to a lack of control over their actions, and their reactions to the actions of others.

According to one's own nature and weaknesses, one must set for oneself a discipline that is invariably to be followed; for example, never to quarrel, never to reply when someone says or does something unpleasant, never to argue when one disagrees. Obviously one should never lose one's temper when things or people are not the way one would like them to be.

Naturally, if a person is not used to controlling himself, it takes a good deal of effort to acquire the habit. But this is quite indispensable if one wants to make any progress.

The path is long. That is why one must have patience and an unfailing sincerity towards oneself.

In order to be able to live in peace with others, self-control is essential, and it ought to be practised even by those who do not aspire for transformation.

Ibid., p 376

12 December 1971

When one gives one's love to another human being, the first mistake one generally makes is to want to be loved by the other person, not in his own way and according to his character, but in one's own way and to satisfy one's desires. This is the number one cause of all human miseries, disappointments and sufferings.

To love means to give oneself without bargaining—otherwise it is not love. But this is rarely understood and even more rarely practised. And the consequences are painful.

When some progress needs to be made, you must set to work to make it, without excusing yourself on the grounds that others are not making it.

Each one is responsible first for himself, and if you aspire to help others, it is

by giving an example of what one should be that you can help them most effectively.

And the Divine Grace is always there, marvellously effective for all those who are sincere.

Ibid., pp. 376-77

28th December 1971

When one loves the Divine truly and totally, then one also loves His creation and His creatures; and naturally, among His creatures, there may be some that one feels closer to and loves more specially. But then the love that one feels is not a selfish love of the ordinary human kind; it is no longer a love that wants to hold and possess, but a love that gives itself without asking anything in return.

To love for the joy of loving is the best condition for a peaceful and happy life; it amounts, in other words, to loving the Divine in all things.

If this culminates in wanting only what the Divine wants, then there is perfect peace.

Ibid , p 378

5th January 1972

It is the invocation of the people who are celebrating Sri Aurobindo's centenary which makes his presence more active and effective. But for those who are always with him, this hardly makes any difference.

The same phenomenon occurs when people concentrate on him at the Samadhi: he is always there, but in response to their call his presence becomes more active.

Ibid.

7 January 1972

The Divine whom we seek is not far off and inaccessible. He is at the very heart of His creation, and what He wants us to do is to find Him and, through personal transformation, to become capable of knowing Him, uniting with Him and finally of manifesting Him consciously.

We must consecrate ourselves to this; it is the true reason for our existence.

And our first step towards this sublime realisation is the manifestation of the supramental consciousness.

Ibid., pp. 379-80

20 March 1972

AN UNUSUAL EXPERIENCE AND ITS EXPLANATION

Mother,

Temi Lakdawalla had the following experience which seems worth recounting to you for an explanation. She writes:

“I left Pondi in very good condition, except for a little pain in the tail-bone. But, while getting into the train for Bombay from Madras, all of a sudden I felt unbearable pain and could not move my limbs because of it. I took some medicines during the journey, but to no avail. Day and night I suffered. When half a day’s journey was left over, in the early morning I was holding Mother’s blessings-packet and Sri Aurobindo’s photo and trying to concentrate on Mother

“Then, *with my eyes wide open*, I saw a strange thing. A thin small black man in red shorts, with nothing else on, entered the compartment from the door behind me. His hair looked dirty and dishevelled. He was going from one door to the other. He turned towards me and laughed. Another man followed him, tall, black, in a long straight dhoti. He just passed by me and went also out of the compartment. Of course, the train was going at full speed.

“Then I saw a plate before me, on which was some food. Just a tea-spoonful had been already eaten by somebody. I heard a voice: ‘Eat this, Mother has sent it for you after tasting it.’ I looked at my watch. It was balcony time. I knew in my heart that the pain would diminish, and it did. When I got down at Bombay I was almost normal. What do you think of it? Should you inform Mother?”

Love.

22 1 1960

AMAL

The Mother’s Reply

One small physico-vital form at mischief and some vital entity, both responsible for the pain.

The dish is the symbol of my help which would bring cure if it were received properly

SRI AUROBINDO ON EQUALITY

EQUALITY is to remain unmoved within in all conditions.

*

Equality is the chief support of the true spiritual consciousness and it is this from which a sadhak deviates when he allows a vital movement to carry him away in feeling or speech or action. Equality is not the same thing as forbearance,—though undoubtedly a settled equality immensely extends, even illimitably, a man's power of endurance and forbearance.

Equality means a quiet and unmoved mind and vital, it means not to be touched or disturbed by things that happen or things said or done to you, but to look at them with a straight look, free from the distortions created by personal feeling, and to try to understand what is behind them, why they happen, what is to be learnt from them, what is it in oneself which they are cast against and what inner profit or progress one can make out of them; it means self-mastery over the vital movements,—anger and sensitiveness and pride as well as desire and the rest,—not to let them get hold of the emotional being and disturb the inner peace, not to speak and act in the rush and impulsion of these things, always to act and speak out of a calm inner poise of the spirit. It is not easy to have this equality in any full perfect measure, but one should always try more and more to make it the basis of one's inner state and outer movements.

Equality means another thing—to have an equal view of men and their nature and acts and the forces that move them; it helps one to see the truth about them by pushing away from the mind all personal feeling in one's seeing and judgement and even all the mental bias. Personal feeling always distorts and makes one see in men's actions, not only the actions themselves, but things behind them which, more often than not, are not there. Misunderstanding, misjudgement which could have been avoided are the result; things of small consequence assume larger proportions. I have seen that more than half of the untoward happenings of this kind in life are due to this cause. But in ordinary life personal feeling and sensitiveness are a constant part of human nature and may be needed there for self-defence, although, I think, even there, a strong, large and equal attitude towards men and things would be a much better line of defence. But for a sadhak, to surmount them and live rather in the calm strength of the spirit is an essential part of his progress.

The first condition of inner progress is to recognise whatever is or has been a wrong movement in any part of the nature,—wrong idea, wrong feeling, wrong speech, wrong action,—and by wrong is meant what departs from the truth, from the higher consciousness and higher self, from the way of the Divine. Once recognised it is admitted, not glossed over or defended,—and it is offered to the Divine for the Light and Grace to descend and substitute for it the right movement of the true Consciousness.

LIFE—POETRY—YOGA

SOME PERSONAL LETTERS

YOUR letter suggests to me that somewhere in your being there is a born “Pilgrim of Pondicherry” as well as “Initiate of Poetry”—and perhaps the former will fully emerge through the development of the latter. It is remarkable that the reading of my sonnet “Mukti” should have left so deep an impression on you. The fact that not just the sense but also the sound of it means so much proves to me that my second description of the potential you is quite correct. For, contrary to the general notion, it is the sound that is the soul of poetry and it is the sense that is the body. By “sound” I mean the inner subtle life-throb of the vision or experience that articulates itself through the intelligible words. The poet’s depths swim up in the rhythm. And the finer the poetry the more crucial are the details of the rhythmic interrelations of a line. This involves a quick response to the word-order and its suggestive concords. Thus there is a world of difference in inner suggestion between the form:

The mute unshadowed spaces of her mind—

and the possible alternative:

The spaces of her mind, unshadowed, mute.

It is not only the changing of places by the two adjectives that counts: the termination of the line by the adjective “mute” lays a special stress on muteness, as if that were the critical quality above everything else. Besides, one is left a little unsure whether the two epithets refer to “spaces” or to “mind”. Finally, the freely sweeping sound of the earlier form has yielded place to one which has a staccato movement and a sort of added-on effect at the close. Even without all these alterations an unnatural effect would be there if one wrote:

The spaces, mute, unshadowed, of her mind.

The line would lack the touch of inevitability which gives the original version an extraordinary spontaneous profundity making our being vibrate in some visionary dimension beyond the thinking brain’s noises and ingenuities—vibrate to a reality far other than our life’s usual tenor. Even a phrase like

Mute and unshadowed spaces of her mind,

which should theoretically not make any difference that matters is yet a definite *à*

peu près. Again an unnecessary emphasis is laid on muteness, all the more because of the marked trochaic rhythm of the word-order.

Perhaps a still more delicate yet equally decisive shift of inevitable profundity in the suggestion comes if a couple of words stand in the same order at the end rather than in the middle of a certain line. Here is the line in its latter avatar:

A cry to clasp in all the one God-hush.

There is a well-rounded mystical effect of a fairly high order. But compare it to the strange sense of an interminable passage into wideness after inner spiritual wideness if we read:

A cry to clasp the one God-hush in all.

Though the verbal significance may be taken to be the same as before, the overall resonance confers on it a greater authenticity, an ultimate authority. Possibly we may go a step further in regard to the significance itself.

Examined sensitively, this version seems to impart even a different shade by its variation of sound fused with another word-order. Now the one God-hush is not to be discovered with an effort at the close of a search. It is to be realised in a natural way as a secret wonder which is self-revealed everywhere to the intense ardour of a rapt inwardness.

I am glad you have invested in my *Talks on Poetry*. The book is meant not only to make poetry come alive but also to make life catch something of poetry's perfection of revelatory rhythm on the diverse planes of our consciousness.

(28.4 1990)

*

The exchange of calm and unrest is nothing peculiar to you: it is part of the general human condition. What you have to do is to let the spells of calm outnumber the moments of agitation. You will ask: "How?" The sole fully effective mode is Yoga. In the practice of Yoga we try to vivify in ourselves the sense of the Infinite, the Eternal and we turn constantly towards the Divine and increase more and more our intuition of His imperturbable Presence. Then at the moment of agitation something will touch us from within and draw us away from the ruffled surface of our being. There won't be success each time, but failures will grow less and less.

"Things like anger, resentment, etc." are difficult moods to manage—even people who have lived in the Ashram for many years are not free from their occasional visits. But the right course is always to reject the suggestion that you are justified in having them. On the other hand, you must not indulge in too much remorse. Don't brood over your past but be ready for the future. Just catch

these moods whenever they come and, without thinking anything more, offer them to the Mother and keep offering them until you feel clear and calm. You must also learn to look at the cause of them—which is, in your own words, “not having things the way I had wanted”—as carrying secret messages to you from the Divine. I have always held that we can let the Divine reach us through everything. And if we look for the Hand of Grace in even adverse circumstances it will extend to us and bring us benefits we have never dreamt of. I don't say that we must never want circumstances to be other than they are. We may work towards a different dénouement and yet reap profit from a situation that seems to cut across our plan. Everything becomes a gift of God in one manner or another when we offer it to Him and await in our heart His contact through it. This is one of the great lessons I have learnt and it is one of the paths to permanent peace. You have a deep sincere aspiration to live quietly and joyously as the Mother's child. It will carry you safely through all the ups and downs of earthly days. Have faith in your destiny of inward light. (5 11.1988)

*

Your letter brought excellent news. We are happy that the Ticker is pretty sound or makes a pretty sound and the period of the little cacophony has passed, proving the little caco to be phoney.

Your friend's second note has reached me. Yes, she is a fine rare person. To my mind a person is more than a mere individual. An individual tends to be locked in his own unity. A person is an individual flowering out—because he has also flowered inly beyond himself, reaching or at least touching the spontaneous sweetness and light of the soul—the soul which is never bound to its own oneness. (24.10.1990)

*

I was simply delighted to see what was inside the packet. What love and care have gone into collecting and preserving all that I have written to you! Even the insignificant notes scribbled in haste have found a cherished place in the file. The file itself is of an outstanding quality. Nothing but the best for your friend. Precious indeed is your heart to me for such a “crimson-throbbing glow” it has at the slightest touch of affection from me. It is as if Amal could say: “Am-all to my hand-in-hand aspirant companion on the inward and upward Path.”

Glancing through the contents of the file, I am amazed at the amount of my correspondence and at the variety of topics it deals with—or, rather, the various ways in which it approaches one sole Topic—better still, the one Soul-topic—the discovery of our true self which is a child of the Divine Mother, implicitly, intrinsically, inherently. Ever since I came here I have tried to find that self

whose love for the Divine is spontaneous and unconditional. I don't remember whether I have quoted to you the letter I wrote to the Mother after some years in the Ashram. Here it is, along with the answer it got from our Gurus:

Pardon my writing to you without any specific reason; but I felt like telling you that you are my darling. In spite of my thousand and three imperfections, this one sense remains in me—that you are my Mother, that I am born from your heart. It is the only truth I seem to have realised in all these years. A very unfortunate thing, perhaps, that I have realised no other truth; but I deeply thank you that I have been enabled to feel this much at least.

Sri Aurobindo replied: “It is an excellent foundation for the other truths that are to come—for they all result from it.”

The Mother added: “My blessings are always with you.”

I am sure something in you will respond at once to the expression in that old letter; for I feel you to be unmistakably a psychic personality. There are several people whose psychic beings came out in relationship to the Mother—I have watched this happening time and again. But I have also known that these same people could be rude and crude in their daily behaviour—some were even quite pestiferous to their neighbours. There was no persisting undercurrent of the psyche in their day-to-day life. It is the presence of this undercurrent in all one's doings that makes one a psychic personality. A psychic personality feels not only the Divine in oneself but also the Divine in others.

Apropos of your file of my letters, your “Treasure” as you have called it, I would like to cite three lines from *Savitri* (Centenary Edition) for you to fancy in what sense, if at all, you can be taken to have used this term:

The treasure was found of a supernal Day (4:34)

A treasure of honey in the combs of God (49.8)

A growing treasure in the mystic heart (674:33)

The third line breathes of some sweet and luminous interiority gradually unfolding, the second catches sight of a secret fullness of delight, the first conveys the thrill of entering a rapt vastness of God's glory. Of course, I am taking the lines more by themselves than in their actual contexts. All of them have a consummate rhythm running through words that are rich with spiritual significance. Each line, speaking of a wonderful wealth of experience or realisation, is in its own individual manner a poetic treasure (12 12 1988)

*

The dream, which you have recounted in your letter of 12 10.89, was quite prophetic. What I was showing you while taking you round was really there—my

flat was in a bad state, needing repairs. And now repairing has started. It's been going on for the last four days, reducing the flat to even a worse state—temporarily. Things are being knocked down, things have been shifted, and after 8.30 a.m. I can't go to the back of the flat, or shall I commit the Indianism of saying the flat's "backside"? I well might, for the prohibited area contains conveniences for my daily relief. Only at 5.30 p.m., after returning from the Samadhı can I find relief possible with the pre-repairs ease and comfort. Till then it's best for my spiritual life to be true, in a most physical mode, to the last word in King Manu's apostrophe to an exalted personage in a poem of Sri Aurobindo's.

Rishi who trance-held on the mountains old
 Art slumbering, void
 Of sense or motion...

You write: "I felt that you had an impression that I had something to do with the repairs." Well, although I had applied for repairs, nothing was being done. Only after your dream—almost immediately after—did the people appear with their tools and materials. On a subtle plane your realisation that my flat seriously needed a new look seems to have awakened the powers-that-be to take action.

Your "looking for a book" in my flat is, of course, most appropriate. The first thing one notices on approaching my front room is two book-packed cupboards—one a huge double-winged structure given me by the Mother and the other a comparatively smaller piece left by an American woman who had visited the Ashram in the '50s. Quite like a miniature public library the room looks. And actually the fellow who comes every month to read my electric meter reported once to the authorities that my place was not a private residence but a public library! His impression was all the stronger for seeing me every time reading. So to my surprise my electric bill mounted up. I questioned the meter-reader and he said, "We have to charge this place more because this is a public library." I had to take him round the flat, show him my bedroom and my dining room to convince him that I was residing here and very privately re-living the life of Robert Southey:

My days among the dead are passed;
 Around me I behold,
 Where'er these casual eyes are cast,
 The mighty minds of old.
 My never-failing friends are they,
 With whom I converse day by day.

Yes, books have been a major part of my life—and as if there were not enough of them in the world I have been destined to increase their number.

Perhaps by the time my 18 still unpublished books see the light of day I may have to my credit or discredit about 36 in all since already 18 or so have come out.¹ And if by any chance I go on to the year 1998 which Sri Aurobindo clearly inscribed at the head of an early letter to me I may add to this tally before the fumbling being whom Sri Aurobindo wanted to be “The Clear Ray” (“Amal Kiran”) and who has aspired, however vainly, to make true his master’s vision—

A ray of the timeless Glory stooped awhile—

and to be

A ray revealing unseen Presences

feels that his time is up and, living in the sense of the “up”-ness, becomes

A ray returning to its parent Sun.

The parallel case you cite to the suggestion of my 1998—the Mother telling you, apropos of your “difficulties of dreams on the vital plane”, “You are not alone. There are hundreds like you Try, try for one hundred years if necessary”—this parallel case makes me very happy, especially as after your prayer “Please bless me, Mother” she gave you her blessing and later looked intently into your eyes All this seems to me to presage most graciously as well as forcefully a very long life for my bosom-friend. Both of us may have our life’s length, but what about our life’s depth? I believe it will be easier to have it if we have each other’s enkindling company.

Now to your dream of September 28. The date is very likely to have been one of those nights when I was typing away till nearly 3 a.m., the hour at which you went to sleep again after a brief awaking. The “countryside” in which “we were moving about intimately” is rather apt, for my thoughts often fly to scenes of mountains and greenery and winding rivers, but your finding that the countryside’s “path was uneven, broken at places” and that “there were pits and holes here and there” shows in a small symbolic form our general field of endeavour—as put by a *Savitri*-line—

In the green wonderful and perilous earth.

Your trying to take care of me even in your sleep points to the psychic profundity in which your relationship with me has birth. And I seem to be wanting to be thus taken care of because it is indeed fine to feel the helping hand of a warm friendship Actually, as you found out, I could walk “with ease”, needing no

¹ Editor’s Note At the present moment (October 1992), 23 published and 23 unpublished

“Canadian canes”. For, from a figuration of the earth’s beauty and bale, we had passed into a domain beyond the body’s hold. Properly speaking, I should say “the physical body”, for there is an embodiment on all the planes, but the stuff is not physical. Even on the subtle-physical plane something of the earth’s characteristics linger. There I may not be tottering, yet I would limp a little. Though no sticks might be necessary I would still have a halting gait. We must have been in a dimension which I would call the mental-psychic. All our inner and outer movements were charged with the soul’s spontaneity of sweetness and light, but it was at play through an atmosphere of mind. The hint of this atmosphere comes through your telling me in your letter that you handed a dictionary to me because I wanted to look up a word. In the sheer psychic, I should think words have no *raison d’être*—hearts mingle and know each other directly. In the mental-psychic, the mingling of hearts also takes place, but the joy is not complete without an exchange of lyric language and sometimes the *mot juste*, the felicitous expression, has to be sought out in a super-Chambers’ colourful lexicon instead of the consciousness living, silently fulfilled, in

White chambers of dalliance with eternity.¹ *

The little incident you recount of you offering me some snacks and I proposing that you should share them with me and you doing so—all this suggests the intimacy between us deriving from our inner recesses and not floating merely on the day-to-day surface. The fact which you mention, that you “took a piece of sweet” from me, indicates not only our intimacy but also the quality of the substance, as it were, of all interchanges in that inner plane: sweetness in addition to light.

Your dream was indeed a many-aspected pointer to the basis of the happy communication, both written and thought-wafted, going on between us within the enfolding presence of the Divine Mother. (21 10.1989)

*

Speech is the usual mode of communication and togetherness. But silence need not be self-enclosed and separative. When it is full of memories and anticipations it is no more than a formative pause between past utterance and future word, an active potentiality of communication, a warm preparation for being together again. Such has been my state when no letter passed from me to you. Last night the call suddenly came to write to you and the subject is one of the strangest that can be associated with me.

A number of nights back I had a dream in which I exclaimed: “Oh I am so unhappy, so unhappy!” It was a surprise and yet a tinge of recognition mixed

¹ *Savitri* (Centenary Ed.), p. 91

with it. At once—in the dream itself—there was a quiet pressure on the inner being to divulge the reason for this cry from some depth of discontent. And the answer arose like a far phantom trying to take shape. When I looked into the distance I read the words: “There is some coldness between you and the Mother”—and behind this immediate disclosure I discerned a vast tract of the still unrealised dimensions of the Divine.

My aim through day after day has been for years a quiet joy emanating from the heart because of a constant contact with the Mother’s presence within—a contact which brings about a radiant sense of her presence all around. A glory and a greatness and a grace wake in the inmost to meet the light, the power, the love that are, as the Mundaka Upanishad says of Brahman, “before us and behind us, to the north and to the south of us and above and below and extended everywhere”. But after the dream-discovery a few nights ago I see at the same time the need to repair the slight sinking of the Motherward flame and to widen the receptivity to her manifold mystery. The living touch with her is so important—so much the all-in-all—that even a slight slackening of it makes all life dust and ashes and wrings from the whole being a note of utter tragedy. What the slight slackening brought about along with this note is the accentuation of something I have felt for a long period. I remember writing to my sister many years ago and I have repeated it to friends intermittently that I have been waiting eagerly for a certain breakthrough. The fire of loving and self-giving aspiration has often burned intensely and yet failed to pierce some barrier that hangs between the luminous yet limited Here of God-intimacy and a multi-layered Beyond of plenary God-realisation

When both Sri Aurobindo and the Mother were physically with us this hunger for the Infinite was never so acutely felt—or rather it was not felt as an ardent ache. Their presence and their ambience gave, as it were, a constant promise of that Fullness. Perhaps it is more true to say that the Fullness itself appeared to come towards us on their earth-treading feet and with their earth-illuminating faces. Even when Sri Aurobindo withdrew from his body the Mother’s incarnate divinity was an assurance that the entire infinite would be ours and that to look into her eyes and receive her smile and be made by them her own thrice-blessed children was to be brimmed with a bliss that seemed to encompass everything. The sense of what Nirodbaran in a poem has termed with a felicity of revelatory expression

Life that is deep and wonder-vast

is still with us as a legacy of the Mother’s light and love from her physical past amongst us. Indeed that physical past is still with us in a subtle enveloping form, but the unrealised dimensions of the Divine which were not acutely felt when to see and touch her was to feel that nothing was lacking have haunted me ever

since her departure from her body. It is not as though the vivid conjuring up of her subtle reality were not sweet and sublime enough: what is wanting is the surety of receiving those dimensions as a straight gift from her some time or other. This may be due to my own shortcoming in receptivity. Others may not yearn as I do for the immense Unexplored. They may be content with having arrived through

an aureate opening in Time
Where stillness listening felt the unspoken word
And the hours forgot to pass towards grief and change.

at

A spot for the Eternal's tread on earth.¹

The dream of my secret extreme unhappiness has made me keenly aware of chasms within me that long to be appeased with more and more of the Mother's empyreans. Not that I disvalue the precious opening and widening my Gurus have made in me. I cannot be sufficiently grateful for the freedom and the joy and the release from self that they have given the thought-hemmed desire-ridden groper after spiritual silence and psychic purity that I was. But oh so happy, so happy indeed will I be if I can break into the endlessness of Sri Aurobindo's Truth, the boundlessness of the Mother's Beauty! (3 7 1992)

*

I have your two letters—of 13 and 16 August. The former date was the Rakhi day and the beautiful golden chain you had sent in advance was put on my wrist. As I looked at it I had the feeling that this shining band was symbolic of a deeply delicate bond between us. I say "delicate" because there is not the slightest compulsion in it nor any gross element. I might even say it is airy-fairy, but in no vapid sense. The lack of heaviness is due to the source of its delicacy—the depth of being from which it derives its exquisite loveliness. Nothing short of the true soul in us forms the link between a fifty-seven-year old who is still a spontaneous child wrapped in heaven-touched dreams and one who is nearing his eighty-eighth year and yet has the joyousness and impetus of seeking endlessly the Perfect, the Ideal, the Eternal Beauty that never ages.

Yes, I am a seeker of the Supreme but am personally very far from attaining anywhere near Him. So your phrase in connection with your projected visit to Pondicherry in mid-October—"I will take prasad by your holy hand"—is rather puzzling, all the more because it implies on my part some proficiency in cooking

¹ *Savitri* (Centenary Ed) p 14

I think I once recounted to you my only feat of cookery. Let me refresh your memory by referring to this feat again. A bag of flour had come and my wife and her sister made chapattis. I said, "Why not give me a little flour?" They gave it and I made a chapatti on the table where I had been working on an article for *Mother India*. This table was a big round one and served many purposes. So it had an assortment of bottles or cans on it. I got the brilliant idea to add to my chapatti a drop from whatever stood there. So I put on it a drop each of ink, eau de cologne, machine oil and a cough mixture. My wife and her sister were simply aghast at my concoction. When cooked, it was sure to be wonderful, something never created before, compared to which what they had prepared would be absolutely insipid. So if I give prasad of my own making, you will have to face it with a hero's heart and not only the heart of a devotee.

(22.8 82)

AMAL KIRAN
(K.D. SETHNA)

SILVER SOLITUDE

O VIRGIN Splendour of the trance-rapt sky,
 Enter my core with Thy mystic calm,
 Sweep away my bounds with Thy immaculate breath.
 The garden of Thy Grace
 Is too fragrant to be forsaken,
 I wander in its revealing air
 And drink from its rapture-pool.
 Thy ever-proximity is not a myth
 But a marvel-reality draped in silence.
 Let all Thy transforming hues
 Smile into a brilliant rose
 To be a companion of my soul,
 O make me a playmate of the aspiring star.
 The darkness is in love with me but I am
 With Thee, akin to Thy silver solitude.

SEIKH ABDUL KASAM

AURA OF THE MOTHER'S MANIFESTATION

A MEMOIR OF CHAMPAKLAL SEEN BY CHAMPAKLAL HIMSELF

(Continued from the issue of September 1992)

IF service to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother was Champakbhai's daily food, writing about their Glory and Grace is his daily prayer, says Champakbhai

On 30-3-1983, when I asked him some details from his life, he wrote, "If I answer, I have to write in great detail. I have to begin a third book "

A Then why don't you write the third book? You have enough things to write and reveal.

C: "It is very interesting When the first book was being written, Madhavbhai had a feeling that there would be three books written by me I did not then believe it I had not even imagined that I could write even the first book! But now I think that it may be possible to write the third book.

"Of course, it goes without saying that the Mother and Sri Aurobindo have written so much and nothing is left out from Their writings, but, for that people at present seem to have no time. Here, in my books and other books you see in one place so many things and that too in Their own words.

"You see, I myself have not read fully the books of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother The only book that I have read completely is *The Mother* by Sri Aurobindo

"Often, I feel what is not there in *The Mother* and what new things can I write? And this stops me from saying or writing further At the same time, there are many ways of looking at things .

"Before, when I had something to say or write, the old idea or thought used to come would it not be writing in praise of oneself? But now it is possible to do so because the Mother has bestowed upon me Her abundant Grace and shown me that whatever I write or say is only in Her praise

"Then, I used to ask myself the question: When you write so much where is your silence? Instead of speaking you talk by writing and enjoy and satisfy yourself—so? But she gave me the experience and pointed out that what I write is not just gossip but that it is in Her praise.

"Nowadays so many things come to me for writing, especially at night...."

A: So, why don't you really begin your third book? In fact, you have already written today the introduction to your third book—you have only to continue now.

C "On this occasion, I remember an interesting anecdote. I do not remember if it is included in *Champaklal Speaks*.

"When I was young I had once gone to Kasiya, Kamalaben's place In order to get my mother's permission to go there, I told her that I was going there for

higher studies. Of course I knew well that the place I was going to was not at all meant for studies, although, in retrospect I can say that that was the place for true studies.

“Now, the point is that when I had to return to my home I had a problem of what to say if people asked me about Sri Aurobindo’s Yoga. I knew nothing about Sri Aurobindo’s Yoga. So, I asked for Punamchandbhai’s advice. He told me, ‘You can say that you are not a pandit—you are only a sadhak and it is only a pandit and a yogi who can explain all those things.’ Then I asked Dikshitbhai as to what I should tell my father and mother when they ask me what I had learnt there at Kasiya. He told me to show my notebook to my parents and to tell them that I had learnt all that is written there.

“I knew of course what was in the notebook—a few verses and one prayer in Gujarati which we used to recite at prayer time. It was a nice prayer, I knew its meaning, but, it is only now that I know more and more its real and true meaning. Some people may say that the lines of the prayer are very simple and easy to understand, there is nothing deep or difficult about it. The lines of the prayer run like this:

‘One who lives for others he truly lives in this world;
One who sacrifices his life for others, he alone lives forever.’

“So, being a very simple lad at the age of 18 years, I showed my notebook to my father when I returned to Patan. I remember very well, after seeing the notebook he did not speak a single word but just smiled a little—it was a smile with a dual meaning. It had a dual meaning because for one thing my father came to know what a simple lad I was, and for another, he was pleased very much that I had learnt what is truly to be learnt!”

Champakbhai has turned out to be not only a writer but also a poet and a dreamer as the Mother had predicted on 6-10-1948, after seeing his hand: “She saw the nails and said: ‘Dreamer, writer, poet.’ ” He has written scores of poems in the form of *bhajans* which are a spontaneous outflow of his love for the Mother. Each of the *bhajans* is a spiritual experience, a radiant fountain of delight and *bhakti*. I saw him several times listening to the cassette recording of his *bhajans* put to tune and sung by Mohanbhai and every time I saw on his face a luminous rapture. It was evident that he was revealing the experience caught in those simple Gujarati words and phrases. While listening to the song-poems, his whole body seemed to chant and his face was wrapt in rapture and calm.

Here are a few comments that I could gather from him, on 30-3-1983, about his own *bhajans* and prayers:

“What is interesting is that I am myself surprised that I could write all this in the particular way.

“Mohanbhai has deeply felt the meaning of the songs and has sung from his heart.

“These *bhajans* create wonderful vibrations. If one can identify with

vibrations one can even get the experience of what is written in the songs.

“Another interesting thing is that Mother has made Mohanbhai Champaklal and then made him to sing.”

On a remark from me that his songs are the future Meera Bhajans, Champakbhai nodded an approval and wrote: “To some I have already said, ‘these songs are meant for future generations.’

“The mind may say, ‘Oh! there is nothing new in all these songs, I know all this, what is great about them?’

“In one way it is true that there is nothing new about what I have said in the songs, except for a few things. But, what is important is that there is an experience behind the words—the words have come from there (pointing to his inner being), that is why those words are so living and vibrating. They are not merely words.

“It is too early perhaps to say all this. It is not right if I myself say all this—it is for the others to feel it and to understand it ”

Regarding a certain prayer in the songs where Champakbhai prays to the Mother, ‘May She help others also to come to Her Feet’, he wrote:

“Champaklal has seen that She has heard this prayer for some people.”

When I requested Champakbhai that he should write songs using Sri Aurobindo’s name also, he put on a cassette wherein we hear mostly “Sri Aurobindo *sharanam mama*” sung by Manoj Das Gupta. About this he wrote.

“It is taken from one of Sunilda’s New-Year pieces of music. As I liked this portion, I asked Manojda to sing for me. He said that it was not sung by him. Then I told him that I want it in his voice and he agreed to learn it and sing for me. I asked him to repeat the same thing and fill up both sides of the cassette. I like it very much and others also liked it and copied it. Manojda sang from his heart.”

Before becoming a writer and a poet, Champakbhai had become a wonderful artist. He tried and became an expert in different styles of art: Chinese art, still-life style, sketching etc. Sri Aurobindo wrote about Champakbhai’s artistic talents, “Champaklal has a natural talent already developed to an unusual degree ” Another time, “You have the capacity, you have only to be steady in your endeavour.” Champakbhai was indeed steady in his endeavour and produced hundreds of paintings many of which were seen by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. His unique contribution has been, I think, marbling. Marbling in itself has been done before, but it is in Champakbhai’s hands that marbling became for the first time a conscious medium of an artist. It became for the first time a spiritual art manifesting the different moods, dreams, aspirations of an artist. Beyond all this, it became for the first time a mood to capture spiritual levels of consciousness, an imprint of Divine Beauty on running time. The second contribution of Champakbhai is the paintings of flowers which occasioned the Mother to give spiritual significance to each flower. Champakbhai

must have surely caught the soul of each flower in his painting with which the Mother could communicate before naming it. And lastly, for me personally, the contribution of Champakbhai has been the painting of the Lotus signed Sri Aurobindo and the Mother for each other. On the White Lotus Sri Aurobindo wrote: "Aditi—The Divine Mother", and on the Red Lotus the Mother wrote. "The Avatar—Sri Aurobindo"

Although it may not come strictly under the category of an artist, the greatest and most valuable thing that Champakbhai has done for future humanity, apart from collecting Their Relics, is to get an impression of the footprints of the Avatars. Many Avatars have come and gone, but it is only the footprints of the Avatars Sri Aurobindo and the Mother that have been actually drawn, thanks to Champakbhai, and preserved for future humanity to adore. They are Eternity's footprints on shifting Time; Immortality's impression on Mortality. One day he showed us with reverence the pair of Footprints which he had drawn (for details, see *Champaklal Speaks*) and I touched them to my forehead. I strongly felt that my present as well as my future lives have been blessed and that I shall be under Their protection, grace and love forever.

Another dimension of Champakbhai is his capacity to have the right knowledge and vibration of a person or a place. In this regard I shall narrate here a recent experience of Champakbhai.

During his recent visit to Hyderabad, he had a unique experience at Aurodarshan on 13th February, between 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. He went to visit the spot of Auromandir of which he himself had laid the foundation in 1984. After watching the spot for a while, he suddenly sat down in *padmasan* and within no time he went into a trance. It was as if he was suddenly and quickly transported into different times and a strange world. For, after a span of an hour he started doing some strange gestures with his hands, which one could term as *Mudras*. For example, he stretched his hands sideways or above his head, with palms facing outward. A little later he did a deep bow. Again, he suddenly stretched himself on the ground and lay there in *Shavasana*. He returned to his outer consciousness after a while and then returned to the Guest House at Aurodarshan and taking off his upper garment lay down again on the ground for several minutes.

The photographer near him clicked away the different poses Champakbhai was taking and the persons around him stood motionless in wonder and awe.

On being asked about the experience Champakbhai wrote later "I have seen many places in the world including the Himalayas, but I have not found anywhere such a unique place. Other places are beautiful and peaceful—this is unique.

"Previously, there was an Ashram here. And what they have done is still there, undisturbed. Their atmosphere is undisturbed till now. I hope the Government does not disturb it."

On another day, in the early morning hours of 18th February, Champakbhai wrote again. "Since the beginning I had a feeling that I know this place Mother has revealed to me what it was, but, not what it will be."

Later, on being asked more about the spot, he added, "It will be like Auroville, but it will have a distinct character of its own. Matridarshan is beautiful, nice and has lots of possibilities for the future, but Aurodarshan has a spiritual background and it is unique." (Matridarshan is a hilly spot, 7 kms away from Jangaon which is itself about 84 kms from Hyderabad, on the way to Vijayawada)

Champakbhai refused to say more than this. He wrote, "The time has not yet come to reveal my experience at Aurodarshan. I shall tell when the time comes."

We, some of the enthusiasts who were willing and wanting to work at Aurodarshan felt a bit dampened, for, we were keen on knowing about Champakbhai's full experience which would have not only thrown light on Aurodarshan's past but also on its future. If we know the direction of its future, as revealed to Champakbhai by the Mother, then we could start off straightaway in that line, without wasting our time on the experimentation. But, we have to wait for Champakbhai to reveal its secret future. Alas! we do not know for how long!

Madhusudan Reddy, who saw Champakbhai during the experience at Aurodarshan, felt that Champakbhai had been transported to those times when the Ashram existed at the spot and that Champakbhai was one of the Rishis of that Ashram. Perhaps, Sri Aurobindo himself was the Guru of that Ashram at Aurodarshan. The identity of Champakbhai with his past life was so total and immediate that one is tempted to believe this explanation, unless of course, denied by Champakbhai himself. (After reading out this paragraph I asked Champakbhai if he had any objection and if so to say it right away before the article goes to press. Champakbhai approved the explanation with a nod and a smile.)

It is true that since the very first day Champakbhai had been taken to Aurodarshan, a beautiful mountainous spot with a large never-drying lake, about 17 kms away from Medak town in Andhra Pradesh, he was very much attracted to it and whenever he visited Hyderabad, he felt like going to the spot even though it meant a drive of 120 kms from Hyderabad. His attraction to Aurodarshan was irresistible. We know now the secret of his immeasurable joy at his visits to Aurodarshan—it is obvious: He belonged to that Ashram in the past and his psychic memories pulled him towards it and gave him the experience of that glorious time and place.

After reading out this note on Aurodarshan's experience, I asked Champakbhai about his opinion. He wrote: "For me surely O.K.—but don't know how others will take it." Then he added, "What does it matter—other's views?"

Later, on being told about the problems of acquiring the land of 125 acres from the Government, Champakbhai commented. "One day the whole thing will come—even the Guest House. But it may take years."

In another context, Champakbhai wrote: "Why bother about these problems (of acquiring land etc.)? If it is Her project, then when the time comes, nothing can stop it."

Lastly, as a dreamer, Champakbhai has had dreams and visions in the recent years which speak unmistakably about the tremendous speed with which he is proceeding in the transformation of his total being. The Mother seems to be leading him from height to greater height of psychicism and spiritualisation often leading him to the realm of the Supramental. It is not very difficult to guess this travel if we read closely his visions. Take for instance, "A Golden Vision" wherein we understand clearly the universalisation of his consciousness and his being face to face with the Supramental world.

"I noticed that the Mother's body was expanding more and more, in all directions . There was only the Mother in Her *Viratkaya* . Then this gigantic figure was no more there and I could only see bright cool golden Light I saw the Mother coming out from it with Her transparent golden body which appeared to be made of Light only. I saw a golden hammer in Her hand . In her other hand, there was a luminous lotus.

"The Mother looked again at my forehead. This time my forehead expanded and became vast and vast. . The Mother lifted Her hammer.. and struck it hard on my forehead. Then I saw the golden Light begin to radiate from my body and spread around in space."

It shows that he is a Vijnana-Yogi, that is, one whose inner abode appears to be in the Supramental consciousness. It is true that it might seem a wild-guess game trying to label these Yogis, for, we have not the faintest idea of the worlds beyond our physical one. But, knowledge of the descriptions given by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother of the Supramental consciousness and the New World helps us in identifying such visions as those of Champakbhai's. My faith in the correctness of my interpretation got doubled when on 8 December 1986, Champakbhai himself wrote saying that most of the time he is in the consciousness of "MY ALL" by which as he explained later, he meant the consciousness of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. There can be different ways of being in contact or communion with Their consciousness, but the level of the manifestation of Their consciousness where Champakbhai meets them and dwells strikes me as being the Supramental.

It is because of the attainment of the Supramental consciousness and the universalisation of his total being that Champakbhai had reason to write on 8-12-1986: "When I go away, my body should be burnt wherever it dies—even if it is a forest. And nothing should be done in my memory."

Bansidharbhai, who was sitting near us, commented, "But, people will do

whatever they want. They do things more to satisfy themselves. So, whatever you may write will not matter." Champakbhai laughed and nodded, and said, "They want to do as they wish and not according to my wish. But I have faith कृपामयी will see to it."

What kind of Love people have! For such a being who has attained freedom from attachment, desire and ignorance, and who sees the Divine everywhere, the whole earth is a *Pavitrasthan* and just as he has offered all of himself to the Avatars all his life so he wishes his body to be offered to the Divine Agni. Perhaps, it is the last act of his surrender:

"A vast surrender was his only strength ..
 Only he longed to draw her presence and her power
 Into his mind and heart and breathing frame,
 Only he yearned to call for ever down
 Her healing touch of love and truth and joy
 Into the darkness of the suffering world.
 His soul was freed and given to her alone."

Champakbhai's Comment on this Article:

"I think all about me is correct—but whatever you have said about your experience, for that I have no right to say anything whether it is right or wrong."

(*Concluded*)

V ANAND REDDY

THE LAST 60 DAYS OF CHAMPAKLALJI

ON 10 March 1992 we were supposed to leave Pondy by 5 30 a m. That morning Dadaji was quite happy, it was his habit that whenever he was supposed to go somewhere he would be happy and curious about the new things to come. When I reached Sri Aurobindo's room his bath was over and the attendants were helping him to put on his clothes. I joined them after greeting Dadaji. The room, once Sri Aurobindo's bathroom, but now being used as Dadaji's living room, was full of attendants and others closely related to Dadaji.

After the dressing was over we made him sit on his folding wheelchair which had been brought from America by one of Dadaji's devotees in 1991. Fully jubilant, he was looking here and there, from time to time looking at me too and feeding me with his divine smiles. The wristwatch was put on his left wrist. Now everything was ready for the departure.

We took Dadaji, according to his wish, to Sri Aurobindo's room, just in front of Sri Aurobindo's huge photo behind the Master's bed. He meditated there for a few minutes, the atmosphere was full of the Presence of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. Great calm and peace were prevailing, as if Sri Aurobindo wanted to talk to Dadaji.

Then Dadaji returned to his room and Nirod-da came. He said, "My heart is going to Baroda." Nirod-da had great love for Dadaji and Dadaji too had great love for him. I remember there were occasions when both of them used to share the divine laughter together. So that day he had come to wish him good-bye.

Then we took Dadaji down to the Meditation Hall where he concentrated for a few seconds on the huge photo of the Mother kept against the staircase wall. We wanted to take him out from Nolini-da's door but Dadaji wanted to go first to the Samadhi, so we took him there. We brought the wheelchair just by the side of the Samadhi; Dadaji kept his left hand on the Samadhi and meditated deeply for a while. One of the sadhikas who was arranging flowers on the Samadhi told me later that she had seen tears rolling down from Dadaji's eyes. I was some distance away at that time and did not see nor could have imagined the tears. I was praying to the Mother for a safe and happy journey and a safe return to Pondy with Dadaji. Tears, however, were not impossible for him since he was very tender, emotional and simple-hearted.

Though it was not openly declared about his departure to Gujarat, many people who had come to the Samadhi for meditation had a chance to have his last darshan. On previous occasions when he used to go out of Pondy he never went for Samadhi pranam but this time he did it because he knew that it was, physically, his last pranam.

We took him out of the main Ashram building through Nolini-da's gate. There was a huge crowd waiting for his darshan. One ambulance for Dadaji and a Matador for others were waiting by the side of the road. Soon we were in our

seats. Dadaji was lying on the stretcher in the ambulance. We made a round of the Ashram and were off from there.

Around 9 a.m. we reached the Madras Interstate Airport. Our flight for Bombay was scheduled for 11 a.m. After the security check, we six persons (Dadaji, Kamala-ben, Sanjay, a doctor who had come to accompany Dadaji, not the one who would look after him at Jantral, the son of a future doctor of Dadaji who had come to take along relics of Sri Aurobindo and myself) were waiting for our flight in the waiting hall. There were only four of us from the Ashram, the first three mentioned above and myself.

We had a long time to wait; Dadaji was quite happy and looked several times at his wristwatch, asking me the time of departure. Dadaji asked us to take some food and so we took coffee with something to eat, but he did not take anything.

Finally it was 10 45 a.m. We got into the airbus and made him sit on the front seat, keeping his wheelchair to one side. He was looking cheerful and inquired about our seats. We all had lunch on board except Dadaji. The food was very spicy for my Ashram-habituated tongue, still I took a small quantity of it. There was some sweet too, which was my favourite item, as I am a Brahmin by birth. There is a proverb in Sanskrit, ब्राह्मणस्य मधुरं प्रियम्, "Sweets are favoured by the Brahmins."

At 12.40 we landed in Bombay. Many devotees of Dadaji were waiting for him eagerly. When they finally saw him they were full of joy; they surrounded him and offered beautiful roses, seeking his blessings. They had already reserved a retiring room for us. Dadaji was taken there. The devotees had brought several items to eat but he only tasted them; he did not take any juice or water either, only a few sips of tomato soup.

Our next flight for Baroda was at 4 30 p.m. so we had enough time to take rest. We arranged a bed for Dadaji and wanted him to lie down for some time but he refused, saying that he was not tired at all. So he was in his wheelchair, calm and quiet, looking at the windows and walls as if he was looking on the walls of his own room which were covered with Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's photos. Day and night, when he was in his room, he would fix his gaze on some particular photo, meditate for a while, and then shift to another one. On these walls there were no photos of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo to our eyes, but for Dadaji it was different. As the Gita says, "The yogi unified with the Divine sees everywhere the same Divine." He had created there a divine atmosphere by his love. He introduced us, especially me, to his devotees, saying, "He manages me perfectly."

Then, after some time it was our flight time, so we were again in an airplane and at 5 45 p.m. we reached Baroda. There again many devotees were waiting for Dadaji's arrival. With love and enthusiasm all greeted Dadaji and requested him to spend a night in Baroda but he refused, he wanted to go directly to

Jantral. Manekbhai, the physician who was supposed to treat Dadaji, had come with his assistant. They had arranged an ambulance with a stretcher for Dadaji; a few of us were with him. For others there was a jeep and for the relics there was a car decorated with garlands of fresh flowers.

We started from Baroda at 6.15 p.m. for Jantral. The car was leading, with our ambulance behind; the jeep was following us. Dadaji was lying on the stretcher, he took a nap from time to time. The road was not pleasant—specially the last 10 km. were painful: we had to hold Dadaji firmly to protect him from heavy jerks. At last at 8.15 p.m. we were in Jantral.

Jantral is a small village of Panchamahar district; it lies 65 km. away from Baroda city. The nearest town, rather a small town, is Kalol, 10 km. away from the village. Anything one needs for one's daily use had to be fetched from there.

The institute where Dadaji had come for treatment is called "Amrit Sanjivani Arogya Tirth", and lies a ½ km. before the main village. It is not very old; the foundation stone was laid by Dadaji himself in the beginning of the '80s. They told me that at that time Dadaji had walked with bare feet all along the border of this 10-acre land and blessed it profusely with both his hands. At that time it was a barren land but now it is in its stage of infant development. A little greenery is there—a few trees, plants, and flower-gardens—and there are plans for more plants.

When we got down from the ambulance it was cold, quite cold for the Pondicherrians. We arranged Dadaji's bed. That night he took a little kicheri and a ½ glass of milk. He had sound sleep throughout the night; he did not wake up even once. In the morning it was very cold and he asked for more blankets.

At 8 a.m. I massaged him with olive oil. At 9 a.m. they took him out into the sun, for 30 minutes the sun rays were given with red and yellow plastic filters over the knees and hands. When he was in the sun his body used to glow more, as if the golden light was radiating throughout his body. After the sun-bath he would come in and cool his body for ten minutes on the stretcher and then have a bath in lukewarm water. By 10 a.m. the bath was over and Dadaji would sit in his wheelchair for a few hours. Around 10 a.m. he was given a glass of carrot-juice. At 12 noon he would come to his bed to lie down, and at 12.30 p.m. he would have one glass of grape-juice. Again at 3.30 one glassful of carrot juice, at 5.30 grape juice—one glass, 400 ml.—and at 8 p.m. one glass of milk with honey. After that they gave some treatment with yellow and red filters over electric lights. For a few days the routine was maintained as above.

One day I told Sanjay to bring for me a ½ litre of mustard oil from Baroda. Seeing the packed bottle of oil, Dadaji asked what it was. I told him: "It is mustard oil. It is good for massage." I requested someone to read out to Dadaji the pamphlet which was there along with the bottle. He listened carefully. It was written there that, according to Ayurveda, mustard oil is very good for massage. So Dadaji told me to massage him with the mustard oil and he immediately

ordered two more bottles to be brought for me. I was massaging him from then on with mustard oil every morning. The other routines were almost the same as I have mentioned above.

Manekbhai used to give his computer-made medicine mixed with juices. To know the patient's problem the doctor would put a sample of blood, nail and hair on the plate of the computer and circulate the pendulum in harmony. This kind of treatment is known as "Radio-biology". I had never heard of such treatment before. It was a totally new thing for me.

At the beginning there was no improvement in Dadaji's health. After 15 days, however, a little improvement was seen. His right leg started bending a little. I was very happy to see this and intensified the mustard-oil massage and started giving some leg-and-hand exercises after the massage. I used to notice that after taking his evening milk Dadaji was dull and slack. One evening after he had drunk his milk I asked him, "Dadaji, why are you looking so dull and forceless at this time every evening?" He asked for the slate and wrote, "It is the milk which makes me sick." Then I told him not to take milk. When the doctor came I informed him of Dadaji's complaint and he too agreed, telling Dadaji that he had wanted to stop it but he thought Dadaji liked it. After that day no milk was given. Once the milk was stopped the above-mentioned complaints were no longer there. He was looking quite happy.

In the evenings we used to take him out on the premises in his wheel chair. He used to enjoy the coil's song by pointing in its direction with his left index finger, a smile on his lips. He would sit there for a while if the sun had not set. He liked the sunset and the moon-rise. Just like a child he would point with his finger to the moon as if we were not aware of it. Another thing he liked most was fire. He would look at the rising flames without even blinking for 15 minutes—no words, calm and quiet; he did not like it if anyone was talking then.

After 25 days Sanjay came back to Pondicherry and I was alone with Dadaji. For night duty there were some devotees from Baroda; among them Narendra Thakkar was very regular.

After the outing Dadaji would go inside a pyramid at 6.30 p.m. for one hour. He would sit there on a wooden cot with a bell beside him to ring if he needed anything. In the morning after bath he often used to sing with great joy. One could feel the divine joy and Ananda. He would sing for 15 minutes and suddenly stop and smile and ask me how it was.

Two small pyramids had been made to treat Dadaji's knees. I used to put pillows beside him and the pyramids on top of them, removing them after two hours. One day when he was sitting on his bed with his back against the back-rest and his legs stretched apart, with the pyramids kept as usual covering his knees, suddenly he started scolding the pyramids with his left index finger, shaking it fast as if they had made some mistake and he was warning them. Then, at the next moment, he started caressing them with great love, affection and care. I was

watching this incident very carefully. There was great simplicity in each of his actions,—the moving of the index finger, the smile on his lips, the activity of his eyeballs and eyebrows were really wonderful—just like a child's, or rather a Maha-child's. When the caressing was over I said to him, "Dadaji, you are caressing these inanimate things, you have never caressed me." He laughed loudly, called me to his side and started caressing me with divine affection. Though what I had said was a joke for me, his caress was not a joke, it was something soothing, effective and full of Ananda

After many days I could see the improvement in Dadaji little by little. I started increasing the exercises. After 25 days of treatment, for the first time he tried to stand and walk two steps. Day by day we increased his walking distance according to his capacity. He could not walk on his own, of course, but only with the help of two persons holding him from both sides. He could not stand on his own even for a few seconds. After a few days of practice in exercise he could walk, with the help of two persons, for 10-20 metres. I would say that 10-15% improvement was there.

During these days when he saw I was alone in the room he would ask for the slate and write, "How does my body look now? Do you see any improvement?", etc. And I used to reply by telling him whatever improvement I had seen in him. And again he would ask, "How long will it take?" "I don't know, Dadaji," was my reply. One day I added, "If you ask the Mother to cure you, you will soon be cured." He shook his head in negation indicating that he would not ask the Mother for that purpose.

When the people of Gujarat came to know that Dadaji was in Jantral they started coming for his darshan. Dadaji did not like that, as he used to tell everyone, "I have come for treatment here, not for visitors, please don't come to visit me." Still people used to come.

On one Sunday there were many visitors. Two among them had come to get blessings for the release of a magazine in Gujarati. I don't remember from which place they had come. When they presented the magazine to Dadaji, he put it on his lap and started looking at it very carefully, calmly and quietly. On the cover page there was a photo of Sundaram (an Ashramite Gujarati poet, now passed away). When Dadaji wanted to open the next page his finger caught the back cover-page and soon the magazine turned upside down, revealing a photo of the Mother on the back.

Suddenly his modest figure became like Rudra. The "Lion of the Mother" raised his finger and started hitting the magazine very fast, showing the front and back cover photos to us, then he threw it down on the floor. He felt it was an insult to the Mother. Then I realised why the Mother used to call him "My Lion". We handed the magazine to the persons who had brought it and told them to go away. When they were ashamed and about to leave, Dadaji looked at them; there was no sign of anger. His eyes were full of love, he raised his hand

and gave his blessing I was surprised and I could see Dadaji's unique love for the Mother, his simplicity and his straightforwardness

In the last week of April Dadaji had terrible pain in his left eye. A devotee doctor from Dahod had come to visit him, so he examined the eye and found that the cataract was ready for an operation. He asked Dadaji for his approval of the operation and the date of 10 May was finally decided for it to be done in Jantral itself.

After the Darshan Day of 24th April Dadaji was looking grave and not taking interest in outward activities. Before he used to ask four or five times a day whether I had eaten or not. Not only that—he would ask whether I had liked the food or not, and he would also ask me to list the different preparations for him. Sometimes I used to joke for the sake of making him happy. I would say, “Dadaji, I have eaten 20 chapatis at dinner!” With a huge exclamation he would say “Han!” and smile. “Yes, Dadaji, as you don't eat any solid food I take your share also.” He would laugh in such a way that you could see divine laughter there. Each of his cells seemed to laugh with a divine ecstasy. These moments were very touching. They cannot be described in mental terms; one can only feel them.

Now, different activities started taking place. When I used to do pranam or wish him goodnight before sleeping he would draw my hand or head onto his bosom and meditate for a few minutes.

By 29th April everything was more or less all right, then the doctors wanted Dadaji to become stronger so he could walk more. They asked him about exchanging solid food for the juices twice a day, morning and evening. On 29 April, for the first time after 49 days of juice-diet, they fed him with *dogla* (whole mung dal soaked in water, crushed and then cooked). On 30th April at 10 a.m. *khichu* (crushed rice preparation) was given.

On 1 May, morning and evening, *dogla* and *khichu* were served. That day Dadaji's cough and phlegm started increasing, which had been less during the juice-diet. On 2nd May also, in the morning and evening, *khichu* and *idli* were given. On 3rd May, after seeing the reaction to the solid food, the doctor put him again on juice-diet exclusively. Dadaji was restless the whole day. At 12 midnight he was shivering very much; we provided blankets one after another but still he kept shivering. His temperature was 103°. He wanted to sit, so I sat behind him and he leaned on my chest till 3 a.m.

The doctor consulted his computer about the fever and the treatment was successful. The fever came down from 103° to 101°F but Dadaji had no sleep in the night. On 4th May at 5.30 a.m. his temperature was 100.4°F. They gave him some Ayurvedic medicine for cough and fever. Though Dadaji did not want to take any juice, they insisted on him to take it. Then he would take it unwillingly. At 10 a.m. his temperature was 100.6°F; he was feeling uneasy from time to time. At 12 noon he had 101° temperature. After the juice he slept well in the afternoon.

I would like to remark that after he had developed fever he was absolutely in-gathered and used to keep his eyes closed as if meditating intensely. Sometimes I had to caress him gently to tell him that it was time to take the juice because otherwise he would not open his eyes. Still he would not open them immediately but make a sign to wait a little. Then after five minutes or less he would open his eyes and inquire why he had been disturbed, as if he did not know anything and had come from some other world. I was very much surprised that he was so much more inward than usual.

As the fever was there constantly I was worried; I used to inform the doctor about the temperature. He consoled me by saying that the fever was good for Dadaji's cough, that it would help it to ripen and the phlegm would come out. At 5 p.m. the temperature was 101°. At 10 p.m. it was 102° and some Ayurvedic pills were given. In the night, though the fever was there, Dadaji was in deep sleep, only once or twice he made some movements.

On 5th May at 4.45 a.m. the temperature was 100°F. He was still in a deep indrawn condition almost all the time. The cough was on the increase. I gave a sponge-bath at 11 a.m. At 12 noon the temperature was 99.5. At night the temperature was a little below 100°F. The whole night he was coughing vigorously.

On 6th May at 5 a.m. the fever was still 100°F. By noon it had come down to 99° and at 6 p.m. finally the temperature was normal. But he was all the time drawn inward and had no interest in anything.

On 7th May other troubles were there but not fever. His blood-pressure read 155/95 at 10 a.m. and some swelling could be seen on the legs and on the face. He passed more urine than usual during the day and night. I had to do the night-duty that night. As he was not sleeping, how could I have slept? I was looking at him all the time. There was a dim light in that room, it was sufficient for me to see whether Dadaji was sleeping or not and whether his eyes were open or closed. That night he kept his eyes closed and was fully conscious. He was moving his left hand as the dancers and musicians do. I saw many other sights as if he was talking with someone in the inner planes and signing with his hand that he had to go away.

On 8th May there was no fever but he had pain in his left eye again. Meanwhile we had requested the eye-specialist, who was supposed to operate on the same eye on the 10th of May, to postpone the surgery as Dadaji was quite weak. At 10 a.m. grape-juice was given. I was happy because he had no fever but at the same time there was something in me that was not happy because of his disinterest in the outward life. At 9.30 a.m. I bathed him with warm water. Then he sat in his wheelchair but not more than half an hour. In the afternoon he slept a little. At 4 p.m. when they offered grape-juice he refused to take it. They tried hard, but in vain; even Kamala-ben stood in front of him holding the glass for more than fifteen minutes, but he was unmoved. They tried until 8.15 p.m. with

different juices but he did not accept anything. He was lying on his bed and then suddenly he started shivering. Blankets were procured. I took his temperature—it was 101.4°F. Again at 9.45 p.m. it was 102°F and at 11.10 p.m. it was 103. At 12 midnight it was 104.5°F. The doctor started his computer to bring down the mounting temperature but it did not work this time. Fortunately that night Hemant-bhai from Baroda was there with me for night-duty, so we started putting wet compresses on his body. This continued till 2.30 a.m. At 2.30, at last, the temperature came down to 102. He was still shivering vigorously. When we stopped the cold compresses after half an hour the temperature started mounting again. At 3.30 a.m. one crocin tablet was given to him by the doctor. On that day, at night he passed less urine.

On 9th May at 7 a.m. the temperature was 102.4°F. Though he was not complaining about any trouble, one could see the suffering and the uneasiness on his face. The coughing was very painful and troublesome. The phlegm was so sticky that he was unable to get it out. It stuck in his throat, causing trouble for his breathing. At 9 a.m. the juice of one mango was prepared. He was asked to drink it. There was no response either for acceptance or refusal. He was fully conscious but had no inclination for anything. They decided to feed him the mango-juice with the help of a small teapot whose spout was inserted into his mouth; he took the juice with a little difficulty. At 9 a.m. the fever was less. At 11.10 a.m. the wheat-coffee (made of roasted wheat-dust) was fed to him with the help of the teapot. At 12 noon the temperature was again up to 102.3°F. One crocin tablet (crushed) was given at 12.10 p.m. At 1.30 p.m. coconut-water (200 ml) was given. I had then a little time for a nap. When I woke up it was 3 p.m. I looked at Dadaji. He was very serious and looked tired. He was breathing in and out with difficulty, very fast. The temperature was around 103°F. I immediately told the doctor that he must send someone to bring a known specialist from the nearest city. He told me that nothing was serious and that there was no need to worry as in naturopathic treatments such outward signs are good for the body. But I was not satisfied with his explanation, so again and again I requested him to send someone to bring a specialist as soon as possible. I was alone there. I could not go anywhere, leaving him behind in this condition, and there was no telephone. If one wanted to phone, one had to go 11 km. away. Finally at 4.45 p.m. the doctor sent his assistant Smita-ben to Godhara 40 km. away from Jantral to bring a specialist.

Meanwhile at 5.10 p.m. they fed him watermelon-juice (300 ml) by the same process which I have mentioned above. After taking the juice he lay down on his bed.

It was very, very hot there during those days, around 45°C. I used to take bath at 8.15 p.m. every night. That evening, by chance, I thought of getting my hair cut as I had a headache and it was very hot. The extra weight of hair was really troubling me. For a hair-cut I would have had to go to the village. Seeing

Dadaji's condition I postponed my hair-cutting idea. Kamala-ben was sitting near Dadaji and I told her that I was going out of the room for a few minutes for a change and that if I was needed she should call me. When I went to the garden, there was a patient from Bombay sitting in his wheelchair. Seeing me he asked whether I liked the climate. I told him that it was very hot for me and that I wanted to get my hair cut, but could not go to the village. He told me he had a barber-servant who had all the required instruments to cut my hair immediately. I was ready, sitting there on a bench. The barber came and shortened my hair within 15 minutes and I felt a little relieved. I took a bath and was ready by 6.30 p.m. for Dadaji's service.

At 7.00 p.m. wheat-coffee was fed with the help of the teapot (300 ml). Unwillingly Dadaji swallowed it. It took 15 minutes to feed him. I was sitting on his bed for him to use me as a back-rest. He was leaning against my chest. After the drink Kamala-ben went out and I was alone with him. He had great trouble breathing in and out. The rate of the breaths was increasing steadily.

I began thinking of the Pondicherry Ashram and Sri Aurobindo's Room. I was thinking how nice it would be if we were there, and I started praying in my heart to the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. I recited aloud the last prayer written by the Mother in her *Prayers and Meditations* in French, as I knew it by heart. It was 7.40 p.m. Kamala-ben came back into the room. I asked Dadaji if he wanted to lie down, as he had been sitting against my chest from 7 p.m., but he refused by signing with his head. I remained there supporting him.

Suddenly I felt that some Force had descended. It was so powerful that my whole being, each cell of my body, became full of joy and Ananda. My mind fell silent—no thoughts at all. My body became very light like a piece of paper. I felt as if I was going to fly. I felt vividly the strong presence of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. No fear or worry was in me any more. My whole being had become calm and silent, something which I cannot describe in words.

It was 8.00 p.m. Suddenly Dadaji's body became limp and started bending towards the right side, with his head down, his chin touching his chest. Kamala-ben told me that Dadaji was not closing his eyes. I immediately told her to call the doctor, who was somewhere in the garden. She went and came with him and he started calling, "Dadaji, Dadaji" but there was no sign of any reply. He was completely indrawn and there was no outward consciousness at all from 7.55 p.m. onwards. I wanted to count the pulse but it was very difficult because it was running very fast. The doctor put some liquid medicine into his mouth but it made no difference.

It was 8.10 p.m. The breath became irregular and the pulse also. The doctor told me to lay him down on his bed. Slowly I did so. His gaze was fixed upward without any physical movement. Exactly at 8.15 p.m. he drew his last breath, with a heavy effort, and simultaneously he put his affected right hand on his chest with a swift jerk. He had never been able to do this before; when he

wanted to put his right hand on his chest he used to hold it with his left hand and put it there. Finally, at the last moment, he gained the victory over the disability. His left hand was on the bed His eyes were open, gazing upwards as if he was doing Tratak. I was still in deep joy and Ananda and had no feeling that he had left his body, but then I felt that the divine atmosphere and peace were receding slowly from me. For a moment I felt that I was alone in this huge cosmos and at another moment I felt the Mother's presence very strongly and I started doing the remaining work happily.

At 8.45 p.m the doctor's assistant Smita-ben came with the specialist—too late.

One thing is remarkable here. We had reached Jantral on 10-3-92 at 8.15 p m., and Dadaji left his body just after 60 days on 9-5-92 at 8.15 p.m. He was born 2-2-1903; you remove the 9 and a sum of 8 remains. He left his body on 9-5-1992, you remove all the nines there and there remains a sum of 8. Is it not a mystery? As we all know, 8 is the Mother's most preferred number.

Finally I will say that he showered on me his love and affection, and I was very lucky that he had chosen me to be with him till his last breath. I had enjoyed his divine company very closely for the last three years. I felt too a strong presence of the Mother while I was with him. I found joy in his each and every outward activity.

Many people have asked me, "Why did Champaklal leave his body outside of the Ashram? What had he expressed about his death to you?" etc. I think that it was his decision to leave his body outside of the Ashram because about two years back he had written to us that he would like to leave his body in Gujarat, his native land. As he had given his whole life to the Mother, he may have wanted to give his physical frame to his native place.

On 20 March, when he was in Jantral, Dadaji wrote down, "If I leave my body here the body should be cremated here itself." However, before he left his body (20 days before) he wanted to come to Pondicherry. At the end of March, I asked him how long he wanted to stay in Jantral. He wrote, "As long as the doctor wants me to be here I will be here " On the other hand he had no faith or interest in the treatment. It seemed to me as if he had come only to leave his body there. For example, when we used to tell him that he would walk soon one day and that his right hand would be all right, he, with great emphasis, would say, "No, it will remain as it is." Still the doctor did not lose hope of curing Dadaji. The doctor and his assistants did their best for Dadaji. I think that what happened there was beyond our reason.

RAMCHANDRA DAS

“MY OPERATION AND ESHA’S ROLE IN IT”

AN ACCOUNT BY NIRODBARAN

(4)

(Continued from the issue of September 1992)

ACCORDING to the doctor’s instructions, I had to continue my “catheter life” for some time longer till the bladder regained its normal tone. It was not a happy life by any means, though I was free from any physical complaints. My movements were restricted. I had to walk about carrying a bag concealed under my clothes. For an active man like me this was a severe punishment. I kept wondering how long I had to endure such a cumbersome existence, when all the other parts of my body were crying out for a healthy vigorous life. Sri Aurobindo had said that I must be patient.

Then one day, early in the morning, I had a curious dream. I saw Sri Aurobindo sitting on my bed. His complexion was rather dark and he was sweating. I clearly saw beads of perspiration all over his chest. I got up from my bed and said to him, “You are sweating. Shall I fan you?” He kept silent. I do not remember if I tried to wipe away the sweat or not.

That very evening, my former assistant doctor, who had returned from his leave, came to see me at an appointed time in the Nursing Home. He examined me, tested the capacity of my bladder, and informed me that the catheter treatment should stop. The bladder was not getting any chance to act on its own because it was being drained mechanically. This would make it more atonic, not less. “Let us try a new method which is now being practised whenever possible,” he said. “I have been thinking about it since this morning for your case. It is very simple if you are prepared to take a little trouble.” Then he demonstrated the method before our Ashram doctor and nurses. “It is called self-catheterisation,” he explained. “You have to use the catheter only four times a day. You must observe antiseptic precautions. Even so there might be minor infections at times, but they can be kept under control. Are you prepared for this?” he asked me.

I assented immediately. It would certainly be a heavenly boon for me, because then I could enjoy all my usual activities like a normal person, participate in group, run, cycle and so on.

The doctor was pleased and said, “I am relieved. I was afraid that you might not want to go through with it, because it would entail some trouble and risk.” He left after assuring me that he would be ready to visit me whenever I might need his help. He gave me hope that this catheterisation also would be dropped with the improvement of my general health.

Later on, I asked Esha to inquire why Sri Aurobindo had been sweating when he came to me in my dream. She told me that he had said it was because he was working on me...an enigmatic answer indeed.

Such is the story of my blessed operation. All’s well that ends well

(Concluded)

THE TRIBUTE

I WOULD like to gather
The charm and marvel
Of all the flaming flowers,
The enchantment of golden morns,
The peace of pearly eves
To offer at Thy Feet.
And all that is precious in life—
A child’s innocent smile,
The nobility of a sage,
The selflessness of the great
And the ardour of the brave,
I would bring to Thy altar.
But all these forever belong to Thee
In this wide world
Nothing is there, O Sweet,
That I may call mine.
Sorely am I perplexed.
What to bring
As my adoration’s joyous tribute?
A small shade
Of Thy perfections,
I can offer Thee
Only this temporal illusion
Of a separate “I”.

SHYAM KUMARI

THE STORY OF A SOUL

BY HUTA

(Continued from the September issue 1992)

The Mother's Message

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



A NAGGING anxiety rose in me—my nerves were torn to pieces—I felt as if I were alone groping to find my way in the shuddering darkness. A thousand doubts and queries assailed me

I was exhausted. Often I wished to leave my burdensome body and find relief in nothingness. I had not been able to sleep. I lay awake hour after hour, haunted, tormented, and then drifted into queer disturbing dreams with mingled fantasy and images of reality.

The nauseating sensation of a deep unease returned again and again to gnaw

at my stomach. I felt sick as though sinking into the fathomless pit of the subconscious.

The adverse forces assaulted me through people, situations and surroundings. The cruel, heedless forces swarmed over my consciousness like maggots on meat. They gave me terrible creeps.

Moreover, the Mother was totally silent about the *Savitri* paintings. What should I do? My life seemed without an aim. I was suffering from an inferiority complex.

I knew there were so many claims on the Mother's time. Yet I longed to see her. For I realised nobody else was there for me to turn to and confide my woe.

Life was too boring, too disgusting. I wanted very much to withdraw. I expressed my feeling to the Mother. She answered:

Huta my dear little child,

It is your full right to refuse to live in this world if you do not like it.

But to get out of it, is not so easy as you think. Death is not the solution, far from it. Death is a clumsy and mechanical return to the endless round of existences, and what you have not achieved in one life, you have to do in the second, generally in much more difficult circumstances. The feelings that are weighing upon you now are surely the result of a previous failure. And if, once more, you accept the defeat, next time it will surely be still worse.

There is only one way of getting free from life altogether, it is to go to Nirvana; and this can be obtained only by a very strict tapasya of complete detachment.

There is also another and more simple way of getting out of trouble, it is to take refuge in the Divine's Love.

With my blessings.

Still the notion of death was hovering in my mind. The life I had accepted was exceedingly tough. I was entangled in a web of psychological struggle.

The following morning the Mother called me to the Meditation Hall upstairs and made me understand the truth of life. Later I noted down what she had said and sent it to her for confirmation. Here is her talk:

Child, you must be obstinate. You see, the Supreme Lord Himself is very obstinate. He persists in His aim of taking away all obscurity, inertia and unhappiness from human beings and making them perfect. This process goes on in an endless cycle. He does not change human beings suddenly. Everything has its own time.

Failure always comes in human life but even he who fails can go one step forward to his goal. Not a single person can escape from misery, difficulty and failure.

A few people seem highly educated and intellectual, they are praised by many for their remarkable work and success, but, after all, these 'wise' people are full of ignorance, and in the end they fail to achieve their goal.

A person gets married, has children and all the rest, he is not happy at all. At the end he falls into the chasm of death and again he comes into this world. This goes on, and on, and on until he finds the Truth

This world is the only place where man can progress and lessen the burden of his past life and present life and get ready for the next more fortunate birth to find something higher and more beautiful. It is only here in this world that you are given the opportunity to progress towards the Eternal.

I have seen many other worlds, which are dull, grey and full of darkness, where people are bored and are groping to find happiness.

I know the beginning of the world and its end up to Eternity Your failure is that of your past birth and not of your present birth. Failure is nothing but a step forward to your success. You will have to dig in each step carefully and set your feet firmly and proceed in future to the Truth. But you must be obstinate

The highest cannot be realised until one becomes perfect. It takes years after years, century after century. However, you must be obstinate like the Supreme Lord Be more and more obstinate in front of your own defects.

Life is not so simple and straight It is like the waves of an ocean.

Do not care about what people say They are ignorant—their judgement leads you nowhere.

Remain in the vastness of Supreme Love, Truth, Light and Peace

This is the Law of the Supreme

Now it was the last day of December The Mother gave me her photograph in which she is looking up. She called the picture "Realisation". After pointing to the pose she advised:

Child, you see, here I look upward. I always do so Beauty, Peace, and Light are there above They are ready to come down. Aspire always by looking up to them to manifest upon earth.

Never, never look down at the filth of falsehood—the ugly things of the world.

Look upward with me and there you will find the Supreme Truth.

With these luminous words came the end of the year 1960.

(To be continued)

SATYAJIT RAY: AN ARTISTE

(Continued from the issue of September 1992)

SATYAJIT Ray passed matriculation in 1936 at an age less than 15 years. Though he wanted to study Arts subjects, the great statistician Prasanta Mohalanabis, a friend of his father, influenced young Manik to study Economics with Science subjects. He did not like it and said later that his College days were rather unproductive as the study was against his aptitude. However, he graduated from the famous Presidency College in 1940 with Economics as his subject.

Earlier, Tagore had asked Manik to join his University at Shantiniketan. There is an interesting story behind it. Some time during the later part of 1929 Tagore found planchetting an interesting pastime. One day the spirit of Sukumar Roy, the son of his old friend, Upendra Kishore, appeared and requested Tagore to get his son admitted to his institution. Tagore consented on condition that Sukumar's wife agreed. Sukumar implored Tagore to request her. The whole dialogue, it is said, has been recorded and kept in the Archive at Visva-Bharati. The mother agreed and the son, though not much inclined at the beginning, was admitted after graduation in 1940 to the Kala Bhaban—painting and drawing section—of the University. Satyajit admitted later that it is here only that his audio-visual senses were really developed. He admitted his gratefulness to Acharya Nandalal Bose, sitting at whose feet he learnt how there is no life in the simple outlines of a cow, but there is flesh and blood inside. Nandalal taught him to hear the inner rhythm of nature. And his gratitude and love for his other Guru, Binod Behari Mukhopadhyay, a painter who had gone blind, was expressed in his best documentary film, *The Inner Eye*, on the life and work of his master. His third source of inspiration was the great sculptor Ramkinkar Baij.

Though Tagore did not live for long after Ray's admission in Visva-Bharati, Manik treasured one valuable gift from the poet throughout his life. When he had first met Rabindranath with his mother, he had requested the poet to write a poem in his note book. The poet satisfied him but not instantaneously. He asked him to come on the next day when Manik received the very famous few lines in Bengali, the meaning of which, the poet said to his mother, would be revealed to the boy as he matured in age.

A free translation of the poem is given here—

“Spending a huge sum we have been going, for very long, to see distant mountains and seas and lands. But we haven't seen with our wide-open eyes a single dewdrop glistening on the head of a single paddy only a few steps ahead of our door.”

After completing his studies at Shantiniketan Manik joined D.J. Keymer and Co. in 1943 as a commercial artist. The world of visual communication kept

him raptly engaged from 1943 to 1953. Satyajit soon established himself as a great graphic artist with his own style and individual mark. He made the art form more creative, effective and respectable with the magic touch of his genius. Before his time it was mostly a copying of the Anglo-Indian art form. He emancipated it from all inhibitions. Later he started the illustration of books. But it was more than a visual transcription of the words of the book. His drawings on bookcovers were exhibited in different international exhibitions and he received international awards in 1950 and 1953. Soon he became famous in this work. He used its art-form later for the purpose of his cinemas. While he was working on his film *Satranj Ke Khiladi*, the then Curator of the Victoria Memorial, Calcutta, reports having seen Ray minutely sketching the portrait of Gajuddin Hayder of Lucknow. Later Ray explained that his photographic reproduction of the crown of the Nawab of Lucknow was not very distinct and complete with all details. Therefore he sketched it. While filming *Sonar Kella*, he required a big painting of Jamini Roy. Instead of searching for it, he simply drew a picture of Jamini Roy which better served the purpose. From the beginning Ray used to draw all advertisement matters and posters for his own films. But he very candidly admitted, "Master Mashai (Nandalal) taught me there was something more than superficial outlines that artists and painters must be aware of. He taught us that in objects the most significant aspect was the inner rhythm which must be caught." (As quoted in *Desh*—28.3 92—p. 30)

Because he would catch this inner rhythm of painting and music, sights and sounds of Nature and the inner rhythm of life, he became a real artiste who knew the science and art of his subject and never hesitated to learn more when required.

He was proud of seeing *Tarzan the Apeman*, the first talkie of the world produced at Hollywood in 1928. Whatever he did, however great he was in other fields, filmography was the centre of his attraction. All other art-forms added to the greatness of the film for Ray. Around the year 1944 he started writing scripts for cinemas and occasionally he wrote articles on the Cinema. In 1950 he was sent to the U.K. by his employer for higher training. During his stay there for nearly five months he saw some 100 films by eminent film-makers. He was impressed by the neo-realist Italian film-maker De Sica, particularly his *Bicycle Thief*. While making illustrations for Bibhutī Bhushan Bandopadhyay's book *Pather Panchali*, the idea of filming it perhaps arose in his mind. On his return from the U.K. Satyajit Ray started working on the script of *Pather Panchali*. The reason for his choice was, "its qualities, its humanism, its lyricism and its ring of truth." We have already said, the film was later adjudged 'the best human document' at the Cannes film-festival.

Now a few words about this first film of his which won the day with overwhelming strength and originality. A new cinema-age began with the unheard-of detailed picture of such insignificant things that were never before

thought to be a subject for films. Before working on the film Satyajit worked for some time with the famous French Director Jean Renoir while the latter was shooting his picture *The River* in Calcutta. Incidentally, some critics have opined that perhaps the French people understood him better than many of his countrymen. Starting to work with Renoir he ended by receiving the Légion d'Honneur from the President of France. His *Sakha Prasakha* was produced by the French Erola Films. Sound-taking of the film was done by Pierre Lenoir.

Pather Panchali (Song of the Road) was released on 26 August 1955. Ray worked on it for four years. It was produced at a very cheap cost (which he always maintained) with a casting of mostly new or little known artistes, particularly selected by the Director as was his wont throughout his career. As the work progressed he had to face an acute financial crunch. His wife had to sell her ornaments, he took loans from his friends and relatives and yet he could not finish the picture. He approached the then Chief Minister of West Bengal, Dr. B.C. Roy. Neither he nor his Government had any programme to help film-making or extending help for it. But as in many other matters, Dr. Roy took the bold decision of producing the film by his Government. Behind his decision, it is said, he considered the family background of Ray. It may be that Basanti Devi, wife of the late C.R. Das, also requested Dr. Roy. And the Chief Minister was impressed by the self-confidence in the young man. He had to reply to questions in the Assembly for his queer decision, so considered in those days. At the distribution-stage also the film was in trouble. Finally the Aurora Film Corporation came to its rescue. For the first few weeks the halls were going almost empty. Credit for a turn of the tide goes to Pankaj Bhusan Dutta, the cinema critic of the largest commercial literary Bengali magazine, *Desh*. Shri Dutta from the beginning profusely praised the picture and predicted its international acceptance. Gradually it attracted people and the film commenced rising from stage to stage of success. So it may be rightly remarked that Ray had the capacity and he was helped at the right moment to go up, not pulled down or left to languish on his own. With *Pather Panchali* Satyajit created a new genre. Many became his followers. It was fresh, new, unheard-of, unseen before. But behind all these qualities we should with great respect remember the creator of the story, his capacity and sympathy for the poor, his love for the untrodden path. The creator behind the creation was its writer Bibhutibhusan Bandopadhyay to whom Ray remained always grateful and whose influence on his life he always admitted. We understand that the Mother of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram saw the film. Many were struck by the stark poverty depicted in it.

From 1955 to 1991 Satyajit Ray produced 28 feature-films and 8 documentaries—out of which one was a tele-film. For all his films he wrote the script as well as directed the entire film and its music. In some cases the story also was his own. Apart from this he helped in many ways other Directors by directing the music, etc. The last film where his story was adopted was

directed by his son Sandwip Ray and the music was directed by himself. It was *Gupi Bagha Fire Elo* (Gupi and Bagha Have Come Back). It was done in keeping with the tradition of *Gupi Gayne Bagha Bayne* and the father's influence was insurmountable in it. In fact it was the last of Satyajit Ray's creations.

(To be continued)

AJU MUKHOPADHYAY

SIMPLENESS

WHEN I hear the summering wind's long and liquid sigh
 And feel Nature's bursting bloom
 Still held back behind the curtain of rain,
 There's that anticipation of Winter's end,
 As must feel the germ when shuddering it breaks through the last carapace
 and soil

Bursting with a force of green
 Rising to the sun.
 An upsurge earth-wide, a resurgence vast
 Of the little trillion things that thrill to aliveness.
 All creation stretches and yawns
 Shaking back into its forgotten skin
 Refilling it with the animal suppleness and grace
 Of the artless leopard,
 The sleekness without fat,
 The forward stride and leap,
 The antelope's quicker swerves.

A sudden shift of wind
 And the leaf is brushed aside
 By streaking sun-rays
 Rushing in answer to a flower's cry for light.

ARVIND HABBU

KASHMIR IN ITS TRUE PERSPECTIVE

Reproduced here are excerpts from the inaugural speech of India's High Commissioner to the U.K., Dr. L.M. Singhvi, at the seminar on "Kashmir in the Changing International Environment" organised recently at India House in London. Our acknowledgments are due to *India Perspectives*, May 1992, pp. 2-6.

I CONSIDER it a proud privilege to open this Seminar on Kashmir as it reinforces and strengthens India's resolute fight against disinformation and confusion on Kashmir. The Seminar is particularly welcome because it represents a meaningful method of communication and interaction between two open and democratic societies (those of Britain and India). I regard this Seminar as a convocation of shared concerns, and I hope that the faith and convictions which inspire this colloquium will bear fruit for better Indo-British understanding and greater goodwill.

May I say at the outset that I have had many opportunities to outline the basic Indian position on Kashmir from time to time. I took the liberty of writing to Members of Parliament at great length soon after I arrived in London, explaining the historical, legal, moral and political aspects of India's principled position. I found that epistolary exercise a useful and rewarding method of keeping in touch with makers and leaders of public opinion in Britain. I had to seek the hospitality of the columns of British newspapers to fight the campaigns of calumny against India by interested, often highly biased and opinionated agitators and exponents as well as by unwitting victims of superficial oversimplification. I have also had occasions to share my anguish and concern with countless genuine friends of India in Britain, including Ministers, Members of Parliament, officials, editors, journalists, Mayors, Councillors, teachers, students and intellectuals, including many of them of Asian origin. The Seminar represents an important culminating event as well as a landmark point of an ongoing endeavour on a continuing basis.

My first proposition is that the Republic of India was founded as a democratic and secular society wedded to pluralism, equality, liberty and individual dignity. India has the second largest Muslim population in the world, much larger than Pakistan. Minority rights are guaranteed and are judicially enforceable. So are individual human rights. There are less than four million Muslims in Kashmir valley in a total population of about seven million in Jammu and Kashmir. There are about 116 million Muslims in the rest of India. The integrity and unity of India is vital to the well-being of the whole of the sub-continent, including those 116 million Muslims. Let us remember that there is no problem of individual, group, federal or area rights which cannot be resolved fairly and justly within the framework of the Indian Constitution.

My next proposition is that when the transfer of power was effected and the Partition of India took place, there was a lapse of British paramountcy and the State of Jammu and Kashmir exercised its option by acceding to India through its legal sovereign, the Ruler of Jammu and Kashmir, and through its democratic and political representatives represented by National Conference under the leadership of Sheikh Abdullah. That accession by itself was unquestionably legal and clearly irrevocable. The latter-day conundrum, canard and concoction in scholarly disguise to insinuate that the Indian armed forces had entered before the Instrument of Accession was signed is an instance of total distortion and pre-meditated misinterpretation. Indeed, the accession became doubly irrevocable in 1951 and 1956 on the basis of universal adult suffrage. Let me also point out that Lord Mountbatten had himself accepted the Instrument of Accession and that it was after the accession that the Indian forces went into Jammu and Kashmir, when Lord Mountbatten was not only the Governor-General of India but also the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces as well as the Chairman of the Joint Defence Council of India and Pakistan.

My next proposition is that Pakistan had no *locus standi*, to begin with, and lost its *locus standi* in respect of Kashmir many times over during the last 45 years. First of all, Pakistan had no *locus standi* after the Accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India. Its troops disguised as tribals had no business to trespass into Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan lost its *locus standi*, even if it had any, when its disclaimer of involvement in the armed invasion was proved to be a piece of palpable prevarication. When India went to the UN to complain of Pakistan's aggression, Pakistan pleaded innocence and said that the incursion into Jammu and Kashmir was by tribal Kabailis and not by its troops. It was demonstrated in due course that regular Pak troops were disguised as tribals and that they had committed the most barbaric atrocities upon the people of Kashmir who rose to fight the Pakistan aggression. It is a travesty of all principles and procedures that the successful complainant should be faulted by the nation that was found guilty.

Pakistan again lost its *locus standi* when it failed to vacate its aggression and to withdraw its troops from the well-defined territory of the State of Jammu and Kashmir as required by the UN resolutions. The immediate withdrawal of Pakistani troops from Jammu and Kashmir in 1948-49 was the pre-requisite precondition of the UN Resolutions, and having failed to comply with it at the relevant time, Pakistan has no legal or moral basis any more for demanding a plebiscite. It was India which had made the offer of plebiscite. It was a time-bound offer for no more than 12 weeks. In any case, the plebiscite offer or the UN provision for it contemplated the withdrawal of Pakistani troops and tribals and the plebiscite idea was thus frustrated. The UN resolutions in this regard have to be read as a whole and in their historical context, and not in a truncated and lopsided manner. Moreover, in addition to retaining Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, a fruit of wanton aggression, Pakistan has made a gift of parts of

Jammu and Kashmir to China. Worse still, Pakistan has waged three wars of aggression and is at present engaged in an undeclared proxy war against India. By fighting these wars and by funding, fuelling and fanning the forces of fundamentalism, terrorism, secessionism and subversion in Jammu and Kashmir, our neighbour has imperilled the fabric of peace in the subcontinent. Perhaps I should also add that clandestine trade in narcotic drugs has been found to be intimately intertwined with terrorism, fundamentalism, secessionism and subversion. Finally, after the Shimla Agreement all disputes and differences have to be settled "by peaceful means through bilateral negotiations or by any other peaceful means mutually agreed upon between them". It was a term of the Shimla Agreement that "pending the final settlement of any of the problems between the two countries, neither side shall unilaterally alter the situation and both shall prevent the organisation, assistance or encouragement of any acts detrimental to the maintenance of peaceful and harmonious relations." These were the premises for the pursuit of durable peace in the subcontinent. It is clear that in recent years, there has been a systematic spate of acts detrimental to the maintenance of peaceful and harmonious relations in a bid to try and unilaterally alter the situation between the two countries. The responsibility for these detrimental acts lies squarely on Pakistan.

My fourth proposition is that the so-called demand for independent Kashmir, the so-called third option, is historically and legally without any basis, and politically it would be a source of endless intrigue, perpetual unrest and calculated destabilisation of one or the other country, and the exploitation of Jammu and Kashmir as a pawn on the international chessboard. Those who speak for the third option on the basis of the principle of self-determination do not appear to understand the concept which is confined in international law to decolonisation and cannot be used as a tool for disintegrating multicultural sovereign, democratic States. Self-determination within sovereign, democratic States means internal democracy, autonomy, human rights and self-preservation of the integrity and unity of the State. Nor can the frontiers of nations and the world be divided on the basis of theocratic fanaticism and fundamentalist demographic divisions. In other words, self-determination in democratic societies implies the right of suffrage, protection of group and minority rights including a measure of autonomy and the right to freedom in all its aspects, and not a right of secession and the wilful destruction and disintegration of existing States. I should be allowed to sound a note of caution when I hear an impulsive, imprudent, impudent and premature requiem for State sovereignty, the wages of which may well be suicidal for those who are thoughtlessly overstretching the concept of self-determination.

My final proposition is that in respect of human rights issues in Jammu and Kashmir, we have to differentiate carefully between those who are genuinely interested and concerned and those who use it as grist to their anti-Indian

propaganda mill. I would like to say that I am second to none in my concern for and advocacy of human rights everywhere in the world. I believe that India would not be the kind of State it is and was meant to be without its human rights concerns and commitments. India's two articles of faith are democratic process based on universal adult franchise and rule of law based on enforceable guarantees of basic human rights. Those articles of faith are based on equality, liberty, fraternity of all Indian people, and the dignity of every individual Indian. These values have been embittered in Jammu and Kashmir by religious fanaticism and organised violence sponsored from across our frontiers. How can anyone with a modicum of objectivity turn a blind eye to theocracy, fundamentalism, authoritarianism and denial of human rights in Pak-Occupied Kashmir, not to speak of Pakistan? How can we turn a deaf ear to the bewailing misery of the victims of terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir and to the cries of thousands of Kashmiris rendered homeless by misguided militants for whom terrorism has become a way of life and a means of livelihood? I do not for a moment condone any human rights violation by any official or by any member of security forces in any part of India.

We in India know only too well that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. We have in India an open society, a free, articulate and unfettered press, a fearless legal profession and an independent judiciary. We have innumerable human rights groups and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in India who have never been found wanting in taking up human rights issues—real, apparent or imaginary. We know only too well how concoctions may often be fashioned and tailor-made to suit the machinations of the merchants of motivated misinformation. Having said that, may I say that every authority, every civilian, military and paramilitary officer in India is accountable in terms of human rights compliance. The Indian army, let it be remembered, is a professional army under civilian control and India cannot allow its fair name to be tarnished by false allegations. George Verghese and his colleagues in the Press Council Committee have shown that on the whole, the Indian army has a good human rights record and is more sinned against than sinning. There are, at the same time, many cases in which officers of security forces have been punished, strictures have been passed and judicial writs, orders and directions have been issued to redress grievances and give content to freedom. For every human rights wrong, there is a human rights remedy in the Indian system. No doubt, we need to strengthen that system and to make it more incisive, efficacious and expeditious. After all, there is no human rights utopia in the world where perfection has been achieved. The point is that India is constantly striving to fulfill its human rights obligations, and that is a great deal more than what can be said of Pakistan or Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir. There is a basic qualitative difference between the two countries in this respect. In any event, the Indian State is fully accountable to its elected democratic institutions, to public opinion and the

media, to judicial institutions and the United Nations system created by ECOSOC and the two International Human Rights Covenants.

May I conclude by expressing the hope that this Seminar will help us all to understand and analyse the Kashmir issue in a perspective of totality of circumstances and to appreciate and explain India's just and fair position in all its aspects. I hope that the concerns of India will be widely shared in Great Britain and a tripartite approach or an all-party consensus on Britain's approach to India will emerge. All that India wants is to be left alone from hostile intrusions, engineered incursions, disguised infiltrations and naked invasions. India wants to be left alone to find satisfactory solutions to its problems within the framework of its liberal and humanistic constitutional system and without even becoming insensitive or indifferent to human problems, human needs, human rights and human obligations. But first we must be spared the vagaries and vandalism of fundamentalism, secessionism and terrorism.

MANGO-DOGGEREL

It was a mango, I believe.
 With which the serpent tempted Eve—
 What other fruit's so fragrant on the tree,
 So golden, plump and fair to see?
 And 'Knowledge' is its symbol-name;
 Surely no apple, mere green or red,
 Could cause a Fall so deep and dread!

But these bright branches heavy-laden
 Tempt still, though still to most forbidden;
 And many an Eve-like village maiden
 Urges her man to rob the garden—
 Until in patriarchal rage
 We drive them out and, flaming sore,
 Post a watchman at the door!

SHRADDHAVAN

SRI AUROBINDO—THE SOUL OF INDIA

(Continued from the issue of September 1992)

BENGAL was the scenario of a mighty revolution. The hero of that revolution was Sri Aurobindo with his group of revolutionary youths who were trained up explicitly for the country's cause and had dedicated their lives for *Purna-Swaraj* (Complete Self-Government). The primary object of the revolution was to break away from the orthodox and traditional thought that had continued for about a quarter of a century (1885-1905) and to introduce a New Thought, or we may call it a spirit, which was to accomplish an intellectual revolution in the minds of the country's people and kindle in them a burning desire for national freedom. Sri Aurobindo was the father of the New Thought which was an exposition of a philosophy of Nationalism in which he laid the foundation of a scientific approach against the ruling moderate and mendicant thought of the Congress.

On August 6th Bipin Chandra Pal started an English weekly called the *Bande Mataram*. He asked Sri Aurobindo to join his venture, to which he readily agreed as he saw that it was an excellent opportunity for starting the public propaganda necessary for his revolutionary purpose. When *Bande Mataram* was filed there were many conjectures about how it was filed, and where Sri Aurobindo was involved. So it is better to take his own account. He writes: "Bepin Pal started the *Bande Mataram* with Rs. 500 00 in his pocket donated by Haridas Haldar. He called in my help as an assistant editor and I gave it. I called a private meeting of the young Nationalist leaders in Calcutta and they agreed to take up the *Bande Mataram* as their party paper with Subodh and Nirod Mullick as the principal financial supporters. A company was projected, and formed, but the paper was financed and kept up meanwhile by Subodh. Bepin Pal who was strongly supported by C R. Das and others remained as editor. Hemendra Prasad Ghose and Shyam Sunder joined the editorial staff but they could not get on with Bepin Babu and were supported by the Mullicks. Finally, Bepin Babu had to retire. I don't remember whether in November or December, probably the latter. I was myself very ill, almost to death, in my father-in-law's house in Serpentine Lane and I did not know what was going on. They put my name as editor on the paper without my consent, but I spoke to the secretary pretty harshly and had the insertion discontinued. I also wrote a strong letter on the subject to Subodh. From that time Bepin Pal had no connection with the *Bande Mataram*. Somebody said that he resumed his editorship after I was arrested in the Alipore Case. I never heard of that. I was told by Bejoy Chatterji after I came out from jail that he, Shyam Sunder and Hemendra Prasad had carried on somehow with the paper, but the finances became impossible, so he deliberately wrote an article which made the Government come down on the paper and stop

its publication, so that the *Bande Mataram* might end with some *éclat* and in all honour."¹

The *Bande Mataram*, like the *Yugantar* in Bengali, had a brief though fiery career. If the *Yugantar* had a meteoric career, that of the *Bande Mataram* was no less impressive. As an official organ of the Nationalist Party, its policy was one of non-cooperation, passive resistance, swadeshi, boycott, national education, settlement of disputes in law by popular arbitration. These were the basic planks for the policy of the *Bande Mataram*.

This paper became a joint stock company with a Board of Directors. The editorial responsibility was vested in the Board so that Government could not prosecute any individual. The Board could bear the responsibility and face the prosecution. That is why it became an eyesore to the Government. So Sri Aurobindo continued the work as actual Editor though it was the Board who took the responsibility. The Anglo-Indian Press bitterly complained that although the editorial articles of the *Bande Mataram* were diabolically clever and reeked with sedition, the paper was still legally inaccessible because of the superb skill of the writer. Mr. Ratcliffe, the then editor of the *Statesman* (Calcutta), wrote a letter to the *Manchester Guardian* (on December 26, 1950): "We know Aurobindo Ghose only as a revolutionary nationalist and editor of a flaming newspaper which struck a ringing new note in Indian journalism. It was in 1906, shortly after Curzon's retirement, that Aurobindo and his friends started *Bande Mataram* (Hail to the Mother). It had a full size sheet, was clearly printed on green paper, and was full of leading and special articles written in English with a brilliance and pungency not hitherto attained in the Indian Press. It was the most effective voice of what we called nationalist extremism."

Bipin Chandra Pal was perhaps the first great leader of Indian extreme thought who gave expression to the doctrine of organised Passive Resistance. When he left, Sri Aurobindo continued Pal said: "The hand of the master was in it from the very beginning. Its bold attitude, its vigorous thinking, its clear ideas, its chaste and powerful diction, its scorching sarcasm and refined witticism, were unsurpassed by any journal in the country, either Indian or Anglo-Indian. It even forced itself upon the notice of the callous and self-centred British press. Long extracts from it commenced to be reproduced week after week even in the exclusive columns of the *Times* in London. It was a force in the country which none dared to ignore, however much they might fear or hate it; and Aravinda was the leading spirit, the central figure, in the new journal."²

The life of the *Bande Mataram* as an extremist organ was a short-lived one. (August 1906-October 1908.) The name *Bande Mataram* was taken from a song embodying the vision of Bankim Chandra Chatterji in 1882. It became a battle cry of Nationalism in 1905. It was the Mantra of Nationalism voiced by millions of people "on the fateful day of August 7, 1905 in connection with the historic Town Hall meeting, promulgating the resolution of Boycott and Swadeshi."

We narrate below the historic growth of the *Bande Mataram* and its role in Indian Nationalism with excerpts from Haridas and Uma Mukherjee. "A sedate scholar like Satis Chandra Mukherjee of the *Dawn* and the Dawn Society observed in 1905: '*Bande mataram*, Hail, Mother!—What Bengali heart is not set beating faster at the sound of the two magic words? When the late Bankim Chandra Chatterjee in his immortal work—*Ananda Math*, 'The Abode of Joy'—first sang the heart-stirring and soul-lifting song, the opening words of which have furnished Modern Bengal with a battle-cry and a divine inspiration, so to say—could he have dreamt of the transformation—the miraculous and wonderful transformation—which the two mellifluous words were destined to work in the hopes and aspirations of his degenerate countrymen? The welkin now rings with *Bande Mataram*. The streets and lanes of Calcutta and of the rest of the province resound with the solemn watch-word. *Bande Mataram* has stirred the hearts of the people to their depths.' Satis Chandra was a classmate of Asutosh Mukherjee and had along with him participated in the memorable students' demonstrations of 1883 and had been since then a close observer of current affairs. He was one of the great pioneers of the Swadeshi Movement of 1905 and as such his observations on the evolution of *Bande Mataram* naturally carry a special significance. Sri Aurobindo also may be cited as another corroborative authority on the point. A devoted admirer of Bankim ever since 1893-94, he wrote in 1907: 'It was thirty-two years ago that Bankim wrote his great song and few listened; but in a sudden moment of awakening from long delusions the people of Bengal looked round for the truth and in a fated moment somebody sang *Bande Mataram* ' ”³

(To be continued)

NILIMA DAS

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QUANTUM AND THE ENORMOUS CHANGE

(Continued from the issue of September 1992)

PART II

THE GROWTH AND DOCTRINATION OF CHRISTIANITY

Background Pertaining to the Incorporation of the Ptolemaic System in the Christian Theology

Our concluding question in the previous section was: why and how did the Church incorporate the faulty and incomplete Ptolemaic System in its doctrinal theology?

We shall not begin by probing into this particular astronomical view of the universe; instead, we shall first consider the matter in a more general manner. That is, our initial discussion will outline certain historical facts and analyse, in brief, how Christianity spread, infiltrated and gripped the religious mind of man. By the time we begin to assess the “why” of our question, we shall have already begun to pick up clues to its answer. Short notes on the deterioration of Christianity and the coming of the “dark night of the Middle Ages” will prepare us to receive the works of Copernicus and Galileo.

We shall therefore start with the historical facts that led up to the establishment of the Roman Empire. Before the Roman Empire came into existence what existed was a Roman Republic, showing the early signs of its growth around 500 BC. Two and a half centuries were to elapse by the time the city of Rome acquired the command of the Italian peninsula (264 BC). In this period the growing Republic had already stamped its speciality on the pages of history. A practical bent of mind and a love for organisation were the qualifying identity of these Romans; and it was this which helped them to develop and establish a more-than-healthy government, a powerful and capable system supported by a strong army. Carthage was defeated and destroyed in 146 BC and Macedon (Greece) annexed; the Roman Senate had now “become the arbiter of the Hellenistic world”. The century to follow was a testing phase for the Republic since it was undergoing a major reformation.

The Empire had steadily grown large and with it came a lot of misrule leading to social disorder; to add to it, a very conventional Senate stifled all liberalizations. Such a state of affairs went on up to 27 BC, which marked the coming of Augustus Octavian—one of the most skilful and able administrators and the greatest ruler Rome had ever seen. With the transformation in the political system, new standardisation of taxes and a complete control of law and order, he established a strong Empire.

Augustus’s organisational system had achieved a high order of stability and

for the coming two centuries, even with the lack of quality-leaders at the helm, it did not lead to disintegration of the "One World". A happy balance between centralisation and decentralisation, unity and diversity, had carried the Pax Romana through its peak until the decline set in at the end of the second century—after the death of Marcus Aurelius in 180 AD.

We have just indicated that the identity of the Romans lay in their predominantly practical bent of mind. True, they lacked qualitative thinking for a classical and philosophical culture, such as we witness in the Greek civilisation; the imagination and speculation that could cultivate an intellectual climate to receive intuition from a higher world was missing. Nor, on the other hand, did the Romans possess a religion with strong and influential rituals and practices as, for example, Islam did and still does. But the Roman ingenuity lay in the fields of organisation and practical sciences.

This missing religious basis or drive had two important effects in the history of the Empire. Firstly, there arose no question of imposing any religion or "godly" ideas on the conquered lands—as the Muslims did in India. On the contrary, the growth of the Empire only exposed the spiritual emptiness in the Roman culture and thus it was the turn of the Romans to borrow and absorb the various ideas, mythologies, practices from the civilisations they annexed. The second point is that the Senate had little interest in the diverse and complicated administrative systems of the provinces Rome had conquered. As a consequence "it gave the provincial governor a free reign so long as he raised recruits for the army" and collected the taxes. This meant that, in the various provinces, the existing religious rituals could be practised quite freely and the various 'schools of thought' could carry along their natural course quite unhindered. Therefore, when Christianity arose, there were no official attempts to suppress it, rather it enjoyed a freedom equal to those of the well-established religions and old traditions of the time. There was a kind of secularism in the Roman Empire.

In contrast to this Roman nature, let us briefly glance at the Judaic character. One of the most important features that we recognise about the Jews is their extreme adhesion to tradition; their culture had come to establish sets of strict conventions that were interwoven with daily activities. Also, their religion was basically a defensive one; they never preached the faith of Moses to a non-Jew since they believed themselves to be the 'Chosen People'. The process, if at all it was there, of converting to Judaism was complicated and uninviting. At the same time foreign religions and ideas were detested. An unflinching belief in Moses and in his words, an ingrained traditionalism, and a current of zeal that "ran with the strength of a torrent" against the smallest foreign attempts of imposition of practices and ideas on their culture mark the predominant traits of the Judaic people. We shall shortly see in a wider perspective how, amongst other happenings, "Christianity retained the Jewish belief in a living God, and a passion for righteousness" and alongside how it "absorbed Greek thought"

Breaking away from some of these Judaic traits Christ, who was actually

born in what by the current calendar would be c. 4 BC and grew up in a Jewish environment, began to preach 'the message of love' and to help the deprived classes of people by instilling in them faith in God. This also included the miraculous curing of physical ailments as tangible signs of the message's worthiness. By the time of his crucifixion he had gathered quite a large following, among which figured the 12 Apostles—those who were close to him and who later spread his teachings.

Here it might be considered important to underline the following: Christ never put down any of his teachings in the form of writing. Most of what we find today in the *New Testament* is an edited version of what some of his immediate disciples had preached. And even this was mostly written fairly long after the death of Christ.

Christianity was an absolutely new religion and had no traditions, had only new ideas to offer. Naturally, therefore, in order to put it across to the people it was most essential to base it on existing traditions and conventions, borrowing established philosophies, sciences and mythologies. To a certain extent it had to meet the psychological needs of the people and at the same time create a religion tangible but not demanding like the Jewish one. The common man needs rituals and practices without which he sees no meaning in a religion. Understandably, therefore, "in its anxiety to spread, Christianity used the language of every race and class and country". The Apostles themselves depended heavily on the local customs and philosophies of the various nations. It is in this "syncretistic nature of Christianity, that is, the new religion's capacity for borrowing and absorbing the doctrines and practices of older beliefs" that emerges the answer to our starting question.

Let us pick up a few instances to illustrate the prevailing situation. One person who was significantly instrumental in spreading Christian views was St Paul. He made a number of missionary journeys across the Roman Empire, which was then at the peak of its glory (50 AD). He had been a Jew himself before he subscribed to the views of Christ, and was thus fully aware of the elaborate sets of rituals that formed a strict part of the law of Jehova. A lot of these he disposed of as he began to build a new religion. He eliminated, for example, the restrictions on food habits—the practice of not eating pork followed in the Jewish customs. Basically, he created an acceptable religion by incorporating a simplified version of existing local traditions and customs. It should be noted here that not all the primary apostles quite appreciated this approach of St Paul; it can, however, be said that "Christianity, at first, was preached by Jews to Jews, as a reformed Judaism".

But this is not all. Traditions and practices differed from region to region; besides, these would also gradually change in the course of time. Thus Christianity needed a stabler ground, a firmer hold on the religious minds of the people. And this it achieved by incorporating the various scriptural notions and mythological and secular writings of the existing cultures. This feature stands out

strikingly in the statement made by Rev Dr R.H. Charles in *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (107-109 BC): "The Sermon on the Mount reflects in several instances the spirit and even reproduces the very phrases of our text: many passages in the Gospel exhibit traces of the same, and St Paul seems to have used the book as a vade-mecum." Similarly, Crane Brinton indicates that Christianity to a great extent allowed the uses of old rites and habits; he also mentions that "Christian notions of immortality and resurrection are related to Egyptian, Greek and Hebrew notions; Greek and Roman philosophies and especially mystical Neo-Platonism contributed a great deal to [develop] Christianity". While talking of the Greek and Judaic elements in Christianity, S. Radhakrishnan has the following to say: "Gnosticism was one of the most powerful currents of thought that influenced Christian doctrines and practices...the Jews gave to Christianity an ethical passion and a sense of superiority; the Greeks gave the vague aspirations and mysteries of the spirit a logical form, a dogmatic setting..."

We have not so far indicated much about the hellenic influence on Christianity—one of the cultures that made a significant contribution to the growth and formation of this new religion. It should, however, be noted that the hellenic traits that became a part of Christianity found their way through Gnosticism. Gnosticism, which existed much before the coming of Christ, is a blend of oriental, mainly Hindu, elements with Greek—basically Platonic—ideas. A beautifully written passage by Radhakrishnan may be quoted here to indicate this hellenisation of the new religion that was happening.

"In the first century [Gnostic conceptions] became fused with Christian ideas. In the early days Christianity wanted a philosophy which the Gnostics supplied. Harnack is undoubtedly correct in looking upon the Gnostics as 'the theologians of the first century'. He says. 'The Gnostic systems represent the acute secularising or hellenising of Christianity, with the rejection of the Old Testament. ...' The Church Fathers tell us that the doctrines of Gnosticism are derived from the mystery religions, Pythagoras and Plato. Gnosticism is by no means a mere attempt to reject the Old Testament and hellenise the Gospels. What it did was to introduce into Christianity not the pure spirit of Greek philosophy but conceptions of the Eastern religions which by the first century had taken their place everywhere in the Roman Empire."

So, after having widened our base by studying this syncretistic nature of early Christianity, it should not come as a surprise to us if the Ptolemaic system of the universe should have become a part of the scriptures. Ptolemy had presented his *Almagest* sometimes around 150 AD and Christianity was growing right up to the end of the third century.

(To be continued)

VIKAS DHANDHANIA

NEW AGE NEWS

COMPILED AND PRESENTED BY WILFRIED

Big Bang's New Bang

IN the issue of May '91 I had announced "Big Bang's Last Bang", though cautiously with a question-mark in brackets. Meanwhile, the pendulum has swung to the other side: the bang is "in" again.

The great event is believed to have taken place some 15 billion years ago, when a tiny ball, almost without any extension, consisting of incredibly compressed energy, suddenly exploded and expanded with enormous speed, creating—virtually out of nothing—space.

Some 300,000 years after that event the expanding cosmos cooled. Matter-particles and pure energy of radiation separated, and particles combined into atoms. At later stages gargantuan gas clouds formed which gradually broke up into smaller, galaxy-size structures. Then, after 2 billion years, stars formed in galaxies, in a universe that is ever expanding.

The hot radiation was not required for the making of the cosmos. It has been floating through the universe like an after-echo of the original creative bang. Cosmologists had discovered it already in the sixties as a *uniform* background radiation in the microwave spectrum. Basically, this was taken as evidence for the big bang scenario, although its evenness was very disturbing, since it pointed to a homogeneous distribution of matter at the beginning, which did not appear likely after the discovery of some giant agglomerations of galaxies (see my article, mentioned above).

Data received from the *Cosmic Background Explorer (Cobe)* satellite at first did not show anything uneven in the microwave sky. However, a very elaborate computer analysis was actually required for a more careful interpretation, making sure that interferences from other sources of radiation were weeded out. After a year, suddenly the surprise was there: what appeared on the computer screens, "was a map with blotches of all sizes indicating regions of the sky where the microwaves are a miniscule 30 millionths of a degree warmer or cooler than average—almost imperceptible, but enough to save the Big Bang theory." (*Time Magazine*, 4-5-92)

NASA, which had launched the satellite, was enthusiastic and Princeton astrophysicist David Spergel said it was "the most important discovery in the past 20 years." Several publications responded with front-page head-lines. *The Guardian* (which was among them) published an article by the astrophysicist M. Rowan-Robinson, who declined to join NASA's 'hype' and wrote in his commentary (1-5-92): "Is this the discovery of the century? By no means, but it is a landmark." *Die Zeit* (1-5-92) was still more cautious about the discovery of

those fluctuations and noted that the evaluation of the data first needed to be confirmed, since errors were frequent in this kind of analysis.

Stephen Hawking, reviewing the film *A Brief History of Time* (created after his book with the same title), said in *The Guardian* that the film properly conveyed his two key ideas, first, that the universe had a beginning in time, and second, that there is another kind of time, called imaginary, in which the universe need have no boundary. He added, "The discovery of ripples in the microwave background reported last week is consistent with this idea, that the universe has no boundary in imaginary time. It does not prove it, but it gives it strong support."

Evidently, this is a subject where one, or several, question-marks are likely to accompany our thinking. Readers may refer, for some more background information, to R. Y. Deshpande's article *All About That Big Bang* in the issue of September '89. "The evolution of the Universe is still a hot subject in the professional field," he writes. "The issues have to be settled more by experimental observations than by theoretical models." That is true, no doubt. David Spergel should have been happy to know this. When he praised the new discovery, he had to admit that it had just demolished a theory which he had recently co-authored. These days, the important news is coming directly from the skies.

NOT BY MIGHT

How few the things that can be done by might!
 High aims are thwarted by excess of will;
 Only when thought is free can mind take flight.
 I do not have to press, but to be still
 I fish, but it is God who fills the net;
 I dig, but it is God who fills the well,
 Life is not mine to order but to let
 Its living power flow through me and impel
 Me forward. Would I grasp infinity?
 I cannot by hard striving reach the goal,
 But I can let the infinite use me
 And know my instant oneness with the whole
 I cannot find You, God, by seeking far,
 But I am quiet—and there, God, You are!

JOHN DILLET FREEMAN

SUDDEN TALES THE FOLKS TOLD

32. ARE YOU MY EQUAL?

A LION, a dog and a fox were intimate friends. They lived in a forest peacefully. Each day they woke up early in the morning and went in different directions in search of food and fun. In the evenings they met and told one another of their adventures and laughed to their hearts' content. They then went to sleep. Thus the days passed by in peace.

One day, the lion told the fox and the dog: "Friends! So far we have gone in search of food separately. For a change, let us go together today. Whatever food we come across, let us share it together. What do you say?"

The dog and the fox nodded in approval.

The three friends together went on their hunting expedition. They walked into a thick forest and espied a deer eating grass. The lion told his friends to encircle the prey. They obeyed. The lion then pounced upon the frightened deer and killed it. He dragged the carcass to the bank of a nearby pond.

Sitting in the shade of a tree, the lion tore the deer's flesh into pieces. He then looked at his friends. They were sitting on their hind legs, with their watering tongues lolling out of their mouths.

The lion told the dog, "My friend! You are a symbol of faith and loyalty. So, I request you to divide this venison into three parts. We will have a good dinner."

The dog thanked the lion for his compliment. He divided the venison into three equal parts and said to the lion, "O King of the beasts! Here are three equal shares. You are at liberty to choose yours."

The lion became wild. He roared in anger, "You base, mean dog! Did I ever tell you to divide the dinner equally? How dare you think that you are my equal? Why the devil did you forget your status? You do not deserve my friendship." He then pounced upon the dog, killed him and devoured him.

The lion then turned towards the fox, who sat shivering. "Now, my friend," said the lion, "Divide the venison. Let us share it."

The cunning fox took only one small bone and said, "My Lord! I am a small and insignificant animal. And so this little bone is more than enough for me. You are the king of the forest. And so you deserve this entire lot."

Pleased with the fox, the lion said, "O, you are very humble. I like your humility. But tell me, when did you become so wise?"

"Only after witnessing the death of our friend, the faithful dog," replied the fox.

*

33. THE DEAF AND THE SICK

Years ago there lived a man who was hard of hearing. Though he was not stone deaf, one had to shout at the top of one's voice to make him hear. No wonder that many avoided his company

The deaf man's greatest source of consolation was his wife. She was a very affectionate companion and never felt tired of shouting to her husband. If at times he failed to hear her, he smiled and nodded, never showing that he had not understood her.

One evening the lady shouted to her husband: "The old man in the next house is bed-ridden for the past two weeks. To meet one's neighbour when he is sick and speak a few kind words are good manners. Won't you pay a visit to the sick?"

"But that would be very embarrassing," replied the deaf. "The sick man's voice would be nothing more than a squeak now. I won't be able to hear anything. Do you want me to smile and nod to all he says?"

"Nothing to worry about. Now listen to me very carefully," shouted the lady.

"Go on!" the deaf man strained his ears.

"When you meet the sick man," the lady went on with her instruction, "the first question you are to ask him is: 'How are you?'... Once you finish asking the question wait for his reply. It doesn't matter if you fail to hear anything. But closely watch his lips. If they move, that means he is saying that he is better. Then you must say: 'Good! It's all the Grace of God.' "

"That's a good idea." The gentleman sounded convinced. "Listen to me further," she continued. "Your next question will be, 'What food are you taking?' Whatever be his answer, you can safely say, 'That's good food. It's full of vitamins, you know.' "

The gentleman now looked enthusiastic. "What next?" he asked.

"The third question would be: 'Which physician did you consult?' Don't forget to watch his lips. When he tells you the name of the physician, you have to comment: 'Well done! He is the best one in our land.' "

The deaf man was quite impressed with the wit of his wife.

"Don't stay there long," she cautioned her husband.

After some rehearsals, the deaf man left for his neighbour's house.

The sick man was lying on his bed. On seeing the visitor, he nodded welcome. Sitting by the side of the sick man the gentleman opened the conversation.

"How are you, my friend?"

The sick man heaved a sigh and seconds later replied in an inaudible voice: "I'm dying."

The gentleman who was eagerly waiting for the neighbour's lips to move and

then close, immediately said. "Good! It's all the grace of God."

The neighbour least expected this. While his face reddened and he was fuming with anger, the visitor shot his next question "What food are you taking?"

Pat came the answer: "Poison. What else?"

"Very good! That's good food, full of vitamins, you know "

The sick man gnashed his teeth in uncontrollable rage. His blood-pressure shot up. He would have tried his strength with the queer visitor had he any in his muscles. When he was about to sign him to go out, he heard the third question. "Which physician did you consult?"

Irritated beyond limit, the sick man yelled out, "Yama, the god of Death!"

"How wise of you to consult him! He is the best physician in our land. Goodbye, see you later!" He left after the final shot, eager to report to his wife the success of his venture.

*

34. THE FOOLISH COMPANION

A Chettyyar once carried a barrel of oil on his head to the village-fair. The oil was sold by retail and by the time the barrel became empty, it was already dusk.

The Chettyyar counted his coins, put them into a cloth bag, tied its mouth with a piece of string, and got ready to go back home.

The very thought that he had to cross a wood to reach his village without a companion made him shiver. He was terribly scared of the bandits who lurk in the wood and waylay the passers-by. He was badly in need of someone who could guard him and his moneybag till he reached the village.

The Chettyyar searched for someone who could live up to his expectations. He succeeded in finding one who was sturdy and well-built. He was dark complexioned. Employing him as a companion, the Chettyyar said, "I'll give you good food when we reach my home. You can spend the night at my residence and quit it by dawn. And now, you can have this money for accepting to accompany me to the village."

The sturdy fellow was happy to receive an eight anna coin.

The journey began.

By the time they entered the wood, it was dark. They went on walking side by side without making the least noise for fear of attracting the attention of the bandits.

As they were half-way through the wood, the Chettyyar sensed someone coming from the opposite direction. He called a halt to himself and to his companion. Together they cocked their ears and listened.

Soon they heard several voices and the subject of their conversation was

about the booty they had to share.

The voices, as they came nearer, sent a chill down the spine of the Chettiyar. "Go. go! Hide yourself somewhere and never show up till I call you I'll hide myself behind this bush," he whispered and disappeared into a nearby bush.

Unable to find a place to hide himself, the Chettiyar's companion suddenly fell to the ground and stretched himself "My dark complexion will make me invisible in the dark," said he.

The group of bandits, still engaged in their conversation, passed by But it was very unfortunate that one happened to stumble over the sturdy fellow lying in the way and fall.

The fallen bandit gathered himself up and dusted his hairy chest

"Are you all right?" the other bandits asked him

"Yes!" he replied. "Cursed be this log on which I stumbled and fell."

While the bandits were about to resume their journey, they were surprised and shocked to hear the log speak: "He! Did you call me a log? You son of an ass! Brother-in-law of a monkey! Can you ever think of a log owning an eight anna coin?"

The bandits caught the Chettiyar's companion and thrashed him till he parted with the only coin he had

The bandit who plucked the coin from him twisted and turned it to know if it was really a coin. His action angered the Chettiyar's companion. In his fury he bawled: "Why the hell are you twisting and turning the coin? Don't you have faith in my words?" He heaved for breath and added to the dismay of the Chettiyar: "And if you doubt the authenticity of the coin, ask the Chettiyar himself, hiding behind this bush."

*

35. TO LOSE WHAT YOU HAVE...

A fisherman was surprised to see a strange fish in his catch. It had the head and the breast of a woman, and the body of a fish. It was neither big nor too small.

While the fisherman went on staring at the strange creature he had netted, the latter to the shock of the former spoke "I am a goddess of the sea All the finned creatures obey my commands. Let me go back to the sea, please "

The fisherman couldn't believe his ears. His thoughts took wings Seconds later he said: "I can make a fortune by making you a museum piece I will kick off this risky job of fishing in the sea."

"But if you let me go back to the sea," interrupted the goddess, "I'll give you whatever you desire "

"Are you sure?" doubted the fisherman

“Ask and it shall be given,” said the goddess.

“Give me a bag of gold,” demanded the fisherman, putting her words to test.

“Why one? I’ll give you two,” so saying the goddess rolled her eyes and, within the fraction of a second, there appeared two bags of gold from nowhere...only the goddess knew from where

Immensely pleased, the fisherman jumped for joy. But soon dark thoughts came to him. “I’m no fool to let you go,” he said.

The goddess read his mind and said, “Go ahead! Ask all that you want... I will give you to your heart’s content. But please let me go.”

“Well then! Turn this fishing boat into a merchant vessel with all amenities and conveniences,” demanded the fisherman

The goddess obliged. The fisherman beamed with satisfaction.

“What next?” asked the goddess.

The fisherman took a long time to speak out his third demand. “This is my final wish. I’ll let you go provided you make me the king of the land.”

“The King of the land!.... But what do you propose to do when you are made king?”

“I’ll let you go,” laughed the fisherman.

“Know your limitations! There’s an end to everyone’s greed. I wanted to help you, but you don’t deserve it. You’ll lose all that I have bestowed upon you. You will continue to toil on the sea to win your food,” said the fish-goddess and jumped into the sea with the net and disappeared.

The fisherman found himself in his old tattered boat without his net.

*

36. THE DEATH OF A TYRANT

A land was once honoured by the visit of a sage. People thronged to see him and seek his blessings.

The king of that land was a tyrant He didn’t take the trouble of meeting the most honoured man and inviting him to his palace

But the sage wanted to meet the king and give him good advice. One morning, without any prior permission or appointment. the sage entered the court.

While the courtiers and commoners stood up and welcomed the sage in unison, the king ignored him and didn’t show even the least sign of respect.

Silent stood the sage. The king treated him like dirt.

Ill-treated thus, the sage burst out a curse: “Oh, you haughty king! You are doomed to die in another six months ”

Dazed stood the king, as the sage left the court. He went on ruminating over

the words of the sage in the loneliness of his palace. His queen too wept over the fate of her husband.

But the curse had brought a dramatic change in the life of the king. Perhaps it was his turning point. He began to help his people in all possible ways. He avoided battles and opted for peace with all the enemy kings, and was sympathetic even to robbers and other law-breakers.

Within a short period of six months, the king came to be liked by everyone. As he had love for the people, love was returned to him.

No one knew if it was the love and affection of the people that had saved the king from death. The king didn't die even after twelve months, even though he expected the curse to work out any moment.

Many anxious days passed. One day the king was surprised to see the sage once again in his court.

The king stood up, welcomed him with his outstretched arms, paid obeisance and sought his blessings. The sage too was very happy to see the changed king. At his request, the sage stayed as a royal guest for a couple of days.

On the third day, when the sage made preparations to leave the palace, the king asked him, "O Sage! Now it is more than a year since you cursed me. But you see, I didn't die."

The sage smiled and asked: "Who said you haven't died? Don't I see a new and changed king in you?"

(More Tales to follow)

TOWARDS SPIRITUALISATION OF MARX*

A REIVEW-ARTICLE

“The Fallacy of Karl Marx”· A Critical Appraisal of Marxism in the Light of Sri Aurobindo’s Social Philosophy by Kishor Gandhi. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, 1992, pp 66. Rs. 30/-

Few men have left their imprint upon history as Karl Marx did. Issuing from the smoggy, claustrophobic world of Mid-Victorian England, Marxism rose as a nemesis to *laissez faire* capitalism. It brought hope to the dispossessed and forsaken of the world, holding out the possibility of a perfect millennium. By the end of World War II, Marxism, as an ideology, had overtaken two-thirds of the world’s population, including many of the former colonies in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

As a philosophy and world-view, Marxism has attracted some of the finest minds of our times: George Orwell, André Gide, Arthur Koestler, Jean Paul Sartre, André Malraux, Jawaharlal Nehru, Christopher Caudwell, Bertolt Brecht, Raymond Williams, Pablo Neruda, Octavio Paz...

Despite the Cold War, the reality of the iron curtain and the Police State, Marxism flourished—from China to Nicaragua, epitomized in the clenched fist of a Castro or battle fatigue of a Che Guevara. As symbol of justice, equality and defiance, it inspired groups as diverse as the coloured, the third world and women

And suddenly, it ended, or so it seemed. After thirty years of an uneasy reign that marked coexistence with a hostile ideology, there appeared to be the beginning of the end, first in Eastern Europe and next in the Soviet Union itself. From being a major world ideology, Marxism got relegated to a few pockets of influence.

In the hours of both triumph and tragedy, the study of Marxism reveals significant portents for the future of man. Professor Kishor Gandhi’s essays in the book under review attempt an appraisal of Marxist thought in the light of Sri Aurobindo’s socio-political philosophy. The six chapters in this book were originally prepared in 1961 as class-notes for an introduction to the teaching of *The Human Cycle* to the students in the Higher Course of the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, Pondicherry. These have been published elsewhere as well, and are now presented in book form so as to reach a wider public.

Professor Gandhi divides the book into six key chapters, taking the reader systematically through the main areas of Marxist thought: Marx’s philosophical

* The reviewer is greatly indebted to Avijit Pathak, Centre for the Study of Social Systems, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, for his valuable insights on this topic

doctrine of Dialectical Materialism, his theory of Historical Materialism, analysis of modern capitalism, critical evaluation of Marx's theory of class-struggle and international socialism and finally an assessment of Marx's theory of modern capitalism. Each of these chapters is lucid, concise, thoughtful and persuasive. The language used is uniformly unpretentious and refreshingly free from jargon or pedantry that mars so much of scholarly writing today.

While Marxist thought provides many important insights into the functioning of human society, Professor Gandhi contends that the Marxist analysis was not strictly "scientific" though Marx claimed it to be so. For, in placing an exclusive reliance on a single, albeit important economic factor, Marx made sweeping generalizations, showing blindness to many other factors such as the linguistic, religious, cultural or nationalistic that have polarized classes in history.

Secondly, Professor Gandhi points out that Marx's division of society into two classes—the ruling bourgeois and the labour or proletariat—is somewhat simplistic. For instance, the ruling class itself is not always uniformly structured, monolithic or homogeneous. As Karl Popper rightly remarks:

"Indeed, the divergence of interests within the ruling and the ruled classes goes so far that Marx's theory of classes must be considered as a dangerous oversimplification, even if we admit that the issue between the rich and the poor is always of fundamental importance. One of the great themes of mediaeval history, the fight between popes and emperors, is an example of division within the ruling class. It would be probably false to interpret this quarrel as one between exploiter and exploited."¹

Thirdly, the yoking of the Hegelian process of dialectics to a view that posits the sole existence of matter and material forces, Professor Gandhi believes, is both flawed and anomalous. "Dialectical development," he maintains, "is inconsistent with scientific materialism because matter being inert and passive cannot possess self-conscious freewill and purpose." To quote Nicolas Berdyaev, a one-time Marxist revolutionary who was later disillusioned with Marxism:

"Matter is endowed by Marxist philosophy with the freedom of spirit, with life, activity, logic, freedom and the possibility of independent movement. But if we preserve the right terminology of philosophy we see that matter and material processes cannot be active, that free self-directed movement is not inherent in them, that no dialectical development can be theirs. Matter is inert and passive: spirit alone is active; activity presupposes a spiritual principle."²

¹ Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies* Quoted by J P Suda, *A History of Political Thought*, Part III, p 337

² Nicolas Berdyaev, "Christianity and Human Activity". *The Bourgeois Mind and Other Essays*, p 82

Similarly, Professor Gandhi demonstrates that Marx's explanation of capitalism is derived from his economic theories of "the sole productivity of labour, the surplus value of labour, the continually increasing accumulation and concentration of wealth in the hands of the capitalists and the consequent impoverishment of the workers." The author shows the basic limitation of each of these theories.

Professor Gandhi also points out that most of Marx's predictions have not come true. The revolution, when it did take place, was not in societies that had reached an advanced state of industrialization. These societies were basically agrarian, peasant ones such as Russia, China and Cuba. Likewise, Marx also predicted the growth of international socialism, summed up in his *Communist Manifesto*: "The workers have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Workers of the world, unite." This is far from the reality. Not only was this faith in international solidarity given up by the Soviet Union, soon after the October Revolution, for the sake of political expediency ("socialism in one country" was officially ratified in December 1925 by the 14th Congress of the Communist Party), but that faith was most dramatically dropped during the two World Wars when workers of the warring nations decided to support their respective national governments. Similarly, Marx's prophecy about the growing polarization among the two classes and about the pauperization of the labour, has been disproved by the growth of the welfare state, where the state plays an increasingly interventionistic role to safeguard the interests of labour.

Echoing Sri Aurobindo, Professor Gandhi declares that any theory that tries to explain social behaviour and discover the psychological law for social development has to be balanced and holistic in its approach. It has to ensure the individual's need for an ordered growth. Individualistic democracy leading to *laissez faire* capitalism and market economy results in gross inequality and tyranny. It goes to Marx's credit that he saw private profiteering as the cause of inequality and sought to realize the goal of an egalitarian society. But his approach was mechanical just as his understanding of human nature and behaviour was insufficient. As the twin epigraphs to Professor Gandhi's book beautifully sum up the matter.

"The communistic principle of society is intrinsically as superior to the individualistic as is brotherhood to jealousy and mutual slaughter; but all the practical schemes of Socialism invented in Europe are a yoke, a tyranny and a prison."¹

And again,

Quoted by R V Anderson in "Berdyayev's Critique of Marxism", *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, July, 1962, p 278

¹ Sri Aurobindo, *Thoughts and Aphorisms*, (Cent Ed, Vol 17), p 117

“If communism ever re-establishes itself upon earth, it must be on a foundation of soul’s brotherhood and the death of egoism. A forced association and a mechanical comradeship would end in a world-wide fiasco.”¹

Quoting Sri Aurobindo, Professor Gandhi maintains that all forms of exploitation—including the economic one—are caused by the human ego. Without a radical transformation of human nature, a mere replacement of the private by the public economy will only lead to exchanging one form of egoism for the other, not necessarily a better or a superior ideal, or, as Sri Aurobindo puts it, one form of economism by the other. The dictatorship of the proletariat becomes more tyrannical than the absolutism of the capitalist. Indeed, as Milovan Djilas, the author of *New Class*, says while describing his book *The Unperfect Society. Beyond the New Class*: “This book is not intended either as an exposition or as a refutation of Marxism. It is rather a disclosure of the inevitability of violence and corruption in human beings—in the mass and as individuals—once Marxism in its totality is applied to society or, more strictly speaking, is imposed upon society.”²

Capitalism and communism are two sides of the same coin. The hidden persuaders of the consumer culture and network television are no less authoritarian than the “vanguard of the proletariat.” In Avijit Pathak’s words, “If official socialism makes a mistake by equating society with the state, capitalism makes an equally traumatic mistake by equating society with the market.” What both lack is an order which is organic, which is consensual and which, therefore, does not come as a strait-jacket or a prison-house. Is there finally any lesson left in the example of Marx?:

“The question is: Can Karl Marx help us to move towards a new civilisation? It is impossible to negate Marx completely because in Marx we see the reaffirmation of mankind’s noblest dream: end of “estranged labour”, end of private property, end of exploitation and the beginning of communism....

“But, then, it is equally important to look at the world spiritually. Without spirituality, is it possible to fight ruthless consumerism? Without spirituality, is it possible to fight the passivity imposed on man by a bureaucratic state? Without spirituality, is it possible to experience that sacred merger that we call communism? A spiritualised Marx, a spiritualised communism, it seems, would gear us up for a new path that socialism, at this turning point, ought to strive for.”³

¹ *Ibid*

² Milovan Djilas, *The Unperfect Society Beyond the New Class* (London Unwin Books, 1972), p. 50

³ Avijit Pathak, “Towards Spiritualisation of Marx”, *Mainstream*, January 11, 1992, pp. 22-23

Such a possibility, though difficult to foresee in the near future, is the goal towards which our effort should be directed. As Sri Aurobindo so prophetically remarks in the Postscript Chapter of *The Ideal of Human Unity*:

“It is not that the principle of Communism necessitates any such results or that its system must lead to a termite civilisation or the suppression of the individual; it could well be, on the contrary, a means at once of the fulfilment of the individual and the perfect harmony of a collective being. The already developed systems that go by the name are not really Communism but construction of an inordinately rigid State Socialism. But Socialism itself might well develop away from the Marxist groove and evolve less rigid modes; a co-operative Socialism, for instance, without any bureaucratic rigour of a coercive administration of a Police State might one day come into existence ..”¹

SACHIDANANDA MOHANTY

¹ *The Ideal of Human Unity* (Cent Ed , Vol 15), pp 568-69

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Lights from Nolini Kanta Gupta: The Best from the Eight Volumes of His English Collected Works: Compiled and Edited by Shyam Kumari, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 605 002, Price: Rs. 90/-

Shyam Kumari, a *sadhika* of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, has achieved in the volume under review a fine art of compilation. She herself describes the circumstances leading to the creation of the volume:

Then the inspiration came to me that for the benefit of those who were unable to read Nolini-da's voluminous writing I should make selections from his English Collected Works... Only by the Mother's Grace could I accomplish it. Through this work I have passed the years 1988-89 in the soul-ambience of Nolini-da.

Her words present to us precisely the true nature of her work. It is not a mere stringing together of passages from the different volumes of the vast output of the great man. It is an inspired work accomplished by inner sympathy with the author whom she calls Nolini-da or *Brother Nolini*, emphasizing her kinship with him as children of the same Mother. No wonder that, as we read the work, we also feel that we live in the spiritual atmosphere of one about whom the Mother said, upon seeing him for the first time,

“This young man can realise the Supermind ”

In her prefatory remarks Shyam Kumari distinguishes three stages in the development of Nolini-da which continue in him as the three major aspects of his personality,—the patriot, the intellectual giant and the treader of the Sunlit Path. While yet in his teens Nolini signed a pledge to serve Mother India with blood drawn from “nearest his heart”. His love of the country made him naturally gravitate to Sri Aurobindo. Soon he graduated to be *Sri Aurobindo's Mānasa-putra*, “the son of Sri Aurobindo's Mind.” Sri Aurobindo not only taught the young disciple languages—ancient and modern—Greek and Latin, Sanskrit—Vedic and Classical—French and Italian, etc. but also initiated him into the thought and aesthetic experience embodied in the works in the different languages. When Sri Aurobindo moved to Pondicherry Nolini followed him there and, with the establishment of the Ashram under the Mother, he soon became the Spiritual Son of the great Gurus participating “in the parleys of the Empyrean,” as Shyam Kumari beautifully phrases it.

In the extensive writings of Nolini Kanta Gupta from which the compiler selects the LIGHTS for the Pilgrim of Eternity we see the three aspects of his personality.

The patriot sees India as the Immortal Nation:

“It is said the Varna and the Ashrama (roughly translated as *caste* and *order*) that give the characteristic structure of Indian society even today characterised also the Vedic society; and the system of village autonomy that survives even today ruled Harappan India also. It has also been pointed out that the administrative system pursued by the British in India was nothing brand new imported from outside, but only a continuation, with minor adaptations, of the system consolidated by the Moguls who again had taken it up from the Mauryas; a system initiated perhaps by still earlier legislatures and builders of Indian polity. Mussolini of twentieth century Italy is in no way related to Cato or Julius Caesar of ancient Rome, but Sri Ramakrishna or Sri Aurobindo is a direct descendant of the Vedic Rishis ”

The very passage revealing his patriotism also reveals his scholarship and intellectual acumen. His extraordinary intellect is seen in his discussion of various political, social and other problems.

His mastery of languages, as well his ability as a literary critic, can be seen when he says,

“In the world of poetry Dante is a veritable *avatar*. His language is a supreme magic. The word-unit in him is a quantum of highly concentrated perceptive energy, Tapas. In Kalidasa the quantum is that of the energy of the light in sensuous beauty. And Homer’s voice is a quantum of the luminous music of the spheres.”

“The word-unit, the language quantum in Sri Aurobindo’s poetry is a packet of consciousness-force, a concentrated power of Light (instinct with a secret Delight)...”

The passages bring out the truth of Shyam Kumari’s insightful remark in her Preface:

Not for him were the set grooves and gyres, fads and furrows of conventional literary criticism.

The mystic and the Seer are revealed not only in Nolini’s different remarks but especially in his poems. The compiler has made a tasteful selection of some of his best lines.

Here is a Vision of Mahakali:

“She has burst open the veil and leaped to the front,
 Into the very thick of the combat—
 Our Captain, our Warrior—

her flaming sword, her battering mace,
Her thundering cry sweep the field.”

A supreme truth is revealed in the following simple lines:

“In Thee I am a perfect slave,
Sovereignly free and happy!
Without Thee I become the master
Bound head to foot, a figure of misery.”

One cannot be too grateful to Shyam Kumari for this boon to aspiring souls.

K.B. SITARAMAYYA

Students' Section

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

Seventy-first Seminar

23 February 1992

(Continued from the issue of September 1992)

HOW TO PREPARE OURSELVES TO BECOME THE TRUE INSTRUMENTS OF THE MOTHER'S GREAT WORK FOR EARTH AND HUMANITY?

Speech by Punit Chandak*

My friends who have spoken before me have given you a sufficiently clear idea of the Mother's Great Work and its significance for earth and humanity. So it is not necessary for me to elaborate on it any further. I shall only state the profound significance of that work in one brief yet marvellous sentence of Sri Aurobindo:

“The Mother comes in order to bring down the Supramental and it is the descent which makes her full manifestation here possible.”¹

My intention is to dwell more on the other part of the subject viz.: How to prepare ourselves to be the true instruments of the Mother's Great Work?

The descent of the Supermind which will create a new race of gnostic beings on earth, which was the aim of the Mother's work, occurred according to her, in its initial stage in February 1956. But the fulfilment of that work also needs at least a few individuals to be receptive to it and let it carry out in all parts of their nature its work of transformation without any resistance, obstruction or distorting falsification. According to Sri Aurobindo, the mental, the vital and the physical parts of man are not capable of that unmixed receptivity to the supramental Truth. It is only the psychic being that is capable of it. I read here Sri Aurobindo's own words in which he makes this very important point:

“ ..once the connection between the supramental and the human consciousness is made, it is the psychic being that gives *the readiest response*—more ready than the mind, the vital or the physical. It may be added that it is also a

* Revised and enlarged

¹ *The Mother* (Cent Ed , Vol 25), p 48

purer response; the mind, vital and physical can allow other things to mix with their reception of the supramental influence and spoil its truth. The psychic is pure in its response and allows no such mixture

“The supramental change can take place only if the psychic is awake and is made the chief support of the descending supramental power.”¹

The last sentence in the above quotation gives the perfect answer to the question: How to prepare ourselves to be the true instruments of the Mother’s Great Work. The descending supramental Power can work out the whole process of transformation in us without any obstruction or falsification if the psychic being in us is awake and, coming to the front, makes our whole being receptive to the supramental influence. This naturally leads to the related question: How to awaken and bring forward the psychic being? There are innumerable letters and other writings in *The Life Divine* and *The Synthesis of Yoga* where Sri Aurobindo has amply dealt with this question. But I propose to provide an answer to it in a very simple and practical manner, not in my own words but by reading a passage from the Mother’s book, *On Education*. In the chapter “Psychic Education and Spiritual Education” in this book, she compares the finding of the psychic being to a great but difficult discovery, like the discovery of new continents and gives some practical hints which will make it safe and easy. I quote the long passage in which she has given these hints:

“..the path to that [the psychic] realisation is long and difficult, strewn with snares and problems to be solved, which demand an unfailing determination. It is like the explorer’s trek through virgin forest in quest of an unknown land, of some great discovery. The psychic being is also a great discovery which requires at least as much fortitude and endurance as the discovery of new continents. A few simple words of advice may be useful to one who has resolved to undertake it.

“The first and perhaps the most important point is that the mind is incapable of judging spiritual things. All those who have written on this subject have said so, but very few are those who have put it into practice. And yet, in order to proceed on the path, it is absolutely indispensable to abstain from all mental opinion and reaction

“Give up all personal seeking for comfort, satisfaction, enjoyment or happiness. Be only a burning fire for progress, take whatever comes to you as an aid to your progress and immediately make whatever progress is required.

“Try to take pleasure in all you do, but never do anything for the sake of pleasure

“Never get excited, nervous or agitated. Remain perfectly calm in the face of all circumstances. And yet be always alert to discover what progress you still

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

have to make and lose no time in making it.

“Never take physical happenings at their face value. They are always a clumsy attempt to express something else, the true thing which escapes our superficial understanding.

“Never complain of the behaviour of anyone, unless you have the power to change in his nature what makes him act in this way; and if you have the power, change him instead of complaining.

“Whatever you do, never forget the goal which you have set before you. There is nothing great or small once you have set out on this great discovery; all things are equally important and can either hasten or delay its success. Thus before you eat, concentrate a few seconds in the aspiration that the food you are about to eat may bring your body the substance it needs to serve as a solid basis for your effort towards the great discovery, and give it the energy for persistence and perseverance in the effort.

“Before you go to sleep, concentrate a few seconds in the aspiration that the sleep may restore your fatigued nerves, bring calm and quietness to your brain so that on waking you may, with renewed vigour, begin again your journey on the path of the great discovery.

“Before you act, concentrate in the will that your action may help or at least in no way hinder your march forward towards the great discovery.

“When you speak, before the words come out of your mouth, concentrate just long enough to check your words and allow only those that are absolutely necessary to pass, only those that are not in any way harmful to your progress on the path of the great discovery.

“To sum up, never forget the purpose and goal of your life. The will for the great discovery should be always there above you, above what you do and what you are, like a huge bird of light dominating all the movements of your being.

“Before the untiring persistence of your effort, an inner door will suddenly open and you will emerge into a dazzling splendour that will bring you the certitude of immortality, the concrete experience that you have always lived and always shall live, that external forms alone perish and that these forms are, in relation to what you are in reality, like clothes that are thrown away when worn out. Then you will stand erect, freed from all chains, and instead of advancing laboriously under the weight of circumstances imposed upon you by Nature, which you had to endure and bear if you did not want to be crushed by them, you will be able to walk on, straight and firm. conscious of your destiny, master of your life.’¹”

*

For those who wish to be the true instruments of the Mother’s work it is

¹ *Collected Works of the Mother* (Cent Ed), Vol 12, pp 33-5

most essential to remember that it is the Divine's Work that has to be done according to the conditions laid down by the Divine's Will and not according to our mental ideas or egoistic desires and ambitions. Sri Aurobindo has given this warning in a long letter from which I quote a passage because it is most relevant to the subject we are considering here.

“The only creation for which there is any place here is the supramental, the bringing of the divine Truth down on the earth, not only into the mind and vital but into the body and into Matter. Our object is not to remove all ‘limitations’ on the expansion of the ego or to give a free field and make unlimited room for the fulfilment of the ideas of the human mind or the desires of the ego-centred life-force. None of us are here to ‘do as we like’, or to create a world in which we shall at last be able to do as we like; we are here to do what the Divine wills and to create a world in which the Divine Will can manifest its truth no longer deformed by human ignorance or perverted and mistranslated by vital desire. The work which the sadhak of the supramental yoga has to do is not his own work for which he can lay down his own conditions, but the work of the Divine which he has to do according to the conditions laid down by the Divine. Our yoga is not for our own sake but for the sake of the Divine. It is not our own personal manifestation that we are to seek, the manifestation of the individual ego freed from all bounds and from all bonds, but the manifestation of the Divine. Of that manifestation our own spiritual liberation, perfection, fullness is to be a result and a part, but not in any egoistic sense or for any ego-centred or self-seeking purpose. This liberation, perfection, fullness too must not be pursued for our own sake, but for the sake of the Divine ”¹

This is a truth which all those who aspire to collaborate in the Mother's Great Work of New Creation upon earth must never forget because as Sri Aurobindo himself has warned: “I emphasise this character of the creation because a constant forgetfulness of this simple and central truth, a conscious, half-conscious or wholly ignorant confusion about it has been at the root of most of the vital revolts that have spoiled many an individual sadhana here and disturbed the progress of the general inner work and the spiritual atmosphere ”²

¹ *Letters on Yoga* (Cent Ed , Vol 24), pp 1313-14

² *Ibid* , p 1314