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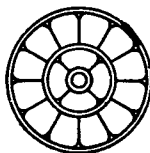
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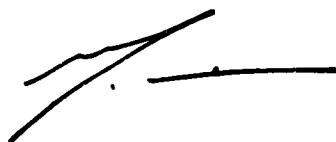
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,  
A new light breaks upon the earth,  
A new world is born.  
The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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# MOTHER INDIA

## MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XLVI

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*"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"*

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# THE MOTHER'S "MANTRAS" ON MANAGEMENT

## Compiler's Note

*This compilation is made from the talks of the Mother in her Wednesday classes. At times, she has emphasised the same thought in different words on different occasions. Similar thoughts of hers spread over the years have been placed together to make these more emphatic. At one place Sri Aurobindo's words on the same theme have been dovetailed.*

G. P. GUPTA

LET us work as we pray, for indeed work is the body's best prayer to the Divine. It is not so much the act that matters, but the consciousness in which it is done. It is always the right thing when it is done in the right spirit.

\*

Organisation is indispensable for all good work. Organisation is a discipline of action. An organisation is needed for the work to be done—but the organisation itself must be flexible and progressive. No material organisation, whatever its degree of preparation, is capable of bringing a solution to the miseries of man. Man must rise to a higher level of consciousness to get rid of his ignorance, limitation and selfishness in order to get rid also of his sufferings.

\*

The major part of the world's misery comes from the fact that things are not in their (proper) place. If life were organised in such a way that nothing was wasted and each thing was in its place, most of these miseries would not exist any longer. If everything were in its place, in nations, in the material world, in the actions and thoughts and feelings of individuals, the greater part of human suffering would disappear.

\*

You may think differently from the Guru, but you must do what he says—that is what keeps you in the right attitude. It is not the action, but the inner attitude that matters most and decides finally your action. If you can't obey your Guru, you have to leave him. So also, if in some vital matter you can't see eye to eye with your superior, you have no other alternative but to leave the job.

Towards your subordinates, be as kind, generous and sympathetic as possible.

\*

You carry with you, around you, in you, the atmosphere created by your actions, and if what you do is beautiful, good and harmonious, your atmosphere is beautiful, good and harmonious; on the other hand if you live in sordid selfishness, unscrupulous self-interest, ruthless bad-will, that is what you will breathe every moment of your life and that means misery, constant uneasiness, it means ugliness that despairs of its own ugliness.

Every wrong action produces on the consciousness the effect of a wind that withers, of a cold that freezes or of burning flames that consume. Every good and kind deed brings light, restfulness, joy—the sunshine in which flowers blossom.

\*

Fatigue comes from doing work without interest in the things you do. With the right consciousness always there, there would be no fatigue. When you feel tired, don't overstrain yourself but rest—doing only your ordinary work; restlessly doing something or other all the time is not the way to cure it. To be quiet without and within is what is needed when there is this sense of fatigue.

\*

There is consciousness in each physical thing with which one can communicate. Everything has an individuality of a certain kind—houses, cars, furniture etc. The ancient people knew this and so they saw a spirit or 'genius' in every physical thing. Physical things have consciousness within them which feels and responds to care and is sensitive to careless touch and rough handling.

\*

People who do not know how to deal with things carefully do not deserve to have them. Indeed this shows a kind of selfishness and confusion in the human being, and it is not a good sign. They may be in a room which looks very tidy and very neat outwardly, but when you open a drawer or a cupboard, it is like a battlefield. Everything is pell-mell, you find everything in a jumble, nothing is arranged. These are people with a poor little head in which ideas lie in the same state as their material objects. They have not organised their ideas. They live in a cerebral confusion.

\*

Rules are indispensable for the orderly management of work; for without order and arrangement nothing can be properly done, all becomes clash, confusion and

disorder A rule that can be varied by everyone at his pleasure is no rule. In all countries in which organised work is successfully done, rules exist and nobody thinks of breaking them, for it is realised that work (or life either) without discipline would soon become a confusion and an anarchic failure. In the great days of India everything was put under rule, even art and poetry, even Yoga. Personal discretion can even in a frame of rules have plenty of play—but discretion must be discreetly used, otherwise it becomes something arbitrary or chaotic.

\*

It is impossible to arrange the work according to personal considerations as then all work would become impossible.

To learn subordination and cooperation is necessary for all collective work; without it there will be chaos. Whatever work is done, one has always to subordinate or put aside one's own ideas and preferences about things and then work for the best under the conditions and decisions laid down. One of the principal difficulties throughout is that each worker wants to do according to his own ideas, on his own lines according to what he thinks to be the right or convenient thing and expects that to be sanctioned. It is one of the principal reasons of difficulty, clash or disorder in the work, creating conflict between workers and managers, conflict between ideas and the actions. Harmony can only exist if all accept the work without grudge and personal reaction.

How greatly orderliness increases the power in each thing! Are not the most powerful machines the ones in which each part, each cog, each lever fulfils its function with order and precision? And in a machine like that even the smallest screw, when it keeps to its proper place, can claim to be as useful as the majestic flywheel.

\*

... it is very necessary that one should consider everything from as many points of view as possible. There is an exercise in this connection which gives great suppleness and elevation to thought; it is as follows. A clearly formulated thesis is set; against it is opposed the antithesis, formulated with the same precision. Then by careful reflection, the problem must be widened and transcended until a synthesis is found which unites the two contraries in a larger, higher and more comprehensive idea.

\*

... If you want to succeed in having precise, concrete, clear, definite thought on a

certain subject, you must make an effort, gather yourself together, hold yourself firm, concentrate. And the first time you do it, it literally hurts, it is tiring! But if you don't make a habit of it, all your life you will be living in a state of irresolution. And when it comes to practical things, when you are faced with—for, in spite of everything, one is always faced with—a number of problems to solve, of a very practical kind, well, instead of being able to take up the elements of the problem, to put them all face to face, look at the question from every side, and rising above and seeing the solution, instead of that you will be tossed about in the swirls of something grey and uncertain, and it will be like so many spiders running around in your head—but you won't succeed in catching the thing.... I am speaking of the problems of your daily life, of every day. They become something quite woolly.

\*

For a correct judgment, let there be an 'objective perception' with a 'perfected machine'. Objective perception is to see and judge without adding anything from oneself, free from all personal reaction—without mixing up in it any personal feelings. Perfected machine means the clarity of a living consciousness which means uniting your consciousness with the object/person you want to know/judge impartially.

\*

When you have a problem to solve, instead of turning over in your head all the possibilities, all the consequences, all the possible things one should or should not do, if you remain quiet with an aspiration of goodwill, the solution comes very quickly. And as you are silent you are able to hear it.... Implore the Light and wait for it to come.

\*

Do not admit suggestions of despair and impatience. Do not brood over your difficulties. One ought not to indulge in ideas of incapacity, inability to respond, dwelling too much on defects and failures and allowing the mind to be in pain and shame on their account; for these ideas and feelings become in the end weakening things. If there are difficulties, stumblings or failures, one has to look at them quietly and call in tranquillity and persistently the Divine help for their removal, but not to allow oneself to be upset or pained or discouraged.

When some weakness comes up, you should take it as an opportunity to know what is still to be done and call down the strength into that part. Despondency is not the right way to meet it.

SRI AUROBINDO

\*



Money does not bring happiness. The Sannyasin who possesses nothing and usually eats only one meal a day is perfectly happy if he is sincere. Whereas a rich man may be thoroughly unhappy if he has ruined his health by all sorts of excess and over-indulgence. It is not money that makes a man happy, but rather an inner balance of energy, good health and good feelings.

\*

Money is not meant to make money. Money is meant to increase the wealth, the prosperity and the productiveness of a group, a country or, better, of the whole earth. Money is a means, a force, a power and not an end in itself. And like all forces and all powers, it is by movement and circulation that it grows and increases its power, not by accumulation and stagnation.

\*

There are honest people but they do not have the capacity to work. There are capable people but they are not honest in their work. When someone is both honest and capable he becomes very precious.

\*

In dealings with others, you should see not only your own side of the question but the other side also. There should be no anger, vehement reproach or menace, for these things only raise anger and retort on the other side. It is best even to be severe with one's own mistakes and charitable to mistakes of others.

\*

Nothing lasting can be established without a basis of trust. And this trust must be mutual. You must be convinced that it is not only my good that I am aiming at, but also yours. And on my side I must know and feel that you are here not merely to profit but also to serve. There is no welfare of the whole without the welfare of each part. There is no harmonious growth of the whole without the progress of each one of its parts. If you feel you are being exploited, I will also feel that you are trying to exploit me. And if you fear you are being deceived, I will also feel that you are trying to deceive me.

\*

When we have to work collectively, it is always better to insist, in your thoughts,

feelings and actions, on the points of agreement rather than on the points of divergence.

We must give importance to the things that unite and ignore, as much as possible, those that separate.

# SRI AUROBINDO'S VISION OF THE FUTURE SOCIETY

PASSAGES COMPILED BY GOPAL BHATTACHARJEE

*(Continued from the issue of June 1993)*

## PART III

### MARCH OF HUMANITY TO A SPIRITUALISED SOCIETY

#### The Key-Role of Individuals

A CHANGE of this kind, the change from the mental and vital to the spiritual order of life, must necessarily be accomplished in the individual and in a great number of individuals before it can lay any effective hold upon the community.

The Spirit in humanity discovers, develops, builds into form in the individual man: it is through the progressive and formative individual that it offers the discovery and the chance of a new self-creation to the mind of the race.

For the communal mind holds things subconsciously at first or, if consciously, then in a confused chaotic manner: it is only through the individual mind that the mass can arrive at a clear knowledge and creation of the thing it held in its subconscious self.

Thinkers, historians, sociologists who belittle the individual and would like to lose him in the mass or think of him chiefly as a cell, an atom, have got hold only of the obscurer side of the truth of Nature's workings in humanity.

It is because man is not like the material formations of Nature or like the animal, because she intends in him a more and more conscious evolution, that individuality is so much developed in him and so absolutely important and indispensable.

No doubt what comes out in the individual and afterwards moves the mass, must have been there already in the universal Mind and the individual is only an instrument for its manifestation, discovery, development; but he is an indispensable instrument and an instrument not merely of subconscious Nature, not merely of an instinctive urge that moves the mass, but more directly of the Spirit of whom that Nature is itself the instrument and the matrix of his creations.

All great changes therefore find their first clear and effective power and their direct shaping force in the mind and spirit of an individual or of a limited number of individuals. The mass follows, but unfortunately in a very imperfect and confused fashion which often or even usually ends in the failure or distortion of the thing created. If it were not so, mankind could have advanced on its way with a victorious rapidity instead of with the lumbering hesitations and soon exhausted rushes that seem to be all of which it has yet been capable.

## **Two Conditions Must Unite**

Therefore if the spiritual change of which we have been speaking is to be effected, it must unite two conditions which have to be simultaneously satisfied but are most difficult to bring together. There must be the individual and the individuals who are able to see, to develop, to re-create themselves in the image of the Spirit and to communicate both their idea and its power to the mass

And there must be at the same time a mass, a society, a communal mind or at the least the constituents of a group-body, the possibility of a group-soul which is capable of receiving and effectively assimilating, ready to follow and effectively arrive, not compelled by its own inherent deficiencies, its defect of preparation to stop on the way or fall back before the decisive change is made.

Such a simultaneity has never yet happened, although the appearance of it has sometimes been created by the ardour of a moment.

That the combination must happen some day is a certainty, but none can tell how many attempts will have to be made and how many sediments of spiritual experience will have to be accumulated in the subconscious mentality of the communal human being before the soil is ready.

For the chances of success are always less powerful in a difficult upward effort affecting the very roots of our nature than the numerous possibilities of failure.

The initiator himself may be imperfect, may not have waited to become entirely the thing that he has seen.

Even the few who have the apostolate in their charge may not have perfectly assimilated and shaped it in themselves and may hand on the power of the Spirit still farther diminished to the many who will come after them.

The society may be intellectually, vitally, ethically, temperamentally unready, with the result that the final acceptance of the spiritual idea by the society may be also the beginning of its debasement and distortion and of the consequent departure or diminution of the Spirit.

Any or all of these things may happen, and the result will be, as has so often happened in the past, that even though some progress is made and an important change effected, it will not be the decisive change which can alone re-create humanity in a diviner image.

### **Readiness of the Community**

What then will be that state of society, what that readiness of the common mind of man which will be most favourable to this change, so that even if it cannot at once effectuate itself, it may at least make for its ways a more decisive preparation than has been hitherto possible?

For that seems the most important element, since it is that, it is the unpreparedness, the unfitness of the society or of the common mind of man

which is always the chief stumbling-block. It is the readiness of this common mind which is of the first importance; for even if the condition of society and the principle and rule that govern society are opposed to the spiritual change, even if these belong almost wholly to the vital, to the external, the economic, the mechanical order, as is certainly the way at present with human masses, yet if the common human mind has begun to admit the ideas proper to the higher order that is in the end to be, and the heart of man has begun to be stirred by aspirations born of these ideas, then there is a hope of some advance in the not distant future.

### First Essential Sign

And here the first essential sign must be the growth of the subjective idea of life,—the idea of the soul, the inner being, its powers, its possibilities, its growth, its expression and the creation of a true, beautiful and helpful environment for it as the one thing of first and last importance.

The signals must be there that are precursors of a subjective age in humanity's thought and social endeavour.

These ideas are likely first to declare their trend in philosophy, in psychological thinking, in the arts, poetry, painting, sculpture, music, in the main idea of ethics, in the application of subjective principles by thinkers to social questions, even perhaps, though this is a perilous effort, to politics and economics, that hard refractory earth matter which most resists all but a gross utilitarian treatment.

There will be new unexpected departures of science or at least of research,—since to such a turn in its most fruitful seekings the orthodox still deny the name of science. Discoveries will be made that thin the walls between soul and matter; attempts there will be to extend exact knowledge into the psychological and psychic realms with a realisation of the truth that these have laws of their own which are other than physical, but not the less laws because they escape the external senses and are infinitely plastic and subtle.

There will be a labour of religion to reject its past heavy weight of dead matter and revivify its strength in the fountains of the Spirit. These are sure signs, if not of the thing to be, at least of a great possibility of it, of an effort that will surely be made, another endeavour perhaps with a larger sweep and a better equipped intelligence capable not only of feeling but of understanding the Truth that is demanding to be heard.

Some such signs we can see at the present time although they are only incipient and sporadic and have not yet gone far enough to warrant a confident certitude.

*(The Human Cycle, Vol. 15 of Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library, pp. 231-234)*

*(To be continued)*

## LIFE—POETRY—YOGA

### SOME PERSONAL LETTERS

I AM very happy that you have taken yourself thoroughly in hand and are doing your best to combine normal natural behaviour with the Yogic aspiration. What often stands in the way of both is what I have called “too much preoccupation with oneself”. A relaxation away from the ego is indicated in an outward direction by cordial and friendly and co-operative relations with those among whom one lives or works: the same is indicated in an inward direction by getting in touch with the deeper layer of the mind which looks up to a light beyond the mere thinker and with the depth behind the mere “feeler” to a love for some ideality of existence towards which our sense of the good, the true and the beautiful keeps pointing. The cause of the tightness, the narrowness, the tiring anxiety of common life is our being centred in the “habitual self”.

You speak of your “proclivity to observe and hold aloft the negative aspect of people’s personality”, a proclivity which “mars the budding warmth and growing closeness of a relationship”. This means you have a hypercritical temper. And perhaps such a temper inclines you to see also the negative aspects of your own personality. The Delphic command—“Know thyself”—is ever valid: we must perceive our abysses, our level lands, our heights: I should add “our depths” as distinguished from “our abysses”. But the stress should be on perfecting all our positives. Here there should be no egoistic preening ourselves on our merits and virtues just as there should be no urge to sit in sackcloth and ashes because of our defects and depravities. What is required is an offering of the whole composite self to the Divine and an appeal to help the positives prevail over the negatives and ultimately dissolve them. Sri Aurobindo has said that the Mother never makes much of a sadhak’s shortcomings: her concentration is always on his good points, his openings to the Divine Light and Love: no matter how often he may fall, she never emphasises his downward tendency but hurries to pick him up and set him once more on the right course. Our attitude to fellow-creatures should be similar. Their minuses must not loom large in our eyes: their pluses have to be appreciated in such a way that each person may feel like doing his best to live up to our happy evaluation of his pluses and hope to lessen the minuses as much as possible.

In another letter you have asked for the correct method of meditation and the correct idea or movement on which to meditate. Then you say that you follow my method of meditation as given in the February issue of *Mother India*, namely, to concentrate on the Presence of the Mother in the heart and offer all the movements as quietly as possible to the Presence. Then you put the question: “Can it also be done that one concentrates in a movement of aspiration to the Grace or one concentrates in a state of equanimity, *i.e.* in a state of having

stepped back in the Vast throbbing behind us?" There is no single way to meditate. I believe that the alternatives you have mentioned have figured in some letter or other of mine in the past. Whatever comes naturally to one is the right mode at any particular time. At this moment my meditative mood may be summarised as follows: I feel myself stationed at the back of my heart in a wideness not quite throbbing but quietly vibrating to a far-off rhythm which seems like a universal humming with small ups and downs of tone and, while this large peacefully listening poise is enjoyed, some sort of warm "aroma" of self-offering wafts towards the Divine Mother present everywhere yet wearing the face and form of the human-looking Mother we have known in the Ashram as our Guru and this "aroma" emanates from a small centre which is myself deep within, a centre held in the arms, as it were, of the same human-divine being—at once infinite and finite—towards whom and into whom the self-offering flows. I think what is happening covers all the alternatives you draw my attention to, including the movement of aspiration to the Grace.

You may ask: "How can you talk of meditating when you are typing this letter?" Although I do not claim to be an adept in meditative practice I may reply: "Meditation has two aspects—background and foreground. There can be a detached, dedicated, offered, aspiring state continuing from moment to moment without any effort—undisturbed by whatever one may be doing, a constant background to all one's doings, of which one becomes distinctly aware only when one looks within at any instant, withdrawing from the work in hand for a second. When one returns to the work one knows that the background meditation goes on but instead of the distinct awareness there is in the foreground just a vague sense of something within carrying on the Integral Yoga while one is busy with typing or reading or even talking. Such a double state is possible most when the Yoga is done by the heart rather than by the mind. While the mind is occupied with various activities, the heart stands apart, alone with the Divine. Surely a link exists between the two, for it is the mind that on ceasing from its activities at any point realises that what it was conscious of as a far-away yet persisting divine support is a many-featured condition of blessedness, a participation both ample and profound in some sort of inner divineness.

The background Yoga can be of diverse kinds. People may feel an action from above, illumining both mind and heart and opening an inner eye to strange glorious scenes or to a play of forces seeming to affect the very body although actually the occult or spiritual phenomena have the subtle-physical part of us as their field and the gross-physical form experiences no more than a mirror-effect. The mirror-effect can be productive of happy results in our nerves and even organs but essentially there is no transformation of them towards establishing a new more-than-human body. I have spoken of the foreground and background of meditation in terms of my own general none-too-spectacular transitions from the old "I" to the new Aurobindonian "me".

You are right in deciding not to compare yourself with anyone, superior or inferior. The tendency to pat ourselves on the back when we find someone below our self-assessment or to hang our jaw down face to face with a person evidently better-gifted—this tendency is natural and proves helpful at times, but on the whole it is mistaken, for each of us is unique and has to develop according to a pattern inherent in our nature. This does not mean that we should turn a deaf ear to people's ideas about us. It simply means that we have to be humble enough to consider whatever criticism is made of us and clever enough to see through flattering estimates. Sri Aurobindo once forbade me to run any rivalry with poets already "arrived" or famous but to cultivate my own individual line of inspiration, recognise my defects and, without caring for fame, intensify whatever successful vein I had struck. I was lucky to have Sri Aurobindo to set the proper measure for me, but his aim was to guide me as long as he thought I needed guidance and then leave me to find my own way with the instinct he had implanted in me. In sadhana too one was expected to discern the bent of one's disposition and not put up any scale of more advanced or less advanced sadhaks. Of course a wise practitioner of Yoga would be ready to learn from the example of others, catch the particular line along which a fellow-Ashramite had come inwardly close to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother or avoid the trend by which he or she seemed to grow distant.

"How will the division in me heal? What would be the mechanism of the healing?"—this question of yours gets an answer which is a little complex. The first step is to take your stand as firmly as you can in the part you want to regard as your normal self. The sense of identity must not waver. A detachment has to be practised from the less normal, less Yogic personality—a detachment which tends to forget that there is anything of such a character. The less one is preoccupied with something to be avoided, the firmer gets one's sense of the right self. There is also the need to recognise that actually you are neither the right self nor the wrong. You become whatever your "consciousness" gets fixed on. Each of us is essentially a consciousness moving from one shade to another of what we ordinarily regard as our self. The general nature we take to be our own is the ego-formation which demarcates each of us from his fellows and stamps on certain shades of mental, vital and physical being the sense that we are those shades. Then when we turn inward and realise a finer being as our own we have the impression that the ego has made the choice. And we may ask why Sri Aurobindo wants us to get away from such a spiritually inclined chap as the ego. But in fact we have got beyond the ego by the consciousness fixing itself on another psychological state than the ego-bound outer one. And what has guided the consciousness is a projection of the true soul, the psychic being, into the mental-vital-physical complex accompanied by the ego-sense. While the ego directs this complex into the common ways of individual existence with its barbaric or polished self-regard and possessiveness, the psychic projection



throbs in sympathy with all creatures as if they were its own self in spite of differences of mould and manner. Furthermore, it has the urge always towards some perfection of thought, expression, conduct and, through it, feels the call of some Unthinkable, Inexpressible, Uncodifiable and, at the same time, in its relation to the cosmic scene of manifestaion, some Infallible. It is this psychic projection that turns towards Yoga and the more you are conscious of it in a direct mode rather than by a reflection of it, as it were, in the mental side of your personality, the easier becomes the process of feeling alien to the “persona” you wish to banish. As there is an intense sincerity in your desire to annul whatever bit of deviation occurred, you are sure to succeed in your Yogic career. All who have experienced the touch of Sri Aurobindo’s finger on the core of their being must expel all doubt about their ultimate destination: the Divine. Everybody has his weak spells, his sudden falls, but when one’s direction has been set by a Higher Power they do not matter in the long run. What I am saying has a living force and is not mere book-knowledge, because my deviations have been legion and yet the Mother’s hold on me has never failed. I had once asked and obtained the boon: “Even if I want to get away from you, never let me go.” My deviations included at times rash ventures, the taking of risks. There the Mother had warned me against being too cocksure of her saviour grace. She said: “We have saved you again and again. But do not exploit our protection. Try to be a little more prudent.” (15.3.1993)

\*

It has always been a pleasure to hear from you. And I realise that for a long time I have not been alert enough to give you a corresponding (apt epithet!) pleasure on hearing from me. Your latest sheaf of matter has stirred me from my long lethargy.

It is indeed interesting that Swami Vivekananda was a Freemason. The evidence is well presented. But I cannot subscribe to the idea that his memorable “Sisters and Brothers of America” at the Parliament of Religions at Chicago was inspired by his freemasonry or that it would be “a fortuitous choice of words” without the Masonic underpinning.

To begin with: if, as you claim, Vedanta and Freemasonry have similar attitudes, the former is sufficient to account for that mode of address. Secondly, and basically, the term “Sisters” could never come from Freemasonry. There are no “Sisters” in it: it is exclusively a Brotherhood. Sisterhood is excluded because sisters can’t keep secrets, according to these brothers. Both logically and psychologically, Vivekananda’s thrilling opening phrase need have nothing to do with his having been a Freemason. In fact, to trace it to his having been initiated in “Anchor and Hope Lodge” is to rob it of its spontaneous inspired splendour, its essentially spiritual aura, its roots in the living sense of the One Self in all and

the ancient Indian vision of the whole world being a single family. Besides, Freemasonry, in spite of its “three Grand Principles”—“brotherly love, relief (charity) and truth”—is a secret enclosed limited group conscious of a difference between itself and the world at large: it stresses a special relationship among its initiates in distinction from the rest of humanity. There is a touch of the sectarian mind—as in the semitic religions (Judaism, Christianity, Mohammedanism)—in contrast to the world-wide attitude of Hinduism and Buddhism.

I have nothing against Freemasonry. My father was a master mason of the Lodge “Rising Star” and I would have been initiated if my father had not died at the age of 44. I do not share the prejudice of the Roman Catholic Church against Freemasons, though I may admit that certain sections of them had political interests as part of their work and had even an anti-clerical shade in their outlook on life, as in France at one time. My refusal to reduce Vivekananda’s grand phrase to his freemasonry is not due to any bias against his membership of any lodge.

(12 12 1992)

\*

In your recent letter you speak of two sides of your being: one which wants to give itself in affection and sympathy to the whole world without any expectation of reward and the other which wants everybody to make much of you and which looks upon itself as specially important. But you regret this side of your disposition and wish to outgrow it. I gather from your self-portrayal that the soul in you is in full bloom of sweetness and light but does not yet have fully the fire of Agni, the all-conquering strength to overwhelm the egoistic urge. However the fact that you pray to the Mother to take away all ambition, all self-regarding movement, is a clear sign that the sweetness is no mere heavenly sugar but the precursor of a powerful purifying nectar and that the light is more than the shedding of happiness on people: it is also a force turned inward to expose and eliminate every petty egoistic impulse. Agni’s fire is surely in the making and the Mother will respond to your prayer and make you completely her spiritual child who will bring much joy and wisdom in my physical period of “second childhood”!

The passing away of Madhav Pandit has given you much food for thought. When you so seriously think of mutability in general and even of your own death in some far future, why do you go at me hammer and tongs because I used the word “survive” about myself? At my age it is natural that now and then the idea of the great transition should occur. As I once before told you, Einstein felt himself to be so much a part of the universal flow that he had no particular self-regard in the face of possible death: I feel utterly a part of Sri Aurobindo’s world-vision and world-work so that I am certain he will arrange my life according to his will: I have no concern over how long I shall live. I am ready to

go tomorrow as well as prepared to continue for years and years, savouring the immortal ambrosia of their inner presence and striving to let something of its rapture and radiance touch the hearts of all who are in contact with me. At my age I cannot have absolute confidence that I shall definitely continue: so it is natural for me to have said to you: "I hope to survive till you return." Along with a streak of jocularly, a teasing tinge, there is bound to be a vein of seriousness here. I understand and appreciate your pain at the word "survive", your anxiety that I should not pop off soon and your deeply held wish for me to go on and on to help people remember and act on Sri Krishna's great words: "You who have come into this transient and unhappy world, love and worship Me." Yes, I cannot blame you for chiding me: your affection is perceived to be warm and vibrant behind your protest, but neither should you take me to task for being realistic. All the same, let me tell you what I have already written to a friend earlier. Your anxiety calls for its repetition. My heart is ever young, my mind is always ready for new ventures and although my legs are not very co-operative these days they are out of tune with a face which—if I am to believe my friends—has no pouches below the eyes and no marked wrinkles and has, even at the age of 88 years and 5 months, all its own front teeth (9 lower and 10 upper). If my head has lost most of its hair, can't the condition be regarded as symbolic of the spirit of youth caught in the slang expression "Go baldheaded" (for things), meaning "proceed regardless of consequences"? I hope this picture of me makes you happy. (15 4 1993)

\*

Long ago I read a letter of Sri Aurobindo's to the effect that it is the lesson of life that everything fails a man except the Divine if one truly clings to the Divine. I had wondered whether there was any reference here to outer circumstances and events taking a favourable shape by one's adherence to the Divine by means of faith or prayer.

Of course external things could change to some extent, but the non-failure of the Divine in this sense struck me as too superficial and having little bearing on the progress of one's sadhana.

Yesterday there was an incident as if something important were failing me radically, a solid support abruptly giving way. I kept offering the painful occasion to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. All of a sudden, at the Samadhi, I felt an intense inward opening to them in the heart-centre. Behind my own self in that centre supporting me, sustaining my being was a wide warm Presence perpetually transfusing into me a deep peace, a profound happiness, the sense of a personified eternal smile holding me up and passing its strength of unending sweetness into my inner poise.

All external features at the Samadhi vanished. My eyes kept closing and as if

drowning in the vast surge of that blissful love which was fully unveiled to my heart because this heart had turned to no support except its mighty mystery. The pain that was there was enveloped by the powerful warmth which was tending all the time to erase it with a joy capable of blotting out everything.

I understood most vividly what Sri Aurobindo had meant by those words—the *modus operandi* grew clear of the one unfailing factor possible to realise amidst the vicissitudes of “this transient and unhappy world” into which we have come yet within which Sri Krishna points to an unchanging support when he gives the call: “Love and worship Me.”

A little later an external circumstance came to my help. I received an assurance making me see that the hurtful situation had arisen out of an utter misunderstanding (28 4 1993)

AMAL KIRAN  
(K.D. SETHNA)

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#### A CORRECTION

On p. 398 of the June *Mother India*, in the last paragraph of the article, “Tribute to an Old Comrade” Amal Kiran writes: “Ambu joined the Ashram in 1928, less than a year after I did.” This sentence should have been followed by the words: “So too did Meenakshi, the nonagenarian sadhika whose smiling presence is yet with us ” The omission though unintentional is regretted.

# NIRODBARAN'S TALK ON CHAMPAKLAL

*(Continued from the issue of June 1993)*

## Part II

### The Last Chapter

AFTER the Mother's passing in 1973, the last part of Champaklal's life took a complete somersault as it were. Now he no longer had an occupation. It was apparently a dreadful come-down from the significant role he had played in the Mother's and Sri Aurobindo's long heavenly drama on earth, for more than a half-century.

I have said that after the Mother's passing he was one of those who were in charge of the Mother's room and were looking after it from day to day. The room was packed with many precious things offered by the disciples and devotees over the years. He used to go regularly in the morning and evening to put her bed, articles, papers etc. in order. That was his main work, while he employed his free time for his various hobbies. One day, however, we found that he had stopped going to the Mother's room. He would not tell us the reason. Then we suggested that he should take up some other work, for without work life here would be difficult for him or anybody else. He tried to adjust himself. For one who had given his entire life to the service of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo it was not easy to divert his attention in other directions. Finally he turned his gaze outwards, to the vast external world. He thought perhaps that the Mother had given him uncharted freedom to turn his ample free time to the best account. He had no regrets, for had he not served the Gurus every minute of his life for many decades, till his old age? The vast natural beauty of God's wonderful world now opened wide before him, particularly the snow-covered mountain ranges of the Himalayas with their floral and faunal grandeurs for which he had cherished a subconscious attraction for long. Thus he went on a pilgrimage to holy Badrinath, Kedarnath, Kashmir and other places in the North. He assumed that the Mother's approval was behind it and felt at places her Presence.

As soon as people came to know that they could have his rare darshan, he was invited to various places, particularly by Tara Jauhar of Delhi, who used to arrange trips to Nainital and the Himalayas. She would always send him an invitation. We have seen exquisite slides showing "Maharaj" in various poses and dresses, trekking through the Himalayan woods, streams, and waterfalls, meeting sannyasins and seeing multitudes of variegated flowers. He used to bathe in very hot or very cold fountains, quite immune to their effect. I need not expatiate on the beauty, grandeur and splendour of the Himalayan valleys and the tremendous attraction that an artist like Champaklal would feel, that made

him visit them more than once when an opportunity presented itself through the invitations of Tara Jauhar. And he always had groups of people who were only too glad to accompany him because of their 'Dadaji's' natural charm.

Once, I remember, he was not in the best of health when a call came from Tara. In later life, he had developed high blood-pressure and prostate trouble. We advised him to postpone his trip, but he was most reluctant to do it. We persuaded him to consult a doctor and took him to the JIPMER hospital. A urologist examined him and advised him to abandon his trip since his blood-pressure was too high, and his prostatic condition could give him trouble in the cold regions. He would not listen, particularly because he did not want to disappoint the group which had made all the arrangements. As it turned out, he did have prostatic trouble on the way. This was Champaklal, a man of a very strong will and an adamant adherent to his way of life and full of softness for his 'bhaktas'. It was while returning from another of his trips that he suffered a mild heart attack and had to send a wire from Madras for a car to fetch him. This was the first signal to him to be careful.

We noticed another strange happening at this time. He suddenly began to observe silence and stopped talking. I came to know that he had visited a throat-specialist at Madras for some throat-trouble and, following his advice, began to observe *mauna* (silence). He never sought my advice in these matters. Unfortunately he extended this precaution over such a long period that ultimately he lost his power of speech altogether, and could not regain it in spite of exercises in voice-training. It seems he made this extension in order to control his outbursts of temper.

When his Himalayan journeys came to an end he turned his attention to the vast plains and visited almost all the places in the North, South, West and East of India. From among all of them three places attracted him the most: Orissa, Baroda and Hyderabad. The *bhaktas* of Orissa in particular gave him a royal reception, looking upon him almost like a demi-god. Many used to fall at his feet, and some even craved his blessings for their various ailments. There are stories that he had cured people's diseases, solved their problems and performed other miracles. One particular *bhakta* looked upon him as a god. I myself have seen him prostrating himself before him. Every time he came, he offered him big sums of money and bore, it seems, the greater part of the expenses of his travels.

I cannot but mention here an incident showing Champaklal's calm courage. As recounted by some *bhaktas*, there was a park in Orissa quite far from the city where a tame tiger had been set free to roam. Champaklal was very curious to visit the place. There he entered the enclosure against the objections and persuasions of his friends not to do it. Then he fed the tiger. I, for one, would not dare to do it though the tiger was a tame one.

During Darshan days, the darshan of "Maharaj" was also a regular feature;

people from Orissa especially, more than a hundred at a time, would line up for his touch and blessings.

About doing pranam at his feet, Champaklal said that in the beginning he did not like people touching his feet, but later when he saw that people were happy doing it he relented. Since then, it happened that when certain people touched his feet he got for an instant a pain similar to a 'scorpion bite'. Sometimes when certain people stretched out their hands to touch his feet, his feet themselves rejected the touch by an automatic withdrawal. Each time when people would touch his feet, or pray to him, he would pass on consciously the person's prayers to the Mother and seek Her Grace and Love, he said. He acted only as a mediator. However, sometimes, he said, when people carried within themselves vital and hostile forces they attacked his body. Once when he was distributing grapes and other fruit to visitors at Hyderabad, one lady caught hold of his hands tightly and stared into his eyes. Champaklal too looked back at her with a quiet but intense gaze. It was as if a veritable battle of forces was taking place and the lady's dark force was being absorbed by the Divine Force in Champaklal. At the end of the distribution, when Champaklal was going to rest after his lunch, he suddenly sat down and slowly collapsed on the ground. He did not allow anyone to touch him. He said he would take five minutes to become all right. His lips moved as if intensely calling the Mother. He got up exactly five minutes later. As he clarified afterwards, it was an attack of a hostile force on his body, and he took some time to throw it out and offer it at the Mother's feet.\*

Champaklal used to go out twice a year but return by December. At that time we had the pleasure of his silent company in the Ashram. He would also accompany us on our annual group picnics. We visited quite a number of places of natural beauty or historical fame: the temples of the South, Shivaji's Gingee Fort, the Ashram of Ramana Maharshi, and so on. Though he kept mostly silent, his rishi-like presence among the young group members sanctified the atmosphere.

Two incidents from the picnics are still fresh in my memory. Once we were climbing the hill at Tiruvannamalai at Ramana Ashram. Our destination was the famous Skanda Ashram near the summit where the Maharshi lived many years alone, doing tapasya. The morning sun grew scorching as we trekked uphill, and we noticed that "Maharaj" was beginning to feel the heat. His gait became unsteady, his face and the bare part of the chest flushed. But he would not allow anyone to help him. What we feared finally happened: he started sweating and his breathing became laboured, alarming all of us. It looked like a mild sunstroke. We brought him a few metres down the hill, sought for shade and managed to lay him down under a tree almost denuded of leaves. After an hour's rest and whatever treatment we could give him, he came to and resumed walking without our support. He had given us some anxious moments indeed. He would

\* Report by Anand Reddy

not allow anyone to touch his body even if he stumbled. I had to be always behind him as a shield of protection!

On another trip we had a contrasting experience with him. A river in the South had dried up. At places there were pools. Champaklal and myself and a few others simply rushed towards one of these and plunged into it. Champaklal's joy was a thing to be seen. How he splashed, sprinkled water all over his body, tried to float and submerge himself! Just like a bird splashing in scanty water. I paint this picture to show how "Maharaj" was a completely different person at times, just like a child.

I have said that Hyderabad was one of Champaklal's favourite places where he had some significant visions. Ananda Reddy of Hyderabad has given a very attractive account of his mystic visions and other experiences there in his book *Our Champaklal*. He begins: "I had a dream in which Sri Aurobindo said to me, 'She has brought down with Her the Aura of Her Manifestation.' I understand the aura to mean the intimate circle of persons who have closely served the Mother and Sri Aurobindo.

During one of his last visits to Hyderabad, Champaklal had a unique experience at Aurodarshan, one of the places given names by Madhusudan Reddy where some foundations were to be laid. He went to visit the spot of Auromandir of which he himself had laid the foundation stone in 1984. After watching the spot for a while, he suddenly sat down in *padmasana* and went into a trance followed after some time by the performance of many *mudras*. The photographer recorded his different poses, while the persons around him stood motionless in wonder and awe. Champaklal wrote later, "I have seen many places in the world including the Himalayas, but I have not found anywhere such a unique place. Previously there was an Ashram here. And what they have achieved is still there undisturbed." On another day he wrote. "Since the beginning, I had a feeling that I knew this place. Mother had revealed to me what it was, but not what it will be. It will be like Auroville, but of a different character. Matridarshan is beautiful and has a lot of possibilities for the future, but Aurodarshan has a beautiful spiritual background and it is unique." (Matridarshan is a hilly spot about seven kilometres from Jangaon.)

(To be continued)



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

### A REPORT BASED ON ORAL COMMUNICATION

(Continued from the issue of June 1993)

#### Darshan of Sri Ramakrishna

In the last issue of *Mother India* I alluded to an incident the details of which were suppressed from me by the narrator Esha, as she feared that I would not believe it. But Sri Aurobindo insisted that I should be told all about it by Esha.

Here is the rest of the story. Esha says:

It happened in 1948. At that time I was not interested in Sri Ramakrishna nor did I want to know anything about him. One morning, however, at about 7.30 a.m. while still in bed I saw his figure high above on the wall. He was wrapped in a white *chaddar* and said, “Bring me a blanket. I’m feeling very cold.” I was thinking, “Who is he? I seem to have seen him somewhere, but can’t recollect it.” He stayed for about five minutes. After he had gone, I remembered and exclaimed, “Oh! It was Sri Ramakrishna.”

I told my mother about it and asked her why he had asked me to offer him a blanket when there were so many of his bhaktas in Belur Math. Then I forgot him completely.

One night, after about ten years, as I was about to go to sleep I saw a round ball of fire suddenly flame up before my eyes, like a fire in a burning ghat. I thought the flame must be symbolising my mother’s death as she was ill at that time. I prayed to my Lord. For seven days the fire appeared before me. After the seventh day it neared and stood before me. I kept looking at it. Then a hollow space formed in the middle of the fire and the bright face of Sri Ramakrishna filled it up. This happened three times.

Now a new chapter started in my life. I had forgotten the Mother and Sri Aurobindo altogether. In their stead for the whole day and night my mind was preoccupied with Sri Ramakrishna alone. My entire being was burning with the pain of separation from him. My mother said, “Go to Belur Math; you’ll get peace there.” I did, but to no effect. That night as I was thinking of him while lying in bed, he appeared before me and said, “Why have you come back? You should have sat in my lap.”

Again I became restless. And as my indifference to the Mother and Sri Aurobindo began to increase I looked at Sri Aurobindo’s picture and cried out, “O Lord, are you taking me to hell?” An exceedingly sweet smile parted his lips and he replied, “Can anybody think of the Paramahansa and go to hell?” That

gave me support and I was plunged in a deep ecstasy at the thought of Sri Aurobindo and his response to my prayer.

For four or five years Sri Ramakrishna absorbed me completely. Many changes and reverses in my external life took place but his presence was there in everything. Once I had a craving to see his sweet smile. After some weeks, I saw a big hall with a crowd of devotees and Sri Ramakrishna was seated there. He asked, "Where is Esha? Hasn't she come?" Vivekananda pointed towards me. Sri Ramakrishna looked at me and amply fulfilled my desire with an exquisite smile.

One day as I was lying in bed, he came near me and said, "Get up." For no apparent reason I was terribly afraid and grasped my bedsheets firmly. He said, "Have no fear." As soon as I approached him, he caught hold of my neck and brought me to Sri Aurobindo's presence in the Ashram Meditation Hall and said, "Bow down to Him." Sri Aurobindo was sitting on a sofa and blessed me, while Sri Ramakrishna stood by. As I did pranam to him, he said to me while blessing me with both hands, "My blessings are with you to protect you from all danger and catastrophe." Then he simply melted away and did not reappear.

Life became dry and empty. Neither he nor Sri Aurobindo was anywhere near. I lost faith in God. For one year I suffered. Then one day at about 3 a.m., a crow outside my window began to call in an intensely shrill voice while looking at me. Suddenly two figures bright and resplendent appeared before me; they were none other than the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. How resplendent indeed they were! At once a deep peace descended and enveloped my whole being in ecstasy. For one year I used to see a half-moon between my brows and they were sitting on it. I regained my lost faith.

Sri Ramakrishna's assurance of protection, however, had intrigued me as at that time all was well with me and my family. But I was grateful for it when it was brought home to me very powerfully after the incident of my son's getting waylaid and beaten up by Naxalites and left for dead on the wayside. I will not repeat it here as I have already recounted it earlier.

Sri Aurobindo too had warned me to give up all attachment to my son as the worldly life was incompatible with my spiritual future.

Once I went to Dakshineswar and was walking about in the Panchavati, the area of five trees. As I was musing on Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Aurobindo, I heard a very distinct voice saying 'दूहे मशीकह' ("Two colossal trees!")

*(To be continued)*

# THE STORY OF A SOUL

BY HUTA

(Continued from the issue of June 1993)

## The Mother's Message

This is the  
interesting story of  
how a being succeeded  
to Divine Life



ON 28-6-1968, after her recitation of *Savitri*, the Mother gave her comments on the passage. Then she asked me to sit very close to her and meditate with her. No sooner did I close my eyes than I felt immense peace engulfing my whole being. When the Mother opened her eyes, she smiled at me and said:

“Child, do you know the Banyan tree at the centre of the Mother's Shrine?  
Just now I saw you in my vision. You were sitting under the Banyan

tree, and garlands were hanging all over you from the branches of the tree. Also the flowers were showered on you from above. You were peacefully quiet.”

I painted her vision according to her instructions. When she saw the painting, she asked me to alter the length of the grass. She said that it should be short. I made the alteration. The Mother was amused to see the squirrels, the deer and the rabbit. She made small happy exclamations, pointing at various details, and laughed. Then on a sheet of paper, after a little concentration, she wrote:

“The inner life.”

Later, the painting was printed when the brochure of *Matrimandir—The Mother’s Truth and Love* was published by me in 1974.

Nolini Kanta Gupta’s introduction to the brochure was:

“Huta

I invoke the Mother’s blessings upon your work. I am sure it will have them.

With affection and greetings.

8.5.74

Nolini-da”

I was amazed to see the reproduction of the same painting in *Matrimandir Newsletter* No. 66 May-June 1990.

\*

On 28-3-1970 I wrote to the Mother asking her about the final plan of the Matrimandir.

She dictated to Mr. Andre (her son) her answer to me:

“It has been decided and will remain decided that the Matrimandir will be surrounded with water. However, water is not available just now and will be available only later, perhaps in a few years’ time.

As regards the Matrimandir itself I have selected our plan which agrees with the vision I had of the inside and has my full approval. Therefore there is no need to worry. The Matrimandir will be built now and water brought around it later.”

The Mother

During this year the Mother told an American, Richard Eggenburger, who

was at that time in charge of the Matrimandir gardens:

“It must be a thing of great beauty—of such a beauty that when men enter the gardens, they will say: ‘Ah, this is it!’ and experience physically, concretely, the significance of each garden. In the garden of Youth, they will know youth, in the garden of Felicity they will know felicity, in the garden of Perfection they will know perfection and so on.

One must know how to move from consciousness to consciousness.”

Towards the end of 1970 the Mother said enthusiastically:

“Child, your tiny house will be very close to the Matrimandir. I will arrange everything for you. Leave everything to me I will see to everything.”

I took her hands into mine and said: “Oh! but, Mother, I have left everything to you, and truly I am not at all anxious about my house, but I am anxious about the Matrimandir.” She smiled and nodded.

I knew very well that to serve the Truth and the Love was no joke. I must prepare myself. I wrote to the Mother:

“My dearest Mother,

Didn't I pray to you in 1965 when you appointed me guardian of the Matrimandir that I would not step into the Sacred Temple until and unless I become perfectly pure and worthy? And with a smile you said: ‘You will be.’ And I was relieved.”

The Mother replied on 14-11-72:

“Yes, have faith.

Love and blessings.”

\*

On the morning of 19-1-1973 the Mother and I meditated in her room. As always I prayed for her Victory. I asked her whether the Matrimandir would be built according to her wish and vision. She pressed my hand and twice said forcefully:

“YES.”

I was happy because I knew how much the Matrimandir meant to the Mother.

On 10-5-1973 she finalised my work as the guardian of the Matrimandir. Her words were:

“She will keep the keys of Matrimandir—she will open and close the Matrimandir and she will also see whether everything is all right in the Matrimandir.”

My memory winged back to the year 1957 when the Mother had given to me a tiny bunch of four silver keys. She had said smilingly:

“Ah! these are the keys of Heaven, take them.”

And her smile had been reflected in her luminous eyes. Everything was so full of occult meaning, I thought.

The next day when I went to the Mother, I expressed my profound gratitude and prayed to her to make me worthy of the Supreme Truth in her Light and her Love. She went into a trance for a brief while, then pressed my hands and nodded.

\*

A few people with good will suggested to me:

“Huta, since the Mother wished and visioned your guardianship at the Matrimandir, why don't you meet the concerned people and the top officials of the Central Government for your right?”

I was very much amused and I answered:

“The people concerned and the top officials have not appointed me the guardian of the Matrimandir. It was the Supreme Lord who made me so. If He wants me to be there, it is O.K. with me. If He doesn't want me there, it is also O.K. with me. For I am not obsessed with or attached to the Matrimandir or anything in this world. I live a moment-to-moment life and the rest I leave to the Almighty who knows what is the best for me and for the whole world. Surely, He is wiser than human beings.”

After that none approached me. I am much relieved.

\*

I remember one of the Mother's letters to me dated 28-8-60:

“None wants you to reach your goal more than I do.”

The Mother has made me her instrument for various plans of hers. From the human point of view these may seem quite out of focus—out of place—meaningless, useless, hopeless, laughable.

The Mother alone knew what I had gone through—what I had come for. She has made me live my name—“Huta, the offered one.”

The whole course of events during these last 38 years is the fulfilment of my aspiration—the aspiration to accomplish the work which the Mother has entrusted to me for the whole of humanity and to unite concretely and consciously with the Supreme Lord—my goal.

Here I recall the Mother’s words which moved me very much.

One day, after our *Savitri*-work, the Mother said while holding my hands:

“Child, it doesn’t matter if nobody loves you. But I love you” (*pointing to her heart*).

My eyes brimmed with tears of gratitude and happiness. I drew near to her. My right cheek touched hers when I said: “Mother, that is why I live. I too love you.”

Yes, indeed, the Mother’s love transformed my life and gave meaning and value to it.

\*

The Mother’s last words to me in the beginning of 1973 were:

“Child, if I am certain of anything in this world, I am certain of only one thing: that is, the Victory of the Truth—My Victory.”

On 18th May 1973 she met me in her room. We meditated for about fifteen minutes. Then she gave me a pink lotus: “Avatar—The Supreme Manifested on Earth in a body.” She also handed me a bouquet of white flowers of various kinds and white roses.

When I took my leave she held my hand tightly as if she did not wish me to go.

That was my last meeting with her.

On 20th May 1973 she stopped seeing anybody except her attendants. On 17th November 1973 she left her body.

Still the wounds are not healed in my heart. None can ever fill the gap. I miss her so.

Only the wonderful work she entrusted to me keeps me alive. She wanted

me to accomplish it for the whole world. I am determined to do so by her GRACE and LOVE.

When I expressed my wish to withdraw from this world, the Mother wrote to me on 2-6-65:

“Dear little child of mine.

I quite understand your feelings. But have you thought of this? If all the good people were to leave this world then the bad ones only would stay and what would happen to the world? It would become a true Hell.

So the good people must courageously endure in order to make the world better and to lead it to its salvation. And their reward for this unselfishness is that the Lord is always with them.

LOVE.”

Another letter of the Mother to me is indeed comforting:

“Yes, my dearest little child,

We are here to bring upon earth the victory of Truth and Love—and it will be done.”

\*

I have been writing, preparing, organising my enormous work which needs a lot of time and full concentration. The work seems endless.

Many people have inquired about the publication of my books. But I feel that the time is not yet ripe for this particular work. Besides, there is no point in doing anything in a hurry.

\*

After the Mother left her body, she gave me many memorable experiences. From them I could gather that her work has not stopped in the world. On the contrary her Force has intensified to lead the world to its goal.

The Mother never asked anything from us. She simply gave and is still giving endlessly. A great wish of hers was the realisation of the Matrimandir.

Indeed, we can only repay Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, for all that they have done and are still doing for us, by fulfilling faithfully and sincerely their “Dream” upon earth. Then and then alone is life worth living. And to fulfil that “Dream” we must weave into our lives the wonderful message the Mother gave me on my spiritual birthday in 1961, the anniversary of the day on which I first saw the Mother—1st November 1954:



“Truth is supreme harmony and supreme delight. All disorder, all suffering is a falsehood. This world of misery and confusion is a world of Falsehood.

Only a change of consciousness and the conquest over falsehood can change the conditions of this world.”

From the spiritual and occult point of view what the Mother has disclosed to me about the Matrimandir’s role in the whole world is far more profound, boundless and sublime than human conceptions.

My guardianship holds the same occult truth in tune with the Mother’s Consciousness. The Mother gave me spiritual treasures and made me their guardian in her Truth and Love. These spiritual riches belong to the whole world. For we are all equals. One of the Mother’s letters to me, dated 25-9-65, is apt:

“Among the souls there are no small and no big, no important and no ordinary. They are all equal and all divine in their Origin.”

\*

Here I wind up *The Story of a Soul*. So far I have given only a bird’s-eye view. There is still much to do in this regard.

Is there any end to the work? Isn’t it continuous life after life?

I must not forget to thank my friends and readers here in India and abroad for appreciating personally and through letters *The Story of a Soul*.

Let me close with this encouraging quotation from the Mother:

“Lord, deliver us from all care for contingencies, deliver us from the ordinary outlook on things. Grant that we may henceforth see only with Thy eyes and act only by Thy Will.

Transform us into living torches of Thy divine Love.”

(Concluded)

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## COMING BACK

TRANSLATED FROM AN ITALIAN ARTICLE IN *DOMANI*

THE dream of most youngsters: to travel and see other places, perhaps even to live in them. My dream was soon realised. I was 16, filled with imagination and enthusiasm and also many illusions. I left the Ashram, my mother, my friends and Pondicherry. I left for Italy on the 17th of January, 1991.

This is how it all started. One day I phoned my mother from the BMS in Ooty where I was studying. I said that I had absolutely to finish my studies in Italy and that I simply could not stay in Ooty any longer. My mother took it in her stride.

Having got all the documents, I left Madras for the first lap of my journey. It had a dramatic beginning, Bombay, midnight. Together with a friend I stood in the queue for the check-in, when an announcement came over the loudspeaker that our SwissAir flight would not be leaving because of the Gulf war. "Passengers will be accommodated on other flights," said the voice. We were tired and irritated but there was nothing we could do. After two days of waiting in Bombay we managed to leave and arrived in Italy. But it wasn't quite the Italy we dream of: that beautiful, sunny and warm-hearted peninsula where *Italia 90* took place and was viewed on TV every night, the Italy of museums and art schools, of song and chianti wine, of pizzas and pastas. We had arrived in the middle of winter, one of the really cold winters in North Italy, and it snowed and snowed. I got bronchitis. But thanks to the sweetness and affection of the friends with whom I was staying, a family of the Mother's devotees, I managed to integrate and get used to my new life and school. During the first weeks in Italy I used to cry with homesickness. A dose of homoeopathic *Ignatia* released me from the acute sense of separation but in spite of the love that I received there was something missing, something which had been with me all my life. Time passed and the term came to an end. It was summer and vacation time. I went down to the South to spend my holidays with my brother Adriano and his wife Luciana. Although everything was beautiful and everybody full of affection and though Adriano reminded me so much of my father Nata, the nostalgia for home, for India was as strong as ever. I still could not quite understand what was the something that was missing. I must say that in spite of the difficult periods the experience in Italy was very intense and very interesting and that I still cherish the people who were so good and loving to me as though I were a part of the family. I came to Pondicherry in August for the second half of my holiday and went back to Arezzo which is near Florence, to a very wonderful art school. Also I was able to realise some of my dreams in Italy and one of them was this art school. I learnt singing with an opera singer and I played football with a women's team. But there remained that void that no pizza or spaghetti could fill. All I managed was to put on several kilos.

Then something happened to me during my Christmas vacation at the Ashram, on the 13th January, which in India is not considered inauspicious as it

is in Italy. What happened to me that day was the most beautiful thing that could have happened to me in all my life. I wanted to see Champaklal and went to him with my mother. Something in me must have known that it was a last meeting. He was 85 years old and had never forgotten me. Every time my mother went to see him he would make inquiring gestures about me since of course he no longer spoke. My mother always had to tell him where I was and what I was doing. That Sunday, after the meditation in Sri Aurobindo's room we went to Champaklal. I was seized by a very strong sensation of happiness. I had never been so happy all my life. He held out his hands to me with an infinitely sweet smile, full of joy and love. He took my hands and I felt tears coursing down my cheeks, tears of joy. We stayed with him a while before leaving the room. It seemed to me that I had always known him. That smile had told me that he loved me and that he wished me every spiritual good. It came with a rain of blessings. It was a unique experience, full of light and force.

After that I began to realise that I had been rather stupid to leave the Ashram and to go to Italy. Even if it had been once my father's native land, his true and spiritual country was India. Though I went back to Italy for the new term I wanted to be back in the Mother's atmosphere where we aspire for evolution, where there are positive energies, harmony and joy. The need for all this became acute and I managed to return for good on the 9th of May to celebrate my mother's birthday. We went to the Ashram immediately to find a very dear friend—the Mother. We knelt at the Samadhi. Then once again the same tears came as those that had come in Champaklal's room. I got up and waited for some moments near the flowers and the sweet presence of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. We had only taken a few steps from the Samadhi when an Ashramite in a white saree came towards us and told us that Champaklal had left his body that very day in Gujarat. We heard the news in silence that became deeper and deeper. Then we went home to light the candles. It was the day of Champaklal's departure and of my return and the anniversary of my mother's birth.

I write these lines with the perspiration running down my back in the torrid month of June. But just to be here makes me feel serene and happy.

I don't regret having gone to Italy. It was an experience I had to go through and to be far away made me understand that there is nothing better than to be in one's own world—the Mother's world.

For three weeks I was able to return to the Ashram Kindergarten, this time as an assistant to Simiben and as a trainee; it was a time of great happiness in which I was able to relive the first years of my own school life which I had the great good fortune and grace to spend there. Nobody could wish for a better start in life. I will always be grateful for it. Now I teach in the Auroville Kindergarten trying to pass on what I learned there.

## ETERNAL GAME

EDDIES of wishes,  
Swells of pride,  
Screeching gull-like thoughts,  
A will supine—  
One who let things be,  
Never questioning why  
Nor changing nor trying.  
A quagmire of desires,  
Quicksands of empty life,  
Desperate rain-efforts  
Taking deeper down,  
Not a step forward,  
Not a step out.  
Man will-less,  
Gods helpless,  
Time a mere passerby  
In the course of destiny  
Each new page was etched  
With such dull endings,  
Throbbing pains,  
Small magical interludes  
That deluded but never satisfied.  
And it was studded with gems  
Bright, yet so rugged  
That they cut the wearer to the core  
With what may be  
But never is  
A force of pretty probables  
Led man a baffling dance  
Straining, wild, unrewarding.  
What he sought he really knew not,  
That which he had

Always needed more to satisfy.  
Farther and farther went the vain  
search  
For impotent wearying probables  
Which only from afar seemed fulfilling.  
An endless gambit  
Tossed through the years  
By countless men,  
Who always lost their Draupadi—  
The radiant soul—  
To the dark power  
Of desert and destruction.  
Again and yet again they came,  
Played the same dice,  
Lost the same game,  
Yet wanted another throw  
In another life  
The soul wedded to fire  
And deadened wandering senses,  
Warriors who had lost their chivalry,  
Knowing the dire penalty  
Yet not caring,  
Giving faith without justification,  
A craving they felt  
That put even shame aside  
A hell is in each man  
To which he may pay allegiance  
Or uproot and throw it away.  
A choice is there,  
Though tempered by fate—  
To pierce the heart of night  
Or let life pass wide the mark.

SHYAM KUMARI

## AN HOUR AND A HALF WITH C.G. JUNG

SUMMER 1953 My late wife Sobharani<sup>1</sup> and I with our two children had arrived in England in January that year. I took up the post of Spalding Lecturer in Indian Philosophy and Religion at the Department of Oriental Studies in the University of Durham. I saw an announcement in a philosophical journal about the XIth International Philosophy Congress to be held in Brussels, Belgium, the following August. I expressed my desire to attend the Congress to the Director of the Department of Oriental Studies who spoke to Sir James Duff, the Vice-Chancellor of the University. Duff, it may be mentioned here, had years ago a close connection with education in India. He was a member of the University Grants Commission of which Professor Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan was the Chairman. The Vice-Chancellor readily agreed to send me as a delegate to the international meeting of philosophers to represent the Department of Oriental Studies and the University as well. I with my family arrived in Brussels two days before the Congress was to start. When I went to the Reception Office I was given a well-produced informative Programme of the Congress with the names and addresses of all the participants, the institutions they were representing—some came in their individual capacity—, the dates and times of the meetings of the different sections, the lists and venues of the receptions and parties that the Government and academic and cultural institutions were giving. When I was going through the Programme to find out what, where and when the meetings relating to Indian and Asian philosophy were, I was surprised to read that I was to conduct the deliberations of the section on Social and Political Thought as its Chairman. I mention this not to blow my own bugle but only to inform the readers of this magazine that my selection gave me the opportunity to present Sri Aurobindo's viewpoint in regard to the future society and human unity in my remarks summarising the papers presented and the discussions on them.

Madame Aebi, a Swiss Kantian scholar, was also attending the Congress. My wife and I made her acquaintance and we all became quite friendly. One day I happened to mention that as an undergraduate I had heard her celebrated compatriot C.G. Jung lecture. I had had this privilege on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee session of the Indian Science Congress held in Calcutta in 1937. Sir James Jeans was the General President. Other eminent thinkers who were invited included Sir Arthur Eddington. Jung was also one of them

Even now I remember his tall figure and distinguished face as he was lecturing to a mixed audience which comprised eminent Indian scientists and philosophers and simple but enthusiastic undergraduates like myself. This mixed character is worth mentioning because I was impressed by Jung's earnestness as a lecturer and his sincere effort to make his discourse intelligible to all without

<sup>1</sup> D Litt (Calcutta), Ph D (Durham), M A (Calcutta and Banaras), Professor and Head of the Department of Philosophy, Banaras Hindu University

sacrificing any of the more difficult themes of his own psychological system. Though I had to study psychology as one of the subjects in my Philosophy Honours course I was not particularly interested in that subject. However, though the Psychology Paper was designed to give us a grounding in the subject and did not include revolutionary developments like the doctrines of Freud, Jung, Adler, Behaviourism, etc. some of us had heard the names of the eminent Western psychologists and systems of psychology. Jung was one of them and his theory of the collective unconscious, in so far as we had learnt of it, intrigued us. So I was interested to hear him lecture and the experience was worth the trouble I had taken in doing so. I must have had a lurking subconscious desire to meet him personally and my wife, who had had psychology as a special paper in her M A course, was also keen to do so. So I met Madame Aebi. We hoped that there might be a way open for us to meet the great psychologist. Madame Aebi, when she came to learn of our desire, herself said that if we went to Zurich, she, who knew Jung personally, would be happy to arrange a meeting.

Two years later Sobharani and I were in Rome to attend the eighth session of the Congress of the International Association of Historians of Religion, where I gave a lecture on Sacral Kingship in Ancient Indian Thought. At the end of the meeting we proceeded to Switzerland with the intention of meeting C.G. Jung. I had written to Madame Aebi beforehand from England about our visit to the beautiful country at the foot of the Alps, requesting her kindly to try to arrange for us a meeting with Jung. She heartily welcomed us and assured us that we would be able to see the great psychologist. A couple of days after reaching Zurich and some sightseeing we met Madame Aebi who, after ascertaining how long we were staying in Zurich and what our programme was, said she would make contact with Jung and let us know his response. We were very pleased when a day later she rang me at our hotel and told of the day and time when we were to go to Jung's house, a large and beautiful place on the lake Kurshacht. He had also a summer retreat in a village called Bolingen which gave the name to the series of his collected works. We found his home full of books, journals, papers. Truly a scholar's home and he himself had a sage-like appearance. I was most impressed by his remark that there was yet much to know and do. I may mention that I took a snapshot of Jung who was also photographed with Sobharani and myself by Madame Aebi.

Jung received us cordially and after exchanging courteous pleasantries asked me why I wanted to see him. I told him about the lecture of his which I had attended and that after hearing him on the collective unconscious I had wanted to have a few points cleared from himself. Being encouraged by his enquiry as to what points I wished him to explain, I started with the personal unconscious before raising the question of the racial or the collective unconscious which was my main interest.

I asked him whether it would be right to say that the unconscious was really

not unconscious and that ideas etc. “come down” to the conscious mind from the unconscious rather than “rise up” from it or to put it in another way, could the unconscious be described as such only because we were not conscious of it.

Jung answered that if a spatial imagery was to be used, the unconscious could not be said to be below the conscious and that it had in it all that is psychic. From what little I knew of Jung’s ideas of the personal unconscious from expositions of his psychological system, I had formed this impression. But I wanted a confirmation of my understanding from the horse’s mouth, so to speak. Years after I read in his own writings that according to him the personal unconscious serves as the source of consciousness and ego and has the possibility of some sort of ego or personality within it. It has also been regarded as the source of creative ideas and even of rational thoughts—all suggestive of some degree of consciousness in it. He observes that some psychologists call it the subconscious because of the intermixture of conscious and unconscious in it. Jung, however, rejects this change in terminology because the word implies that the unconscious is a derivative of the conscious mind and lies below it. But he answers that the evidence he has got is that the unconscious is compensatory of the conscious mind. It is not the latter’s derivative but constitutes its source, and is not necessarily ‘lower’ than the conscious mind. And he asks rhetorically, “How do you know that the unconscious is ‘lower’ and not ‘higher’ than the conscious mind?” (Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. V, p. 430). The unconscious is not the negation of consciousness but is so designated because we are not conscious of it (Jung: *Psychology and Religion*, pp. 39-40). The unconscious does not mean that it is the basic quality of this part of the psyche and denotes only limitation of the conscious mind in regard to its awareness of phenomena. The limitation is owing to the fact that we can know nothing about the psyche itself (Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. X, p. 147). Jung characterises the unconscious as a manifestation of the life-instinct and he indicates the possibility of equating this instinct with Bergson’s *élan vital* or with Schopenhauer’s Creative Will. It is difficult to understand this remark of Jung, for both Bergson’s *élan vital* and Schopenhauer’s Creative Will are metaphysical categories and not psychological concepts. But it is not necessary to pursue this matter here.

The idea of the collective unconscious is Jung’s special and original contribution to contemporary psychology. The racial or collective unconscious is, according to Jung, a deeper layer of the psyche which is not formed in an individual’s life. Its contents are not repressions of personal desires or sediments of personal memories, rather they are inherited patterns of perception, apprehension and behaviour. The inheritance is not from immediate parents or even a few generations just earlier than them. It goes back to distant historic and prehistoric ages and can even be taken as rooted in man’s animal ancestry. As such the collective unconscious is impersonal and this is evident in images produced in pathological states of mind, fantasies and mythical creations Jung based the

concept of the collective unconscious on common occurrences of some of the images in dreams, fantasies and pathological states of the mind on the one hand and in myths on the other. The racial or collective unconscious is the repository of myths of all times and climes. Because of their universality, these images are not and cannot be acquired by an individual in his life-time. They seem to be inherited along with the human brain itself. Jung says that the collective unconscious is the psychic correlate of the differentiation of the human brain. In other words, it is the psychic aspect of the inherited brain structure itself (Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. X, p. 9). It must have evolved slowly. A century's events add only an infinitesimally small amount of variation and differentiation to it (*Collected Works*, Vol. VIII, p. 376). From the psychical point of view, it contains the deposit of world-processes embedded in the structure of the brain and the sympathetic nervous system. It is therefore supposed to be in its totality a sort of timeless and eternal world-image which counterbalances the conscious momentary picture of the world. Thus it is a mirror-world lying within us (*Collected Works*, Vol. VII, p. 376). It is so much a world in itself that entering into it the subject ceases to be the subject as he becomes an object of all possible subjects; he becomes utterly one with the world (*Collected Works*, Vol. IX, pt. 2, p. 22).

The concept of the complex is a most interesting and important component of the psychology of Jung. A complex is a feature of the personal unconscious. Jung during therapy sessions in which he used the word-association test found that groups of contents of the personal unconscious may bond together and 'form a cluster as it were'. Jung termed them complexes. An example given by him is the mother complex. There are persons who according to him are governed by this complex. People who have a mother complex are very sensitive to what is said and felt by their mothers, whose images are present in their minds. Such people tend to speak about their mothers whether what they say is relevant or not. They prefer the company of elder women to women of their own age and tend to imitate them.

One of the sources of a complex is what Jung called an archetype. It means an original model which serves as the pattern of other similar things. Jung spoke of several archetypes like birth, death, power, magic, the hero, the child, the demon, the trickster, the wise old man, the earth-mother, the giant, natural objects like the sun, the moon, the wind, rivers, fire, animals, God, and many man-made things as well, for example, rings and weapons. "There are as many archetypes," wrote Jung, "as there are archetypal situations in life. Endless repetition has engraved these experiences into our psychic constitution, not in the forms of images filled with content, but at first only as *forms without content* representing merely the possibility of a certain type of perception and action" (*Collected Works*, Vol. IX, p. 48).

Jung also did a good deal of work on symbols. A symbol whether in dreams



or in waking life fulfils two main purposes. First, it is a representation of a frustrated instinctual impulse. It is not merely a disguise but often a transformation of primitive instinctive impulse. "The symbol is not a sign," writes Jung, "that veils something everybody knows. Such is not its significance. On the contrary, it represents an attempt to elucidate, by means of analogy, something which still belongs entirely to the domain of the unknown or something that is yet to be" (*Collected Works*, Vol. VII, p. 281). Jung means by an archetype in the collective unconscious that which is as yet completely unknown and still to be formed. A symbol primarily tries to represent an archetype but the result is mostly unsatisfactory because imperfect symbols represent the psyche and are projections of an aspect of man's nature. They are also attempts to express the wisdom acquired by mankind in the past and can represent too the prospective evolution of the individual. There are other things that Jung says about the symbol which we need not go into now, for I wish to give a further account of my conversation with him.

(To be continued)

ARINDAM BASU

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#### HUTA'S NOTE ON AN ERROR

In *Mother India*, June 1993, p. 400, in *Nirodbaran's Talk on Champaklal*, Nirodbaran has written about Champaklal:

"He used also to be present during the Mother's work with Huta."

This is a mistake. Champaklal was never present when the Mother and I worked together on *Savitri*. In fact, nobody was present. We always worked alone in relation to this epic.

# VYASA'S TALE OF SAVITRI IN THE MAHABHARATA

## A VERSE-BY-VERSE RENDERING INTO ENGLISH

(Continued from the issue of June 1993)

VI: *The Grief-Stricken Parents, the Rishis Consoling Them and Giving Them Assurances, the Return of Satyavan and Savitri, and Savitri's Narration of the Day's Episode and of How She Won the Several Boons from Yama.*

Markandeya said:

1. At about the same time the mighty King Dyumatsena got back the sight, clear and pellucid, with which he began seeing everything very well.
2. But, O Yudhishtira, perturbed as he was, for his son had not returned yet, he along with his wife Shaibya went to the several hermitages enquiring about him.
3. That night they, husband and wife, went to the several ashramas and to the river-banks and to the lakes around, in different parts of the forest, looking for him.
4. Whenever they heard any voice, they believed, expectantly, that it was their son's; they spoke, cheering each other, that Satyavan was coming with Savitri.
5. With their feet having become stiff, with the blades of grass and the thorns piercing their bodies, bruised and bleeding, they were running hither and thither, raving in madness.
6. Then all the learned and elderly ashramites gathered around them and gave them comforting assurances, they then took them back to their hermitage.
7. The elders, grown rich in tapasya, narrated to the grieving couple, encouraging and consoling them, the stories of the ancient kings.
8. In spite of this, possessed as they were by the single wish of seeing their son, they sorrowed greatly and began remembering his childhood
9. They were wailing aloud, without cease and in deep anguish, crying, Woe to us! Our son, our virtuous daughter-in-law, where are you now, where? Then the Brahmins, the speakers of the Truth-Word, began telling them this wise.

Suvarsha said:

- 10 His wife Savitri, I know, is engaged in tapasya and has control over the senses and is of a good well-poised conduct; from that I can proclaim that Satyavan is alive.

Gautama said:

11. I have studied the Vedas and all their six limbs, accumulated great might of askesis, observed strictest celibacy from my early youth, and pleased well my preceptors and the Fire-God.
12. I have completed with the power of concentration all the vows and in former times I had observed meticulously the fasting rites by nourishing myself with the air only.
13. I can, by the strength of these austerities, know all the movements of others; believe, therefore, in my words that Satyavan is living.

The Disciple said:

14. Whatever is uttered by my revered Teacher, that never can turn out to be false, yes, Satyavan must be living.

The Rishis said:

15. His wife Savitri is endowed with all those excellent and virtuous qualities that dispel widowhood; this must mean that Satyavan is living.

Bharadwaj said:

16. His wife Savitri, I know, is engaged in askesis and has mastered the senses and is well-poised in her manner of action; I can hence affirm that Satyavan is living.

Dalbhya said:

17. By the token that you have suddenly started seeing, and by the reckoning how Savitri was observing the vow, and by the fact that she went with him without breaking her fast, it is clear that Satyavan is living.

Apastambha said:

18. The manner in which in these tranquil benign surroundings the beasts and the birds are finding voice, and the manner in which you have been doing the things befitting a king, all this goes to show that Satyavan is living.

Dhaumya said:

19. As your son is rich in merit, and is handsome, as he is dear to everyone and

as he has the marks of a person with long life, from that it is clear that Satyavan is living.

Markandeya said:

20. In this manner those speakers of the Truth-Word, established in austerities, gave assurances to him; he respecting them and listening to them became somewhat quiet and composed himself.
21. Then, a short while after, Savitri with her husband Satyavan arrived there in the night, entering the ashram-premises, greatly happy

The Brahmins said:

22. O Lord of the Earth, we jubilate in your meeting with the son and, possessed with sight as we see you, we invoke and mark progress and good fortune for you in these happenings.
23. Union with your son, the presence of Savitri herself here, and your regaining eye-sight—all these three portend high prosperity for you.
24. The words that we had uttered, all those came true in the exact manner and about that there is no doubt, the future also will soon be, again and again, of great thriving for you.

Markandeya said:

25. O Yudhishtira, then lighting in the open a bright fire all those twice-born and holy sat around Dyumatsena, the King of the Earth.
26. Shaibya, and Satyavan and Savitri who were standing farther at one end, also took their seats when directed to do so by everybody, now griefless.
27. O Yudhishtira, those Dwellers of the Wood, sitting with the King, began asking several questions to his son, being eagerly desirous of knowing everything.

The Rishis said:

28. Why is it that you, along with your wife, did not return much earlier than this odd hour in the night? Was there any obstacle or difficulty in the matter?
29. By your delay in this manner you have caused, O Prince, such distress to both your parents and to all of us; we are unable to understand anything and hence tell us in detail whatever has happened.

Satyavan said:

30. Obtaining permission from my father I had gone, Savitri accompanying me, to the forest; there while chopping the pieces of wood I suddenly had a severe headache.
31. Afflicted by that piercing agony I fell asleep for too long, I suppose; never did I sleep in this manner any time earlier.
32. On waking up from the sleep I decided to return immediately despite the growing night, realising that you would be all worried about me; and for the delay there is no other reason.

Gautama said:

33. But your father Dyumatsena got his eye-sight so unexpectedly, its cause you do not seem to know; perhaps Savitri will be able to tell us about it.
34. O Savitri, I am eager to know and hear of its secret from you; you are the knower, O Savitri, of all that is far and near, that belongs to the past and to the future; one like Goddess Savitri herself you are, with her effulgence, that I know.
35. Surely, you have the knowledge of this mystery, and of its purpose, and therefore, if there is nothing in it to hide, tell us truly everything

Savitri said:

36. What you are all soliciting of me is quite just and your wish, understandably, cannot be otherwise; besides there is nothing in it that I have to hide. Listen to what I am going to narrate in proper detail.
37. Narad, the high soul, had foretold to me my husband's death long before; this was to happen today and for that reason I did not leave him alone.
38. When he fell asleep Yama himself came there, his subordinates attending on him; he subdued him and tied him and started moving in the direction of the departed, the abode of the forefathers.
39. Then to the mighty God I offered, with the utterances of the Truth, gratifying eulogies; he granted me five boons about which you will presently hear from me.
40. Vision and regaining his kingdom were the first two boons I obtained for my father-in-law; one hundred sons for my father and another hundred for myself were the next two.

41. By the last I got my husband Satyavan back with a life of four hundred years; it was precisely for the return of the life of my husband that I had undertaken the vow.
42. I have thus explained in detail to you all the real reason of the delay; this great sorrow which I had to bear has at last turned into happiness.

The Rishis said:

43. The House of the King was plunging more and more into darkness, assailed by misfortunes; but you of noble birth and a virtuous wife, sweet and amiable in nature, and an observer of the vows, one given to meritorious conduct, lifted up the family again.

Markandeya said:

44. Thus wise the Rishis, who had assembled there, spoke respectfully, and adoringly about her, the excellent among women; then, with the permission of the King, and of his son, they took their leave and went back, in great happiness, to their respective huts.

*VII: Request from the Citizens of Shalwa to Dyumatsena to Return and to Rule over the Kingdom, the Coronation Ceremony, and the Fulfilment of the Boons.*

Markandeya said:

1. When the night was over and the solar orb had well ascended, they, all rich in austerities, finished their morning rituals and gathered again.
2. Those great Rishis spoke to Dyumatsena of the extreme good fortune of Savitri and were not contented even though they expressed it again and again.
3. About the same time, arriving, the citizens of Shalwa informed the King that his enemy had been killed by his own minister
4. They further told him: "His kinsman as well as his associates have also been murdered by the same minister, the army too has fled.
5. Coming to know of these happenings the entire kingdom has expressed its confidence only in the former king; whether he can see or he is blind, that matters not as he alone is the rightful ruler

6. O Sovereign, we have been sent, having arrived at this firm decision, to solicit you to return; the chariots are ready and the full army in all its four divisions is at your command.
7. O King, consent to it; a happy welcome awaits you even as the trumpets declare in the capital your victory. Long may you live and rule over the kingdom of your forefathers.”
8. Seeing the King with his sight regained, and in good sound health, their eyes grew large with surprise; then bowing their heads low they all paid respects to him
9. The King made his reverential obeisances to the elderly Brahmins of the ashram, worshipped them and, with their permission, departed for his capital.
10. Shaibya along with Savitri sat in a well-decorated beautiful carriage drawn by several men and, with the army all around for protection, left the place.
11. There the priests sprinkled the holy unctuous waters and performed the coronation ceremony for Dyumatsena; the great-souled Satyavan was at the same time ceremoniously nominated as the crown-prince.
12. Then in the course of long time Savitri gave birth to a hundred sons, enhancing her name and her glory; hero-warriors as they were, they never retreated from the battle-fields.
13. In the same way her father Aswapati, the King of Madra, begot a hundred sons from her mother Malawi; they too were mighty and great in strength.
14. In this way she had saved her father and mother, and father-in-law and mother-in-law; indeed, Savitri had extricated her husband's house from calamity.
15. The fortune-bringer Draupadi, possessed of noble qualities, will also, like Savitri, high-born and chaste, carry you all across to the shore.

*(Concluded)*

R.Y. DESHPANDE

## AND SO THIS HAPPENS

(Continued from the issue of June 1993)

THE Professor went on:

Now let us take up the next machinery—the machinery of Economics, which is regarded as a great force that governs human existence.

‘Since we have been under an alien administration for several hundred years, the first thing needed after independence was to determine how to build a new India. As a true patriot and a lover of humanity at the same time Sri Aurobindo has indicated on several occasions what would be the right way that free India should follow for her reconstruction, development and progress.’

The professor wished to have the editor’s view.

The amazed editor could not speak; but his eyes smiled.

Feeling enthused, the professor took a book and stated:

‘It is in 1908 Sri Aurobindo unambiguously indicated in *Bandemataram*, “There is no slightest doubt that our society will have to undergo a reconstruction which may amount to a revolution, but it will not be for Europeanisation... but for a greater and more perfect realisation of the national spirit in society.”’

Then the professor drew out another book from the cabinet and said that just after one year in 1909 he wrote in *The Karmayogin*: “Our business is to realise ourselves first and mould everything to the law of India’s eternal life and nature... of Indian thought and knowledge and to seek to throw off from us the dominating stamp of the occident; what we have to take from the West we should take as Indians...”

‘Later in an essay under the title “Indian Culture and External Influence” originally published in the *Arya* in 1919, and finally appended to this book, *The Foundations of Indian Culture*, Sri Aurobindo has explained, “Obviously if we ‘take over’ anything, the good and the bad in it will come in together pell-mell. If we take over for instance that terrible, monstrous and compelling thing, that giant Asuric creation, European industrialism,—unfortunately we are being forced by circumstances to do it,—whether we take it in its form or its principle, we may under more favourable conditions develop by it our wealth and economic resources, but assuredly we shall get too its social discords and moral plagues and cruel problems, and I do not see how we shall avoid becoming the slaves of the economic aim in life and losing the spiritual principle of our culture.”

‘So, according to Sri Aurobindo, “An entire return upon ourselves is our only way of salvation.”

‘Then in a letter to Joseph Baptista written on 5th January 1920, he reiterated, “I hold that India having a spirit of her own and a governing temperament proper to her own civilisation should in politics as in everything



else strike out her own original path and not stumble in the wake of Europe.”

‘Lastly in 1948 in the second year of independence Sri Aurobindo in his message to the Andhra University has once again reminded the nation of what it has to do in the reconstruction and rebuilding of India,—perhaps you know that this message was given by him on the occasion of the presentation of the Sir Cattamanchi Ramalingam Reddy National Prize to Sri Aurobindo at the convocation held at the University on December 11, 1948. Let me read out the portion that I have just referred to:

“In this hour, in the second year of its liberation, the nation has to awaken to many more very considerable problems, to vast possibilities opening before her but also to dangers and difficulties that may, if not wisely dealt with, become formidable.... There are deeper issues for India herself, since by following certain tempting directions she may conceivably become a nation like many others, evolving an opulent industry and commerce, a powerful organisation of social and political life.. but in this apparently magnificent progression forfeiting its *svadharma*, losing its soul. Then ancient India and her spirit might disappear altogether...”

‘Drawing our attention to the present world situation Sri Aurobindo has stated, “The present era of the world is a stage of immense transformations Not one but many radical ideas are at work in the mind of humanity and agitate its life with a vehement seeking and effort at change; and although the centre of the agitation is in progressive Europe, yet the East is being rapidly drawn into this churning of the sea of thought and this breaking up of old ideas and old institutions. No nation or community can any longer remain psychologically cloistered and apart in the unity of the modern world. It may even be said that the future of humanity depends most upon the answer that will be given to the modern riddle of the Sphinx by the East and especially by India, the hoary guardian of the Asiatic idea and its profound spiritual secrets. For the most vital issue of the age is whether the future progress of humanity is to be governed by the modern economic and materialistic mind of the West or by a nobler pragmatism guided, uplifted and enlightened by spiritual culture and knowledge....

“India, the heart of the Orient, has to change as the whole West and the whole East are changing, and it cannot avoid changing in the sense of the problems forced upon it by Europe...”<sup>21</sup>

‘Optimists as we are, we hoped that a new spiritual awakening must arise from the depths of this vast life on the basis of which the future of India would be founded; for it must not be formed in the crude mould of the westernised social and political ideals. But,’ continued the professor with a sigh, ‘it is evident from the state of affairs that Sri Aurobindo’s words of wisdom went unheeded. India, perhaps under compelling circumstances, has been growing to become one more nation among many other nations in the world. Her progress during the last two

decades is conspicuously not in consistence with the abiding principle of her *svadharma*. Naturally we cannot avoid experiencing its implications and eventual consequence. Willy-nilly we have ushered in what is called the commercial and economic age.

'It is said that when a nation passes through this age its civilisation and culture are largely influenced by the economic and commercial man. In the words of Sri Aurobindo, "Accumulation of wealth and more wealth, the adding of possessions to possessions, opulence, show, pleasure, a cumbrous inartistic luxury,... life devoid of beauty and nobility, religion vulgarised,... politics and governments turned into a trade and profession, enjoyment itself made a business, this is commercialism."<sup>22</sup>

Then turning towards the editor the professor said, 'You were asking what commercialism is; now perhaps it is clear to you. You can verify the present situation and ascertain whether we are passing through that age. Assuredly this phenomenon cannot be the beacon to guide and lead the youth of free India. Many of them who are somewhat above the ordinary level, and may be a wee bit ahead of their times and who dream of a better future towards which the whole world must progress, are vehemently disillusioned. Some of them are caught in the trap of so-called revolutionary leaders who exploit their indomitable spirit to achieve their own political ends. And the rest become the victims of this hedonistic culture. Many of them gradually grow desperate to become rich overnight by whatever means fair or foul; and in no time they become puppets in the hands of a few gangsters who are monarchs in their respective domains. Often there are clashes between these monarchs, as also between a monarch and his group. When an individual, whether educated or not, becomes a puppet it is very difficult for him to come back to normal life. The Neelesh of the story, as it seems to me, belongs to this group.

'Now let us come to the main point at issue; how to bring about a change in our economic policy including the machinery of production and distribution so that the gulf between the rich and the poor may be narrowed down on the one hand and on the other the chronic problem of unemployment may be more effectively tackled.

'It is a fact that many of us believe that it is only through socialism that the change can be brought about. Of course, by socialism we mean European socialism and not socialism of Indian origin. European socialism, as we all know, is based on the State-idea. It has originated from the failure of plutocratic democracy. Naturally it tends to establish *equality* in collective living by depriving the individual of his *liberty*.

'Undoubtedly the State-idea in modern times dominates the thought and action of the world; for it is considered to be the passage towards the eventual ideal of a free, classless, stateless communal life.

'Here in India we know that there are a few political parties who strongly

believe in this idea, and they are at work for its effectuation. For obvious reasons the younger generation has a natural attraction to the idea. It is no use gainsaying that young people, especially the student community of many a developing country of the world, has become its standard-bearer. Therefore, I think it is worthwhile to have some glimpses of Sri Aurobindo's views on the characteristics of this world-dominating idea; more so because this idea, since it is regarded as the panacea for all social maladies, has also significant relevance to the problem we are discussing. The fallacy of the idea needs to be pointed out to the youth who are groping for light.

'In *The Human Cycle* and *The Ideal of Human Unity* Sri Aurobindo has critically evaluated this idea and indicated where it falls short of ensuring the real progress of humankind.

'Socialism as an ideal takes its birth in a revolt against capitalism "It sets out," in the words of Sri Aurobindo, "to replace a system of organised economic battle by an organised order and peace." Obviously this cannot be done on the basis of individual liberty. And therefore socialism must do away with the democratic basis of individual liberty. Its basis is equality, not political only but a perfect social equality "There is to be equality of opportunity for all but also equality of status for all." This equality is not possible "if there exists personal property or at least inherited right in property." So, as explained by Sri Aurobindo, "The Socialistic principle has practically to deny the existence of the individual or his right to exist except as a member of the society and for its sake. He belongs entirely to the society, not only his property, but himself, his labour, capacities, the education it gives him and its results, his mind, his knowledge, his individual life, his family life, the life of his children."<sup>23</sup>

"This is what is called the State-idea of socialism. "Theoretically, it is the subordination of the individual to the good of all that is demanded; practically, it is his subordination to a collective egoism, political, military, economic, which seeks to satisfy certain collective aims and ambitions, shaped and imposed on the great mass of the individuals by a smaller or larger number of ruling persons who are supposed in some way to represent the community."<sup>24</sup>

'By whatever process or means this ruling body is constituted, it cannot be said with certitude that it represents the best mind of the nation. Generally it is the politicians who constitute the body. "... the modern politician in any part of the world," comments Sri Aurobindo, "does not represent the soul of a people or its aspirations. What he does usually represent is all the average pettiness, selfishness, egoism, self-deception that is about him and these he represents well enough, as well as a great deal of mental incompetence and moral conventionality, timidity and pretence. Great issues often come to him but he does not deal with them greatly.... Yet it is by such minds that the good of all has to be decided, to such hands that it has to be entrusted..."<sup>25</sup>

'Sri Aurobindo has emphatically stated, "Even if the governing instrument

were better constituted... still the State would not be what the State-idea pretends that it is."<sup>26</sup>

'From his further analysis we come to know that the State is an entity which has no soul. It is a machine and not an organism. So, it is bound to act crudely. It can manufacture but cannot create, whereas the individual has something which we know as soul. The individual needs freedom because he has to grow and create. Hence "the call of the State to the individual to immolate himself on its altar and to give up his free activities into an organised activity is something quite different from the demand of our highest ideals." This immolation of individuality means "giving up of the present form of individual egoism into another, a collective form, larger but not superior."<sup>27</sup>

'So, you see, my friend,' continued the professor, 'that in all these aspects there lies the fallacy of the ideal. It is true that a change of machinery—political, social or economic—can lead a nation to a certain distance but cannot achieve the aim for which humanity strives unless this outer change coincides with the inner change of its people.'

*(To be continued)*

SAMAR BASU

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## SRI AUROBINDO—THE SOUL OF INDIA

(Continued from the issue of June 1993)

“THE ideal creates the means of attaining the ideal, if it is itself true and rooted in the destiny of the race ” (*Bande Mataram*, Weekly edition, May 1, 1908.)

Sri Aurobindo’s political thought was founded on the idealistic basis of his spiritual nationalism. This inevitably led to his adopting as the goal of his political endeavours nothing less than the complete emancipation of his motherland from the foreign rule

As the editor of the *Bande Mataram* he created ideals for his readers, and through them he taught the nation the very alphabet of patriotism and the basic tenets of the religion of Nationalism. As the directing intelligence behind the nationalists, he gave them a cohesion, a purpose, a plank of action to battle with the bureaucracy within the provisions of the civil law of the land. A disarmed nation, an emasculated people, they had no resources, no will power even. For a demand pitched so high, what were the sanctions the Nationalists had in their mind? Sri Aurobindo’s answer was “Passive Resistance”. Defy the law openly when necessary, and accept the consequences: this was the dress-rehearsal for Gandhian non-cooperation, civil disobedience and ‘Quit India’ movements in the early ‘thirties and ‘forties.

Sister Nivedita and others who watched Sri Aurobindo at close quarters could see that he was a man of God, that his nationalism was really a new religion. If it was the purpose of religion to take men to God, it was the purpose of the religion of nationalism to bring men to their Mother India—Bhavani Bharati

In those heroic days, there were among the nationalists personalities like Tilak, Lajpat Rai, Ajit Singh, Bepin Pal, Aswin Kumar Dutt, Subramaniam Bharati. Sri Aurobindo was considered as an indisputable foremost leader whose leadership contained something more than his political ability. As the historian R.C Majumdar has pointed out, “While Tilak popularised politics and gave it a force and vitality it had hitherto lacked, Aravinda spiritualised it and became the high priest of nationalism as a religious creed. He revived the theoretical teachings of Bankim Chandra and Vivekananda... who placed the country on the altar of God and asked for suffering and self-immolation as the best offerings of His worship.”<sup>1</sup>

Late in April, 1907 the news spread that Lala Lajpat Rai was going to be deported. The British Government passed an old ordinance which constituted that due processes of Law could be ignored if any person was considered politically dangerous by the Government: such a person could be dealt with by deportation. Lala Lajpat Rai’s deportation followed on 9 May and two days later Sri Aurobindo responded in the *Bande Mataram* editorial “Crisis” dated

11.5.1907: "In this grave crisis of our destinies let not our people lose their fortitude or suffer stupefaction and depression to seize upon and unnerve their souls. The fight in which we are engaged is not like the wars of old in which when the king or leader fell, the army fled. The king whom we follow to the wars today, is our own Motherland, the sacred and imperishable; the leader of our onward march is the Almighty Himself, that element within and without us whom sword cannot slay, nor water drown, nor fire burn, nor exile divide from us, nor a prison confine. Lajpat Rai is nothing, Tilak is nothing, Bepin Pal is nothing; these are but instruments in the mighty Hand that is shaping our destinies and if these go, do you think that God cannot find others to do His will? Lala Lajpat Rai has gone from us, but doubt not that men stronger and greater than he will take his place. For when a living and rising cause is persecuted, this is the sure result that in the place of those whom persecution strikes down, there arise, like the giants from the blood of Raktabij, men who to their own strength add the strength, doubled and quadrupled by death or persecution, of the martyrs for the cause. It was the exiled of Italy, it was the men who languished in Austrian and Bourbon dungeons, it was Poerio and Silvio Pellico and their fellow-sufferers whose collected strength reincarnated in Mazzini and Garibaldi and Cavour to free their country."<sup>22</sup>

Sri Aurobindo further commented: "The first need at the present moment is courage, a courage which knows not how to flinch or shrink. The second is self-possession. God is helping us with persecution, we must accept it with joy and use that help calmly, fearlessly, wisely."<sup>23</sup>

Obviously the Government became panicky not only at the increasing popularity of the *Bande Mataram* and the *Jugantar* but at the effectiveness of the attacks. So the Government decided to prosecute the *Bande Mataram*, not interested in the paper itself but wanting to catch the one individual who was supposed to be the master-brain behind the paper. But that was also very difficult to accomplish. The Government thought it was easy to prosecute the *Jugantar* as it preached more than sedition. But the *Bande Mataram* in its subtle and suggestive way was considered as a more dangerous paper as it had kept itself carefully and cunningly within the four corners of the existing law. The Government carried out a police search on July 3 at the *Jugantar* office and arrested Bhupendra Nath Dutt, the editor.

Some years later Sri Aurobindo wrote in a letter to one of his disciples: "The *Bande Mataram* was never prosecuted for its editorial articles. The editor of the *Statesman* complained that they were too diabolically clever, crammed full of sedition between the lines, but legally unattackable because of the skill of the language. The Government must have shared this view for they never ventured to attack the paper for its editorials or other articles, whether Sri Aurobindo's or from the pen of his three editorial colleagues."<sup>24</sup> So the Government, having decided on the prosecution, now brought against the paper the charge of having

reproduced translations of certain articles which had appeared in the *Jugantar* and also printing a letter to the Editor entitled "Politics for Indians" in the Dak edition of the *Bande Mataram* of 28th July 1907. On 30th July prosecution of *Bande Mataram* was launched and the police made a search of the *Bande Mataram* office. On 16th August a warrant was issued to arrest Sri Aurobindo. Sri Aurobindo did not avoid the arrest. Rather he went himself to the police court and asked to be arrested. At the police station he was questioned whether he was the editor or printer. To both the questions he replied "No."

"He was released on bail on August 29. The *Bande Mataram* Seditious Trial came up for hearing before the Chief Presidency Magistrate of Calcutta, D.H. Kingsford. Altogether three persons were accused and charged: Sri Aurobindo as the alleged Editor, and Hemendra Nath Bagchi and Apurba Krishta Bose as the Manager and Printer respectively."<sup>5</sup>

At the court the case for the prosecution hinged on one principal witness, that was Bepin Chandra Pal. The Government then got hold of a circular letter when they raided the *Bande Mataram* offices written after he himself had resigned from its editorship. Everybody knew, the Government too, that Sri Aurobindo was the editor, but this had to be proved in the court. If Pal, who had been connected with the paper some time before, could name Sri Aurobindo as the editor who succeeded him, the case for the prosecution would be established. Called to the witness stand, stout-hearted Bepin Pal refused to name the editor of the *Bande Mataram*. For this refusal, he was charged with contempt of court and sentenced to jail for six months. No evidence against Sri Aurobindo forthcoming, the prosecution against him could not be proceeded on. "At last on 23 September Kingsford delivered his judgement. 'There is no evidence before me that the *Bande Mataram* habitually publishes seditious matter.' He went on to acquit Sri Aurobindo for want of evidence that he was the editor."<sup>6</sup> The case had an interesting sequel. Rabindranath composed a poem in honour of Sri Aurobindo, expecting him to be convicted. After his acquittal, Tagore came to him to offer congratulations and said: "What! you have deceived us by not going to jail." Sri Aurobindo smiled and replied: "Not for long will you have to wait." This proved prophetic.

The Government, however, wanted a victim to vent their wrath. They found Apurba Bose, the printer, guilty and sentenced him to jail for three months under the existing provisions of the Press Act.

Sri Aurobindo wrote in the *Bande Mataram* of 12 September on the sentence that Pal had been awarded: "The country will not suffer by the incarceration of this great orator and writer, this spokesman and prophet of Nationalism, nor will Bepin Chandra himself suffer by it. He has risen ten times as high as he was before in the estimation of his countrymen: if there were any among them who disliked or distrusted him, they have been silenced, for good we hope, by his manly straightforward and conscientious stand for the right as he

understood it. He will come out of prison with his power and influence doubled, and Nationalism, has already become the stronger for his self-immolation.”<sup>7</sup>

Sri Aurobindo, after his acquittal, became very famous and was regarded as the embodiment of the spirit of the paper, but always he had been the real editor. Previous to the launching of the prosecution he was holding the reins of leadership from behind the scenes. He wrote to his disciple Dilip Kumar Roy over two decades later: “I was never ardent about fame even in my political days; I preferred to remain behind the curtain, push people without their knowing it, and get things done. It was the confounded British Government that spoilt my game by prosecuting me and forcing me to be publicly known as ‘Leader’ ”.<sup>8</sup>

*(To be continued)*

NILIMA DAS

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# THE YOGA OF LEARNING SANSKRIT

A REPORT BY WILFRIED

*(Continued from the issue of June 1993)*

## II

“MORE than anything I’ve ever known, Sanskrit touches the heart of all that is sacred and true, in so perfect a manner that it hardly seems possible that we could ever have been so fortunate to have been blessed with such a language,” writes Vyas Houston in his essay titled “The Yoga of Learning Sanskrit”. But this beautiful language, if taught in the academic way, is exceedingly difficult. The drop-out rate at American universities can be as high as 90%. When Houston found that he himself could hardly take anyone beyond the beginning stages, he started searching for a new method

“My initial breakthrough was the visualization of the grammar of Sanskrit, color-coded on a computer screen and presented in a manner which would make students immediately aware of the basic patterns that pervade the language ” When tried in the classroom, it proved successful and Houston was happy to acknowledge “the birth of a new method for teaching Sanskrit ” Henceforth, he abandoned the belief that Sanskrit was a very difficult language and told his students that everyone could learn it.

Nevertheless, every student still has to master no less than 24 endings for several classes of nouns, for instance. Houston points out that the traditional way of learning was through chanting. “The patterning of the endings in groups of three lends itself to rhythms and melodies which are extremely relaxing, enjoyable and serve to create an effortless attunement to the lucid articulation, exquisite symmetry and root power of the Sanskrit language.” The Western method, on the other hand, is through memorization by intellectual effort, whereas pronunciation and rhythm are mostly neglected. This method, he says, is entirely inadequate for this language designed for maximum uninterrupted resonance

Houston then proceeds to develop something like a philosophy of learning Sanskrit. He discusses the well-known educational method of making students learn for the sake of grades and success. “Our very survival seemed to depend upon grades.” Achievement and performance, accompanied by mutual comparison of the students, become the main values superseding learning and the joy of discovery as such, “the discovery of one’s Self and one’s relation to the whole of life.” “Learning seemed to be more concerned with how well we did than the process of awakening to life, that might constitute true education ”

So we never properly learned how to learn because behind our education

there was always our “survival concern”. And this kind of conditioning, says Houston, makes it so difficult to learn Sanskrit. He makes an interesting statement then by pointing out that “although Sanskrit does not seem to fit into lifestyles dominated by survival concerns, it actually could help us to survive.” In any case, his students are advised to follow a path of mutual help, harmony and unity. They will avoid comparing or judging each other and focus on the goal at hand, learning the language in a very conducive atmosphere.

In the second section of his essay Houston at first clarifies the eternal relationship between Yoga and Sanskrit: “For millennia, these two have mutually enhanced and empowered one another to elevate human consciousness to the sublime. Within the great spiritual traditions of India, Sanskrit could be seen as the vehicle and Yoga the driver, for the great inner journey.” Houston then gives an example of his practical approach and demonstrates how he gets a class “to shift into a yogic model for learning”. He chants a line of three simple monosyllabic Sanskrit noun endings such as *ah au āh* and asks his students individually to duplicate the sounds, while observing the following very liberal guidelines:

1) listen and duplicate the sounds based on what you heard and what you remember.

2) you don't have to get it right.

3) keep the rhythm.

4) if you don't remember the original sounds, substitute anything you like

Then he asks the group to describe what they experienced while doing the exercise. “The most pervasive feature of all that they describe is a fear about getting it right.” Houston analyzes the psychological mechanism behind this fear and tries to guide his students toward a new relaxed approach. For this purpose, he also refers to the Gita and its teaching of doing works without being attached to the results. This attitude encourages active participation in the classroom, whereas attachment to results equals “no participation”, because students are afraid of making mistakes and looking ignorant before the teacher and their classmates. “Full participation on the part of everyone is essential for keeping the class alive. As soon as one person withdraws from participation the class begins to die. A basic yogic orientation is essential to keeping the class together and strengthening its unity.”

In this more relaxed atmosphere of freedom mistakes are certainly made, but many students also experience “unexpected flashes of brilliance”, a statement which is quite credible. If you are in your best consciousness, you can get in touch with your inner teacher and receive additional guidance from there. Houston sees the teacher as a person who orchestrates group dynamics. This requires “a precise and reliable learning technology” which he draws from the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. Houston shows how the Sutras contain very important truths helping teachers and students to focus attention on the given subject.

I am concluding my summary of his essay with the following quotation:

“Perhaps my greatest challenge has been to communicate that learning Sanskrit does not require that anyone remember anything. Sanskrit is learned by immersing yourself in its pure and ever blissful vibrations, and seeing, *only seeing*, and hearing, *only hearing*, the consistent and symmetrical patterns of its grammatical structure.”

### III

Vyaas Houston’s Newsletter (“Sanskrit Today”) begins with another essay on the language, titled “Sanskrit—A Sacred Model of Language”. Basically, it repeats some of the ideas I have already presented while discussing his compilation “What is Sanskrit”. In this text he particularly dwells on the word “*aham*” (“I”) and shows how the sounds constituting this word are as if consciously selected, which he explains in a most detailed way. “The design of a sacred language is such that the sounds perfectly express the vibrational essence of that which they describe. In this way, words establish knowledge and understanding directly,” Houston concludes.

Large advertisements give information on his courses, lasting two to three weeks, 5 days a week from 8/9 a m. to 4.30 p m. The program features items such as “read the original Devanagari script with ease”, “learn the most important forms of Sanskrit grammar” or “read and translate a chapter of the Bhagavad Gita”. Those who cannot afford the expensive residential immersion training in three stages (\$ 1500 for one course or \$ 3600 for the complete training, including boarding and lodging), can choose “Sanskrit by Cassette” which features 8 cassettes, 175 large pages with sharp type, 22 full page illustrations of mouth positions, 16 color pages with color coded diagrams, instructive exercises as well as telephone and/or written consultation as a support when needed (\$ 200). A less expensive two cassette introductory course is also available.

Furthermore, Houston offers cassettes with chantings, accompanied by flute and synthesizer, of the Gita, the Gayatri Mantra, the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali and the Vishnu Sahasranama. With this whole program Houston is certainly one of the most active and dynamic Sanskrit teachers on earth. Even those who may not entirely share his philosophy will appreciate his immense enthusiasm which is backed by great pedagogical skill and suffused with deep genuine love for a language that has survived thousands of years and may yet have a great future.

(Concluded)

# A TREASURY OF ANCIENT TAMIL LEGENDS

*(Continued from the issue of June 1993)*

## 4. THE SONG THAT SAVED A THOUSAND LIVES

NAKKIRAN was no fish to remain under water for ever. Though the golden lotus pond had temporarily assuaged the heat of his burning body, the desire to move out of the pond began to burn his mind.

Lord Siva took pity on the victim of His fiery eye and rescued him. Yet He felt that the punishment He had inflicted on Nakkiran for not being humble was not enough. But for the holy water in the golden lotus pond, Nakkiran would have been burnt to ashes. And so to teach him a second lesson about humility, He made him a leper.

Rejected and avoided by everyone including his own kith and kin, Nakkiran's pride had its fall.

"What a nitwit am I to throw out a challenge even to the Lord?" he asked himself and wept profusely. His ego got drowned in his tears.

Repenting for his ignorance, Nakkiran supplicated for pardon by sincerely praying to the Lord.

"I'll cure your ailment on condition that you pay a visit to Kayilai Hill," said Lord Siva and disappeared as quickly as he had appeared. Kayilai Hill, being Mt. Kailash, was in the North.

On his journey northward, Nakkiran halted on the bank of a pond under the shade of a tree. As he engaged himself in offering his prayers to the Lord, his mind got distracted by the falling sound of dead leaves. What actually surprised him was that the leaves that landed on the earth immediately turned into birds and took wing; and the leaves that touched the water immediately turned into fish and began to swim.

His mouth agape, he continued to watch the strange phenomenon. He forgot all about his prayer. He asked himself: "Well then! What'll happen if a leaf falls touching both the water and the earth?... Quite unimaginable."

Perhaps to answer his question, down fell a leaf, half of it touching the earth and the other half the water.

Ah, how strange! The leaf got transformed into half bird and half fish.

As the bird flapped its wings to soar to the sky, the fish headed towards the depth of the pond, dragging each other in the process.

As Nakkiran laughed to his heart's content, there appeared a demon authorized to devour a thousand guilty souls all at a time. It had already imprisoned nine hundred and ninety nine guilty fellows in its cave and was longing for the one who would by his guilt make the number full and round.

The demon whisked away Nakkiran to its cave and shut him in with the others.

“Now it is complete,” roared the demon. “One thousand sinners all guilty of distraction during prayer. The much-awaited time has come. Let me take a bath before I feast upon the ever tasty human beings ”

The demon went in search of a holy river. As soon as he disappeared from their sight, all the nine hundred and ninety-nine prisoners began to shed tears. They became furious and unanimously yelled at Nakkiran: “Till yesterday we were all happy eating our bellyful and resting all the time, doing no work. But now your arrival has made our lives miserable. It’s only because of you, we are going to be devoured by the demon. What a cursed creature are you to spell doom for a thousand lives?”

Unable to bear the sight of these grown-ups sobbing like chided children, Nakkiran began to sing a 317-line song invoking the help of Muruga (Kartikeya in the North), the God of War.

Pleased with the song, Lord Muruga, delaying not a second, reached the place, got down from his vehicle—the Peacock—and hurled his spear at the demon and destroyed him.

Nakkiran’s composition, popularly known as *Tirumurugatruppada* is one among the ten Tamil idylls—*Pattapāta*. It is recited in all the temples of Lord Muruga and it is believed that the reciting of this song has a saving power.

Freed from the clutches of Death, all the thousand sinners praised the Lord and started towards their destination.

“What are you bound for?” Muruga asked Nakkiran.

“The abode of your father—Kayilai Hill.”

“Why?”

“To get cured of my ailment and receive his blessings,” replied Nakkiran and told him the circumstances under which he had been cursed and the supposed remedy.

The handsome lord smiled. His smile brought joy and consolation to Nakkiran.

“Should you go all the way to the North to see my father? Not necessary. Since he had said simply Kayilai Hill, one can’t be sure if he had referred to North Kayilai or South Kayilai. And so I would advise you to go to Tirukalasthi (South Kayilai).”

Nakkiran proceeded to South Kayilai and took a holy dip in the temple pond there. The incurable disease left him once for all.

Released from his disfigurement, Nakkiran returned to Madurai to enjoy more honour and respect than ever before.

## 5. NEVER SPEAK ILL OF ANY LANGUAGE

There was a time when Sanskrit scholars from the North came to Madurai and taught their language and literature to the interested Tamils. Many a Tamil

pundit learnt the language and appreciated the nuances of its literature. While most of them read the Sanskrit works for the sheer joy they gave, a man named Kondan wanted to raise a controversy and create ill-will among the common people.

One day Kondan took a tom-tom and went on beating it in and around Madurai, halting now and again to proclaim: "Sanskrit is superior. Tamil is inferior."

The Tamil pundits, who heard him proclaim so, said to one another that Kondan must have gone mad.

Many ignored him. A few looked down upon him. But no one cared to ask him why he declared so.

The news reached Nakkiran. He pitied the ignoramus pooh-poohing his own mother-tongue. He rushed out of his house and stopped him. "Why do you say this?" asked Nakkiran.

"I say it because I think so," replied Kondan.

"I don't question your right to think so. But before you speak out you must think twice."

"I know what I am talking about. Sanskrit is superior..."

"So let it be... But don't you think that it is stupid of you to denounce your own mother-tongue?"

While Kondan stood baffled and fumbled for an answer, Nakkiran continued: "Does it not amount to calling your mother inferior to some other woman?... Both languages are creations of Lord Siva. He himself is said to have declared that both the languages are akin to His two eyes. And only an ignoramus would say one is superior and the other inferior."

"I stick to my stand," growled Kondan.

"In God's creation nothing is inferior. Everything has its own merit."

"You stick to your view. But leave me to mine."

Unable to bear with the irresponsible reply of Kondan, Nakkiran prayed to Lord Siva for a minute and then burst into a song:

"Long live Lord Agastya  
of the Podhiyal Hills.  
So let Kapilar and Parinar;  
but not Kondan who spells  
death to his mother-tongue.  
Let Death crush him with all its might."

Kondan dropped down dead.

"Well done, great bard!" applauded the crowd that was keenly listening to the arguments between Nakkiran and Kondan.

"Kondan deserves such a punishment," said one in the crowd.

“Not only Kondan, but anyone who pooh-poohs a language, be it his or another’s, brings a curse on himself. Let this be a lesson to all such idiots.... Every language has its own merit,” said another.

But an aged couple, who came elbowing their way out of the crowd, looked at the dead Kondan, began to wail and moan. They were the parents of Kondan.

“Didn’t we tell you, my son, not to speak ill of your mother-tongue? But you didn’t listen to us. And now you lie dead on the road. Are we fated to live the rest of our lives without any support?” wailed Kondan’s mother.

Kondan’s father knelt before Nakkiran and caught hold of his feet and begged for mercy to his son.

Moved by the tears of the old woman and by the cringing of the old man, Nakkiran said to the aged couple: “I have nothing against your son. But what I have deplored in him is the false allegation he has brought against his mother-tongue. And my intention was to teach him a lesson in self-respect.”

While the aged couple stood before Nakkiran with their hands folded against their chests and admiring the love he had for his mother-tongue, the latter sang:

“Dead is Kondan  
for his foolish proclamation:  
‘Sanskrit is superior; Tamil inferior’.  
Bring him back from the dead,  
Oh! Tamil, my honey-tongued mother  
in the name of Lord Agastya  
who brought you from Lord Siva.”

Kondan’s lifeless body began to show signs of life. Seconds later, to everyone’s surprise, he stood up.

His father told him of the miraculous powers of Nakkiran who could kill anyone with a song and bring him back to life if he wanted with another song.

Kondan bowed with all humility and proclaimed: “Superior is Tamil. Inferior is Sanskrit.”

“No,” yelled Nakkiran. “Never talk like that again. You have no business to decry any language. Why should a language be superior or inferior to any other? Every language has its own merit. Never again speak ill of any language.”

Kondan wept his folly away.

## 6. PRAYERS PRECEDE BOONS

Once during the reign of King Abisheka Pandya, Madurai was honoured by the visit of a Siddha.

A Siddha is an all-powerful person, well-versed in the eight siddhis, namely *Anima* (the power to become the size of an atom); *Mahima* (the power to become mighty and huge as a mountain); *Laghima* (the power to become light like air); *Garima* (the power to become heavy like gold); *Prapti* (the power to gain entry into the seven worlds); *Vasitvam* (the power to have control over kings and gods); *Prakamyam* (the power to disembodify oneself and enter into other bodies) and *Isitvam* (the power to do and enjoy whatever one wishes).

The people of Madurai were unable to believe their eyes, when they saw the Siddha perform miracles. He made the octogenarians throw away their walking sticks and walk like soldiers. Bald-headed men found use for their combs once again. Many a woman branded barren by physicians became pregnant. Blind men rejoiced at seeing the world. Deaf people heard. Dumb ones spoke. Illiterates talked like highly educated scholars. Base metals turned into gold. At his very touch, sand tasted like sugar. And just for the sake of fun he transformed men into women and *vice-versa*.

People admired his powers and began to worship him as an incarnation of the Lord Himself. His fame spread far and wide.

King Abisheka Pandya who had heard his courtiers speak highly of the Siddha wanted to meet him. Hence he sent his messengers to fetch him to the court.

Hours passed. But the messengers didn't return to the court. Hence the king sent a couple of his ministers who went to the temple of Lord Siva, where the Siddha sojourned.

The ministers saw the messengers sitting around the Siddha and listening to him in rapt attention like curious children listening to a skilled story-teller.

The Siddha took no notice of the ministers and went ahead in entertaining the public.

"Now listen!" interrupted a minister. "We are ministers to the king. We have come on his majesty's request to escort you to his palace. He will give you whatever you want."

"What do I want?... My needs are small. There is nothing that your king can offer me. It's a waste of time for me to meet him," replied the Siddha.

"Mind your words," cautioned another minister. "There is no man on earth who doesn't need wealth.... If you heed the king's request, you'll be honoured."

"Leave me to myself. I don't need honours. Give them to those who crave for them."

"Then we have no way but to drag you to the palace."

"Do so if you can."

The ministers with the help of their menials tried to lift the Siddha up, but to no avail. He sat rooted to the ground.

When the matter was reported to the king, he rushed to the temple. He looked daggers at the Siddha and in a fit of fury burst out: "You are in my land..."



yet you disobey my orders.... You will be punished. Keep that in mind.”

The Siddha looked straight into the king's eyes and said: “This is your land, eh! But the world is mine. Your land is only a negligible part of my wide world.”

“Spiritual ego has gone into your head. I'll teach you humility,” so saying the king pulled a sugarcane from a nearby vendor and gave it to the Siddha. “If you are really a Siddha and not a cheat, make that stone elephant eat the sugarcane.”

The Siddha winked at the stone elephant. The animal, to the shock of the king, came to life, pulled the sugarcane from the hands of the Siddha, broke it into two and pushed the parts into its mouth.

As the sugarcane juice dripped from its active mouth, the Siddha asked the king, “What next?”

Dumb-struck stood the king. The Siddha winked at the elephant again.

The animal pulled off the garland of costly pearls the king wore and sent it down its throat.

The king prostrated himself before the Siddha and asked for his pardon. He said amidst tears, “You have taught me humility, O Sage. Now I know where I stand.... Forgive my stupidity in questioning your miraculous powers.”

The Siddha smiled. In a trice a great transformation took place in him. He turned out to be Lord Siva.

“I have come to Madurai only to heed your long-standing request. Day in and day out, you and your wife were badgering me to bless you with a male heir.... And now I grant you that boon.” Lord Siva said and disappeared.

King Abisheka Pandya stood in the temple for hours together, singing panegyrics of the Lord who had come to the earth to grant the request of a bhakta.

*(More legends on the way)*

P. RAJA

# WHAT MAKES ART SERIOUS<sup>1</sup>

## A REVIEW-ARTICLE

To raise the question of why we take art seriously, as many who have the opportunity undoubtedly do, and of whether there is a good reason to make such an investment, is a bold and dramatic gesture. It is natural to think that it carries with it a certain responsibility. So it would seem not inappropriate to insist that an enquiry along such lines ought to be undertaken only by someone who can match the scale of the question with a proportionately substantial answer. Just as it would be wrong to raise the question of why we should take life seriously in a casual spirit, something jars in the idea of challenging the seriousness of art merely for the sake of argument; especially given that, for all those who are likely to pick up a work on aesthetics, the assimilation of works of art is bound to be as habitual and natural a thing as anything else in life.

John Passmore's intent is undoubtedly serious, but he does not offer a profound answer to his question, for his vision of what it is that makes art important is not a grand one. This is, perhaps, a lot to ask, but unless it is fulfilled, there is little prospect of avoiding the danger besetting analytical aesthetics, of giving the impression that what it takes most seriously is the exercise of analysis itself. In fact, the title and leading question of Passmore's book, it soon becomes clear, are to serve as a framing device for an otherwise orthodox treatment of the central issues in philosophical aesthetics. The word "serious" occurs on most pages, but it is mostly redundant: Passmore's enquiry into what makes art serious is largely just an enquiry into what makes it *art*. Most if not all of the topics considered by Passmore—the ontology of works of art, beauty, representation, and so on—are worked at from entirely conventional angles, with the usual modesty of contemporary philosophical ambition.

Considered in these limited terms, and thus released from the burden of its title, *Serious Art* has a great deal to offer. Passmore's writing is animated and fast-moving, shifts deftly between examples within and across the different art-forms, and dwells on those advanced in the philosophical literature only to a limited extent, referring by preference to the more engaging statements of artists and critics, of which the book provides a treasure-trove. He is refreshingly sensitive to the richness and nuances of the vocabulary of art criticism.

Passmore's characteristic method, in his "detective-like search for the distinguishing mark of the serious", is to focus on a candidate a seriousness-conferring property (such as truth, imagination or beauty), set out and analyse some possible views of its connection with art, note those which can be shown to have absurd consequences (for which Continental pronouncements serve excellently), and settle for a hedged, invariably minimal view. Passmore's conclusions

<sup>1</sup> *Serious Art* 301 pp Duckworth £ 29 95

form a loose web, heavy with qualifications. Although works of art are all "public objects", there is no such thing as *the* ontological status of works of art. This topic nevertheless requires analysis, for misapprehensions on this score have generated some well-known but false doctrines about the nature of art (and encouraged conceptual art, which is bogus). Serious art is art that displays, as a necessary but not sufficient condition, "imaginativeness", or at least "imaginative thinking". Imaginativeness is, however, not peculiar to works of art, and there is no general theory of the artistic imagination to be had. Art that is serious may overlap with art that is entertaining or "telic" (designed for some ulterior end), but it must be "not merely entertaining, not merely telic". Serious art need not have been intended as such, which allows much that has been created with a religious purpose, or with a view to amusing, to count as serious art.

Unsurprisingly, the traditional value of beauty comes out as insufficient for the seriousness of a work of art. Nothing much can be made of the language of formalism, for when a commendatory term such as "balance" is extended beyond its normal physical range, issues about its importance in art become too difficult to settle. The same goes for "unity"; formalist concepts can be at most "an aid to" discrimination. And, against Romanticism, there is nothing singular and definitive about the emotions that cluster around works of art (awe and sublimity are felt equally by the general public at the mention of the name of Einstein). The formula that art "depicts emotion" tempts Passmore briefly, but he rejects it too as not valid universally, for he finds that music can not be said to do more than "convey moods".

Results of this sort virtuously avoid any hint of pretentiousness, but they will not remain in the memory as striking or illuminating insights. Some of the possibilities deflated by Passmore might have been given more of a run for their money. The value of artistic realism, for example, is boiled down too quickly. And it is astonishing that F.R. Leavis, an advocate of seriousness who tried as hard as anyone ever has to explain its meaning, is dealt with in a single paragraph, where he is referred to merely for the sake of illustration. Passmore says at the end that his hope was at least to "help to dissipate contemporary fogs", which include the aesthetics of those he describes as "fanatics". In this project he has many successes, but the reader is left wondering if the energy of analysis would not have been better spent in reconstructive rather than dismembering dimensions: if only in attempting to offer some sort of explanation for the few essential properties of serious art that Passmore is prepared to endorse.

The investigation leaves some fairly clear pointers. What the indefiniteness and unassertiveness of Passmore's conclusions show to be needed is a positive account of why the phenomenon of art should have a complexity that defies generalizations, in a way that contrasts with science. What is it that explains the anfractuosity of art, its power to readily elicit global characterizations that are

radical and gripping, yet often at the same time and in the same respects obviously partial and exaggerated? This dispositional property of art is, surely, the really interesting datum, and it indicates that what we need to understand is how so many things—form, imagination, beauty, realism, expressiveness and so on—can come together in a single phenomenon.

To find art not serious requires very little—just the philosopher's usual, somewhat mechanical act of reflective disengagement from the naive attitude of acceptance and, perhaps, complacency. To justify an attitude of seriousness towards art requires a great deal. Passmore leaves us thinking that the ultimate grounds of art's seriousness can only be approached through some independent investment: art elicits and merits seriousness either because it is significantly imbricated with the central workings of our minds, or because it seems to attune us to a level of reality that deserves to be described in terms not far short of religious. To make good the second suggestion, some sort of metaphysics would be required; to amplify the first, a deep theory of the human mind. Either would make the seriousness of art as inevitable as that of life itself.

SEBASTIAN GARDNER

(With acknowledgments to the *Times Literary Supplement*, June 5, 1992, p 17)

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## PARADOX

Twists in nature  
 We seem to cherish for ever  
 As precious inherited treasures.  
 Yet a dream we love to dream  
 Is of blooming like a candid flower  
 Radiating charming fragrance around  
 To friend or foe.  
 A pure white flame at heart  
 Awaits to be roused further,  
 To melt crookedness of nature  
 In its radiant glow.  
 Yet this mortal frame  
 Remains a field of tussle,  
 Bearing the pain of wakeful nights  
 Between what we are  
 And what we ought to be!

SITANGSHU CHAKRABORTTY

## BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

*All is Dream-Blaze*, R.Y. Deshpande, Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, Pondicherry, 1992, pp. 70.

THE Heavens beyond are great and wonderful but greater and more wonderful are the heavens within you. It is these Edens that await the divine worker. R.Y. Deshpande is such a divine worker and his Edens are visioned in the unique Aurobindonian way and his mystic experiences are treated with unparalleled graphic accuracy in his poems.

For an Aurobindonian poet like Deshpande, a poem is a record as well as a prayer. Not to go on for ever repeating what man has already done is his work but to arrive at new realizations and undreamt-of masteries. For him again, there is no greater pride and glory than to be a perfect instrument of the Master. Deshpande firmly believes that the limitations of the body are a mould and that soul and mind have to pour themselves into them, break them and constantly remould them in wider limits. The Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the author's personal knowledge of it have influenced him to see the world not as a rigid exercise in logic but, like a strain of music, an infinite harmony of many diversities. This infinite harmony of interactions pervades the poetry of Deshpande.

Freedom comes by a unity without limits, for that is our real being. We may gain the essence of this unity in ourselves; we may realize the play of it in oneness with all others. Deshpande's poetry is the result of this freedom, the quint-essence of this double experience. It has been well said by Aurobindonians that the nature of man is to transcend himself, to become more than himself. As a true Aurobindonian, Deshpande tries once again to become more than himself in this second collection of seventy poems titled *All is Dream-Blaze*.

The Prefatory Note says that the seventy poems are grouped here in three distinctive categories with different perceptive features. Yet there is, it further says, a certain poetic relationship among them, a deeper echoing harmony growing into a single hymning voice addressed to the innermost Muse. They are said to belong to the surrealist-lyrical genre recording a "luminous seizure of the occult mysteries of the soul itself—seizure in signs and symbols, in glowing images that have a body of rhythmic sound." In the inward spiritual progress of a seeker it is a major step to cross from *Svapna* (dream) into *Susupti* (sleep). So also in creative art it is a great achievement when the sleep-consciousness floods the dream-consciousness, lights it up, sets it ablaze with the calm vastness of its own knowledge-self, Prajna entering Tajasa. Revealing utterance can emerge from sleep-originated dream. *All is Dream-Blaze* attempts such utterance. It is well documented by the poet himself:

Dream is the high Northwind blowing  
 Ever since Nothingness begun,  
 Borne by the all-quiescent sleep  
 Is the glowing life of the sun (No 25: 5-8)

The body (also the pen) of Deshpande becomes a plaything of the infinite mind and learns to obey the will of the immortal soul. He declares:

My soul would be one with the fire  
 Of cosmos's everburning will, (No. 23 11-12)

Like his first volume of poetry, *The Rhododendron Valley*, his second is another addition to the distinguished body of the Aurobindonian school. Prema Nandakumar's view on the first volume can be applied to the second volume also: the poems are "eminently readable, but meant for the slow and steady gathering of one's reactions by significant pauses and meditative silences."

What we see in this poetry is a mysterious interplay of the soul with Nature, Cosmos. He becomes one with Nature, an inseparable part of the cosmic consciousness. Unlike Wordsworth, who seeks shelter in the lap of Nature, Deshpande becomes the lap of Nature itself making use of his yogic knowledge. What appears a passing dream of some significance to an ordinary poet becomes an enlightened, startling, supreme revelation to an Aurobindonian poet. Thought is not essential to existence, nor its cause, but it is an instrument for becoming. Deshpande, by his creative art, becomes what he sees in himself. The poet has utilized a variety of sources ranging from the Vedic consciousness to the contemporaneous world "buried in the atomic mushroom" (No. 60: 11). However, the glow of an enlightened soul that passes through all the poems binds them together into a beautiful document of one's spiritual achievement and a manifesto of one's mystic, dreamy thoughts manifested as poems.

The sun, stars, rains, deserts, flowers, rainbows, comets, trees, flames, elephants, birds, woods, rivers, and a host of other subjects form the corpus of his poetry and the poet traverses this familiar world to realize that all living thought is a world in preparation. The poet's soul, energized by the inner infinite harmony, not only rotates on its own axis but also wheels round the sun of an inexhaustible illumination. The illumination lighted by Deshpande's poetry is really inexhaustible, giving ample scope for many interpretations of correlative concepts: the ephemeral and the eternal; the material and the spiritual; the seen and the unseen; the realized and the unrealized, the real and the fantastic

In consonance with the themes, the poet has employed metaphysical imagery that "fills your vision's widenesses." "Like images leaping to sounds / Like stars winging to dreams," the poet's

Words quiveringly hold  
 The shining mass of mountains;  
 And you reach the sun-world. (No. 1: 17-20)

To him, "Time's brow grows wider yet" (No. 7: 13) and "Sometimes even the starry music / Descends like a summer-cataract" (No. 16: 6-7). He could watch "diamond" as "a four-footed horse / Of inward thrust covalent and stern" (No. 24: 1-2) and "Ripples of Time turn into fish" (No. 27: 7).

When the poet "sleeps 'neath the sky of dreams" (No. 36: 9), he gathers poems like dew of early dawn and glimpses a "mysterious rainbow of night / Built on borrowed columns of light" (No. 26: 1-2). The poet feels that "there is no end to infinity, / For its joy is ever the new birth" (No. 39: 3-4). Consequently, he has now grown taller than thought and become

... a little bird that swings  
 On the bough of creation's tree;  
 Under the green shade beat two wings,  
 Love and sweetness of Savitri. (No. 39: 9-12)

His dream-surrealistic thoughts are "flames of new creation" that could discover "a vast that in each atom spins" "beyond vague shores of the Void" (No. 26: 9-10). The Vedas proclaim: Find the Guide secret within you or housed in an earthly body, hearken to his voice and follow always the way that he points. Deshpande conforms to this concept:

There is a man in the breast  
 As small as the thumb  
 But with all heaven's wisdom  
 Which we cannot plumb. (No. 44: 1-4)

He also experiences a mystic revelation that comes close on the heels of his well-anchored faith in the Life Divine:

I have now a wondrous feeling  
 Of a small sun burning in my breast; (No. 38: 9-10)

and also

The upward intensity  
 To light a huge blaze. (No. 44: 11-12)

When the poet feels the upward intensity, the creative process begins. The poet

leaps “across the reach of Mind” and “like glass his memory is still” (No. 38: 5-6). As a result,

Blown like dream-hued pinions  
Songs fly everywhere  
They turn into stranger joys  
And climb the rainbow-air. (No. 45: 1-4)

Such moods, moments, joys are “borne by rhythms of the Infinite” (No. 57: 8). No wonder then, “Moments are the songs / Burdened with joys of flight” (No. 56: 9-10).

The poet describes beauty in a Keatsian vein. Beauty “never grows old” and “Even the rainbow-thoughts / Cannot reach the newness of her gold” Her heart is “a perfect rose / Where burn passions of the ancient flame” (No. 57: 11-12). These passions are like the unseen flight of the arrow bent across the arc of silence (No. 61: 5-6) and, as a result, there appears a “mystic vision burning high / To luminous eye’s call.” (No. 58: 7-8)

Stylistically, Deshpande matches the thought-speed and the mood to a finely modulated expression. The poems, ‘The River’s Song’ (No. 54) and ‘When the Mirror is Broken’ (No. 30) are the best illustrative examples. Much of his poetry falls into a neatly patterned rhyme-scheme. End-rhymes are often embellished with internal echoes like alliteration and assonance. When the thought-process outruns the felicity of expression, he becomes audacious by tailoring new compound expressions, of course, for the better. Like Hopkins and Dylan Thomas, his poetry is sometimes experimental, capitalizing on the so-called poetic licence. The lines

O truth-breasted flame-swift bird,  
Your crown is the eternal day; (No. 66: 1-2)

evoke Hopkinsian boldness and freedom. Expressions like “bright-freedomed” (No. 66), “zenithed noon” (No. 65), “A white fire birthing flame-surprise” (No. 60), “All moments one-rosed / Never to part” (No. 42), “Breaking a visioning eye” (No. 43), “Across all the unbirthed ages” (No. 15), “topaz-winds pyramiding” (No. 15), “Your vision’s widenesses” (No. 1), etc. are the result of the mystic poetic sight.

One can discover numerous symbols, and symbolism dominates the poetry of Deshpande as it is unavoidable in this type of soul-poetry. For instance, the number ‘seven’ (“seven doors”, “seven skies”, “seven... pitchers”, etc.) gets repeated very often and this number stands for many concepts in Hinduism. Similarly, symbols like lotus, bird, flame, golden etc. are suggestive of many spiritual interpretations. To conclude, this second volume of Deshpande is, to borrow his own words from the concluding poem,



A new lake filled by the new streams

and the poems are

New bells for new temple towers,  
And new gods in new shrines;  
Where begin the lands of the sun  
Infinity's new lines.

D. GNANASEKARAN

## *Students' Section*

### THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

#### Special Seventy-third Seminar\*

14 February 1993

“HOW TO FOLLOW IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE MOTHER ON THE  
PATH TO THE DIVINE LIFE?”

Speech by Jhumur Bhattacharya

WHAT IS the best way, we are asked, to prepare ourselves to walk on the path of the Yoga of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo? According to me, the answer is very simple. It is to love the Mother, to walk with Her. She is always there to hold our hand and lead us on the way.

“A Light there is that leads, a Power that aids.”<sup>1</sup> But we must choose to walk, the desire to reach up our hand to hold Hers must be ours, for, says Sri Aurobindo: “The Divine can lead, he does not drive.”<sup>2</sup>

I recall, in this context, one of the first prayers that the Mother taught us when we were children. She said: “Pensez au Divin seul et le Divin sera avec vous.” “Think of the Divine alone and the Divine will be with you.”<sup>3</sup> Does this mean that if I do not think of Him, He abandons me? Obviously not, since He is the All, as this beautiful line from Sri Aurobindo tells us: “All He loves, all He moves, all are His, all are He.”<sup>4</sup> He is everywhere, around me and within me. But when I think of Him, I am with Him, my consciousness is turned towards His.

Unfortunately, very often we forget to think of the Divine; then we are no longer with Him, and our lives sink into unconsciousness, even sometimes into mechanical living. Thinking of Him is the beginning of an awareness, often followed by a need, by a calling out to His Presence, His Grace to come to our help, to fill our lives with His Light. It always comes, it cannot do otherwise, but the insistence must be ours.

Why not then remember always that we have a “wonderful Mother of unnumbered souls” and simply be always Her little children answering to Her

\* This Seminar was specially organised to celebrate the Mother's 115th birthday and the Golden Jubilee of the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education

<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri* (Cent Ed, Vol 28), p 339

<sup>2</sup> *Letters on Yoga* (Cent Ed, Vol 23), p 598

<sup>3</sup> *Collected Works of the Mother* (Cent Ed), Vol 14, p 14

<sup>4</sup> *Collected Poems* (Cent Ed, Vol 5), p 590

“with the simple heart”<sup>1</sup>? For isn’t that what She asked of us, all those years ago, when She allowed little children to gather round Her and built a school for them to study in? Children always need and call their mother at every turn, and she never fails them. She always sees to their welfare and they grow up nourished by her love and care.

So is it with us, we need only to “Remember and Offer”<sup>2</sup> ourselves to Her and She will take up our lives into Her hands. She is ever present among us, and if there are some who cannot see Her it is because they do not take the trouble of looking for Her.

“O Bliss who ever dwellest deep hid within  
While men seek thee outside and never find”,<sup>3</sup>

said Ashwapati. It is so true. If we live only on the surface of our beings, centring our lives upon the ego, how shall we feel Her Presence when we are already full of ourselves? It is only if we empty our beings of our little selves and take a deeper stand in the spirit within that we can truly feel Her influence and answer to it as flowers to the Sun. As Sri Aurobindo says:

“Answering with the flower’s answer to the sun  
They gave themselves to her and asked no more.”<sup>4</sup>

Then will the children of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo walk indeed on the Sunlit Path. The road of this Yoga, so long and arduous for anyone who seeks to climb it alone, will then be one of blissful surrender. We can indeed call ourselves the children of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo when we put ourselves entirely in Their hands and let Them do our Yoga for us. Then nothing will seem difficult for us since the responsibility for the success of our endeavour will no longer be ours; in fact our very lives will no longer be ours. Every act, every thought and feeling can be made an occasion to offer ourselves to Them and if we meet with difficulties, they become intense opportunities for calling and recalling the Grace. The only renunciation required of us is that of the ego, so that we can be remoulded in the shape that the Divine has chosen for us.

We are truly privileged to have been brought up here, to be living here. The Grace is everywhere around us, we have only to turn to it in order to feel it—though it is active even when we don’t. But how much more beautiful becomes our existence when we do feel it! We cannot breathe here, the Mother tells us in one of Her talks, without breathing in the Grace. In other yogas done

<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri* (Cent Ed., Vol 29), p 366

<sup>2</sup> *Collected Works of the Mother* (Cent Ed.), Vol 3, p 26

<sup>3</sup> Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri* (Cent Ed., Vol 28), p 345

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, (Cent Ed., Vol 29), p 364

in other circumstances, the seeker must undergo many hardships; the period of preparation is long and difficult before the least advance is made. Here the Mother and the Lord are there to carry us forward, if we let Them. That is the key. We have to let Them. We have to wish it. "Il faut le vouloir", as the Mother says again and again.