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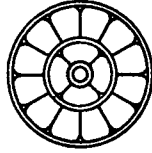
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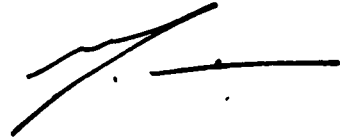


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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# MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

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*“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”*

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## TWO TALKS BY THE MOTHER

6 March 1957

*What does this paragraph mean "Freedom is the law of being in its illimitable unity, secret master of all Nature servitude is the law of love in the being voluntarily giving itself to serve the play of its other selves in the multiplicity" (Thoughts and Glimpes, Birth Centenary Library, Vol. 16, p 386)*

At a superficial glance these two things appear absolutely contradictory and incompatible. Outwardly one cannot conceive how one can be at once in freedom and in servitude, but there is an attitude which reconciles the two and makes them one of the happiest states of material existence.

Freedom is a sort of instinctive need, a necessity for the integral development of the being. In its essence it is a perfect realisation of the highest consciousness, it is the expression of Unity and of union with the Divine, it is the very sense of the Origin and the fulfilment. But because this Unity has manifested in the many—in the multiplicity—something had to serve as a link between the Origin and the manifestation, and the most perfect link one can conceive of is love. And what is the first gesture of love? To give oneself, to serve. What is its spontaneous, immediate, inevitable movement? To serve. To serve in a joyous, complete, total self-giving.

So, in their purity, in their truth, these two things—freedom and service—far from being contradictory, are complementary. It is in perfect union with the supreme Reality that perfect freedom is found, for all ignorance, all unconsciousness is a bondage which makes you inefficient, limited, powerless. The least ignorance in oneself is a limitation, one is no longer free. As long as there is an element of unconsciousness in the being, it is a limitation, a bondage. Only in perfect union with the supreme Reality can perfect freedom exist. And how to realise this union if not through a spontaneous self-giving: the gift of love? And as I said, the first gesture, the first expression of love is service.

So the two are closely united in the Truth. But here on earth, in this world of ignorance and inconstancy, this service which should have been spontaneous, full of love, the very expression of love, has become something imposed, an inevitable necessity, performed only for the maintenance of life, for the continuation of existence, and thus it has become something ugly, miserable—humiliating. What should have been a flowering, a joy, has become an ugliness, a weariness, a sordid obligation. And this sense, this need for freedom has also been deformed and has become that kind of thirst for independence which leads straight to revolt, to separation, isolation, the very opposite of true freedom.

Independence!... I remember having heard an old occultist and sage give a

beautiful reply to someone who said, "I want to be independent! I am an independent being! I exist only when I am independent!" And the other answered him with a smile, "Then that means that nobody will love you, because if someone loves you, you immediately become dependent on this love."

It is a beautiful reply, for it is indeed love which leads to Unity and it is Unity which is the true expression of freedom. And so those who in the name of their right to freedom claim independence, turn their backs completely on this true freedom, for they deny love.

The deformation comes from constraint.

One cannot love through compulsion, you cannot be compelled to love, it is no longer love. Therefore, as soon as compulsion intervenes, it becomes a falsehood. All the movements of the inner being must be spontaneous movements, with that spontaneity which comes from an inner harmony, an understanding—from a voluntary self-giving—from a return to the deeper truth, the reality of being, the Origin and the Goal.

*(Collected Works of the Mother, Birth Centenary Edition, Vol. 9, pp 49-51)*

\*

**22 October 1958**

*Sweet Mother, how can someone who hasn't much spiritual capacity best help in this work?*

I don't know whether one can say that anyone has much or little spiritual capacity. It is not like that.

To live the spiritual life, a reversal of consciousness is needed. This cannot be compared in any way with the different faculties or possibilities one has in the mental field. It may be said of someone that he hasn't much mental, vital or physical capacity, that his possibilities are very limited; in that case it may be asked how these capacities may be developed, that is, how new ones may be acquired, which is something rather difficult. But to live the spiritual life is to open to another world within oneself. It is to reverse one's consciousness, as it were. The ordinary human consciousness, even in the most developed, even in men of great talent and great realisation, is a movement turned outwards—all the energies are directed outwards, the whole consciousness is spread outwards, and if anything is turned inwards, it is very little, very rare, very fragmentary, it happens only under the pressure of very special circumstances, violent shocks, the shocks life gives precisely with the intention of slightly reversing this movement of exteriorisation of the consciousness.

But all who have lived a spiritual life have had the same experience: all of a sudden something in their being has been reversed, so to speak, has been turned suddenly and sometimes completely inwards, and also at the same time upwards, from within upwards—but it is not an external “above”, it is within, deep, something other than the heights as they are physically conceived. Something has literally been turned over. There has been a decisive experience and the standpoint in life, the way of looking at life, the attitude one takes in relation to it, has suddenly changed, and in some cases quite definitively, irrevocably.

And as soon as one is turned towards the spiritual life and reality, one touches the Infinite, the Eternal, and there can no longer be any question of a greater or smaller number of capacities or possibilities. It is the *mental* conception of spiritual life which may say that one has more or less capacity to live spiritually, but this is not at all an adequate statement. What may be said is that one is more or less ready for the decisive and total reversal. In reality, it is the mental capacity to withdraw from ordinary activities and to set out in search of the spiritual life which can be measured.

But as long as one is in the mental field, in this state, as it were, on this plane of consciousness, one can't do much for others, either for life in general or for particular individuals, because one does not have the certitude oneself, one doesn't have the definitive experience, the consciousness has not been established in the spiritual world; and all that can be said is that they are mental activities which have their good and bad sides, but not much power and, in any case, not this power of spiritual contagion which is the only truly effective power.

The only thing that is truly effective is the possibility of transferring to others the state of consciousness in which one lives oneself. But this power cannot be invented. One cannot imitate it, cannot seem to have it; it only comes spontaneously when one is established in that state oneself, when one *lives* within it and not when one is trying to live within it—when one *is* there. And that is why all those who truly have a spiritual life cannot be deceived.

An imitation of spiritual life may delude people who still live in the mind, but those who have realised this reversal of consciousness in themselves, whose relation with the outer being is completely different, cannot be deceived and cannot make a mistake.

It is these people the mental being does not understand. So long as one is in the mental consciousness, even the highest, and sees the spiritual life from outside, one judges with one's mental faculties, with the habit of seeking, erring, correcting, progressing, and seeking once again; and one thinks that those who are in the spiritual life suffer from the same incapacity, but that is a very gross mistake!

When the reversal of the being has taken place, all that is finished. One no longer seeks, one sees. One no longer deduces, one knows. One no longer gropes, one walks straight to the goal. And when one has gone farther—only a

little farther—one knows, feels, lives the supreme truth that the Supreme Truth *alone* acts, the Supreme Lord *alone* wills, knows and does through human beings. How could there be any possibility of error there? What He does, He does because He wills to do it.

For our mistaken vision these are perhaps incomprehensible actions, but they have a meaning and an aim and lead where they ought to lead.

*(Silence)*

If one sincerely wants to help others and the world, the best thing one can do is to be oneself what one wants others to be—not only as an example, but because one becomes a centre of radiating power which, by the very fact that it exists, compels the rest of the world to transform itself.

*(Collected Works of the Mother, Birth Centenary Edition, Vol 9, pp. 414-417)*



# WORDS OF SRI AUROBINDO

## EQUALITY

THE renunciation of attachment to the work and its fruit is the beginning of a wide movement towards an absolute equality in the mind and soul which must become all-enveloping if we are to be perfect in the spirit. For the worship of the Master of works demands a clear recognition and glad acknowledgement of him in ourselves, in all things and in all happenings. Equality is the sign of this adoration; it is the soul's ground on which true sacrifice and worship can be done. The Lord is there equally in all beings, we have to make no essential distinctions between ourselves and others, the wise and the ignorant, friend and enemy, man and animal, the saint and the sinner. We must hate none, despise none, be repelled by none; for in all we have to see the One disguised or manifested at his pleasure. He is a little revealed in one or more revealed in another or concealed and wholly distorted in others according to his will and his knowledge of what is best for that which he intends to become in form in them and to do in works in their nature. All is our self, one self that has taken many shapes. Hatred and dislike and scorn and repulsion, clinging and attachment and preference are natural, necessary, inevitable at a certain stage: they attend upon or they help to make and maintain Nature's choice in us. But to the Karmayogin they are a survival, a stumbling block, a process of the Ignorance and, as he progresses, they fall away from his nature. The child-soul needs them for its growth; but they drop from an adult in the divine culture. In the God-nature to which we have to rise there can be an adamantine, even a destructive severity but not hatred, a divine irony but not scorn, a calm, clear-seeing and forceful rejection but not repulsion and dislike. Even what we have to destroy, we must not abhor or fail to recognise as a disguised and temporary movement of the Eternal.

And since all things are the one Self in its manifestation, we shall have equality of soul towards the ugly and the beautiful, the maimed and the perfect, the noble and the vulgar, the pleasant and the unpleasant, the good and the evil. Here also there will be no hatred, scorn and repulsion, but instead the equal eye that sees all things in their real character and their appointed place. For we shall know that all things express or disguise, develop or distort, as best they can or with whatever defect they must, under the circumstances intended for them, in the way possible to the immediate status or function or evolution of their nature, some truth or fact, some energy or potential of the Divine necessary by its presence in the progressive manifestation both to the whole of the present sum of things and for the perfection of the ultimate result. The truth is what we must seek and discover behind the transitory expression; undeterred by appearances, by the deficiencies or the disfigurements of the expression, we can then worship the Divine for ever unsullied, pure, beautiful and perfect behind his masks.

All indeed has to be changed, not ugliness accepted but divine beauty, not

imperfection taken as our resting-place but perfection striven after, the supreme good made the universal aim and not evil. But what we do has to be done with a spiritual understanding and knowledge, and it is a divine good, beauty, perfection, pleasure that has to be followed after, not the human standards of these things. If we have not equality, it is a sign that we are still pursued by the ignorance, we shall truly understand nothing and it is more than likely that we shall destroy the old imperfection only to create another: for we are substituting the appreciations of our human mind and desire-soul for the divine values.

Equality does not mean a fresh ignorance or blindness, it does not call for and need not initiate a greyness of vision and a blotting out of all hues. Difference is there, variation of expression is there and this variation we shall appreciate,—far more justly than we could when the eye was clouded by a partial and erring love and hate, admiration and scorn, sympathy and antipathy, attraction and repulsion. But behind the variation we shall always see the Complete and Immutable who dwells within it and we shall feel, know or at least, if it is hidden from us, trust in the wise purpose and divine necessity of the particular manifestation, whether it appear to our human standards harmonious and perfect or crude and unfinished or even false and evil.

And so too we shall have the same equality of mind and soul towards all happenings, painful or pleasurable, defeat and success, honour and disgrace, good repute and ill-repute, good fortune and evil fortune. For in all happenings we shall see the will of the Master of all works and results and a step in the evolving expression of the Divine. He manifests himself, to those who have the inner eye that sees, in forces and their plays and results as well as in things and in creatures. All things move towards a divine event, each experience, suffering and want, no less than joy and satisfaction, is a necessary link in the carrying out of a universal movement which it is our business to understand and second. To revolt, to condemn, to cry out is the impulse of our unchastened and ignorant instincts. Revolt like everything else has its uses in the play and is even necessary, helpful, decreed for the divine development in its own time and stage; but the movement of an ignorant rebellion belongs to the stage of the soul's childhood or to its raw adolescence. The ripened soul does not condemn but seeks to understand and master, does not cry out but accepts or toils to improve and perfect, does not revolt inwardly but labours to obey and fulfil and transfigure. Therefore we shall receive all things with an equal soul from the hands of the Master. Failure we shall admit as a passage as calmly as success until the hour of the divine victory arrives. Our souls and minds and bodies will remain unshaken by acutest sorrow and suffering and pain if in the divine dispensation they come to us, unoverpowered by intensest joy and pleasure. Thus supremely balanced we shall continue steadily on our way meeting all things with an equal calm until we are ready for a more exalted status and can enter into the supreme and universal Ananda

# SRI AUROBINDO ON SRI RAMAKRISHNA

## A COMPILATION

(Continued from the issue of 24 April 1992)

### Part II

WHEN Ramakrishna was asked the nature of faith, he replied, 'All faith is blind; otherwise it is no faith,' and he was quite right <sup>1</sup>

\*

NIRODBARAN: You once spoke about Ramakrishna's and Vivekananda's influence in your life. Was it this you meant?

SRI AUROBINDO: No. I referred to the influence of their words and books when I returned from England to Baroda. Their influence was very strong all over India.<sup>2</sup>

\*

P: Ramakrishna's new temple at Belur is supposed to be the biggest on the eastern side.

SRI AUROBINDO: What does the eastern side mean?

P: On this side of the temple of Jagannath.

SRI AUROBINDO: Hindu temples are usually not big. What do they worship at Ramakrishna's temple?

P: I think there is a life-size photograph of Ramakrishna and the sign of OM somewhere.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is Vivekananda's creed.

P: Yes, but I am not sure of the details.

SRI AUROBINDO: In Ramakrishna's temple there ought to be at least an image of Kali.<sup>3</sup>

\*

N: I hope you won't say like Ramakrishna that the things—outer knowledge, beauty of expression, thought, etc.,—don't matter since they don't lead us to the Divine.

SRI AUROBINDO: Essentially Ramakrishna was right. Literature etc., belong to the instrumentation of the Divine Life. It is of importance only if one accepts that aim and even so, not of importance to everybody <sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Talks with Sri Aurobindo*, Vol 1, Second Edition Nirodbaran, p 128

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid* , p 162

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid* , Vol 2, p 410

<sup>4</sup> *Correspondence with Sri Aurobindo*, Nirodbaran, Part I, p 80

N: Can we then not justify Buddha, Ramakrishna and others who advocated isolation from women?

SRI AUROBINDO: ... Ramakrishna insisted on isolation during the period when a man is spiritually raw—he did not object to meeting women when he became ripe and was no longer a slave of sex<sup>5</sup>

\*

*Sri Ramakrishna and the other Avatars*

“Very well, but there are Rama and Ramakrishna. Rama spoke always from the thinking intelligence, the common property of developed men; Ramakrishna spoke constantly from a swift and luminous spiritual intuition. Can you tell me which is the greater? The Avatar recognised by all India? or the saint and Yogi recognised as an Avatar only by his disciples and some others who follow them?”

“Krishna’s mind, for instance, was overmentalised,\* Ramakrishna’s intuitive, Chaitanya’s spiritual-psychic, Buddha’s illumined higher mental.”<sup>6</sup>

\*

N. You say Buddha achieved the Illumined Mind and Ramakrishna the Intuitive. According to your explanation, the Intuitive plane appears to be on a higher level than the Illumined. How is it then that Buddha’s works and manifestation of realisation greatly surpassed that of Ramakrishna’s?

SRI AUROBINDO He had a more powerful vital than Ramakrishna, a stupendous will and an invincible mind of thought. If he had led the ordinary life, he would have been a great organiser, conqueror and creator.

If a man rises to a higher plane of consciousness, it does not necessarily follow that he will be a greater man of action or a greater creator. One may rise to spiritual planes of inspiration undreamed of by Shakespeare and yet not be as great a poetic creator as Shakespeare. “Greatness” is not the object of spiritual realisation any more than fame or success in the world—how are these things the standard of spiritual realisation?”<sup>7</sup>

\*

N: I am still not sure. Can we say that Ramakrishna’s mind or Christ’s mind was as powerful as that of Buddha?

SRI AUROBINDO: Buddha’s mind as a mind was more powerful, but had he

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid* pp 114-115

\* Compiler’s Note. By “overmentalised” Sri Aurobindo meant ‘suffused by the Overmind’, the highest of the spiritual ‘overhead’ levels—the level beyond Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuition.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, p 219

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid* p 224

as much or as many-sided a *spiritual* knowledge as Ramakrishna?<sup>8</sup>

\*

N: Isn't it that you can't really love the Divine until you experience him in some way? Before that it won't be an intense or deep joy.

SRI AUROBINDO. Your supposition conflicts with the experience of many sadhaks. I think Ramakrishna indicated somewhere that the love and joy and ardour of seeking was much more intense than that of fulfilment. I don't agree, but that shows at least that intense love is possible before realisation.<sup>9</sup>

N: Love and ardour of seeking with the same or increased intensity without any big experiences may be possible in cases like Ramakrishna's who from boyhood used to fall into a trance even at the sight of blue clouds, reminding him of Krishna. Even then isn't it said that many times he resolved to drown himself in the Ganges because the Mother wouldn't come?

SRI AUROBINDO. What has that to do with it? It only shows that his yearning was excessive.<sup>10</sup>

\*

N: What about Ramakrishna's cancer? You will perhaps chide me for bringing in these instances, but logically they have to be there. And if Buddha's illness may not be believed, can Ramakrishna's?

SRI AUROBINDO: What did he himself say about it—that it was the sins of his disciples which constituted the cancer. There is a physical aspect to things and there is an occult supraphysical aspect—one need not get in the way of the other. All physical things are expressions of the supra-physical.

N: But Ramakrishna was an Avatar, Sir! An Avatar to be attacked and given insufferable pain!

SRI AUROBINDO: Why should he not? Why on earth limit the possibilities of an Avatar?<sup>11</sup>

\*

(There was some talk about Ramakrishna giving the higher consciousness to a disciple by his touch.)

SRI AUROBINDO: There is no use forcing things. Ramakrishna gave the Brahman consciousness to Hriday, but it did him no good and he had to take that back.<sup>12</sup>

(To be continued)

Compiled by SHYAM KUMARI

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid* , p 235

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid* , p 528

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid* , p 530

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid* , p 739

<sup>12</sup> *Sri Aurobindo's Action*, December 1989, p 3

# LIFE—POETRY—YOGA

## A PERSONAL LETTER

You have sent me quite a tale of woes crying out for panaceas:

“1) How to get rid of the wrench we feel when relations and friends, after spending some time, leave us?

2) How to get rid of useless thoughts and the nervousness that accompanies something we don't remember and we chide ourselves for forgetting it?

3) How to get rid of the remorse we feel when we forget to ask important questions to a friend like Amal Kiran?

4) How to get back the equipoise we lose when someone near and dear dies and we feel we didn't do enough for him or her?

5) How to prevent ourselves from being shaken in the event of a friend committing suicide?

6) How to get over the terrible nervous instability in the being, followed by a fear of the unknown, which is felt round or above the navel?”

You remind me in general of St. Augustine who in a famous passage started with saying “Life miserable, life blind, life uncertain” and then listed various ills and ended with what he seemed to think the greatest of them. “Like a thief Death steals upon all these ills.” But St. Augustine also wrote those profound words addressed to God, which I have loved to quote again and again and which point to the fundamental cause of all our discontents and sufferings and offer the sole basic remedy for them: “Thou hast made us for Thyself and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee.” Apart from the common slashes of life he had one great inner trouble. In spite of having a keen philosophical mind which could distinguish the truths and virtues to be pursued, he was racked by an extreme sensuality. He wanted to control it yet found it most alluring. Hence his celebrated paradoxical prayer: “O Lord, give me chastity—but not yet!” When he succeeded in leaving his passionately loved mistress and fate freed him from his attachment to his dear son by her because of the boy's death and he took wholly to the spiritual life, his deep lament was. “Too late have I loved Thee, O Beauty of ancient days who art ever new, too late have I loved Thee!” He was thirty-three at that time. I believe you and I were luckier than he. I came to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother at the age of twenty-three. I am sure you came to them even earlier. So we found sooner than St. Augustine the master-key to the problem of human existence which had irked us despite our having been quite young—the master-key which Sri Krishna holds forth in the Gita: “You who have come into this transient and unhappy world, love and worship Me.” Yes, we were very lucky, but it is one thing for the inmost soul to have discovered the Secret of Secrets and another for the rest of our being to repeat the discovery. I had my tremendous ecstasies and still could not cope with the Yoga in all my

parts. I plunged back into the chequered common life and went through diverse difficulties—but after I had prayed to the Mother at the time of parting: “Even if I tend to give you up, please never give me up.” She said: “I am like a fairy godmother I can grant all wishes. If you want to be free from me, I can make you so. But if you want me to keep a hold on you, I shall do it always.” Ultimately her promise was fulfilled and, thanks to her grace, all my parts have learned to seek the Light. I say “seek” and not “reach”, for quite a lot in me falls short of the ideal, but every part feels at its centre the call of the Light and the long arduous way ahead of my infirm steps does not prevent the pilgrim’s face from quietly smiling all the time

Is this my answer to your six questions? Basically, yes. For, to let some response to the awakened soul take place in one’s whole nature helps to cut the ground from under every difficulty, every malaise. But I shall try to deal briefly with each particular point you have raised.

If one has not attained an inner detachment which enables one to appreciate and enjoy the company of one’s relations and friends without feeling deprived of them when they leave, one should develop a sense of them within oneself, a closeness warmly felt so that the outer separation never overwhelms one. Indeed, if one truly cherishes anybody, their presence is never lost and one keeps drawing sweetness from the thought of them. To put it the other way round, the thought of them immediately projects one into their company. And this is no mere fancy. There is a mind-space in which one can move freely even though our mind’s ensheathment in a physical form prevents one from fully realising the fact. A further step is that, while holding relations and friends vividly within, there is a movement of offering them to the Divine. Such a movement ensures a sense of security for them and lessens the worry which one’s affection for them brings about. Again, as the Divine is known to be everywhere and therefore always with one, one acquires the feeling that they are safely linked to one’s heart in their subtle beings.

Getting rid of useless thoughts is a matter of practice. You can’t just wish them away. I know of two methods against them. One is to cultivate a standing apart from them so that for lack of attention their stream dwindles or, even if they persist, you are separate from them. You can make the separation more distant by bringing in a preoccupying idea. Set before yourself the serene compassionate eyes of Sri Aurobindo. I remember two passages from my poems which are relevant here. Quite appropriate is the moving line:

O perfect one with the all-forgiving face!

Then there is the rapturous description:

All heaven's secrecy lit to one face  
 Crowning with calm the body's blinded cry—  
 A soul of upright splendour like the noon!

The “blinded cry” of the body does not refer directly to Sri Aurobindo’s own physical self. It hits off the general human condition which feels a perfection somewhere to be attained but keeps fumbling for it unceasingly. In Sri Aurobindo it discovers the sight and the light—the hidden divine truth behind the evolving human is caught in its fullness and in a concentrated form in that tranquil countenance in which the entire broken history of mankind becomes a single shining whole of a knowledge penetrating all problems and a love whose purity, intensity and widenss can suffuse all sorrow and raise every striving spirit to its highest possibility. The inner evocation of Sri Aurobindo’s face is the second method completing and transfiguring the first.

As for failing to remember something and becoming nervous about it, I often miss words or phrases in poetic passages that have stuck in my memory, but I don’t get nervous about them. There is a touch of mild annoyance at times, but I have noticed that the best way is to do one of two things. Either I make a gesture of pushing the “blanks” backward as if into the subliminal depths and asking for a response from these recesses which are said never to forget anything—or else I offer the “blanks” to the Mother just as I do everything else, particularly whatever in ordinary circumstances would tend to hurt me. Before the emotive reaction might occur, the matter is removed from the personal plane and woven into the sadhana of “Remember and offer”. Of course, the “blanks” are merely brief inconveniences and can be tackled with ease. The nervousness you speak of is absolutely out of place. And the calmer you are, the sooner will they be filled either by the subliminal that is our own natural background or by the supraliminal that is the Mother, the Power by whose help we hope to succeed all round in what Srinivasa Iyengar would term “beyonding ourselves”. Within a short time the answer arrives. An extra aid would be to keep repeating the general context of the missing matter. This practice got me through the difficulty of recalling the first adjective—“Miserable”—in St. Augustine’s jeremiad about “life”. In less than half a minute I was out of what you would consider the “misery” of forgetting “miserable”

Your third item is given by you a more serious look than it merits. It becomes really serious if, instead of Amal Kiran being involved, we have Sri Aurobindo in mind. I have often been gnawed by “remorse” for not asking him for clarifications of certain aspects of his philosophy or certain turns of expression in his poetry. One philosophical problem is: “What carries Karmic impressions from life to life?” I don’t recall any direct answer in the Master’s



works. In the Mother's I have come across just one passage<sup>1</sup> directly bearing on the problem. Here it is:

Q: Sri Aurobindo says that some time after death the vital and mental sheaths dissolve, leaving the soul free to retire to the psychic world before it takes up new sheaths. What happens about the Karma and about the impressions—Samskaras—on the old sheaths? Do they also dissolve without producing any result, good or bad, which they should according to the theory of Karma? Also, what becomes of the vital and mental beings after the dissolution of the vital and mental sheaths?

A: The outer form only dissolves, unless that too is made conscious and is organised round the divine centre. But the true mental, the true vital and even the true subtle-physical persist: it is that which keeps all the impressions received in earthly life and builds the chain of Karma.

Now, wouldn't this answer by the Mother mean: "Our true beings—subtle-physical, vital, mental—remain the same for us from life to life down the ages. They, no less than our psychic being, have continuous survival. And the psychic being picks them up while acquiring new subtle-physical, vital and mental sheaths to accompany the physical body into which it is born."? When I turn to Sri Aurobindo I don't get quite the same picture. He<sup>2</sup> writes in one place in an analogous vein: "The soul gathers the essential elements of its experiences in life and makes that its basis of growth in the evolution; when it returns to birth it takes up with its mental, vital, physical sheaths so much of its Karma as is useful to it in the new life for further experience." Here there is no pointer to where the Karma resided and to any compulsive chain of Karma: the soul picks and chooses to serve its own purpose. Will any intellectual of our Ashram shed light in terms of the Aurobindonian philosophy?

One of my literary difficulties are a number of lines in an early poem of Sri Aurobindo's. They occur in "Night by the Sea":

O her name that to repeat  
 Than the Dorian muse more sweet  
 Could the white hand more relume  
 Writing and refresh the bloom  
 Of lips that used such syllables then,  
 Dies unloved by later men. (*Collected Poems*, p. 17)

There is even a whole little piece, "Miracles", whose central theme is still opaque to me:

<sup>1</sup> *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, p. 134

<sup>2</sup> *Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library*, Vol. 22, p. 434

Snow in June may break from Nature,  
Ice through August last,  
The random rose may increase stature  
In December's blast;

But this at least can never be,  
O thou mortal ecstasy,  
That one should live, even in pain,  
Visited by thy disdain (*Ibid.*, p. 48)

What is this "mortal ecstasy"? Some occasions in *Savitri* too need for me Sri Aurobindo's comment. But I came upon them after he had passed away. Whatever was available to me earlier I consulted him about in case of difficulty or uncertainty. Yet several matters elsewhere were missed.

Take these lines from Aswapati's speech to the Divine Mother:

The splendid youth of Time has passed and failed;  
Heavy and long are the years our labour counts  
And still the seals are firm upon man's soul  
And weary is the ancient Mother's heart  
O Truth defended in thy secret sun,  
Voice of her mighty musings in shut heavens  
On things withdrawn within her luminous depths,  
O Wisdom-Splendour, Mother of the universe,  
Creatrix, the Eternal's artist Bride,  
Linger not long with thy transmuting hand  
Pressed vainly on one golden bar of Time,  
As if Time dare not open its heart to God. (Part One, p. 345)

Now in the lines—

O Truth defended in thy secret sun,  
Voice of her mighty musings in shut heavens—

who is indicated by "her"? The apostrophised "Truth" is of course the "Voice"—but whose voice is it? Two lines later we have

O Wisdom-Splendour, Mother of the universe.

So "her" can't refer to this "Mother" who is directly addressed. The only possibility seems to be in the line preceding the apostrophe to "Truth".

And weary is the ancient Mother's heart.

Surely the ancient Mother can't be the one who is directly spoken to as "O Wisdom-Splendour"? But how shall we conceive "her mighty musings in shut heavens" as having that "Truth" as her "Voice"? And is this apostrophised "Truth" different from the "Wisdom-Splendour"? It can't, since Aswapati is throughout addressing the "Mother of the universe". "The ancient Mother" may be thought of as at the same time the Earth-Spirit and the Earth-Spirit's inmost and ultimate reality to whom a general allusion is made in the lines just before the beginning of our passage:

All heavenly light shall visit the earth's thoughts,  
The might of heaven shall fortify earthly hearts,  
Earth's deeds shall touch the superhuman's height,  
Earth's seeing widen into the infinite.

Perhaps my suggestion is supported by lines in an early part of the poem.

Along a path of aeons serpentine  
In the coiled blackness of her nescient course  
The Earth-Goddess toils across the sands of Time.  
A Being is in her whom she hopes to know,  
A Word speaks to her heart she cannot hear,  
A Fate compels whose form she cannot see. (Part One, p. 507)

The final secret reality of this Earth-Goddess or Earth-Spirit may be the one whose "mighty musings" are in "shut heavens". But then what is the relationship of that reality with the invoked "Truth" and "Wisdom-Splendour" and "the Eternal's artist Bride" who is the "Mother of the universe"? Is the former the supreme unmanifest Shakti-essence whose divine revelation is the latter and whose cover down below in the evolving world is the Earth-Goddess, the Earth-Spirit?

Is any light shed on my conjecture by the several later references to the ancient Mother in *Savitri*?—

Abandoning man's loud drama he had come  
Led by the wisdom of an adverse Fate  
To meet the ancient Mother in her groves. (Part Two, p. 393)

The ancient Mother faces all with joy,  
Calls for the ardent pang, the grandiose thrill; (*Ibid.*, p. 444)

The Ancient Mother clutched her child to her breast  
Pressing her close in her enviroing arms, (*Ibid.*, p. 551)

The ancient Mother offered to her child  
Her simple world of kind familiar things. (*Ibid.*, p. 578)

I will bear with him the ancient Mother's load,  
I will follow with him earth's path that leads to God.

It appears to me that the ancient Mother's identity with the "Earth-Goddess" is briefly flashed out in the lines of scornful Yama to Savitri:

What shall the ancient goddess give to thee  
Who helps thy heart-beats! Only she prolongs  
The nothing dreamed existence... (*Ibid.*, p. 586)

In spite of all this argument I feel I am basically swimming in conjectures. I wish I could have posed my question to Sri Aurobindo when he was still at the other end of a correspondence. Your frustrated feeling, however, is uncalled for. You can always write to me. you can even run down to Pondicherry. That's why you need not be woe-begone for having forgotten at any time to tap your old friend—tottering in his lower half but very far still from doddering in his upper.

Question No. 4 touches on a universal poignancy. We take life too much for granted and don't take all the opportunities possible to give love enough. At some place Sri Aurobindo has written to a disciple about this kind of sorrow added to the sheer sorrow for death. It is easy to lose one's equanimity in such a situation, but it is not by losing it that we can make amends. If the dead person has loved us he or she is not likely to be happy over our wretchedness. The only way to make amends is to give love to the departed person. Never think that the passage to the dead is blocked. As long as they are accessible to the living—and surely up to a certain time they are—the best course is to attend to the Mother's words in the set of question and answer I am quoting below:

Q. Sweet Mother, how should the news of death be received, especially when it is someone close to us?

A: Say to the Supreme Lord: "Let Thy will be done", and remain as peaceful as possible.

If the departed one is a person one loves, one should concentrate one's love on him in peace and calm, for that is what can most help the one who has departed. (16 January 1970)

The subject of suicide which your fifth question raises is a complicated one.

We look in a confused manner at the act of killing oneself. We think of it as being in the same category as murder—only it is taken to be murder of oneself instead of somebody else. No doubt, we pity the person who has committed such violence against himself, but we still consider it a crime. The common law persists in this view and therefore seeks to punish the one who has attempted suicide. Actually the punishment is for the failure to commit the so-called crime. The idea is to frighten the criminal off from attempting to repeat the act. But surely one who is bent on ridding himself of his body cannot be frightened: he will only take care to be more efficient in the next experiment. But of course the initial failure may make him change his mind and see differently the tangle of things which drove him to the drastic method of extricating himself from it. The attitude of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother is not the conventional one. The notion of criminality is far from it. Hence too the idea that here what is within the rights of an individual is trespassed. But Sri Aurobindo and the Mother point out certain unfavourable psychological and evolutionary circumstances resulting from an abrupt exit due to desperation. Their calm, clear, compassionate analysis of the complex problem involved is before us in two letters written to Huta by the Mother dated 21.12.1960 and 16.3.1961 (*White Roses* in facsimile, pp. 122 and 130).

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.

... Death is not at all what you believe it to be. You expect from death some neutral quietness of an unconscious rest. But to obtain that rest you must prepare for it. When one dies, one leaves or loses only one's body and, at the same time, the possibilities of relation with and of action on the material world.

All that belongs to the vital plane does not disappear with the material

substance, and all the desires, attachments, cravings, persist with the sense of frustration and disappointment, and all that keeps you restless and prevents you from getting the expected peace

To enjoy a peaceful and eventless death you must prepare for it. And the only effective preparation is the abolition of desires, a steady detachment from the fruit of action

So long as we have a body, we have to act, to do something, to work; but if we work simply because it has to be done, without seeking for the results of our action or wanting it to be like this or like that, little by little we get detached and prepare ourselves progressively for a truly restful death.

In fact, if you do not expect any satisfaction from physical life, you are no more tied to it and get above all sorrows.

I may add that the Mother, elsewhere in her writings, has discerned the play of a dramatic impulse in the self-destructive move, which may be contributing a tinge of self-satisfaction to it. I am also told that somewhere Sri Aurobindo says that when one after a long eventful life feels a rounding-off to it one may, in view of the uselessness of further prolonging it, opt for a voluntary departure.

Here there would be no association of despair. And this fact brings me to instances of suicide beyond the run-of-the-mill kind. There can go with self-destruction a truly high drama and not the self-satisfying dramatic impulse which the Mother has seen in the ordinary suicide. The high drama would be born from a blend of courage and duty. Thus, during World War II, the captain of the German pocket battleship "Bismarck", after his charge had been destroyed by the British Navy in the Atlantic and he had been taken captive, took advantage of a solitary spell in his room to spread the German flag on the floor, stand in the middle of it and fire a pistol into his head. The code of military honour demanded such an end and we cannot help admiring it. On a grand scale we have the historical (and far from hysterical) self-immolation of the Rajput women by fire to avoid falling into the hands of Muslim conquerors. Even a rare genuine case of *sati*, as in ancient times, has a halo about it, a soul-splendour whose outer aspect has been poetically visioned in those lines in Butler's *HUDIBRAS* !

Indian widows gone to bed,  
In flaming curtains, with the dead

Then there are the great scenes of Antony and Cleopatra, as Shakespeare has intuited them. Hating the idea of being captured by the victorious Octavius Caesar and heart-broken on hearing the report, which later turned out to be false, of Cleopatra's death, Antony runs upon his sword which he makes his attendant hold straight before him and hurts himself fatally, his life lasting only up to the time he is carried to Cleopatra's side. After his death, Cleopatra,

scorning the prospect of being made prisoner by Octavius, applies an asp to her breast and addresses it.

Come, thou mortal wretch,  
With thy sharp teeth this knot intricate  
Of life at once untie; poor venomous fool,  
Be angry and despatch. .

Sri Aurobindo, discussing “nobility” of poetic style with me, wrote: “Cleopatra’s words are an example of what I mean: the disdainful compassion for the fury of the chosen instrument of self-destruction which vainly thinks it can truly hurt her, the call to death to act swiftly and yet the sense of being high above what death can do, which these few simple words convey has the true essence of nobility ‘Impatience’ only! You have not caught the significance of the words ‘poor venomous fool’, the tone of the ‘Be angry, and despatch’, the sense and noble grandeur of the suicide scene with the high light it sheds on Cleopatra’s character. For she was a remarkable woman, a great queen, a skilful ruler and politician, not merely the erotic intriguer people make of her.”

So much for remarks in a broad vein on the subject. You couldn’t have bargained for them, but I just wanted to put before you my understanding of it. And I shall end with two personal opinions. One is a deduction from the Mother’s first letter. The Mother seldom commits herself to absolute statements and I would like to cast a passing glance at the adverb “generally” when she says: “. what you have not achieved in one life, you have to do it in the second, generally in much more difficult circumstances.” Evidently, the disciple who is said to be in a despairing and desperate condition because of “a previous failure”—that is, a past shirking of the problem by the same means of self-undoing as thought of now—the disciple cannot be conceived to be in much more difficult circumstances when the problem is confronted within the benevolent helpful presence of the incarnate Divine Mother. But, doubtless, if even now, “once more”, the “defeat” is accepted as in the past, then “next time it will surely be still worse”. Mark the “surely” in contrast to the earlier “generally”. The actual presence of the Supreme in a physical form makes all the difference. If such an act of Grace is wasted, the consequences are bound to be severe.

My next personal opinion is on a matter of psychology. I cannot daub with a sweeping brush as “cowardly” anyone who commits suicide. Self-preservation is the strongest instinct in each of us. To go against it must call for a lot of courage. But I do grant that here is a desperate courage—a courage to which one is, as it were, driven, but the mood cannot in my eyes be painted as cowardly in any sense.

Your question is not connected with all these issues. It bears on how one is to face the event of a friend putting an end to his or her life. You speak of one’s

being “shaken” by it. Let me remind you of what I wrote to you as well as to some others about the death of a young and very dear relative by his own hand two years ago.

I have passed through many deaths, but nobody’s caused me such difficulty as this in practising one of the major guide-lines of my sadhana:

A wide unshaken look on Time’s unrest.

When I got the news on the phone, there were no tears but deep within was a terrible wrench and I turned to the photographs of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother in front of me and there went out from my heart an appeal of such intensity as I had never felt in my life before in turning to them. All my being swept towards them with but one cry: “O take our loved one and your own child to yourselves!”

Trying to hold the heart-wrench within the mass of peace which Sri Aurobindo and the Mother had packed into me and to keep the thought of the lost loved one moving towards the Divine on the constant flow of my feeling towards them which has been going on for years—in trying to do this from hour to hour an extreme withdrawnness and depth-exploration took place, I plunged into a dimension so profound that whatever was still enmeshed in the human, the all-too-human, was pulled out. The ancient Upanishad has said: “When the knot of the heart-strings is rent asunder, then even in this body the mortal enjoys immortality.” The “immortality” spoken of is not just the soul’s survival of death after death in the course of its many births; it is the never-born and never-dying state which is intrinsically vast and free, luminous and blissful. The way to it is barred by that knot of the heart-strings by which the Immense becomes the little and the Eternal grows bound to the tremors and tensions of life’s run from instant to passing instant, the small fluctuations from one transience to another. I can hardly say yet that the Upanishadic Immortality is my glorious home, but a powerful draw in that direction occurred. In the past, in spite of the tranquil background in which the being had stood with the self-offered soul in front facing the personal Godhead, there had been vaguely, dumbly, a sense still of something missing, the lack of a finishing touch, haunting me and often a prayer had arisen: “Make me completely free!” The prolonged inward-going for days and days brought a quietly and effortlessly keen knife to the entanglements that had lingered in the diminishing heart-knot. It is as if in a fundamental manner the abrupt end of a cherished one’s life had freed me from my old self with a certain finality. I was not rendered cold or self-centred. How can it be so when coldness and self-centredness are qualities of the separative ego which is part of the complex formed by that knot? Once that knot is cut, the ego disappears and the true soul behind can find an outlet keeping a touch between the finite world and the unbound Spirit. What happened was that in the midst of all relationships



and all commerce with common things there was felt an enormous liberty which the very body had the sensation of distantly sharing. In a most basic manner that tragic death made me die into a new life.

If such an excruciating event as a dear one's death at quite a young age, all the more excruciating because it is desperately voluntary, if an event so life-shaking does not send us deeper into the Divine, the beloved one has died in vain. Let us not allow a death of this kind to be just a useless calamity. Let it lead us to some great Light and not leave us in a no-man's-land of misery and mystery.

Now a few words on your last "How?" The nervousness in face of the future, the fear that the veil across the time to come would part to disclose some huge undreamed-of disaster, can, in my opinion, be best removed by reading passages from *Savitri* aloud. The audible reading is necessary in order to set up vibrations in the being. The place where you have the dread of the unknown is the solar plexus and this sensitive mass of nerves is all the time resonating to thoughts, feelings, sensations. Give it the grand rhythms of Sri Aurobindo's "overhead" inspiration to resonate to. When I was in Bombay years ago and was continuing my out-of-body experiences which had developed in Pondicherry after one pre-Pondi surprise, once I was very badly attacked from behind by hostile forces of an occult plane. I felt as if my whole spine had been broken and an indescribable malaise suffused my entire system, I wondered what to do. I recollected that certain passages in *Savitri* had distinctly as Sri Aurobindo had confided to me—what he had termed the Overmind accent, which is the power of the sheer Mantra. Particularly so was the group of lines which described Savitri herself. It begins at nearly the bottom of p. 14 (Centenary Edition) with the line

Near to earth's wideness, intimate with heaven

and closes in the opening part of p. 16 with the phrase

In her he met his own eternity.

The "he" is the God of Love whom Savitri came on earth to manifest against the power of Death. I started reading this passage in a clear tone to myself, giving full scope to its sound-suggestion. When I came to the line—

For even her gulfs were secrecies of light—

I suddenly found myself cured of the pervading malaise and the sense of the broken backbone was totally gone. I may add that A.E. Housman used to say

that he knew he was in the presence of poetry when what he read brought tears to his eyes, made his hair stand on end and his solar plexus felt pierced. Sri Aurobindo, after reading Housman, referred to the solar plexus apropos of his process of getting the correct version in his epic and removing defects by “a word or phrase substitute that flashes—with the necessary sound and sense”. He went on to say: “These things are not done by thinking or seeking for the right thing—the two agents are sight and call. Also feeling—the solar plexus has to be satisfied and, until it is, revision after revision has to continue.” So I believe that the mantric intensities of *Savitri* will deal successfully with your nervous trouble “round or above the navel”. To meet your “fear of the unknown”, what can be a better remedy than this revelatory poem which may be best summed up in one of its own lines as being

A message from the unknown immortal Light? (25.5.1990)

AMAL KIRAN  
(K. D. SETHNA)

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## ALLEGIANCE

WOULDST Thou a moment grant  
The haven of Thy golden arms?  
Then the lustre of my listless eyes  
Will challenge the brightest stars,  
And my wan cheeks become the colour of buds  
Teased open by spring's lovely touch  
I would, if possible, carve Thy image in my heart,  
That argent-hued may become my dark  
Gladly would I lose myself  
In the ethereal mist of Thy tresses  
And be forever Thy willing bonds slave  
Thou, O Love, with Thy diamond-edged Grace  
Tear off the veil from Thy dazzling face.

SHYAM KUMARI

# THE ASHRAM CHILDREN AND SRI AUROBINDO'S LIFE

## A DREAM-DIALOGUE

*(Continued from the issue of 24 April 1992)*

THE child started its story:

“It happened in our village, when I was ten or eleven years old My mother told me about it.

“There was a poor woman who lived alone with her baby. Her husband was abroad. One day she found stones falling on her land She thought the village boys were teasing her and paid no attention to it. A few days later, they began falling in her courtyard, then inside the house She grew really frightened. The neighbours got to hear of it. They came to see for themselves. What they saw shocked them. Stones were falling on the woman herself. When she sat down to eat, her plate was overturned. Her child was thrown out of his cradle. It became practically impossible for her to stay there. Everyone decided it would be best if she left the village for a while to visit her mother. The moment she went away, all the trouble ceased, everything became quiet again, only to start once more the day she returned It is as if something was forcing her to leave her house.

“The elders of the village called on the pundits and the priests. They believed that if there was chanting of mantras and singing of hymns in the house, there would be peace in it once more. They found that as long as the chanting went on, all was well. Everyone smiled proudly. ‘The ghosts are powerless against our hymns,’ thought they. But the moment they thought this, huge stones started raining down into the courtyard. Everyone was struck dumb with fear Only after the ceremony of offering ‘pinda’ at Gaya did the whole thing finally stop.”

“Then it must have been some ghost or spirit who was haunting the place,” Sri Aurobindo remarked. “But did not anyone try to find out the cause, by yogic means?”

“Well, that was a story that earlier the woman used to live there with her mother-in-law. The latter fell very ill, and when the daughter-in-law who was very young then, a girl really, saw this, she was terrified. She was so afraid of illness that she wouldn't go near the old woman. Not even to give her a drink although the mother-in-law was calling out for water. So the old woman died, her thirst unsatisfied, and then came back as a ghost to haunt the house. Do you think the story is true?”

“How can I say that? But it does seem to have some elements of truth in it. For this is how what you call ghosts are born. If one dies with an unsatisfied desire or craving or passion, some part of the being, usually the vital part, may behave in a similar manner That is why our Scriptures advise the ‘Shraddha’

ceremony after death. It helps to bring peace and rest. In this case, the ceremony at Gaya finally liberated the woman's spirit."

"We never before believed that such things really happened."

"That is because you are born in the Age of Science. What you cannot see, touch or hear does not exist—this is what Science teaches. But doesn't the great poet Shakespeare say that

‘There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,  
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy?’"

"And you?"

"I? I am not a scientist. I just told you a story about Mother and me. She has surely told you many more stories. For us, for all yogis, the whole universe is a play of visible and invisible forces in the hands of which man is but a plaything. On the one hand there are ghosts and demons that are at work, on the other are the gods and goddesses. Who can fathom the intricacies of this Divine Game? However, let us end today's session on this ghostly note."

"But you did not explain where the stones came from and how they could fall even in a closed room."

"It is not easy for you to understand. Perhaps we will talk of it some other time. Now, it is time for you to say good-bye."

There arose a loud chorus of 'Why' from all sides.

"Because there is nothing more to recount, at least no more incidents to relate. We are now busy with our sadhana about which I cannot tell you anything; neither will you understand much."

"Do you mean to say that ever since the stone-throwing incident by the spirits, nothing more happened here, during the last 30 years? Nothing that we could or should be told about? You have said little or nothing about Mother, nor have you explained why you went into seclusion, and how the Ashram was begun. Then there was your accident—how did that happen? There is still so much we should know and yet you say there is nothing to say. I think you are trying to avoid speaking to us "

*(Laughing)* "No, it's not that. All the things you mentioned are closely connected with our inner spiritual life. Otherwise, in themselves they are simple enough and could be described in very few words. That is why I asked you all to get ready to leave. For instance, everything that happened between the years 1920/21 and 1926 was part of the inner life of sadhana."

"All the same, do tell us something about Mother "

*(Smiling)* "Ah, for that, you need her permission first. She never likes to be discussed."

"But you already have told us somethings about her. Couldn't you tell us a little more, in a very simple manner?"

"Well, I told you that after she came my sadhana became very intense and advanced very rapidly. So much so that I obtained wonderful results within five years. We shall come to that later. In the meantime, Mother took up the charge of running our household, so that my responsibilities correspondingly decreased, and I found I had much more time. The few companions who were there were also slowly attracted towards sadhana."

"What is sadhana?"

"There you are! I already said that you wouldn't understand me. My sadhana was my effort to bring down an enormous Power on earth and this became progressively easier when Mother's and my Force came together. It was this that, night and day, I was working at, apart from an hour or two that I spent with the boys or with a few visitors. I also walked seven to eight hours a day."

"You just walked?"

*(Laughing)* "Walking was a form of meditation. Instead of sitting down to meditate, I preferred doing so while I walked and this was how I brought down the highest forces."

"Oh yes! we have heard that a sort of path was made by the grazing of your feet on the floor, but unfortunately we can't see it any more."

"Where?"

"In the Guest House."

"Exactly. But why can't you see it?"

"Mother had given Amal Kiran your room and he was happy with that path. But when he went to Bombay for a long stay the room was repaired and while they were at it they redid the floor too *(Laughter)*. But how could you walk 7 to 8 hours in that tiny space?"

"Why should that surprise you? If it was walking only for the sake of walking, then it might indeed surprise you. But, as I told you already, I was doing my sadhana. I was bringing down Force, Light, Knowledge and other higher things."

"When you talked with people, did you discuss only your sadhana?"

"Not only. We spoke of many other matters. Some talked about the books they were studying. Now and then I met a few political leaders or some of my former nationalist friends who came to see me. Then—I don't remember now in which year—we left the Guest House to come to the Library House, or what now is called 'The Prosperity'. Finally, a few years later, we shifted to our present residence."

"Did you continue with your sadhana here too?"

"What other work could I do? If you children had arrived earlier, perhaps I might have started the school at that time!"

"Didn't Mother see anyone?"

"No, in those days, she lived in seclusion, just as I do now. Of course, she kept a contact with the sadhaks, she helped them with their sadhana, meditated

with them. Also, she ran the household and the kitchen, she served the food and ate with the others.”

“And you?”

“At first, I too ate there. Later they segregated me.” (*Laughter*)

“Is that when the colour of your skin changed completely?”

“Oh, you have heard that, have you? Who told you about it? Yes, indeed, a few people who saw me again after quite a while said that my complexion had taken on a sort of golden glow.”

“Weren’t there any women, any sadhikas present then?”

“Very few indeed. We were just twenty or twenty-five people in all.”

“Please, could you tell us something about the 24th of November? What exactly happened on that day and why is it called the Day of Realisation?”

“That is a difficult question. I have already said, haven’t I, that Mother and I were actively trying to bring down a greater Power and Consciousness. I had already had an inkling that such a Higher Consciousness did exist. I established contact with it and drawn by the force of an intense spiritual effort, that Consciousness began to descend. From the beginning of November, or even earlier, the sadhaks were aware of an impending event of great importance, and even the atmosphere of the Ashram changed. All of them felt a great Peace, and some even experienced this new descent to some extent. Our daily evening talks began later and later every day. From 4 in the afternoon when it usually used to start, it now became as late as 9 o’clock or 10 in the night. All the while, they would sit, waiting for me.

“Finally came the 24th of November. It was in 1926. Even from early in the morning, there were several who had already sensed that something very great was to happen that day. The morning passed, so did the afternoon. Nothing happened. In the evening, a few of the sadhaks had gone for a walk along the beach while the others sat waiting for me in the Ashram. Suddenly Mother came out and said that she would like to see everybody. So everyone was called. They gathered in the upstairs verandah of the Library House. What followed is too well-known for me to relate, even you have heard about it, I am sure.”

“Yes, we have. Soon after seven in the evening, both Mother and you arrived. You were wearing a silk dhoti and chaddar draped over your shoulder. Mother was dressed in a beautiful silk sari. While you took your usual chair, she sat down on a small footstool at your feet. Love, Light and Joy were flowing out of you. All the disciples in turn first bowed to Mother and, when she blessed them by placing her hand on their heads, you put yours on hers, so that through her it was you also who was blessing them.

“No one spoke, there was no sound. The whole atmosphere was bathed in a profound peace and silence. After half an hour, the two of you left.

“A little while later somebody announced that you had conquered death, disease, and the need for food and sleep and so on.”

"I don't know from whose lips fell those splendid revelations. All I can say is that there was the descent of Sri Krishna's or the Divine Consciousness into Mother and me."

"What does that mean?"

"It means a great deal, most of which you will not understand. But this much I can tell you which I am sure you will follow that this descent rendered possible what I am trying to do, to bring down the Supramental Consciousness. It was the descent of the Overmind Consciousness and it made the coming of the Supermind possible. Therefore this day is called the Day of Realisation, the Siddhi Day."

"But didn't you already have the vision of Sri Krishna when you were in prison?"

"To have a vision is one thing, to bring down that consciousness into the body or into matter is quite another. The two are worlds apart. One may have a vision in one part of the being, for example in the mind or in the vital, but to experience it in the physical consciousness and constantly to possess that experience in the body is something that is possible only when one has reached a very high degree of spiritual realisation. Now what remained for me to do was to bring down the Supermind. And it is for that purpose that I had to go away and work from behind the veil. Do you follow me?"

"Not really!"

"It doesn't matter" (*Laughter*)

"We have one more small question. Somebody told us that you used to drink tea. But we didn't believe him."

"Why not? Do you think it is a sin to drink tea?"

"No, not that, but—"

"Is it because you yourselves don't drink it? Why does it bother you? Do you know that I used to smoke too?"

"Really?"

"Isn't it a terrible thing for you to hear? Do you feel you have to go and tell everybody about it? Listen then. You must have heard the name of Mahatma Gandhi, surely. His son, Devdas Gandhi, once came to see me. When he found me smoking a cigar, he asked me in a choked voice, 'Why are you attached to smoking?' I answered him straightaway, 'Why are you attached to non-smoking?'"

"But you don't smoke any more, do you?"

"No, I gave up that habit ages ago, and quite effortlessly. The boys who were with me used to smoke too, and Mother did not approve of young men smoking. But since I did so, she couldn't ask them to stop it. So I gave it up. The most important thing is not to be bound by anything. Devdas thought I was very attached to smoking, whereas he had made a vow as strong as Bhishma's that he would never never smoke. But that too is a kind of attachment. To be always

detached in all matters is the most important thing. If I were attached to the habit, do you think I could have given it up so easily? Since we are talking about attachment, let me tell you the story about tea. I used to love tea. Both tea and cigars were habits I had acquired in England. I drank only a cup or two, but unless I got it, I could not concentrate on my work. At that time we were living in the Guest House and it was a relative of mine whose responsibility it was to make the tea. But he used to make it as and when it pleased him, at three o'clock in the afternoon sometimes, or at four or even at five, whenever he woke up from his afternoon nap. Once there was an enormous amount of work before me, but because my mind was partly on the tea that failed to come, I could not concentrate on my work. Until then, I had never asked for anything for myself from anyone. But that day, suddenly, it appeared as if an invisible hand wrote out a time on the wall before me and exactly at that given time the tea was served. But later I gave up even that habit. I do not drink tea any more. So now you can all go home, relieved.

“And think carefully about all that I have told you, won't you?”

*(The End)*

NIRODBARAN

*(Translated by Jhumur from the Bengali)*



## SOME EPISODES FROM THE LIFE OF “AN EXTRAORDINARY GIRL”

### A REPORT BASED ON ORAL COMMUNICATION

#### *My Son (Continued)*

I WILL never forget the day my son Devrup and I were to go to my husband's place for a social function. Devrup had promised to pick me up from my house at seven-thirty in the evening. I waited on the road outside for about half an hour, but there was no sign of him; so, considerably annoyed, I returned to my apartment.

At about nine o'clock, I phoned a friend of his to ask if he knew what had happened to him, but he could not help me. When another hour passed with no news of Devrup, my alarm grew. My mother too became anxious. I went down to the apartment below and knocked on the door of my neighbour, Mr. Rao, waking him from his sleep. When I told him that Devrup had not returned, he asked me into his flat and suggested that I phone "Uncle", a great friend of mine.

"Uncle" arrived at about eleven and surmised that Devrup might have gone to a cinema. He felt we should wait a little longer, but I was already sure Devrup could not have gone to see a film. When another hour and a half had passed, "Uncle" and the Raos began to whisper among themselves that it was time to enquire about Devrup at the various city hospitals. A violent Naxalite movement was raging in Calcutta at the time, and no one's life was safe. I ran to my mother in desperation. "Mother, my son must be dead!" I cried.

She replied with admirable self-control, "Weren't you telling me the other day that Sri Ramakrishna had assured you that nothing disastrous would happen to you? If that is true I am sure Devrup will come back tonight."

I was comforted. I felt a force descend from the top of my head and spread down to my feet, and faith returned to me that everything would be all right. I remained unruffled even when enquiries at the city hospitals yielded no result.

Now my friends thought of searching for Devrup by car and invited me to join them but I declined.

Just at that moment, about one a.m., Devrup returned driving his own car. Part of his face was covered with a blood-stained handkerchief. He explained that when he had been on the way home after getting his examination results, he had been attacked by four or five people. They overpowered him and robbed him of everything he had. Then they left him for dead in the gutter. After four or five hours, a lady found him and took him to her house, where she attended to his wounds. "I drove home when I felt better," he concluded. You can imagine our relief.

At one time Sri Aurobindo had told me that I would have to give up my attachment for my son. "If you imagine that you will have the money to live with your son and enjoy life with him indefinitely, you are mistaken," he said. "Nor can I protect him always, I am only doing it for your sake while you are still with him. No disaster will befall either of you during this period. But you must finally come to terms with the fact that you cannot plant your feet in two boats. You must be prepared to leave worldly happiness behind you, and your worldly attachments as well."

"But people will laugh at me," I exclaimed.

"They will do nothing of the sort," he replied firmly. "They will learn to recognize a higher side of your being. But you must be ready to give up everything you call your own."

So it was that I asked God to free me from my attachment to my son. How unnatural an aspiration it seemed! It would be difficult for anyone to imagine how strong an attachment it was, and how much I had already suffered from it. It was a torture for me to have Devrup out of my sight. My mother, seeing my state of mind, finally advised, "God alone can relieve you of the torment of this attachment. Call him with all your heart."

Acting upon her suggestion, I shut myself in my room. There all alone, I prayed repeatedly to the Lord to deliver me from this mad obsession. My food was left at my door and I allowed no one to see me. My friend Manna witnessed this solitary confinement of mine and told her friends in London about it. They were amazed, all the more so after it had continued for seven long years.

For me, those seven years were amazing in their own extraordinary way. As I would weep and pray to the Lord to deliver me, he would listen and reply, giving me solace in an unimaginably sweet voice. I could not discern him visibly except that at times I would see a golden light flushing the room. But what is most indescribable and marvellous is the state of joy and rapture I experienced during that time. Because of that experience I am now able to live in the Ashram at peace with myself, without my son.

Of course when I return to Calcutta for a visit, the old movements reassert themselves to some extent. If my son returns home late, I begin to fret. Seeing this, one of my relatives asked me how I could live in Pondicherry without him, yet get so easily upset when he did not appear on time in Calcutta. The only answer I could give was that it was a matter of psychology. When I was with my son, his absence caused the old nervous tension; but when a great distance separated me from him, I could maintain my detachment.

It was during my years of solitary confinement that I came to know the person I call "Uncle", one who since that time to the present has been a source of unfailing support and assistance to me. I will write his story in due course. At the moment it will suffice to say that "Uncle" came to our house at the bidding of my own uncle from Poona. He knocked on our door one day while I was in

seclusion, and I slammed the door in his face. Naturally he was offended, but my mother made it up to him by inviting him in, then overwhelmed him with kindness and hospitality.

*(To be continued)*

NIRODBARAN

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## THE CALL

COME, come with me,  
Where the star-lights hide not  
Behind the veils of distances,  
Where the worlds are free of turmoil,  
Where there is a luminous emptiness—  
Fields of eternity and blossoms of timelessness.

Come, come with me, floating along like a kite  
Held by an invisible thread from somewhere beyond

Come and behold the chaotic delight  
Of greens and purples and orange-golds,  
Of merging images and yielding forms.  
Travel through fragrant mists and translucent fog,  
Drop behind the limits of your sight and mind.

Come drifting like a fallen new leaf—  
What looks like autumn is indeed the spring.

DINKAR PALANDE

# LABOUR OF LOVE

by

HUTA

(Continued from the issue of 24 April 1992)

OCTOBER drifted into November 1959. Raw, cold, wet weather gripped London in its remorseless fingers.

Days of anxiety and uncertainty lay ahead of me. My restored confidence ebbed away.

The Mother wrote to me:

“To my dear little child Huta,

Bonne Fête!

Cheer up! ‘All is well that ends well’ and the end will be all right.

My love and blessings.”

1st November was my spiritual birthday. I had completed five years in the Yogic field. Still a long, long way to go to achieve my goal.

\*

Christmas was on Friday. Everywhere there was gaiety and fervour despite the snow and the sharp nip in the air.

Days passed rapidly. The Mother’s message of the New Year 1960 arrived:

“To know is good

To live is better

to be, that is perfect ”

\*

The frigid February month began.

The Mother never forgot to send me her letters, cards, books and *Bulletins*.

Doris came back from India. On 21st February there was a meeting at her place. People present there read all the messages I had received from the Mother. That very night I wrote a letter to her.

“My dearest Mother,

Pranam.

Please accept my gratitude for sending me messages, books and *Bulletins* unfailingly.

I am extremely happy you liked the things I had sent you  
 In the depth of my heart there is a stream of love for you, flowing  
 serenely, sweetly.

Outwardly I am meeting with hideous difficulties and setbacks.  
 Harrowing experiences, confusions and sufferings have besieged me.

Now gradually I am waking up fast to the fact that I cannot sail along in  
 a smooth and tranquil sea expecting everything to be marvellous.

Mother, I feel empty—as if I have forgotten my goal. I do await the  
 new page of my life to be turned by the Supreme.

Believe me, I am far from doing worthwhile things. My heart grieves  
 with sorrow

Your Force, Grace, and Love make me go on—and I live  
 Again and again I thank you for loving me.

Yours  
 Huta”

February gave way to wild and windy March The chillness increased in the  
 air. Everything was freezing—there were the days of solitude and silence

Snow whirled and spattered against my windows.

Once more I changed my accommodation and went to stay in the Y.W.C.A.  
 —Young Women’s Christian Association—at Great Russell Street. The place  
 was very close to my colleges.

The night drew near to dawn My eyes heavy with sleep closed a little.  
 Meanwhile the warden banged on my door with a big key. She went round each  
 and every room to wake up the girls in the same manner which I found frightfully  
 odd

I awoke with a start and stood near my window The weather looked far  
 from promising. Gloomy and incoherent thoughts rushed through my mind.  
 They matched the day—Sunday—grey, dreary with a slow, steady drizzle.

Unwillingly I got ready and went to the basement for my breakfast There  
 was a self-service stall. I took my tray and sat at a table. I was all alone. Then out  
 of the blue an Englishwoman appeared and asked me whether she could join me.  
 I agreed. Afterwards she started sobbing out her life-story. I was surprised,  
 because she was a total stranger I excused myself and left for my room. She  
 followed.

Her chatter was trivial and boring. She seemed to be a bundle of nerves. I  
 asked her to leave my room and sit downstairs in the public lounge, because I  
 wanted to take my bath. She said that it was comfortable here and that I should  
 take my bath leisurely. It was impolite to be rude to an elderly woman Besides I  
 thought that since she was in this respectable place she must be a lady I let her  
 sit in my room.

Reluctantly I took my requirements for the bath. Then instantly I turned

back and took the tiny transistor radio which was a souvenir of the Mother. I took also my Rolex wrist-watch and Parker Pen—gifts from my parents.

The woman blew clouds of smoke into the room watching my movements through them with her half-closed eyes

It struck me in a flash of illumination that I must take my gold chain with a large shining gold locket suspended from it. It had been given to me by the Mother. In the locket nestled a sacred gold-chain the Mother had worn on one of her ankles for several years. She had put it round my neck when I had met her for the first time in November 1954.

Now it was completely worn out, so she got it secured in a gold locket. On one side of the locket there was her symbol and on the other Sri Aurobindo's symbol.

The locket was on the table near my bed. It was quite heavy, so every night before going to bed I took it off my neck and slipped it under my pillow. But unhappily that day I had set it on the table. I advanced my steps to take it, but my innermost self or perhaps the Supreme Power which protects us all unflinchingly in the worst moments of danger and catastrophe, whispered to me: "Do not take the locket from the table."

I retraced my steps and went to take my bath. The time was 11.45 a.m. Exactly at 12 o'clock my heart gave a jerk while I was still in my bath. I felt as if my pulse had lost its regularity. A catch of uneasiness, vague and indefinable, seemed to suggest a lurking danger of which I was totally unaware.

After finishing the bath at 12.15 I entered the room. My stomach turned an abrupt somersault. A sick feeling coiled in it. I caught my breath. The woman had disappeared with the locket and some £ 20 from a handbag, leaving behind her a ghastly, sinister atmosphere. The incident stunned me into silence for a few minutes.

Later I reported to the warden who then rushed to the lady in charge of the Y.W.C.A. She called me.

I was shaken to the core. Despite the state of my mind, I found my voice sounding clear. She heard me out, then asked me severely: "Miss Hindocha, in the first place, why did you allow the woman into your room?"

I felt emotionally too washed out to make any proper reply except that the woman was insistent and I could not help it.

She said: "Such a thing has never happened here all these years. This is the first time."

Afterwards she phoned to the C.I.D.—Committee of Imperial Defence, Criminal Investigation Department.

I had an unhappy, unendurable restless night. My violent urge to leave the hostel became imperative.

The dawn broke. I threw aside the quilt and rose from my bed, exhausted.

My spirit sank still lower—but with a great effort I set my feeling aside,

approached the table and started writing to the Mother

The memory of the Mother enshrined in my heart was intenser than ever. I knew that when everything in my life failed me I should bear in my mind that the Mother loved me and that love would save me from all evils

At about 11.30 a.m. a man from the C.I.D. came and asked several questions. I endeavoured to maintain my calm as I answered him, but my nerves were frazzled. Besides, I showed him my photograph with Aunt Margaret in which I had worn the locket.

He left saying he would make investigations and would let me know. I thanked him

It was a fragile hope, but all I could cling to

I went out to post my letter to the Mother. Now to crown it all, I received a letter from the Manager of Barclays Bank Ltd., that my account was overdrawn. I was shocked

Immediately I telephoned Aunt Margaret to come with £ 50. Indeed, she was a haven—always dependable. I could count on her to stand by me.

She arrived with the money and told me: "Huta, I have been in terrible anxiety about you these past few hours. You really had me all a-twitter with worry. Now tell me what happened and why you wish to leave this place."

I said: "Aunt, I take a very grim view of this episode, because the chain with the locket were not ordinary. They held the Mother's marvellous Force. I have the strong impression that the woman was not only a thief but a desperate character. If I had taken the locket from the table, she would not have hesitated to use violence on me in order to get possession of it. She might have murdered me. From this I can conceive that the hostile forces are everywhere out in the lists. They are actively present—bent upon mischief and how they always wait to pounce on unwary beings! Yet what possible harm can they do to me when the divine forces also are present? You see, the instinct I had of not picking up the locket proved to me that the Divine too was everywhere vigilant and victorious. Nevertheless, there have been too many shocks in my young life. Aunt, I really want to leave this place. I feel disgusted. Thank you for the money which I will credit in my account. When I get the money from my father I will repay the sum to you."

Suddenly I closed my eyes against the weariness—against the problems and conflicts all around me

Aunt Margaret said with solicitude: "How earnestly you wanted to get into the Y.W.C.A. hostel and what a bad experience you had when we finally found you a place here! I know, you are not the sort of person to say things for no reason. I sympathise with you. We shall certainly find another place. Don't worry"

Later we went to the lady in charge. I told her that I wished to leave the hostel and that I would be much obliged if she would give me the refund. She

consented. Then she disclosed: "The wretched woman has vanished without paying her heavy bills. She is a great thief. Moreover, I telephoned the office in West End where she was supposed to start her new work. They said that the woman had not turned up. She took a handsome amount from the office in advance. I also found she had borrowed money from some girls here and never returned it."

Now the pieces began to fall into place when we heard the lady. We thanked her and came out of her office. In the meantime, the Bank Manager telephoned me that it was a mistake on the part of his staff—somebody had drawn the money and they thought it had been I! He apologised and assured me that he would not commit the mistake again. I gave the money back to Aunt Margaret with gratitude and appreciation.

I drifted aimlessly through the days. The atmosphere of the hostel was unbearable. Aunt Margaret found another accommodation in Holland Park, which was close to Doris's apartment. But unfortunately I had a few more days to spend in the Y.W.C.A.

When I had no classes in the afternoon, I visited the British Museum which was not very far from the hostel. I was fascinated by ancient paintings, Greek sculptures, Assyrian winged bulls about forty feet high. There are priceless objects which were excavated and now exhibited with informative notes. There were also Egyptian mummies and Sarcophaguses.

I came to know much later that Sri Aurobindo had once lived in Great Russell Street. He must have visited the library and the British Museum—the greatest, oldest and finest library in the British Commonwealth.

\*

The lady in charge informed me that the man from the C.I.D. could not locate either the locket or the woman.

She gave me the refund and wished me good luck.

The Mother sent me a card dated 30.3.60 in answer to my letter.

On the top of the card were her soothing words:

"Be grateful for all ordeals, they are the shortest way to the Divine."

She had written under this:

"My dear little child Huta,

Do not be worried. Since a few days I knew that you were in difficulties and my love and force were with you more intimately than ever.

Money and jewel can be replaced, the Divine's love is unreplaceable.

With my love and blessings "



Relief flooded through me temporarily. I knew everything passed with time. But some things leave scars.

I had loved the feeling of the sacred chain around my neck. It had given me a sense of security. But now? tears ran down my face, the slow, painful tears of utter despair.

*(To be continued)*

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## LOVE ETERNAL

WHAT shall I dread under the sun  
 If everything is caressed, not cribbed, by your glorious arms?  
 How shall I scoff or disdain  
 When everything is imbued with your omnipotent hush?  
 Nothing is opaque to your wisdom's rays  
 Nothing is masked to your maternal gaze.  
 A nest I want not in some far-off heaven  
 Whose pompous lure despatched through the age-old fane,  
 I refuse to budge from where I stand  
 Since the fountain of your love eternal  
 Murmurs even beneath my soiled feet,  
 I must see it burst forth into the wide open  
 And flood your darling earth, child of the sun.  
 A mere rash fish-catcher I must not be,  
 Braving the turbulent tides for a paltry gain,  
 Since a brilliant pearl invites me still  
 From the arcane chamber of the ocean's deeps,  
 To plunge, to soar, everywhere to reign.

SHEIKH ABDUL KASAM

## SRI AUROBINDO—THE SOUL OF INDIA

(Continued from the issue of 24 April 1992)

THE partition of Bengal was in the offing. In the teeth of vehement opposition, protests and petitions, Lord Curzon was determined to push through the proposals. The whole of Bengal was stirred, its wrath kindled as never before. Sri Aurobindo felt that the partition was a God-given opportunity to rouse the people from their slumber. He exhorted the revolutionary workers with the message "This is a fine opportunity. Carrying on the anti-partition agitation powerfully, we will get many workers for the movement." "He followed it up later with a pamphlet, *No Compromise*". Keshavmurti quotes from the *Galpa Bharati* of Abinash Bhattacharya:

"Sri Aurobindo sent a booklet on *No Compromise*. No press would print it. At length we bought type, stick, case and other things and had the writing composed in private by a Marathi young man Kulkarni who stayed with us. Several thousand copies were got printed overnight in a press and distributed to newspaper editors and distinguished men in educated circles. Barin and I took it to Surendranath Banerjee, the leader of the moderate group in Bengal. He asked us to leave it with him. But we were importunate. He gave it a passing notice and then could no more lay it by. He read it through with absorbed attention and felt astonished and asked who the writer was: 'It is not possible for an Indian, even for a Bengali, to write such English with such striking presentation of facts and arguments.' When he learned that Aurobindo Ghose was the writer, he said, 'Oh, yes, he alone could write it.'"<sup>1</sup>

Concurrently with his intense political activity, Sri Aurobindo deeply explored the riches of the spiritual dimension of life. He had begun the practice of Yoga while in Baroda in about 1904. He continued to progress in it throughout his political career. During his Baroda period he had some spiritual experiences before he met Lele in 1908. Sri Aurobindo narrated about himself in the third person:

"What Lele asked him was whether he could surrender himself entirely to the Inner Guide within him and move as it moved him; if so he needed no instructions from Lele or anybody else. This Sri Aurobindo accepted and made that his rule of Sadhana and of life. Before he met Lele, Sri Aurobindo had some spiritual experiences, but that was before he knew anything about Yoga or even what Yoga was,—e.g., a vast calm which descended upon him at the moment when he stepped first on Indian soil after his long absence, in fact with his first step on the Apollo Bunder in Bombay. (this calm surrounded him and remained for long months afterwards), the realisation of the vacant Infinite while walking on the ridge of the Takhti-Suleman in Kashmir, the living presence of Kali in a shrine on the banks of the Narmada; the vision of the Godhead surging up from

within when in danger of a carriage accident in Baroda in the first year of his stay, etc. But these were inner experiences coming of themselves and with a sudden unexpectedness, no part of a sadhana. He started Yoga by himself without a Guru, getting the rule from a friend, a disciple of Brahmananda of Ganga Math, it was confined at first to assiduous practice of *Prānāyāma* (at one time for 6 hours or more a day). There was no conflict or wavering between Yoga and politics; when he started Yoga, he carried on both without any idea of opposition between them.”<sup>2</sup>

Sri Aurobindo has spoken about his experience when he saw Swami Brahmananda. He found Brahmananda gazing at him with his eyes fully open—“Very beautiful eyes,” said Sri Aurobindo.

From the very beginning of his political activity Sri Aurobindo had felt that a strong religious basis could be given to the revolutionary movement. In connection with this idea, he visited several Ashrams on the banks of the river Narmada, in the company of his friend K.G. Deshpande, and met a number of yogins. At a school conducted by Keshavananda Maharaj, he saw the training imparted to the boys—physical exercises, games, wrestling, marching, drill, etc., all under the guidance and supervision of a retired havildar. There used to be mock battles, and no one would protest or whine of injuries. Sri Aurobindo was impressed with these activities as forming part of spiritual sadhana and incorporated some of the features in his Bhawanī Mandir scheme. We may also mention some connections with a member of the governing body of Sannyasis who gave him a mantra of Kali and conducted *Kriyās* and Vedic *Yajña* for success in political work.

Barin who had become a member of Sri Aurobindo’s family began to experiment with planchette-writing and table-tapping, having read some literature about them. Sri Aurobindo used to join him at times during the proceedings. Once during these séances the spirit of their father K. D. Ghose appeared and in proof of its identity related some incidents which proved to be correct. At one of these sittings Tilak happened to be present; the spirit of K. D. Ghose came again and again and said about Tilak: “When all your work will be ruined and men will bow their heads down, this man will keep his head erect.” Even Sri Ramakrishna was called, but when he came he did not answer questions put to him, only while going away, he said, “Mandir gado, Mandir gado” (“Make a temple, make a temple.”) At that time this message seemed an indication of building a temple. Later Sri Aurobindo understood it to mean that they should make themselves a temple to the Mother.

Barindra had the project to build a glorious temple to the Divine Mother, which would serve the purpose of imparting the inspiration and strength to the young workers who were gathering to give up their lives to the noble cause of liberating their motherland. For this purpose he was in quest of a suitable place to erect a temple in the heart of a forest or the top of a mountain. After roaming

in the hills and forests of Amarkantak in the Vindhya, he returned with a mountain fever which defied all medical treatment. Then came a Naga Sannyasi. He saw the plight of the sick man, he called for a tumbler of water. Cutting through the water diagonally with a knife and invoking a mantra at the same time, he handed it to Barin to drink. The fever soon left and never recurred.

Sri Aurobindo was watching the proceedings. He was impressed. He had witnessed the power and potentiality of Yoga for the work he had undertaken. He writes: "I had thought that a yoga which required me to give up the world was not for me I had to liberate my country I took it seriously when I learnt that the same tapasya which one does to get away from the world can be turned to action. I learnt that yoga gives power, and thought why should I not get the power and use it to liberate my country?"<sup>11</sup>

*Bhawani Mandir*, a pamphlet written in 1903 by Sri Aurobindo, was intended to train people for revolutionary preparation of the country. The idea was by Barin basically, but Sri Aurobindo gave a form to it. "It is possible that the basic conception of this scheme was derived from *Ananda Math* of Bankim Chandra. The booklet, which is mentioned in the Rowlett Committee report (of 1917), is reproduced.

A temple is to be erected and consecrated to Bhawani, The Mother, among the hills. To all the children of the Mother the call is sent forth to help in the sacred work .

*Bhawani is the Infinite Energy*

In the unending revolutions of the world, as the wheel of the Eternal turns mightily in its courses, the Infinite Energy, which streams forth from the Eternal and sets the wheel to work, looms up in the vision of man in various aspects and infinite forms Each aspect creates and marks an age Sometimes She is Love, sometimes She is Knowledge, sometimes She is Renunciation, sometimes She is Pity This Infinite Energy is Bhawani, She also is Durga, She is Kali, She is Radha the Beloved, She is Lakshmi, She is our Mother and the creatress of us all....

*We in India Fail in All Things for Want of Shakti*

But in India the breath moves slowly, the afflatus is long in coming. India, the ancient Mother, is indeed striving to be reborn, striving with agony and tears, but she strives in vain What ails her, she who is after all so vast and might be so strong? There is surely some enormous defect, something vital is wanting in us, nor is it difficult to lay our finger on the spot We have all things else, but we are empty of strength, void of energy. We have abandoned Shakti and are therefore abandoned by Shakti ..

*India Therefore Needs Shakti Alone*

The deeper we look, the more we shall be convinced that the one thing wanting, which we must strive to acquire before all others, is strength

—strength physical, strength mental, strength moral, but above all strength spiritual which is the one inexhaustible and imperishable source of all the others.

*What is a Nation? The Shakti of Its Millions*

For what is a nation? What is our mother-country? It is not a piece of earth, nor a figure of speech, nor a fiction of the mind. It is a mighty Shakti, composed of the Shaktis of all the millions of units that make up the nation, just as Bhawani Mahisha Mardini sprang into being from the Shaktis of all the millions of gods assembled in one mass of force and welded into unity. The Shakti we call India, Bhawani Bharati, is the living unity of the Shaktis of three hundred million people; but she is inactive, imprisoned in the magic circle of Tamas, the self-indulgent inertia and ignorance of her sons. To get rid of Tamas we have but to wake the Brahma within."<sup>4</sup>

*(To be continued)*

NILIMA DAS

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# QUANTUM AND THE ENORMOUS CHANGE

(Continued from the issue of 24 April 1992)

## THE PHOTOELECTRIC EFFECT AND EINSTEIN

THE photoelectric effect is another important illustration of the crucial contributions of the experimentalists. These meticulous pioneers gathered all the details which would have otherwise left the data incomplete; they indeed forced the physical world to reveal its secrets to the theorists.

The photoelectric effect essentially deals with the emission of electrons from a metal surface when an electromagnetic wave of sufficiently high frequency falls upon it. The important properties of this phenomenon were studied by Hertz, Hallwachs, Thomson, and Leonard, and it is their contributions we choose to highlight in the history of the photoelectric effect.

A review printed in December 1904 shows that the photoelectric effect was still in its infancy at that time and was one of the major frontier subjects of research. It had first caught the attention of the scientific world in 1887, after it was discovered accidentally. Far away from the active community, J.C. Bose in India also made significant contributions in this field.

*Hertz 1887.* Not long after Maxwell had propounded his new theory, the electromagnetic nature of light, Hertz set out to verify it experimentally. In the course of his investigations, when he was studying the discharge of sparks generated under the potential difference between two metallic plates, he stumbled upon a curious observation: The primary spark on one surface generated a second on the other. Since the second spark was rather faint, he built an enclosure around it, to eliminate the unwanted light. He was stunned to find that the second spark grew fainter. This stirred his curiosity further and from subsequent experimentations he began to suspect that the primary spark was in some way responsible for the secondary. His guess was that light from the primary is capable of producing sparks; then he went on to confirm the observation in a series of "delightful" experiments. He first increased the distance between the plates until the sparks disappeared and then illuminated the surface with a high frequency electric arc lamp only to find their reappearance. Thus he concluded (not quite correctly) the following: This phenomenon, if it is due to the action of light, is one of ultraviolet light

*Hallwachs 1888:* W. Hallwachs was stimulated by the intriguing findings of Hertz and on the basis of his observations was led to the following conclusion: A metallic surface, when irradiated with ultraviolet light, acquires a positive charge. Hallwachs had no clue at all to the existence of the negatively charged particle in the atom/matter, since the discovery of the electron came only 9 years

later. Two other developments had taken place during this period. The first was the study of the photoelectric effect in a vacuum and the second was the discovery by Pierre Curie that X-rays are capable of inducing the photoelectric effect.

*J. J. Thompson 1899.* It was in the year 1897 that the electron was discovered and Thomson is best remembered for it. But “perhaps his finest experimental contribution deals with the photoelectric effect.” He showed that the photoelectric effect induced by ultraviolet light consists of electron emission from the metal surface. He also calculated the magnitude of  $e$  from these experiments and found it to be the same as “the charge carried by the Hydrogen atoms in the electrolysis of solutions.”

*P. Leonard 1904.* Next in the line came Leonard with his two most crucial discoveries. He studied the effect by using the carbon arc light as the source to irradiate the metal. The advantage he carried from this innovation was that he could vary the intensity by a factor of 1000. He found that the intensity of the incident light had no influence at all on the maximum electron energy. This obviously led him to repeat the experiment in terms not of *intensity* but of *frequency*. The discovery was unexpected and shocking. The photoelectron energy was a function of frequency of the incident light; he also found that they were related by a direct proportion. We shall see a little later why it was “shocking.”

Let us recapitulate the data Einstein was served before he could assimilate and project an explanation of this puzzling phenomenon. There takes place an emission of electrons from a metal when electromagnetic light of sufficiently high frequency is thrown upon its surface. The kinetic energy of the emitted electrons is not the same, but the maximum energy is dependent on frequency of the incident light. There exists a cut-off frequency below which no emission takes place. The intensity of the incident beam accounts only for the number of emitted electrons. The time lag between the appearance of the light on a metal surface and the discharge of an electron is found to be less than  $10^{-9}$  sec (10 to the power  $-9$  sec), in other words, *instantaneous*.

It should have been possible to explain the photoelectric effect in terms of the electromagnetic wave theory, which does consider that light waves carry energy. The incident light is absorbed by the metal and it reappears in the form of kinetic energy possessed by an electron. But calculations do not reconcile with the observation—of instantaneous discharge. These calculations based on Maxwell’s theory indicate that it would take the order of  $10^7$  seconds (about 1 year) for an electron to emerge out of the metal. Equally absurd and stunning are the results when we base our reasoning on the conservation of energy in the transition.

Furthermore, the theory predicts rise in electron-energy with the rise in intensity of the incident light; but the “shocking observation” of Leonard does

not comply with this prediction.

Thus stood in 1904 the scenario in this field of activity. shocking, complex, puzzling and hence challenging. A touch of genius that would transform this complexity into simplicity and solve the mysterious problem was what was required. And indeed this problem was solved in the March of 1905, when Einstein published his paper on the light-quanta. Although the interpretation of the photoelectric effect does not figure as the main theme of this work, it nevertheless plays a strong supporting role to the light-quantum hypothesis. It is also “the most remembered part of the March paper”. Important, though brief, notes on this paper are required before we begin the explanation of the photoelectric effect.

Einstein opens this paper with a discussion on Planck’s black-body radiation formula, in a section entitled “on the difficulty concerning the theory of the black-body radiation” he examines it in some detail. Basing himself on two solid consequences of the Classical Physics—the equipartition law and the method of counting the modes of oscillation—he puts in focus certain imperfections that are present in Planck’s work. Then he corrects these “imperfections” only to obtain a different equation from that of Planck’s, this had a disastrous consequence. Einstein recognised it, as is seen in the following statement made by him: Planck’s formula “agreed with experiment but not with existing theory, whereas [my formula] (just mentioned) agreed with existing theory but not with experiment.” So he decided to study the black-body radiation in a new way, starting off this time, with the knowledge of the experimental validity of Wien’s work in the *Wien regime*. He rederived the formulas in his “own way” and finally extracted the light-quantum hypothesis. This hypothesis essentially says that monochromatic radiation of low density [valid in the *Wien regime*] behaves in thermodynamic respect as if it consists of energy quanta of magnitude  $h\nu$ .

“The genius of the light quantum hypothesis lies in the intuition for choosing the right piece of experimental input and the right theoretical ingredients”—highlights Pais.

Einstein next proceeded to state his “heuristic principle”: *if...monochromatic radiation (of sufficiently low density) behaves as a discrete medium consisting of energy quanta of magnitude  $[h\nu]$ , then this suggests an inquiry as to whether the laws of the generation and conversion of light are also constituted as if light were to consist of energy quanta of this kind*. The first important feature of this principle is that on it was founded the explanation for the photoelectric effect.

It is often (mis)understood that the light-quantum hypothesis gave rise to the revolution but it is not so, for it was possible to regard it “as nothing more than a curious property of radiation in thermal equilibrium, without any physical consequence.” Basically, the heuristic principle is an extension of the properties of light to the “interaction between light and matter.” This “bold” extension was



the fundamental cause of the revolution even as it went on to establish firmly the dual nature of light. Planck's hypothesis of discreteness of energy would have remained an *ad hoc* suggestion had it not been lifted to the status of a theory by the work of Einstein.

Einstein proposed along these lines a 'simple picture' to unveil the unexplained mystery concerning the photoelectric effect. The incident light consists of a number of light-quanta, as each strikes the metal, it transfers all its energy to liberate the electron. This idea was presented in the following equation:

$$E(\max) = hv - P$$

where  $E(\max)$  is the maximum electron energy,  $hv$  the energy carried by each incident light-quantum, and  $P$  the work function (or the constant representing the minimum energy—of the incident light—required to dislodge an electron). It is at once clear that this equation accounts for Leonard's observation:  $h$  and  $P$  being constants,  $E(\max)$  is frequency dependent.

Though this equation did account for all the existing data of the photoelectric effect, it nevertheless made strong predictions none of which were known at that time. One:  $E$  &  $v$  must vary linearly; two: the slope of the  $(E, v)$  plot is a universal constant; and three: this universal constant is none other than Planck's constant  $h$ , earlier determined by the radiation law.

This last prediction was of great and fundamental importance to our understanding of the physical world, both scientifically and metaphysically. Scientifically it represented the second coming of  $h$ . Two quite separate and independent paths had led to the same universal constant, perhaps indicating that the ideas concluded from these fields of research—black-body radiation and photoelectric effect—carried some validity and truth. Metaphysically speaking it baffled our thought with the question: What was the true nature of light? And as a consequence, this brought in sharp focus the necessity for revising our ideas regarding particle-wave aspects. We may also mention in passing that the photoelectric constant and the black-body constant have numerically the same value, if it were not so the underlying reality of light would have perhaps lain in some other hidden aspect. Do we consider ourselves lucky that it just turned out to be exactly the same? Does it also not mean that Planck's hypothesis would have found its own independent ground for being a valid physical reality?

We shall now quickly examine how the light-quantum hypothesis was received by the scientific world.

*(To be continued)*

VIKAS DHANDHANIA

# THE SATIRIC SPECTRUM

## SATIRE IN *AS YOU LIKE IT*

(Continued from the issue of 24 April 1992)

IN the days of the Bard of Avon a visit to Italy was considered an accomplishment in the patrician circles of the time as a visit to Paris was in the Middle Ages by Englishmen. And when the Englishmen returned from Italy they walked about with their noses in the air. They affected an accent which betrayed their artificiality. Such people delighted in laughing at the simplicity of all things native and at the “abominable” ignorance and “atrocious” nescience of the English-stay-at-homes who had no foreign travel to boast of.

In Elizabethan days Italy was denounced as a ‘school for scandal’ and an Englishman who pretended to affect Italian customs was considered to be a devil incarnate. The vigorous Italian proverb goes.

“Inglese italianato è un diavolo incarnato”<sup>11</sup>

Witness in *Romeo and Juliet*:

The pox of such antic, lispng, affecting fantasticoes<sup>12</sup>

and in *The Merchant of Venice* when Portia says of her English suitor:

How oddly he is suited: I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany and his behaviour everywhere.<sup>13</sup>

Whether or not Shakespeare travelled extensively in Europe is polemical, but he would have come across Englishmen who had been to Italy becoming affected and sophisticated à la mode. He makes an attempt to unmask the prevailing pretensions and the vanities of the “English Italianate” in general or the affectation of those contemporaries who had been abroad. Listen to Jaques about to leave Rosalind bidding farewell:

Farewell, Monsieur traveller, look you lisp and wear strange suits; disable all the benefits of your country; be out of love with your nativity, and almost chide God for making you that countenance you are; or I will scarce think you have swam in a Gondola.<sup>14</sup>

Rosalind’s mockery never misses its mark. Shakespeare’s dig at the expense of the English Italianate also holds good even to-day, with reference to men who

talk in an artificial way after a week's visit to foreign countries. When Rosalind addresses Jaques as a "Monsieur traveller" with his lisp, his strange suit of clothes and his dispraise of his place of birth, the dig is deep. Unless 'Monsieur' behaves in a fantastic way, Rosalind says, "no lady will ever believe that he swam in a Gondola"<sup>15</sup>—That is, he had been to Venice! The character of Jaques is in a way a creation who comes with satire on a contemporary affectation. He is the representative type of the widely travelled Englishman, who has come back from the continent with 'empty hands'. He shrugs his shoulders, talks through his nose with a soured temper. It is similar to the affectation referred to in *King John*:

Yet, I remember, when I was in France  
Young gentlemen would be as sad as night,  
Only for wantonness.<sup>16</sup>

The extravagance of the city dames in their attempts to ape the court ladies is frequently referred to in the Elizabethan Drama, and is the subject of Massinger's 'City Madam'. The wives of prosperous citizens were notoriously vain and over-dressed.

Shakespeare here has his sallies out against such of those in the audience who travelled abroad and shamelessly indulged in such affectation. Shakespeare himself offers the right attitude in the words of the fool Touchstone:

A, now am I in Arden, the more fool I  
When I was at home I was in a better place.<sup>17</sup>

Melancholy was one favourite form of sentimental affectation among the courtiers during Elizabethan days which came under fire time and again. The one who was represented as a symbol of melancholy would wear a black cloak and hat with crossed arms, pitying sighs, cynical laughter and the like. According to Sir Thomas Overbury, the melancholy man is the one who "thinks business, but who never does any; he is all contemplation, no action. He hews and fashions his thoughts, as if he meant them to some purpose, but they prove unprofitable, as a piece of wrought timber to no use"<sup>18</sup> Jaques is a melancholy man. He himself says: "it is a melancholy of mine own, compounded of many simples extracted from many objects, and indeed the sundry contemplation of my travels in which my often rumination wraps me is a most humorous sadness"<sup>19</sup> He is the one who distinguishes himself from the rest of the characters by his love of solitude and melancholy. He loves to "suck melancholy out of a song, as a weasel sucks eggs"<sup>20</sup> It would be wrong to discuss him as a caricature of an individual and he is perfectly all right as a man except for his objection to dancing which he considers to be a terrible bore. He is the satirist par excellence.

The next character who has satiric traits in him is Touchstone though he wears the garb of a fool. In Act Five of *As You Like It*, Touchstone tells Audrey: "We that have good wits have much to answer for; we shall be flouting; we cannot hold"<sup>21</sup> meaning fools like him cannot help poking fun at the expense of the others. This customary licensed jeering is slowly but cunningly raised to other forms of satire like invective or burlesque. Touchstone quips: "The fool doth think he is wise, but the wise man knows himself to be a fool".<sup>22</sup> Touchstone's words here stand as a typical example of his burlesquing the learned commentaries; or when he says, "Therefore, you clown, abandon,—which is in the boorish is company,—of this female...for I am he"<sup>23</sup> The quick-witted Touchstone parodies the rhetorical style used by courtiers in pastoral romances. Such parodies were very much in vogue in Elizabethan days and Shakespeare obligingly translates into vernacular English. Much of Touchstone's satire is lost sight of on account of his role. Another way of putting it is that his comments are sharp but never get the seriousness they deserve because the reader does not attach the importance they deserve.

At bottom both Touchstone and Jaques are satirists par excellence though the one differs from the other only in degree. But both escape the epithet satirist because the former is a clown and the latter is a 'melancholy man'. Touchstone delights in verbal ingenuities and Jaques in cynical observations. In spite of their differences both expose the limitations of pastoral life, romantic love. Whereas Touchstone aims his shafts at the country dwellers, Jaques flays at the countries when he was writing his romantic comedies. Shakespeare's works show marked improvement upon his earlier stage as a dramatist by imposing a complex pattern over the subtly-constructed satire on the courtly life and the pastoral conventions with the romantic comedy. Whereas Shakespeare's satire is essentially directed against courtiers in one of his earliest plays *Love's Labour's Lost*, it becomes double-edged in *As You Like It* where the courtiers as well as pastoral tradition are being satirized.

### Innuendos against Puritans

"The early 1590s, about eight years before our play was first presented, had seen the beginning of a new popularity of formal social satire, of deliberate poetic and prose attacks on the weaknesses and follies of the age"<sup>24</sup>

A good number of Elizabethan writers lost no time in taking sides and indulging themselves in a perpetual war of pamphlets. The Church in its Articles sowed the seeds and paved the way for the dislike of the Puritans. In *Twelfth Night*, written practically at the same time as *As You Like It*, Maria says:

The devil a puritan that he is, or anything  
constantly, but a time pleaser, an affectioned

ass that cons state without look and  
utters it by great swarths<sup>25</sup>

Shakespeare speaks only obliquely of the Puritans. In the latter part of Elizabeth's reign and under the Stuarts they were such strong opponents of the drama that they placed restrictions upon popular amusements. Shakespeare was certainly not a stranger to the feeling of hostility in directing satirical remarks against them. In *Twelfth Night*, a foolish knight who is both boastful and cowardly says that he would beat Malvolio if he knew him to be Puritan. In Shakespeare's time the Puritans were a religious sect, intolerant of others and all good things in life. The non-conformists jeered at them as trouble makers and hypocrites. In *As You Like It*, satire against the Puritans is probable though less explicit than in *Twelfth Night*. The Puritans were held in eternal malediction by the people. Macaulay was expressing wittily the thought of his time. They were up against all forms of entertainment, including theatre and other forms of sports. For instance, they objected to bear-baiting, not because it gave pain to the bear, but because it gave pleasure to the onlooker.

When Jaques says to Touchstone: "And being a man of your breeding, will you, be married under a bush, like a beggar?"<sup>26</sup> meaning perhaps with a hint that Martext is after all an unqualified hedge-priest! Then in a confidential aside to the audience, he says that he can see no reason why he should not as well be married by any other priest, because if such a ceremony is invalid, he will have lawful excuse for abandoning Audrey. In order to dismiss the unwanted priest, Touchstone mockingly dances round him, singing a popular ballad. If the original Sir Oliver posed as a Puritan, then the audience would join the ridicule and it will be immediate. For, in Elizabethan days the title 'Sir' belonged to Knights and University graduates and was only extended to clergymen by courtesy. It is a dig at the Puritans who read their own meanings into *The Prayer Book* and *The Bible*. Besides, Martext is a type-name of the kind frequently used in anti-puritan pamphlets and 'Sir' seems to have been the normal title for an unlettered man.

(To be continued)

N. SANTHALINGAM

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## BRAHMAMUHURTA

*(The time traditionally believed to be the hour before the dawn)*

It is the hour when the Souls arise  
 And seek the warm embrace of the Gods  
 Who wait eternally the brides' return  
 In the secret bowers of bliss divine.

It is the hour when the Lord of Light  
 Prepares for his pilgrimage of Grace  
 And kindles aspiration in every breast  
 And wakes to work the sleeping earth.

It is the hour when I, the child,  
 Seek out my Mother of Infinite Love:  
 Her crimson radiance in the East  
 Brings my hungry heart an endless feast

K.B SITARAMAYYA

## THOMAS MORE'S *UTOPIA*— 'AN INDICTMENT OF HUMANITY'?

IN the flowering process of Renaissance humanism, there was a synthesis of cultures—Christian and classical. In this synthesizing act, there was a search for common elements in different strains of inherited cultures. Humanism, in fact, meant a recovery of the historical sense. It broadened and liberalized the minds of men. By the rediscovery of the classical world the recovery of a perspective view in art, painting and literature was made possible. Education became dissociated from the Church without ever parting with the essence of the Christian religion. Along with the revival of the interest in old books there was a longing for personal glory or a love of literary ambition, notably expressed in Petrarch's epic named *Africa*. With man in the centre, a new kind of inwardness and self-exploration made itself manifest in the impressive use of vernaculars. Humanism evinced a multi-faceted view of life. And the humanists became patriots, critics and educators at the same time.

More's *Utopia* is 'the masterpiece of English humanism'<sup>1</sup> in that it expresses the deep-rooted phenomenon which lay in the heart of Renaissance culture—man's highest aspiration to pierce the bounds of *orbis terrarum*. The Renaissance cult of humanism admitted the vast vista of possibilities of mankind, and *Utopia* gives vent to the earnest humanistic desire for the establishment of a just and perfect society. It was 'a pure, pious wish, a demand for "justice"',<sup>2</sup> in Engelian phrase, to mankind in general. More daringly attempted the creation of an ideal weal-public out of his strong moral fecundity and ethical principles. In this respect, he embodied the superb blend of Christian morality and pagan humanistic impulse. He laid stress on the importance of man as man, stripped of all his traditional trappings and outward feigned appearances, man in essence—'unaccommodated man',<sup>3</sup> in the language of Shakespeare. More makes the point clear when he speaks of the abhorrence of the Utopians for gold:

They marvel also that gold, which of its own nature is a thing so unprofitable, is now among all people in so high estimation, that man himself, by whom yea, and for the use of whom, it is so much set by, is in much less estimation than the gold itself.

*More's Utopia and A Dialogue of Comfort*  
(1910; revised edition, London, 1951), p. 81

The Utopians consider gold to be a worthless trifle, while the foolish princes attach much importance to it, and, therefore, the Utopians do not have want, poverty or anything that goes by the name of 'what man has made of man'. To set this off, More describes fluently the humanitarian sympathy extended by the

Utopians even towards the bondmen and sick persons who need help and care

In the fictional form, describing a particular state or community—the theme being the political structure of that fictional state or community—More commented on and reacted to the political, social and economic scene of his day. In Book I of *Utopia* he evolved the framework of a story within a story. In Book II he describes all aspects of utopian life—social, moral, political, religious and intellectual. Sharing the view of the humanists who believed that their knowledge of the history and the moral philosophy of the ancients and their mastery of the art of persuasion fitted them peculiarly to be counsellors to kings, More 'saw sin and especially the sin of pride as the cancer of Commonwealth' <sup>4</sup> He urges forward everything human in his ideal weal-public. Nobody in Utopia is in profit or plenty. Nothing is incommodious to anybody. The people are full of mercy and pity. And to rule these people, the King must also be very good. He is immune from all crafty wiles and poisonous taunts. He is always bent on amending his own life, renouncing dishonest pleasures and forsaking pride. He befriends all and hurts none. Raphael Hythlodoy refers to the King of France and says that it is the duty of the king to enrich his kingdom with the guidance and inspiration derived from his forefathers and predecessors, 'to make it as flourishing as he could, to endeavour himself to love his subjects and again to be beloved of them, willingly to live with them, peaceably to govern them, and with other kingdoms not to muddle, seeing that which he hath already is even enough for him, yea, and more than he can well turn him to' <sup>5</sup> Quentin Skinner has correctly analyzed More's proposition for a perfect society as lying in the dismantling of 'degrees' and in the abolition of private property <sup>6</sup> More's practical sense was imbued with his moral fervour. He was, in a sense, forestalling communism. But this communism where every man would share the products of his country was nicely balanced off by his revolution in the educational field, as for example, in the inculcation of virtue. In a word, More evokes everything human to the utmost from the vast potentialities of man.

In speaking of the law and order prevalent in Utopia, he eulogizes the stretch of the humanitarian feeling of the Utopians to the farthest possible boundary. Humanity is set off against cruelty, vices are destroyed, men's lives are saved and they are so used and ordered 'that they cannot choose but be good, and what harm soever they did before, in the residue of their life to make amends for the same'.<sup>7</sup> Prof. H. W. Donner is right when he says that More's *Utopia* 'contains an appeal addressed to all of us, which allows of no refusal, that we should try and do each one his share to mend our own selves and ease the burden of our fellow-men, to improve mankind and prepare for the life to come' <sup>8</sup>

As a humanist, More fused Christian faith with the pagan belief in reason and virtue. As Logan points out, he struck signal success in conceiving 'of the commonwealth as a network of reciprocally-affecting parts' and also in having



'the conviction that the causes of social problems, and the effects of proposed solutions, can be ascertained by rational analysis' <sup>9</sup> Life is not to be abhorred or shunned, More says, but to be lived honestly and perfectly. The vitality of individual idealism was tinged with a percipient awareness of social causation in More who believed firmly in the fundamental soundness of human nature, and in the perfectibility of man. Mankind marches forward, perfecting itself. What seems unattainable now will some day be near and clear. More exhorts us to believe that though this is a fictitious land, it can be achieved through persistent efforts to live according to nature and reason. "Every man is master of his own to himself."<sup>10</sup> In *Utopia*, everybody lives according to nature and reason, and, therefore, is unstained by craftiness and covetousness. The king takes 'more care for the wealth and commodity of his country than for the enriching of himself'.<sup>11</sup> The pernicious original causes of vice and naughtiness are plucked out of men's minds in Utopia, since possessions are not private and money does not bear all the advantages. There are very few laws in this land and 'all things being there common, every man hath abundance of everything'.<sup>12</sup> While taking cognizance of his rationality not to deprive others, the Utopian's instinct for the individual pleasures always has a let-off, so long as they mean no harm to anyone else. Bodily pleasures are not forsaken, because they garnish the liberty of the mind. The Utopians 'follow the course of nature, which in desiring and refusing things is ruled by reason'.<sup>13</sup> With the help of reason the Utopian uses diligent circumspection not to procure others' inconvenience in seeking for his own convenience. Logan rightly says, "Rational self-interest, then, dictates that, as much as is feasible, the Utopians attempt to secure a good life for all their fellow men."<sup>14</sup> By the pursuit of reason, the Utopian believes in the dictum. 'to withdraw something from thyself to give to others, that is a point of humanity and gentleness, which never taketh away so much commodity as it bringeth again'.<sup>15</sup> So, the humanism of the Utopians is marked off by love and benevolence. It is the fellowship of nature that binds the Utopians together. More asserts that 'the fellowship of nature is a strong league, and that men be better and more surely knit together by love and benevolence than by covenants of leagues, by hearty affection of mind than by words'.<sup>16</sup> Having Plato in mind, More mingles the eudemonist and hedonist ethics in *Utopia*. His outstanding achievement as 'a Renaissance humanist lay in asserting the doctrine of the highest good (as lying in the collective good through individual good), in direct opposition to the prevailing dogmatic theology. This is, no doubt, what Cassirer mentions as 'religion without dogma'.<sup>17</sup> The religion of the Utopians is based on the exercise of virtue and the conscience of a good life.

The Utopians believe that humanity is at once above itself and in itself; their existence, therefore, is full of outlets and pulsing channels. It is for them to enjoy as far as possible the fullness and richness of life in all sorts of diverse ways. More the rationalist and More the idealist are rolled into one. He ends his *Utopia* in a

sceptical way by telling that 'many things be in the Utopians weal-public which in our cities I may rather wish for than hope for' <sup>18</sup> *Utopia* is not, in my opinion, 'an indictment of humanity'.<sup>19</sup> It is really an expression of the Renaissance humanist's dream of a world exempt from deceit and falsehood and all manners of lies of man—a world where the dignity of man is worth its weight in gold. More's ethical motive is clearly evident when he says that all laws in *Utopia* are 'made and published only to the intent that by them every man should be put in remembrance of his duty'.<sup>20</sup> He demonstrates morality as the axis upon which the king or the ruler or the magistrate must stand. At this point, Kautsky's opinion is worth mentioning, 'More's age was marked by a plethora of directions to princes. Machiavelli's *Prince* and Erasmus' *Manual for Christian Princes* were composed at the same time as *Utopia*, and we have not the slightest reason for doubting that the aim of the latter was the same as the aim of the former. to show princes how they should govern'.<sup>21</sup> Like Elyot in *The Book of the Governor*, More is very fastidious about the course the ruler must follow, for it is upon his manners that the making and the marring of the weal-public hang. He exhorts, "what officers could they more wisely have chosen than those which cannot be led from honesty by bribes (for to them that shortly after shall depart thence into their own country money should be unprofitable) nor yet be moved either with favour or malice towards any man, as being strangers and unacquainted with the people?"<sup>22</sup> In this commonwealth justice is considered to be the strongest and surest bond. And this justice stems from the feeling of the community of life and living without any occupying of money or self-aggrandizement. The feelings of nobility, magnificence, worship, honour, and majesty, of the true ornaments and honours are engendered and fostered by the Utopians at all costs. On the other hand, the chief causes of ambition and sedition are by them plucked up by the roots.

The idea of a utopian state was moulded and nurtured by the two ancient beliefs—the Judeo-Christian faith in a paradise created with the world and destined to endure beyond it, and the Hellenic myth of an ideal, beautiful city built by men for men without the assistance and often in defiance of the gods'.<sup>23</sup> As a Christian Renaissance humanist, More never advised one to forsake Christianity. Rather, he believed that it was Christianity which could bind the peoples together. And he saw in the Utopians a religion which could teach tolerance and piety together, a religion in which sedition and dissension were not allowed. The modernity in the humanism of More, indeed, is the worship of man as 'the chiefest and highest god'.<sup>24</sup> It expressed, beyond doubt, 'the reasonableness and open-mindedness of humanism'.<sup>25</sup> This was More's outstanding achievement.

The art of rhetorical presentation of the way men should behave was the dominant feature of Renaissance humanism. The art of rhetorical presentation of the behavioural pattern and the force of persuasion as well More learnt from

his study of the ancient masters. It inculcated in him the marvellous acumen of applying the moral principles to life and behaviour. This he successfully exhibited in the exposition of the manners and beliefs of the Utopians. He expressed them densely enough, but with elegance and grace. There are graphic descriptions galore of these in *Utopia*, without ever producing a feeling of drudgery. Again, More artfully associates the Utopians' knowledge of astronomy with their marvellous quickness in the invention of feats favourable to the wealth of life. Their belief in the immortality of the soul and their reasoning about virtue and pleasure are firmly brought out. More wonderfully master-minded the art of communicating good conversation and the study of classical literature (as is evident in the Utopians' keen interest in the Greek tongue and learning).

*Utopia* is a remarkable specimen of the novel form of rhetoric, teaching through entertainment, and obviously the mood is one of mockery and earnestness combined, the merry dreamer Hythloday coming face to face with the laughing philosopher, Thomas More. It is a great work furnished with copious materials for the guidance of rulers or sovereigns, for the establishment of the best weal-public. It is a humanist document of the Renaissance, putting forth ideas which are of perennial significance. More rejected abstract reasoning and presented his ideas logically and coherently in his work. The style of the book is persuasive; stylistic fluency marks it off. Mary Thomas Crane says in an article, *Video et Taceo: Elizabeth I and the Rhetoric of Counsel*, published recently, that to the theorists of education in the period of the Renaissance, e.g., Erasmus, Vives, Thomas Elyot and Ascham, 'the two goals, moral probity and Latin fluency, were intimately related and to be achieved by the same means'.<sup>26</sup> The humanist doctrines of imitation, the order of learning and education, the emphasis on the concrete, the fusion of Christian and classical morality, the alliance of the force of reason and the persuasion of eloquence are all beautifully limned before us in More's monumental work, *Utopia*.

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## QUIET MIND

IN the surrendered quietude of mind,  
 Descends the peace divine,  
 The mystery of His creation is unfolded,  
 The depth of which is fathomless  
 To the finite search of thought.  
 Nor can the height of His consciousness  
 Be scaled by the logicians  
 A quiet mind grows  
 In the manner  
 A flower blossoms from a bud  
 To a petalled  
 Multicoloured variety and beauty  
 It finds the Divine and His creation  
 In the true perspective,  
 Traces the inexpressible logic of mysticism  
 And the meanings of lines and curves of the Universe.

SITANGSHU CHAKRABORTTY

# THE TERM “DAEMON” IN SAVITRI

A REPORT BY WILFRIED

*In the issue of December '91 the editor has referred to the connection between Socrates and Sri Aurobindo. I am presenting a text here which is indirectly related to this subject. I wrote it a few years ago, while studying the Greek vocabulary in Savitri.*

SRI AUROBINDO has made a very rich use of Greek words, or words of Greek origin, in SAVITRI. *Daemon/daemonic* occurs five times in the epic and it is worth clarifying its meaning, because even medium-size dictionaries may give misleading information about it. Thus, the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English by A. S. Hornby tells us that *daemon=demon*. The latter term is explained as “evil being or spirit” However, this meaning cannot be applied at all in our quotations

- 1) Yet a foreseeing knowledge might be ours,  
If we could take our spirit's stand within,  
If we could hear the muffled *daemon* voice (p. 52, Cent Ed )
- 2) Oracles that break out from behind the shrine,  
Warnings from the *daemonic* inner voice  
And peeps and lightning-leaps of prophecy  
And intimations to the inner ear (p. 86)
- 3) For knowledge comes not to us as a guest  
Called into our chamber from the outer world,  
A friend and inmate of our secret self,  
It hid behind our minds and fell asleep  
And slowly wakes beneath the blows of life;  
The mighty *daemon* lies unshaped within,  
To evoke, to give it form is Nature's task (p. 244)
- 4) And from their high station looked down on this world  
Two sun-gaze *Daemons* witnessing all that is. (p. 258)
- 5) The unborn gods hide in his house of Life  
The *daemons* of the unknown overshadow his mind  
Casting their dreams into live moulds of thought, (p. 482)

If we look into a Greek dictionary to clarify the origin of *demon* and *daemon*, we

are likely to get quite confused:

demon = Gr. *daimôn* = God, divinity; devil, ghost: fate, misfortune

daemon = Gr. *daimonion* = God, divinity; protective spirit, evil spirit; destiny

It is interesting to note that in Sanskrit too the term *asura* was strangely ambiguous. Originally, it meant "powerful, divine being", but later assumed the meaning "undivine being" (based on the wrong etymology *a-sura*), which finally prevailed and is still found today in modern Indian languages.

*daimôn/demon* took a similar development in the English language. Only the negative meaning survived and *demon* means always "devil, ghost"

As for *daemon*, it can have both the "divine" and the "undivine" significance. In the latter case it is synonymous with *demon*. And in the former case, it can mean: 1) lower divinity; 2) spirit, genius; 3) *daimonion*, inner voice; 4) the creative (element in man).\*

If we examine our quotations now, we can gather from the context that the correct meaning is to be taken from the "divine" significances. In quotation 1) and 2) the reference is obviously to the "daimonion", about which Plato reports in his *Apologia*: it was Socrates' inner voice which used to warn him and to prevent him from doing wrong things in life. We may remotely compare it to Sri Aurobindo's "psychic being", although the "daimonion" is purely negative-preventive and lacks the positive-creative aspect of the psychic being (which prompts us, for instance, to do unselfish work, write beautiful poetry, etc.).

In quotation 3) we may choose the meaning "creative spirit" and in 4), 5) "divinity".

It remains to be added that the pronunciation of the two words *demon* and *daemon* is exactly the same: di:m'n.

WILFRIED

\* According to *Langenscheidts Enzyklopädisches Wörterbuch Englisch-Deutsch*

## BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

**The Problems of Human Unity in Sri Aurobindo's Light** *Dr M.V Nadkarni.*  
Published by Registrar, Sardar Patel University, Vallabh Vidyanagar Pp. 47.  
Rs. 12/-

THIS small booklet gives the text of two A.B. Patel Memorial Lectures delivered by Professor Nadkarni last year, the subjects being: "The Problem of Human Unity" and "The Problem of Indian Unity" I have known Dr. Nadkarni mainly by his discourses on *Savitri* in Pondicherry These two lectures are a pleasant surprise Rarely have I come across such a brilliant exposition of Sri Aurobindo's socio-political views on such a topical theme.

In the first lecture, while surveying the world scene the author presents the views of modern thinkers like Toynbee, Ikeda, Laszlo, Tromp and others which seem to be as if stimulated by Sri Aurobindo "As if" because, as the author also points out, Sri Aurobindo's writings have, as yet, received scant attention from the world's opinion-makers; in particular our Indian academics have as good as ignored him It is difficult to resist the temptation to quote extensively from these lectures Let me just quote one sentence nearly concluding this powerful lecture "Sri Aurobindo is asking us, why not tend and cultivate your consciousness and turn it over? That is where the seed of a new consciousness will sprout and from that will come human unity and perfect life on earth." Why not? There are indeed some fundamental issues resisting human unity which are not adequately stressed, as an example the present idolisation of capitalism; but I do recognise the constraints imposed by time on a lecture and hence refrain from criticising the author on such counts.

The second lecture, "The problem of Indian Unity" I feel, should be made a compulsory reading for Indians, especially for our revered leaders. The author starts with a succinct lament, seldom publicly stated: "How I wish that Gandhiji and Nehru had felt as Tagore did about the inspired word of the *Rishi*, but it was the misfortune of the country that this was not to be " A truth that needs to be stressed for a clear historical perspective Quoting Nolini, the author starts his main subject by saying forcefully that India has long been a nation culturally and spiritually, but that its political nationhood is still at a sensitive and fragile stage, that the medieval spirit is rampant and that some pure and clear perception and knowledge and wider consciousness are essential to cleanse the congested hectic atmosphere of the Indian body politic.

A consciousness that rises above religious dogma, sectarian interests and mutual suspicion is the need of the hour The fact of India's Indianness is well brought out by a quotation from C.E.M. Joad Talking of the fundamental sense of unity of Indians, in spite of all diversities, Joad says: "We cannot, in short, speak of a 'European' with the same appropriateness as we can speak of an

'Indian', who, in spite of differences of colour, caste and creed, looks upon all other Indians as his fellow-countrymen and upon India as his home." Later the author speaks another essential truth people are usually scared to proclaim, namely, that, "Sri Aurobindo never believed that Hinduism as a credal religion can become the basis of building a new and united India " Let me not succumb any further to the temptation to keep on quoting from these lectures

I have not attempted to give a précis or a gist of the author's clear, logical presentation of the causes of the problem of unity and its possible solution, for that would mean another booklet. I would only say, thank you Dr Nadkarni, thank you the publishers and printers for making these lectures available All should rush to buy a copy

DINKAR PALANDE



## SUDDEN TALES THE FOLKS TOLD

*(Continued from the issue of March 1992)*

### 12. THE SHORTEST HISTORY OF THE WORLD

LONG long ago when very little was known about the world, a King desired to know its history. He asked his minister to do the needful within a period of five years.

The minister who was a learned man invited hundreds of scholars from different parts of the world and assigned them the task of writing the history of their regions.

The able minister looked after the requirements of the scholars and they spent much of their time in reading and writing. They were quite efficient. So they were able to finish their work in time.

One fine morning, the King was surprised to see a long queue of donkeys in front of his palace. Every donkey was burdened with a big load, containing a dozen or more books. Each book was big enough to pass for a pillow. Puzzled, the King sent for his minister.

The minister arrived within minutes beaming with satisfaction.

“What are all these?” asked the King.

“History of the World, Your Majesty,” replied the Minister.

“O Lord, when am I going to finish reading all this? I can’t even see where this queue of donkeys ends. My God! Even if I live long and devote all my time only to reading, I doubt if I can finish half a dozen donkey-loads of volumes!” said the King in anguish.

The minister was silent, for he knew what the King had said was true.

“Oh these scholars!” continued the King, “Are they trying to have some fun at my expense? Tell them to write a short history of the world avoiding details. Give them another twelve months.”

With a heavy sigh the minister went back to carry out the command of the King. The scholars were once again busy rewriting their works.

Twelve months came to an end. The scholars managed to finish their works with great difficulty. And the minister went to report the matter to the King.

“Very good,” said the King. “Let me see the work.”

No sooner had he said this than half a dozen sturdy donkeys were driven into the palace. Each donkey carried two loads of books and every load contained twenty pillow-like volumes.

The King gasped for breath and then gritted his teeth in anger. “Oh no! I can’t read all this stuff!” he shouted and added, “I am just interested in knowing what is happening all over the world all this time. Let the scholars tell me in a nutshell. I give you one more month.”

The minister ordered the donkeys to be led away. He met the King after a few days

He was holding a small ivory casket. He presented it to the King and said, "Your Majesty! The assigned work is over. This box contains the shortest history of the world. It tells about what happened all over the world all the time."

"Good!" the King exclaimed. He eagerly opened the box. He found a small scroll tied with a silken string

He took the scroll out of the box, untied the string and unrolled it. It contained only three lines

"So short!" the King exclaimed again and read the lines aloud.

Men were born.

They lived.

Then they died.

After a short pause the King commented: "Oh! this is what happened all over the world all the time! Strange but true "

The King suitably rewarded his minister and the scholars

\*

### 13. WHY DID GOD REFUSE TO COME TO EARTH?

As Lord Shiva munched the betel leaves and nuts given affectionately by his consort Parvati, the latter said: "My Lord! People on earth are unhappy with you. they invariably curse you. And it is not good for our family. But they are all praise for Brahma for he creates, whereas you destroy."

Parvati paused.

"But I'm only doing my duty," responded Shiva. Parvati pleaded. "Yet if you can help at least one man on earth, he will praise you heartily. And the curse of others may not have that much effect on us "

Lord Shiva thought awhile and decided to help someone on earth who really deserved it.

As decided, Lord Shiva reached the earth accompanied by his wife. Disguised as nomads, they went from village to village in search of the poor man badly in need of help

After several days of search, they hit upon a hut with an excuse for a roof. Rain or shine, none could live there. Yet they found a bony old man there fast asleep on a worn-out coir cot.

There was only one water-pot and a plate, both made of mud. A tattered mat was rolled and kept in one corner of the hut

The celestial couple looked at each other, and nodded their heads.

"He really deserves our help," they said in unison.

The poor old man woke up with a start and blinked. He rubbed his eyes.

“Don’t be afraid We are here to lend you our helping hand,” consoled the couple

The old man didn’t utter a word

Lord Shiva touched the coir cot with his right forefinger. It turned gold.

The old man jumped out of the cot and looked at the forefinger of the Lord.

“Are you satisfied?” asked the Lord.

The old man clicked his tongue in dissatisfaction.

Lord Shiva touched the mat kept in the corner, and the earthen vessels. As they turned gold, Lord Shiva asked, “Enough?”

The old man clicked his tongue again.

Touching the hut he looked at the old man again expecting a positive reply

But the old man disappointed him.

As Parvatī looked suspiciously at the malcontent, Lord Shiva asked him, “Tell me, what else do you need? I’ll be happy to do anything that will please you ”

The old man looked greedily at the right forefinger of the Lord and said, “Will you please cut that and give it to me?”

The celestial couple took to their heels. On their way to their abode, Lord Shiva told Parvatī, “Never again call me to the earth. It is better to bag curses than live without a forefinger ”

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#### 14. THE BIG AND THE BIGGER

A still grey pool was the colony of little fish They were either white or black in colour and none of them was bigger than the size of our little finger In the same pool lived a multicoloured fish bigger than the rest He was proud of his size and the many colours that embellished his skin So he kept himself aloof from the rest. Whenever the little fishes crossed his path he sneered at them, “You ugly little creatures! How dare you cross my path? If I happen to see you again, I will throw you out of this pool ”

The proud big fish never allowed the little ones to wander freely At the sight of him the little ones swam helter-skelter

One day a very old fish approached the big one and said, “How handsome you are! A fish of your size and beauty deserves to live in a big river This gutter-like pool is hardly the place for a prince like you. If you go off to the big river, you can mix with others of your own size and status And think of the luxurious life in the river!”

The big fish pondered over the matter. The very thought of living in a big river made his heart gallop in joy

“Yes,” he said to himself. “That is an idea worth following. I can get free of

this stinking pool and once for all bid good-bye to these stupid fish who know not my worth. The big river is the right place for me to lead a happy and respectable life ”

He was determined to desert the small pool and told every little creature about his plan

The little fishes were all very happy at the news. They sang, danced and leaped in joy. A few days later there was heavy rain and the big river overflowed its banks. The flood water covered the little pool. Happy at heart, the big fish bade good-bye to the little fishes. He rose to the top of the water and allowed himself to be swept downstream to the river. .

The moment he reached the mouth of the river, he saw five big fishes hunting down worms. The stranger liked to participate in their game and swam nearer.

“You ugly little fool! Do you think you are our equal? You want to share our hunting joy, eh? Get out. Run for your life. If we see you again in our hunting area we will tear you to shreds,” warned a hunter fish.

The scared stranger swam away from their sight farther into the big river. Before he could swim a yard or two he was attacked by a tiger fish. To escape from his fangs the stranger penetrated his way into a nearby hole where a giggling crab clasped him by his tonguelike hands. The stranger struggled for his life and at last managed to escape, wounded though. The moment he came out of the crab’s burrow he was chased by an eel. The fish took him for a snake and swam with all his strength and hid beneath a large clump of weeds.

“My God! This river is no heaven! It is much better to be ‘somebody’ in a little pool than to be harassed like this in a big river.” the proud fish realised at last.

With much difficulty he swam his way back to the pool. But he had become a changed fish. He freely mixed with the little creatures of the pool and was kind and courteous to all.

*(More Tales to follow)*

P. RAJA

# SHIVACHANDIKA—FREEDOM FIGHTER

## A TRUE STORY

BORN on the 18th July 1912 in a village of the Bhagalpur District of Bihar, Shivachandika grew up to be a heroic fighter for the freedom of India. Now we have to put him on the list of the forgotten worthies of the Freedom Struggle.

He belonged to a renowned Kayasth family of Bihar. He had his early education at Bhagalpur. At the age of fourteen he left his school and joined the Swadeshi Movement. The result was that he was put into jail. There he had to meet torture of many kinds by the British Government. In spite of all hardship he continued his education and obtained a degree.

In 1938 he was again put in prison. The treatment meted out to him was nothing but a torment. On the eve of the Non-Co-operation Movement on 9th August 1942 he was confined in a small dark cell of Hazaribagh, Bihar. He was put to hardships of the cruellest kind. He was provided with a wooden Takhta fixed with nails for sleeping. The British Raj thought that torture was the only road to submission. When he refused to leave the Congress work, one of his ears was punctured. Being a dedicated Congress man Shivachandika was fearless and never gave in, never failed or faltered.

In early 1942 when he was a student he was getting leaflets and posters printed about the Congress Party to be distributed openly in public with the result that he was arrested and sent to jail.

In 1947 when he emerged from prison, he was elected leader of the Trade Union Organisation at Jamshedpur.

Due to his Congress activities he had taken a vow not to marry till his country would be free from foreign rule. After Independence in 1947, a close friend, Shri Madanlal Himmatsingka, a devotee of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, persuaded him to marry, and got him married to a befitting partner who was no other than Anand Bahen of the Ashram.

Abdul Bari, a very prominent leader of the Trade Union Movement of Bihar, observed the organising ability of Shivachandika and took him to Jamshedpur for Trade Union work. There he proved to be very successful in organising the Trade Union movement in the whole of Bihar. He gained recognition and was elected General Secretary of the Bihar Branch for many years. The workers regarded highly his sacrifices and rightly chose him to the Bihar Legislative Assembly as their representative. He took up the cause of workers' education and got a workers' College established at Jamshedpur.

In 1967 he was elected to the Lok Sabha from Jamshedpur. He kept close touch with his constituency. His services were widely known. He was the first worker Director of Sindri Fertiliser Company of Nangal. He represented the cause of the workers at the Geneva Conference. Being the labour leader, he

accompanied the National Productivity Team to the U.S.A. and Japan

On 15th October 1972, while delivering a speech in the Home Ministry Consultative Committee on the Freedom-Fighter Pension, he was visibly moved about the deplorable condition of freedom fighters. He had a massive stroke and died in the Wellington Hospital at Delhi.

Shivachandika could get the privilege of Darshan of our Divine Mother due to his friend Himmatsingka.

GUNANANDA DAS

*(Translated by Gourmohan Mahanta from the Oriya)*

## *Students' Section*

### **THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION**

**Seventy-first Seminar**

**23 February 1992**

#### **Introductory Speech by Kishor Gandhi\***

WE have organised this Seminar to celebrate two very important occasions, not only for the disciples and devotees of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother but for the whole earth and humanity and, in their widest scope, for the entire universe. The first is the 114th birth anniversary of The Mother which passed two days back, and the other is the ninth recurrence of the leap-year day of the supramental manifestation upon earth which first occurred on 29 February 1956, and which we shall celebrate after six days.

For this Seminar we have selected a subject which is most appropriate for both these occasions. The subject is:

“How to prepare ourselves to become the true instruments of The Mother’s Great Work for earth and humanity?”

Sixteen members of our Association, who are all students of the Higher Course of our Centre of Education, have prepared papers on this subject which they will read out to you in the alphabetical order of their names.

For my part, by way of a brief introduction to the subject, I shall read out first two short writings of Sri Aurobindo and then one of The Mother which explain in succinct yet most forceful and illuminating terms the essential significance of The Mother’s Great Work for earth and humanity and how we should prepare for it.

#### **The Greatest Boon**

“The boon that we have asked from the Supreme is the greatest that the earth can ask from the Highest, the change that is most difficult to realise, the most exacting in its conditions. It is nothing less than the descent of the supreme Truth and Power into Matter, the supramental established in the material plane and consciousness and the material world and an integral transformation down to the very principle of Matter. Only a supreme Grace can effect this miracle.

The supreme Power has descended into the most material consciousness but it has stood there behind the density of the physical veil, demanding before manifestation, before its great open workings can begin, that the conditions of

\* Revised and enlarged

the supreme Grace shall be there, real and effective.

A total surrender, an exclusive self-opening to the divine influence, a constant and integral choice of the Truth and rejection of the falsehood, these are the only conditions made. But these must be fulfilled entirely, without reserve, without any evasion or pretence, simply and sincerely down to the most physical consciousness and its workings”<sup>1</sup>

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“Self-surrender to the divine and infinite Mother, however difficult, remains our only effective means and our sole abiding refuge,—self-surrender to her means that our nature must be an instrument in her hands, the soul a child in the arms of the Mother.”<sup>2</sup>

SRI AUROBINDO

### The Mother’s Invitation to the Great Adventure

“When the physical substance is supramentalised, to incarnate on earth will no longer be a cause of inferiority, quite the contrary. It will give a plenitude which cannot be obtained otherwise

But all this is in the future; it is a future...which has *begun*, but which will take some time to be realised integrally. Meanwhile we are in a very special situation, extremely special, without precedent. We are now witnessing the birth of a new world, it is very young, very weak—not in its essence but in its outer manifestation—not yet recognised, not even felt, denied by the majority. But it is here. It is here, making an effort to grow, absolutely *sure* of the result. But the road to it is a completely new road which has never before been traced out—nobody has gone there, nobody has done that! It is a beginning, *a universal beginning*. So, it is an absolutely unexpected and unpredictable adventure.

There are people who love adventure. It is these I call, and I tell them this: ‘I invite you to the great adventure.’

It is not a question of repeating spiritually what others have done before us, for our adventure begins beyond that. It is a question of a new creation, entirely new, with all the unforeseen events, the risks, the hazards it entails—*a real adventure*, whose goal is certain victory, but the road to which is unknown and must be traced out step by step in the unexplored. Something that has never been in this present universe and that will *never* be again in the same way. If that

<sup>1</sup> *The Hour of God* (Cent. Ed., Vol. 17), p. 46

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* (1982 Ed.), p. 108



interests you...well, let us embark. What will happen to you tomorrow—I have no idea.

One must put aside all that has been foreseen, all that has been devised, all that has been constructed, and then...set off walking into the unknown. And—come what may! There ”<sup>1</sup>

THE MOTHER

<sup>1</sup> *Questions and Answers, 1957-58, Collected Works of the Mother* (Cent Ed , Vol 9,) pp 150-51