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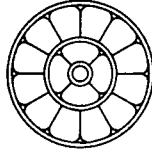
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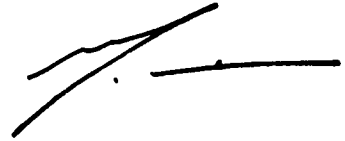


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled



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All correspondence to be addressed to

MOTHER INDIA, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry - 605 002, India

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Editor K D SETHNA

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"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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WORDS OF THE MOTHER

How can we establish a settled peace and silence in the mind?

FIRST of all, you must want it.

And then you must try and must persevere, continue trying. What I have just told you is a very good means. Yet there are others also. You sit quietly, to begin with; and then, instead of thinking of fifty things, you begin saying to yourself, "Peace, peace, peace, peace, peace, calm, peace!" You imagine peace and calm. You aspire, ask that it may come: "Peace, peace, calm " And then, when something comes and touches you and acts, say quietly, like this, "Peace, peace, peace." Do not look at the thoughts, do not listen to the thoughts, you understand. You must not pay attention to everything that comes You know, when someone bothers you a great deal and you want to get rid of him, you don't listen to him, do you? Good! You turn your head away (*gesture*) and think of something else. Well, you must do that: when thoughts come, you must not look at them, must not listen to them, must not pay any attention at all, you must behave as though they did not exist, you see! And then, repeat all the time like a kind of—how shall I put it?—as an idiot does, who repeats the same thing always Well, you must do the same thing; you must repeat, "Peace, peace, peace." So you try this for a few minutes and then do what you have to do; and then, another time, you begin again; sit down again and then try. Do this on getting up in the morning, do this in the evening when going to bed. You can do this... look, if you want to digest your food properly, you can do this for a few minutes before eating. You can't imagine how much this helps your digestion! Before beginning to eat you sit quietly for a while and say, "Peace, peace, peace!" and *everything* becomes calm. It seems as though all the noises were going far, far, far away (*Mother stretches out her arms on both sides*) and then you must continue; and there comes a time when you no longer need to sit down, and no matter what you are doing, no matter what you are saying, it is always "Peace, peace, peace." Everything remains here, like this, it does not enter (*gesture in front of the forehead*), it remains like this. And then one is always in a perfect peace... after some years.

But at the beginning, a very small beginning, two or three minutes, it is very simple. For something complicated you must make an effort, and when one makes an effort, one is not quiet. It is difficult to make an effort while remaining quiet. Very simple, very simple, you must be very simple in these things. It is as though you were learning how to call a friend: by dint of being called he comes. Well, make peace and calm your friends and call them: "Come, peace, peace, peace. peace, come!"

SRI AUROBINDO ON THE MOTHER'S HELP IN DIFFICULTIES

PLENTY of people have this condition (it is human nature) and there is naturally a way of coming out of it—having full faith in the Mother to quiet the inner mind (even if the outer continues to be troublesome) and call in it the Mother's peace and Force, which is always there above you, into the Adhar. Once that is there, consciously, to keep yourself open to it and let it go on working with a full adhesion, with a constant support of your consent, with a conscious rejection of all that is not that, till all the inner being is tranquillised and filled with the Mother's Force, Peace, Joy, Presence—then the outer nature will be obliged to follow suit in its turn.

8-5-1933

Recovery from Bad Conditions

(1)

These bad conditions are a lapse (often due to a very slight cause) from the inner poise to the outer consciousness. When they happen do not get affected, but remain quiet, call the Mother and get back inward.

24-1-1936

(2)

An occasional sinking of the consciousness happens to everybody. The causes are various, some touch from outside, something not yet changed or not sufficiently changed in the vital, especially the lower vital, some inertia or obscurity rising up from the physical parts of nature. When it comes, remain quiet, open yourself to the Mother and call back the true conditions and aspire for a clear and undisturbed discrimination showing you from within yourself the cause of the thing that needs to be set right.

4-3-1932

The Mother's Help in Attacks

(1)

It is the forces of the Ignorance that begin to lay siege and then make a mass attack. Every time such an attack can be defeated and cast out, there is a clearance in the Adhar, a new field gained for the Mother in the mind, vital or

physical or the adjacent parts of the being. That the place in the vital occupied by the Mother is increasing is shown by the fact that you are now offering a strong resistance to these sieges that used formerly to overpower you altogether.

To be able to call the Mother's presence or force at such times is the best way to meet the difficulty.

It is with the Mother who is always with you and in you that you converse. The only thing is to hear aright, so that no other voice can come in between.

7-12-1933

(2)

However strong the attack may be, and even if it overcomes you for the time being, still it will rapidly pass away if you have formed the habit of opening to the Mother. The peace will come back if you remain quiet and keep yourself open to it and to the Force. Once something of the Truth has shown itself within you, it will always, even if for a time heavily clouded over with wrong movements, shine out again like the sun in heaven. Therefore persevere with confidence and never lose courage.

14-3-1932

(3)

Q: What is the best means for the sadhaks to avoid suffering due to the action of the hostile forces?

A: Faith in the Mother and complete surrender.

17-6-1933

(4)

Q: When the sadhaks overlook some weakness of their nature in the process of transformation, is it not possible that it will be shown to them by the Divine Mother rather than through a painful wound at the weak point dealt by the hostile forces?

A: If they are sufficiently open to the Divine it can be done—but most sadhaks have too much egoism and lack of faith and obscurity and self-will and vital desires,—it is that that shuts them to the Mother and calls in the action of the hostile forces.

17-6-1933

(5)

The play of the mental and vital defects in the human nature which belongs to the Ignorance is allowed—as also the attacks and suggestions of the Asuric forces—so long as there is anything in the nature which responds to these things. If they rise in you in the presence of the Mother, it is because then a strong pressure is put on them so that they have either to go out or to put up a fight for existence. The remedy is to open to the Mother only and to reject entirely and at all times all other forces, and to reject them most when they become most active. Faith, sincerity, perseverance will do the rest

16-11-1932

Testing by the Mother

The idea of tests also is not a healthy idea and ought not to be pushed too far. Tests are applied not by the Divine but by the forces of the lower planes—mental, vital, physical—and allowed by the Divine because that is part of the soul's training and helps it to know itself, its powers and limitations it has to outgrow. The Mother is not testing you at every moment, but rather helping you at every moment to rise beyond the necessity of tests and difficulties which belong to the inferior consciousness. To be always conscious of that help will be your best safeguard against all attacks whether of adverse powers or of your own lower nature.

Ways of Giving Help

Help is given in whatever way is necessary or possible. It is not limited to Force, Light, Knowledge. Of course, if by Force etc. you mean anything or everything then the formula holds

22-12-1936

Help and Automatic Action of Force

The need for calling help diminishes, as one gets higher and higher or rather fuller and fuller, being replaced more and more by the automatic action of the Force.

22-12-1936

Rejection of Difficulties by Inward Surrender

To come physically to the Mother for getting rid of a disturbance is unnecessary and useless; it is inwardly that you must take refuge in her and throw away the

wrong movement, as you have seen on this occasion. To come physically would only create a habit of getting wrong and coming to her to get right and it would also lead to the wrong movement of throwing the difficulty on her instead of inwardly giving it up, rendering its surrender. But it is a general surrender that is needed which could prevent these useless disturbances over trifling matters, egoisms, insurances on one's own point of view, anger because one does not have one's own way or a due recognition of one's independence or importance.

Writing to the Mother for Help

You did well to speak to X and also to write to the Mother. Of course, Mother had observed X's difficulties; it is correct that the difficulty is the lack of a certain free opening—otherwise all that could be removed quickly and the necessary change of nature (mind, ego, etc.) carried on by smooth gradation. To write as you do is helpful for opening oneself and for receiving the precise touch. X's logic about the Mother's knowing and therefore there being no need to write is applicable if there is a free or at least a sufficient flow of giving and reception between the Mother and the sadhak, but when a serious difficulty comes, this logic is not so applicable. Naturally, we shall do our best to help him in his struggle.

14-5-1936

(2)

One rule for you I can lay down, "Do not do, say or think anything which you would want to conceal from the Mother". And that answers the objections that rose within you—from your vital, is it not?—against bringing "these petty things" to the Mother's notice. Why should you think that the Mother would be bothered by these things or regard them as petty? If *all* the life is to be Yoga, what is there that can be called petty or of no importance? Even if the Mother does not answer, to have brought any matter of your action and self-development before her in the right spirit means to have put it under her protection, in the light of the Truth, under the rays of the Power that is working for the transformation—for immediately those rays begin to play and to act on the thing brought to her notice. Anything within that advises not to do it when the spirit in you moves you to do it, may very well be a device of the vital to avoid the ray of the Light and the working of the Force.

18-5-1932

The Mother's Occult Action for Answering Calls for Help

As to the experience, certainly X's call for help did reach the Mother, even though all the details she relates in her letter might not have been present to the Mother's physical mind. Always calls of this kind are coming to the Mother, sometimes a hundred close upon each other and always the answer is given. The occasions are of all kinds, but whatever the need that occasions the call, the Force is there to answer it. That is the principle of this action on the occult plane. It is not of the same kind as an ordinary human action and does not need a written or oral communication on the one who calls; an interchange of psychic communication is quite sufficient to set the Force at work. At the same time it is not an impersonal Force and the suggestion of a divine energy that is there ready to answer and satisfy anybody who calls it is not at all relevant here. It is something personal to the Mother and if she had not this power and this kind of action she would not be able to do her work; but this is quite different from the outside practical working on the material plane where the methods must, necessarily, be different, although the occult working and the material working can and do join and the occult power give to the material working its utmost efficacy. As for the one who is helped not feeling the force at work, his knowing might help very substantially the effective working, but it need not be indispensable; the effect can be there even if he does not know how the thing is done. For instance, in your work in Calcutta and elsewhere my help has always been with you and I don't think it can be said that it was ineffective; but it was of the same occult nature and could have had the same effect even if you had not been conscious in some way that my help was with you.

24-3-1949

(*Sri Aurobindo on Himself and on the Mother*, Sri Aurobindo International University Centre Collection, Vol I, 1953, pp 743-53)

LIFE—POETRY—YOGA

SOME PERSONAL LETTERS

YOUR letter has remained unanswered for quite a time. The main cause was my preoccupation with a research in early Christianity and not, as one might suppose, my “ill-health”. Ferdauz’s letter, too, though not so badly neglected as yours, since it wasn’t written so far back, has been on my correspondence-pile for over a month for the same scholarly reason (or unreason). It has been a bit of a strenuous time, going to bed at 1 a.m. and getting up at 5.30 and spending 6 to 7 hours a day at my typewriter. Inset within this programme of reading and writing and frequent concentrated appealing to Sri Aurobindo to get me over several hurdles in the path of my research was the much-sensationalised urinary and kidney trouble. Except for a few days of low fever in the evenings and one day of high fever, the only bother was an urgency to rush to the toilet and save my pants from being internally washed. The doctor put me through a course of Furadantin, the drug of choice, it seems, in the case of what a urine-culture report declared to be “a significant growth of E. Coli in the kidneys”.

Considering my age (soon to be 80 since I am writing on May 29, 1984) I decided for once at least in my lifetime that one should take such an infection with some seriousness. For, I have heard that kidney-complaints in old age are often a preliminary to the old fellow saying “Adieu” or, if he believes in reincarnation, “Au revoir”. So it was arranged that I should consult a urologist at Jipmer. He asked for a number of X-ray pictures and wrote out for the radiologist what exactly he wanted the pictures to tell him. In the meantime my friend Dr. Palande who had heard of my E. Coli wrote to the urologist expressing his concern. The urologist, after seeing the pictures, wrote to Dr. Palande: “There is no cause for anxiety about Mr. Sethna’s health. He is having recurrent urinary tract infection due to borderline prostatic hypertrophy. Pyelograms done recently suggest normal upper tracts and satisfactory bladder function. I do not feel the need for any surgical intervention at this stage. We should be able to curb his infection with mild urinary antiseptics on a long-term basis” (signed M. Bhandari). What Dr. Bhandari wanted was an ordinary urine test and a urine culture test. The first showed no albumen and that is what was desired. The second took nearly three weeks. For, twice the sample was contaminated. At the third trial the result was summed up in the one word: “Sterile.” In the meantime, of course, no medicines were given and even now nothing. Only fruit juices go in and a daily dose of coconut water—and, some of the natural vitamins you and Ferdauz had brought for me. My friend Minna very scrupulously and affectionately sees to it that I am well fed with helpful fluids and well vitaminized.

Dr. K. M. Munshi, Ex-Governor of the Uttar Pradesh, who was a student of Sri Aurobindo at Baroda College, once asked him how Nationalism could be developed. As Munshi reveals in *Bhavan's Journal*, July 22, 1962, Sri Aurobindo pointed to a wall-map of India and said something to this effect—

“Look at that map. Learn to find in it the portrait of Bharat-Mata. The cities, mountains, rivers and forests are the materials which go to make up Her body. The people inhabiting the country are the cells which go to make up Her living tissues. Our literature is Her memory and speech. The spirit of our culture is Her Soul. The happiness and freedom of Her children is Her salvation. Behold Bharat as a living Mother, meditate upon Her and worship Her in the ninefold way of Bhakti.”

*

Instead of “Greetings” you could have written “Heatings”, for you seem to be in quite a fever to set up problems that do not exist. I consulted the talk to which you refer and find that nowhere does the Mother declare that Mahalingam has nothing Maha about him but has only a lingam attached to a vital and mental being: in short, he is very much short of a soul, for the psychic is just an intruder, an outsider lodging himself in somebody who all the time without having a soul of his own kept aspiring and praying exactly as a soul would. If indeed the Mother has said the opposite of what you have believed yourself to be all these years she must have had great fun fooling you—but it was indiscreet of her to give out the secret of her joke as far back as February 24, 1951. It is a wonder how Nolani and others who are supposed to have had fairly sharp minds did not realise 29 years ago that, instead of vainly attempting to guide their lives with the light of souls which the Mother never granted to be theirs, they should have made a bee-line to Ramana's Ashram as you feel like doing or become Christians and die and wait for the resurrection which would restore them to their original body-soul state. The fact that nobody did either of these desperate deeds should give you pause and make you turn once again to that talk to see whether you had judged its drift correctly.

The Mother is talking of how and when the psychic being of a person joins the body-life-mind composite in which it has decided to house itself. She does not say that a person is nothing else than this composite. Surely, if there is birth after birth of which your present b-l-m composite is one occasion and if each time there is a new b-l-m composite, you must be something that is other than the changing series of composites. You are the psychic being whom you consider an intruder. If there is an intrusion it is you who are achieving it time and again. You may say: “I am not conscious of being a psychic being.” But nobody is conscious of all that one is. We have to become aware of the various hidden ranges of being that are ours. What we are at any moment is a fact of

consciousness. This consciousness has to choose to extend itself. If it is restricted to body, life-force, mind it cannot know itself to be anything more. But actually it is not so restricted. There is in each of us a projection of our secret psyche, which mixes with our usual b-l-m and takes on their colours—the body's brown, the vitality's red or green, the mind's yellow or blue—yet blends with these shades a glimmering pink and a shimmering white which are responsible for all our idealisms and our dreams of perfection and our aspirations to be much more than the fumbling, stumbling, grumbling chappies that we normally are. If the consciousness that knows itself at present as Mahalingam chooses to recognise more and more this projection it will discover itself to be what the Upanishads call the inmost self that is like a fire without smoke and is the lord of its past, its present and its future: "he is the one who is today and the one who shall be tomorrow." The Mahalingam who has written his queer letter of discontent in spite of really being "quietly and deeply happy" will cease to be the silly goose that he is and trace this quiet and deep happiness to his truly being a shining cygnet who will ultimately find itself to be

Swan of the supreme and spaceless ether wandering, winged,
through the universe,

Spirit immortal!

Yours affectionately,
A fellow-goose who is not too goosey.

P.S. All this goose-talk reminds me of the epitaph the writer Walter Savage Landor framed for himself:

Here lies W. S. Landor,
They thought him a goose
But found him a gander.

(18.10.1984)

*

The Mother's Mantra, as far as I know, was: "Om Namó Bhagavaté." She found that when the body's transformation was to be achieved, when the physical cells were to be opened, Japa was essential. In Sri Aurobindo's Yoga there is no call for Japa, though it is not ruled out. But at the final stage of the sadhana, with the gross substance of the body directly being tackled, the Mantra-vibration seemed needed. Of course Sri Aurobindo had given some formulas to those who had asked for them and these formulas were charged with illuminative power by him, but in the stated dynamics of his Yoga Japa of any kind is not recognised. The Mantra the Mother had given to people was: "Sri Aurobindo sharanam mama." ("Sri Aurobindo is my refuge.")

As for fear, I am not the fearing sort. I don't recollect ever having been seized by fear. I have had vague or distinct feeling of avoiding something or somebody, but I have always acted upon Whitman's dictum: "Fear never robbed tomorrow of its sorrow; it only robs today of its strength." It has also been my experience that most of the things we fear do not come to pass, though I do believe the Mother when she says that fear serves as a magnet to the thing feared. I suppose she means a very strong fear and not just a shadowy apprehension. If somehow one is prone to fear, the best way to shake it off is to think of it as a little bundle and offer it to the Mother and Sri Aurobindo to do away with it. If there is a persistent trouble, any harassing obsession, I have found that if one goes on offering it from one's heart and belly to the Divine and, while offering it, lifting it upward, for 36 hours, it will disappear without fail. The movement has to be as often as possible, with an inner abandonment to the Grace and a faith that the Grace will not let you down.

During my illnesses I generally rely on the Grace and if one does this in all sincerity some help of an external kind comes. My temperament prevents me from taking troubles very seriously. I usually act as if the troubles were trifles. The only things I am inclined to take rather seriously are my own inner defects, but there too I hardly ever get depressed, for all these defects are in the outer nature and behind them I feel a bright tranquillity with

A wide unshaken look on time's unrest—

unrest whether outside or inside myself. And, along with this calm background, I am aware of a flow from the heart-centre towards some beatific beyond which is also a Divine Beloved. Occasionally this flow is very intense, but it rarely fades away and is mostly a steady welling out of some unknown immortal depth towards its own supreme height of reality still unattained. This flow can also be concentrated on persons or circumstances, enveloping them in a manner very concrete to the inner sense. While I am typing these words I am sending it towards you in a sort of transfiguration of the love I have always had for you—a transfiguration in which soul can meet soul with all the sweetness and light and strength of which the inmost being is capable. (4 12 1984)

*

Your mathematical conclusion from a small clue on p 83 of my *Light and Laughter* is enviable. I don't think I have ever gone beyond the stage I had reached at the end of Standard 2 at St. Xavier's School when at my papa's request Father Hetting agreed to take a special examination of me for promotion to Standard 3. I was given four problems in arithmetic to solve. Within a short time I submitted my results. Father Hetting found all my solutions wrong and

turned to my papa with a sorry expression. Papa looked at my work and said: “See, his method is correct in every case. He knows perfectly how to tackle a problem. Doesn’t that show a sharp intelligence? The only thing he does not know is addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Just for that will you fail such a clever boy?” Father Hetting was completely bowled over by so penetrating a reading of the situation. He smiled and promoted me.

What I appreciate even more than your mathematical skill is the keen movement of your heart, its ever-warm Amal-ward turning, its gladness that I have managed to reach at least chronologically the august company of Goethe, Hugo and Sophocles. Goethe showed how young he still was not only by being capable of falling in love the umpteenth time but also by having the capacity to add the finishing touch to *Faust* with the lines:

Das Ewig-weibliche
Zieht uns hinan.

The Eternal Feminine
Is leading us upward.

Hugo seems to have even outdone Goethe in the erotic capacity and equalled him in literary flair, but he was most notable for having such intact natural teeth as could crack the hardest nut and such undimmed eyes as to be able to recognise all his friends on the road from the top of Notre Dame. From the Yogic point of view Sophocles at 80 is the most striking. He exclaimed on his eightieth birthday: “Now at last I have peace, for I am free from passion!” Of course we in the Ashram are expected to be super-Sophoclean much earlier and to live out that wonderful little lyric of Sri Aurobindo’s, beginning

Bride of the Fire, clasp me now close,
Bride of the Fire!
I have shed the bloom of the earthly rose,
I have slain desire.

Thanks for your good wishes that all my books may get published in spite of my going on to write new ones. Even if some get left over and I am gone, they will see the light of day sooner or later. There I am much more lucky than Sophocles. He wrote 123 plays in all, but only 7 are extant. (10 12 1984)

*

As for your great scheme, I have mixed feelings. No doubt you have a long list of gifted advisors, among whom you have been kind enough to include me, but I

am not sure they can manage to bring out something to take the place of the 11-volume History of the Indian People published by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. I agree that it does not take stock of the work of Sri Aurobindo on the Veda, and this is a gross oversight. Sri Aurobindo's work on the Upanishads and the Gita too is of capital importance, as is that general foundational book of his, *The Foundations of Indian Culture*, which in a masterly fashion brings out the truth and the beauty of our country's spirit and its various dynamic self-expression. But, short of this *lacuna*, that History is admirable. Doubtless, it follows a chronology which is at variance with the ancient Indian scheme, but the question is: Is it right for us to revive that scheme in its entirety? I have given a lot of thought to the matter and, while I hold that a case can be made out to oppose the current chronology, I definitely reject many aspects of the traditional-Puranic framework. Apart from the extremely probable identification of Sandrocottus with Chandragupta I of the Imperial Guptas, most of the implications of the traditional-Puranic framework of time are at fault. What logically follows from that identification I have worked out in minute detail in my forthcoming book: *Ancient India in a New Light*, covering over 700 typed pages. This book will come out within the next 6 months or so and complete my research in ancient Indian history, which began with *The Problem of Aryan Origins* and *Karpāsa in Prehistoric India: A New Chronological and Cultural Clue*. These two books attempt on several grounds to put the Rigveda before the Harappa Culture and to prove the latter to be at once a derivative, a development and a deviation from the former. The third book's broad plan is triple: The Challenge of the Traditional-Puranic Chronology—the Momentous Evidence of Megasthenes—A Reconstruction of Ancient Indian History: Asoka and Before and After. I try to point out the mistakes of modern historians but am not carried away into chauvinism and anti-modernism by a bias which sets the beginning of the Kaliyuga in 3102 B.C. and Chandragupta Maurya in 1538 B.C.

I am sorry to seem to pour cold water on your enthusiasm. Surely the true spirit of our culture needs to be properly revealed and the suppositions of Max Muller or Mortimer Wheeler are to be opposed but with a balanced critical mind which does not swing to another extreme

(16.7.1988)

AMAL KIRAN
(K. D. SETHNA)

MUSINGS OF AN ASCETIC

In the *Deccan Herald*, Sunday, May 19, 1996, the talented Tamil writer P. Raja, under the above title, talks to K. D. Sethna whose life was changed by a newspaper sheet covering a shoe-box, which had an article titled, “A Visit to the Ashram of Aurobindo Ghose”.

ONCE when Sethna was busy in his study proof-reading the pages of a forthcoming issue of *Mother India*, a monthly review of culture, whose editor he has been for the last 47 years, his telephone screamed. Lifting the handset from the cradle, he said “Hello” and waited for a response. “Is it Aurofood?” came a voice from the other end. Sethna didn’t howl “wrong number” and bang the handset against its cradle. Keeping cool he replied in his characteristic tone: “No! This is Amal Drink,” and set the man at the other end roaring with laughter, for Sethna is ‘Amal’ to the ashramites.

Now 91 years young, Sethna is always found bubbling with gaiety and making everyone around him chuckle.

Named Amal Kiran (meaning ‘The Clear Ray’) by Sri Aurobindo, Kai-khushru Dhunjibhoy Sethna, a Bombayite Parsi, read an article and took a decision: “Looks like a divine call. The Sri Aurobindo Ashram at Pondicherry is the place for me.” And when he came to ‘picturesque Pondicherry’, as he wrote in a telegram to Bombay, he was still in his early twenties.

True to the aim of the Integral Yoga practised in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram—“Everything possible in you is sought to be brought out and geared to a divine purpose,” as Sethna himself has said—he has lavished his talents on writing on a wide variety of subjects.

Sethna has a little more than forty published books, at least half-a-dozen more in the press and God knows how many on the anvil.

It’s not always we get a nonagenarian talking to us. But being his “bon ami”, a privileged one at that. I had talks with him on a wide variety of subjects for a little more than ten days, 30 minutes a day.

The following is an excerpt from “Talks with K. D. Sethna”, about his life with the Yogi’s Yogi, Sri Aurobindo:

What were your first impressions of Sri Aurobindo?

My first impressions were not something really worth talking about. When I went to him my physical mind came to the fore, and I began examining how he looked. What sort of beard did he have? What sort of nose? .. He had longish hair. And I found that he had an interesting face and I said to myself, “It is a guru worth choosing.”

Can you narrate the most unforgettable incident in your life with Sri Aurobindo?

It could be his showing me *Savitri*. *Savitri* was a great secret. When I came here the air was ringing with the news that Sri Aurobindo was busy with this masterpiece of spiritual poetry which nobody had seen. And when—some years later—Sri Aurobindo somehow sent me the opening 15 lines of *Savitri*, it was absolutely overwhelming.

Why did Sri Aurobindo choose you to read his Savitri?

You see, I was trying to write what Sri Aurobindo had called Overhead Poetry. That is poetry coming from planes or levels of consciousness beyond the thinking mind; not only behind the thinking mind as most poetry is, but above it. I asked Sri Aurobindo to give me samples of that kind of poetry. "Please write for me just four lines," I said. Then he said, "How can I give you any line on order? It is impossible. What I can do is to give you some lines of my own poetry in which you may find something overmindish if you are lucky." And so he sent me the opening lines of the 1936 version. Instalment after instalment came to me from him, day after day.

Did you make any suggestions about Sri Aurobindo's poetry?

Yes. Yes. I had occasionally the temerity to do it.

Was Sri Aurobindo happy with you as his disciple?

I don't know about that very much (*laughs*) but both of us seemed to enjoy ourselves a great deal in our literary correspondence.

Did Sri Aurobindo help you in your literary career?

Yes. A great deal. My poetry for instance. He taught me how to concentrate on poetic effect, exclude all sorts of expressions which were not in tune with the central theme or the kind of spiritual poetry I aimed at. The prose writings as well as the poetry were meant to bring out the best in me on the new line I had struck and so I have become more self-critical than before. Consequently, the amount of writing diminished at first. But it gained in quality.

Did you always say 'yes' to the suggestions made by Sri Aurobindo concerning your poems?

Mostly 'yes'. And where they seemed a little vague, I would ask him questions and get precise guidance from him.

Were there moments when you thought of skipping his suggestions?

I don't remember any such moments. But Sri Aurobindo never intended his suggestions always to be accepted. He left us quite free. For instance, in a certain poem of mine, he suggested two lines which differed from my own. But I felt that what I had tried to express did not come through them. So I told him that I would

like to use my own lines, with of course a little trimming here and there, and held back his suggestions.

Was he ever unhappy with your counter-suggestions?

Oh, no. He never expected his things to be accepted without any question as if they were infallible dogma.

What is Sri Aurobindo's contribution to World Literature?

First of all, the proper illumination of the meaning of Indian culture and civilization. Secondly, the goal of all civilizations, the goal of all historical processes. Thirdly, a new vision, which is that spirituality's ultimate aim is to establish a new consciousness operative in life, and not a consciousness which shrinks away from the world's questions. Fourthly, the language appropriate for expressing the higher truths. His language, both in poetry and in prose, is meant to forge an expression adequate to the truth which lies somewhat at least beyond the mind's grasp.

In what sense is Sri Aurobindo's Savitri a great epic?

It is an epic which is not concerned only with action. Of course, all action in an epic is expressive of some state of consciousness. But here the state of consciousness is of greater importance than incidents and interplay of characters. This is so especially because this state is an unusual one—revelatory of more than human consciousness. It is somewhat comparable to Lucretius's "On the Nature of Things", but there is no story in that work. Here in *Savitri* there is a story which touches on the world of human affairs, and points to a future for mankind.

You have discussed Sri Aurobindo's poetry in several of your volumes. But what have you to say about his plays and short stories?

His short stories are very few. I've written briefly about his plays in my book *Sri Aurobindo—The Poet*. As regards his competence as a playwright, I would say that he does bring to life his characters through both their speech and their action, which is the aim of a true dramatist. There not only is action important, but the revelation of the consciousness at play through that action is important. And that comes by speech, dramatic speech.

Have you involved yourself in literary controversies regarding Sri Aurobindo's writings?

Yes. Of course. I can't keep quiet when someone needs help in the proper understanding of Sri Aurobindo's writings. I have broken many a lance with several critics. Among them I found P. Lal of Calcutta quite a congenial person to quarrel with.

On what should Sri Aurobindo's fame as a writer rest?

His fame as a writer should rest on his masterly capacity to express subtle and complex ideas which are based on his own experience. There is nobody to match him in the way he has developed great thoughts, and applied them to various sides of human living. His yogic knowledge goes beyond all that we have found so far in important spiritual figures. He has said that he had known far more things than he had expressed; he kept quiet because there was no call to express them under present human conditions and human questionings.

In what sense is Sri Aurobindo unique?

First of all, for his vision which goes beyond all thought structures of other writers. Secondly, for his power of expression to make that vision living to us in the form of words. The range of his knowledge and interest goes beyond the range of any other Indian figure of somewhat comparable stature.

Sri Aurobindo discouraged his biographers by saying in effect: There is nothing on the surface to see. But there is a whole volume Sri Aurobindo On Himself. What would you like to say about it?

Sri Aurobindo did not talk a great deal about himself, but still he was good enough to answer the queries of his correspondents. In this sense, I would consider that book as an authentic biography of a part of his inner development.

What is your opinion of Sri Aurobindo as a man?

Man? The man and the superman were so intermixed that it is difficult to disentangle the mere man. If by 'man' we mean somebody who responds to us, who tries to understand us, and not merely from a height but also by some kind of sympathy with our own level, he is superb. The human side of him is quite evident. The way he dealt with all my questions, yogic as well as literary, shows a great compassion. And the way he always encouraged me in spite of my doubts as to my capacity to do yoga, is remarkable. And he has helped, for instance, my friend Nirodbaran, by a long sustained correspondence full of both light and humour.

Without that correspondence, Nirodbaran would have found it difficult to persist in his stay here. He used to get easily depressed and Sri Aurobindo would pick him out of the slough of despond again and again. Sri Aurobindo continued to write to him throughout the years, until perhaps something in Nirodbaran bound him here. You may dip into Nirodbaran's *Correspondence with Sri Aurobindo* to know more on Sri Aurobindo.

(Acknowledgments to the *Deccan Herald*)

THE FUTURE POETRY

THE Indian influence upon English poetry has not yet found a place in the textbooks. Present-day criticism has scarcely begun to take cognisance of the fact that Indian thought has begun to penetrate our culture. The works of Coomaraswami cannot be bought in any Cambridge bookshop. The name of Sri Aurobindo is even less known outside his own College (King's) where, in the spring of this year (1958) a bronze bust, intended for his Ashram in Pondicherry, was exhibited, together with a set of his books, whose titles and contents must have seemed strange indeed, as the work of a former student of a college made famous by such names as Keynes, Russell and Blackett—*The Life Divine*, *The Problem of Rebirth*, works on Yoga, and, among the rest, a volume entitled *The Future Poetry*. Yet this small tribute to a great Indian, noticed by few at the time, represents a tardy recognition, within the Academic world, of a current of thought that can no longer be disregarded.

The poets, of course, have long been aware of Indian thought. Blake, at the end of the eighteenth century, chose to illustrate, as a significant theme, *Mr. Wilkins translating the Baghavad Geeta*—a work that, together with the writings and translations of Sir William Jones and the circle of scholars around him, profoundly influenced Blake himself, Shelley, and perhaps others among the Romantic poets. In the present century, Yeats collaborated with Shri Purohit Swami in a most beautiful translation of the *Geeta*, and both Yeats and another Irish poet, AE (George Russell), turned to Hindu metaphysics to find the paradigm of the metaphysical and subjective world that underlies the entire work of Yeats, even those poems that seem to relate only to events in history. T. S. Eliot also once studied the Vedas, as may be seen in his masterly use of themes relating to time and eternity; and of the "Word within the word", that he understands in the sense taught in the Vedas, of a self-revelation of the living Word to the *rishis* (and, to the extent of their visionary power, to the poets) of which the thought-forms of the poet, and the written or spoken word in which these are embodied, are but the outward clothing. Professor I. A. Richards, in a lecture on Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind*, recently defined the essence of Shelley's poem as wisdom, in the Vedantic sense—an important turning-point, perhaps, in modern criticism.

Meanwhile Indian philosophy has been the secret well from which poets (I think especially of Yeats) have drawn the wisdom that inspires poems that the world at large is content to admire without enquiry as to its source. Yet at the present time, Indian metaphysics, together with related modes of thought that in Europe have long flowed underground, seem about to emerge into contemporary consciousness—Neoplatonism and the mythological philosophy of Orphism; a metaphysical language all but incomprehensible to the modern Western mind, that has at all times nourished the arts in the poetry of Dante,

Spenser, Milton and Shelley, in the Platonic ideal of Gothic architecture, in the iconography of Renaissance painting.

Sri Aurobindo's *The Future Poetry*, essays written mainly between 1917 and 1920, is a clear, and, to the Western reader, challenging and astonishing statement of the Indian view of English poetry. On the first page, we find poetry defined as "the *mantra* of the real"; all unfolding of Sri Aurobindo's reading of the evolution of English poetry is in terms of this clearly envisaged conception of the highest purpose of poetry. We are reminded of Blake's lonely attempt to define poetry in similar terms, "One thing alone makes a poet, Imagination, the Divine Vision"—and his repeated insistence, to deaf ears, that the task of the poet is to copy imagination, to give form to realities of the spiritual world; and not to copy nature, or (as the modern fashion would have it) to express emotion, or to record the experiences of the human personality, "the worm of sixty winters".

To the trained Indian mind, certain concepts are entirely clear, that to the English student of poetry or philosophy are not so much un-clear as non-existent. The order of the subjective and the metaphysical—of mind—has been lost to our philosophy, and is only now in process of crude rediscovery by the German Schools of psychology, of Freud and Jung. To the Indian mind, this order is the most certain of all things; Sri Aurobindo makes distinctions between the vital, intellectual, and spiritual orders of experience and expression, where to the Western mind, so clear about material categories, there is—to quote Sri Aurobindo—nothing to be seen but the blurred and dazzling image that the physical world presents to the unpractised senses of a new-born baby. Of this most Western students are entirely unaware, and attribute a vagueness to Indian thought that belongs in reality to their own incomprehension of its distinctions. Of this phenomenon, Coomaraswami was clearly aware, and as an exponent of Indian ways of seeing to the Western mind possessed no less insight into his Western readers than into those Eastern ideas that he sought to expound. Sri Aurobindo must be, to Western readers, more difficult to follow, because of the Indian background of ideas that underlies his thought, that is largely unknown to his Western readers. When he writes that poetic expression is "spiritual vision which has found its inspired and inevitable speech", this is not a vague statement (as it would be from most Western critics) but precise, according to clearly understood distinctions, as between vital, mental, and spiritual orders, that do not exist for the Western mind (or only as the dazzling blur Sri Aurobindo divined). Approaching the history of English poetry with requirements pre-determined by the mature metaphysical thought of the Hindu traditions, he has perceived excellencies and shortcomings in the English poetic genius that must strike us, at first sight, as strange; upon deeper reflection, as revealing, and, perhaps, as important germinal ideas.

Coomaraswami saw in what Western mankind calls "progress" rather a

decline from essence to materiality than an evolutionary ascent. Herein lies the great difference between his thought and that of Sri Aurobindo, whose philosophy is evolutionary, though in a sense remote from the materialism of Darwin and his successors. Sri Aurobindo uses this traditional Hindu concept in a sense altogether remote from the Western scientific use of the term. He is nearer to Plato's concept (developed in the *Timaeus*) of the unfolding of Time as Eternity realized in the form of progression, for he conceives evolution as a process essentially spiritual, the evolution of spirit from matter, in which it was first involved. Man, as the highest twig upon the tree of being, is the evolver of the mental from the vital, and, potentially, of the spiritual from the mental. It is not surprising, therefore, that Sri Aurobindo's view of the history of English poetry, as the progressive evolving of consciousness within the organism of the race, is by no means that of the academic critic.

Sri Aurobindo has nothing to say of the traditional mediaeval civilisation to which Coomaraswami gives so high a place; English civilisation virtually begins not in mediaeval Latin culture, but in barbarism, and its flowering falls within the phase of civilisation that is still the modern world. To Sri Aurobindo, the evolution of English poetry is still in process, and culture has not yet reached its term, which must be, can only be, whether in individual, race, or cosmos, a spiritual maturity; this being the predetermined and only term of the process in which man is involved.

In saying that poetry is "the *mantra* of the real", I take it that Sri Aurobindo means that poetry "appeals to the spirit of man through significant images". Both terms of this definition are significant; for what is in the true sense poetic appeals, specifically, to the spirit, and not to the emotional or rational intelligence; and that appeal is through an image—the formal rhythmic image of the poem, and the inner visualisation evoked by the words. This is the power of the *mantra*, by the incantation of the words, by the holding before the mind an image that is itself a reflection, or expression, of reality itself, to evoke that same spiritual reality that gave rise to the *mantra* in the first place; the *mantra* being, in this instance, the poem. Thus the poem originates in spiritual vision, and possesses the power to evoke spiritual vision.

"The real", as evoked by poetry, has manifested itself at different levels in an evolving series. The *mantra* therefore may evoke the reality of any of these levels. Thus Chaucer and Shakespeare may be greater poets than Shelley or Yeats, but the experience sought in the poetry has become progressively more complex, and more specifically spiritual. Lacking what Sri Aurobindo calls the "clear high intellectuality" of the Latin genius, English poetry has at all times excelled in presenting the beauty, the colour, music, joy, passion and external appearances of life; and at the same time possesses a latent element of the Celtic genius of spirituality, destined to become increasingly dominant. The Elizabethan age, vital, sensuous, imaginative, Sri Aurobindo describes as "the

greatest age of utterance—though not of highest spirit and aim—of the genius of English poetry”. Paradoxically, he finds the greatest failure of the Elizabethans to lie, precisely, in their drama. Shakespeare divined intuitively what Sri Aurobindo demands as the essence of drama, “the poet’s vision of some part of the world-act in the life of the human soul; it is in a way his vision of Karma, in an extended and very flexible sense of the word”, and Marlowe’s theme is the human soul in action. But for the rest, the Elizabethan age had no such unifying vision as the Aeschylean *drasanti pathem*, no sense of “living beings working out their mutual *karma*, but external figures of humanity jostling each other on a crowded stage”. Even Shakespeare, he says, thinks “not for the sake of thought, but for the sake of life” With Milton, English poetry was to receive “a training of the poetic and artistic intelligence”; but to attain, in the age of Dryden and Pope, “severe and serious intellectual effort and discipline” at the price of a loss of all its great vital powers.

In the poetry of Coleridge and Wordsworth, Blake and Shelley, Sri Aurobindo finds “the first poetic attempt of the intellectual faculty striving at the height of its own development to look beyond its own level directly into the unseen and the unknown and to unveil the ideal truth”. Here again, to the Western reader, Sri Aurobindo may seem to be making a vague, when in reality he is making a precise statement. These poets are, he says, “the first explorers of a new world of poetry... which may be the familiar realm of the aesthetic faculty of the future”. This is a realm not of sensible, nor of vital experience; nor of intellectual experience, as Dante and Milton have explored that region of thought; but of spiritual vision. Shelley’s poetry he sees, and with a great measure of truth, to be “unintelligible” to contemporary humanity. The contempt in which Shelley is held by the so-called “new” criticism bears out this judgment. Blake has likewise remained a closed book to such minds; yet it is noteworthy that it was precisely Shelley and Blake who formed the genius of Yeats, who is also the first poet writing in English to have turned to Hindu philosophy as alone capable of providing the necessary metaphysical structure for the kind of poetry that he wished to write.

Sri Aurobindo, writing in 1920, divined in Yeats the new voice of poetry. He perceived the world as only the “detached projection” of “inner soul-spaces” that uphold the sensible structure of the phenomenal. At one moment he hoped that AE (George Russell) might prove to be a poet “even greater” than Yeats. He considered that AE possessed greater spiritual perceptions than Yeats, but he later in his correspondence retracted the view that AE was the greater poet, acknowledging Yeats’ greater mastery of the specifically *poetic*. Had he been as familiar with Yeats’ later poems as with his earlier, he might have accorded him a yet higher place. Whether or not he would have seen in the later Yeats the greater poet that he believed must come we do not know. But that there must be such a poet follows from his theory of a spiritual evolution that must give

expression to "the light of the spirit breaking through the veils of intelligence in which it has to find its means of speech".

On this pinnacle of hope, Sri Aurobindo leaves his study of the unfolding organism of English poetic thought. Whatever he fails to perceive, whatever in his broad sweep he sees from a new angle of vision, it is a view of poetry that poets, if not critics, would do well to consider. A superficial judgment might be against him, might decide that he sees as in a phase of growth an organism that has reached its point of decline, together with the Western civilisation of which poetry is but one aspect. Nor does he consider the possibility that the English language, a medium framed by another genius, and for other purposes, may not provide an adequate instrument for such themes as to the Indian mind seem matter for the future poetry. He admits that the language of AE is "rendered sometimes a little remote and unseizable by its immergence in an unusual light". This same remoteness English readers find in most Indian poetry written in English, even that of Tagore, whose images, to the Western reader, make an impact only aesthetic, and fail to convey what doubtless their author intended. Doubtless Tagore's poems written in Bengali convey the total intelligible content of his thought that is elusive in his English poems. The same failure of communication I find in the poems of Sri Aurobindo himself, and, to a greater or less extent, in all the Indian poetry written in English known to me. (I do not of course speak of verse like that of the young poet Dom Moraes, who has adopted a Western point of view, together with the English language, and whose work is essentially indistinguishable from that of his English contemporaries—whatever at some future time it may become. Here there is no failure of communication, because the attempt to communicate a spiritual vision is not the inspiration of the poet.) Is such poetry as Sri Aurobindo envisaged outside the compass of our language, perfected as it is for the definition rather of sensible and rational distinctions, than of spiritual essences?

Our answer to such questions will be a matter of temperament. It is easier to see, with Coomaraswami, in Western material progress a spiritual decadence, as from the stone age to the age of mass-production, than to share the sublime hope of Sri Aurobindo, to whom the evolution of man towards a spiritual perfection, already divined, and even attained, by the greatest souls, seems certain. Yet Sri Aurobindo thought no more highly of our appalling civilisation than did Coomaraswami. Given his philosophic premises, the farther development seems inevitable: since the spiritual order exists and guides this world; and since spirit represents the necessary term of our evolving; since it has already come within our ken, as the next step to be taken beyond the present, intellectual phase of human development, its age will come. Poetry, as the growing-point of evolving human consciousness (here Sri Aurobindo comes unexpectedly near to a very different prophet of the arts, Herbert Read) must of necessity discover this realm of experience, if it continues to discover anything at all. A man climbing a

mountain must reach the snow-line because it lies on his way. To argue that if he goes on he may or may not reach snow is, therefore, beside the point. The mechanistic evolution envisaged by Western science has no inevitable term or direction; but evolution, as interpreted by Sri Aurobindo, in the light of the Vedantic philosophy, has a pre-determined end, in the liberation of spirit from matter. To the revealed doctrine of the *rishis*, this is a matter of knowledge, not (as for our scientists) of hypothesis. Given, therefore, his philosophic premises, and given also his direct spiritual perception of the inner meaning of events whose outer aspect is alone available even to the finest non-spiritual intelligence (I think, in particular, of René Guénon and Coomaraswami, whose views are in this respect opposed to those of Sri Aurobindo), we must give great weight to his insight, as one based on foundations that are strong, whether we regard them as philosophy or as “revealed” truth.

To see what lies ahead of the human spirit in its development is the prerogative of those races, and those minds, that have gone farthest on the way. The Indian genius can look upon Western civilisation as the priests of Sais once looked upon the Greeks, as a nation of spiritual adolescents. Therefore it is humbling, as well as, possibly, inspiring to find that Sri Aurobindo had such high hopes of the future course of English poetry

KATHLEEN RAINE

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INDIAN YOGA AND PSYCHOLOGY

THE PAST AND THE FUTURE

ANCIENT Indian Culture attained unmatched pre-eminence in the field of the psychological sciences. Indian Yoga is nothing but applied psychology. This unparalleled excellence in psychological self-exploration of the inner space, in what we may call the science of “Psychonautics”, is an integral part of the Indian genius. We have already discussed in our last article on Religion and Psychology some of the main features of this Indian genius. The present article further explores the past heritage and the future possibilities of this aspect of the Indian genius, mainly as a cultural phenomenon and not in its scientific dimension.

We have already said that religion in ancient India was not the popular religion as it is practised by the masses but had a spiritual source as it originated from the practice of her yogis and sages. Nor was it based on revealed scriptures or theological dogma but on a scientific and systematic psychological and spiritual self-exploration. In fact psychology in ancient India was not a distinct field of study but rather a by-product of Yoga. Theory was evolved from practice and experience and not *vice versa*. But Indian psychology unlike modern western psychology which is either purely academic or practically curative had a very clear metaphysical aim—the aim of self-knowledge, Atmajnana, and spiritual liberation, Moksha. The function of philosophy is to provide a coherent, logical and holistic intellectual rationale of this spiritual aim of life against the background of a cosmic vision. Here also the source of philosophy in ancient India was not the speculative intellect but a spiritual realisation, experience, intuition or vision. Philosophy is called Darshana which means vision; it is the intellectual presentation of a spiritual seeing. This spiritual experience or intuition was in most cases the end-result of a scientific and systematic inner psychological discipline, experimentation and exploration and therefore verifiable by any seeker who is willing to undergo the necessary discipline.

Thus in ancient India Religion, Philosophy, Psychology and Yoga formed a single mutually complementing whole of knowledge—Philosophy made dynamic by Religion, Religion illumining itself with Philosophy, Philosophy arming itself with the psychological and spiritual discipline of Yoga to realise its aims; Religion receiving constant spiritual nourishment from Yoga and Yoga trying to diffuse its knowledge to the masses through Religion.

Modern psychology has much to learn from this holistic approach of ancient Indian yogis. One of the major defects of modern psychology is the lack of a metaphysical foundation which alone can give a clear aim and direction to the science. This is the defect of not only modern psychology but all systems of modern knowledge. In ancient India every field of knowledge based itself on a metaphysical enquiry into the highest aims and values of life and on this

foundation it proceeded further to enquire into the role, purpose and function of each specific field of knowledge in realising these higher aims of life. Philosophy and Religion provided a metaphysical foundation to the other fields of knowledge. These two disciplines in turn based their enquiry on the intuitions and realisations of the Vedic Rishis and their vision of life. But the unique feature of the Indian religious culture is that it is not dogmatic like the cultures of other regions but scientific in a larger sense of the term. First of all, the acceptance of the Vedic authority is based on a spiritual faith in the authenticity of Vedic revelations. This spiritual faith is not a dogmatic belief but the result of a spontaneous intuition of our deeper self into spiritual truths which have not yet become consciously organised knowledge or experience in our surface consciousness. This form of spiritual faith is an integral part of the science of Yoga. It is a common experience among spiritual seekers that the words of the genuine spiritual masters have a special vibration which rings with a luminous self-evident authenticity and can evoke in the hearer or reader the corresponding intuition or experience. The acceptance of the Vedic revelations in ancient India is based on such a spiritual faith.

The second unique feature of Indian religious culture is that each religious or philosophic seeker or thinker was given the freedom either to deny or to accept the Vedic authority and, if accepted, to test and verify the Vedic intuition within himself and develop or innovate further on the Vedic knowledge. This firm foundation on an authentic spiritual tradition gave to the ancient Indian systems of knowledge, especially in Philosophy and Religion, a unity, coherence, stability and to the rich diversity of paths, schools and disciplines a sense of direction. Since most of the religious and philosophic thought which laid the metaphysical foundation to other fields of knowledge accepted the Vedic vision of life, there was a general convergence among the thinking sections of the society on the ultimate aims of the pursuit of knowledge. This gave a spontaneously and naturally holistic approach to that pursuit. Thus Psychology in ancient India is an integral and indistinguishable part of religious, philosophic and yogic knowledge. And the aim is thoroughly pragmatic, that is, self-knowledge and spiritual liberation. It is against this background of the ancient Indian cultural milieu we have to examine the past and the future of Psychology and Yoga

Now the question is how far and to what extent the aims of ancient Indian yogic psychology is relevant and valid for the present and future of Mankind. Obviously we cannot return blindly and unthinkingly to the past aims. Mankind has progressed on the roads of time and the psychological needs and aspirations of the modern man are no longer exactly the same as that of the ancient Indian civilisation. The individual and collective consciousness and life of the race has acquired a greater richness and complexity in the course of its present cycle of evolution with its correspondingly greater psychological problems and also richer

possibilities and potentialities of inner and outer development and perfection. Another important gain which the modern secular cycle of evolution has added to human consciousness is an awakening to the need of an earthly and collective perfection and the technical capacity and skill to realise this perfection in the outer life. All these new factors added to the consciousness and culture of modern humanity have to be taken into account in evolving the aims of future psychology. The aims of ancient Indian psychology—self-knowledge and spiritual liberation—are valid in general for the present or the future. Self-knowledge is one of the eternally valid aims of pure psychology. Spiritual liberation is also one of the ultimate aims of human development and therefore must be one of the ultimate goals of applied psychology. But these aims of ancient Indian psychology are not sufficiently comprehensive to satisfy the psychological and spiritual needs and aspirations of the modern man and the entire being of man.

As we have indicated earlier, the psychological and spiritual needs and aspirations of modern humanity are no longer exactly the same as those of the ancients. The ancient man is content with a minimum of inner and outer security and satisfaction provided by the family, occupation, religion and the fixed social status given to him in a rigid social hierarchy. But modern man living in an individualistic and competitive society has much more complex and varied psychological needs, problems and aspirations. His inner needs and aspirations are oriented towards better psychological health, creativity, self-actualisation, job satisfaction, personality development and harmonious interpersonal relations in the family, work-life and the community. The psychological urge of the ancient man tended towards a static and preservative balance of his inner life with his outer environment. But the inner urge of the modern man tends towards a dynamic and progressive self-expression in life, adaptation to the fast-changing environment and shaping of the environment according to his expanding vision and ideals. While the spiritual urge of the ancient man tended towards a gradual retirement from outer life seeking for a lonely spiritual freedom, that of the modern man tends towards a spiritual fulfilment in and through life. The psychological and spiritual sciences of the future have to take into consideration these changing inner needs and aspirations of the evolving mind and soul of man and lead him to his highest spiritual destiny by giving a conscious, illumined and disciplined orientation and self-expression to these inner urges.

The applied psychology and Yoga of the future have to pay much more attention than those of the past to the psychological and spiritual evolution of the secular life of man. Not that the master builders of ancient Indian culture did not pay attention to this secular dimension of life. In fact the ancient Indian social organisation, in its original principles, is based more on psychological principles than on economics and politics. The governing idea behind the ancient Indian social organisation is that the outer organisation of the collective life of man must be a spontaneous self-expression of the inner psychological organisation of the

human being. The central aim of the Indian social endeavour is to promote the psychological and spiritual evolution of the individual by fitting him in an occupation which is in harmony with his inborn and natural psychological temperament.

Here again, these Indian psychological insights on social organisation have still a living relevance for the modern and emerging society. But in ancient India these psychological insights, principles and aims were not fully brought out with clarity and precision in the cultural mind of the community. Only the pragmatic outer forms and the methods of regulation were shown and discussed in the shastras. An increasing emphasis on the pragmatic outer form, action, conduct, method and discipline at the expense of the deeper truths, principles and laws behind them led to the gradual loss of the latter in a rigid socio-religious formula. Though the ancient Indian religious culture is infinitely more free, enlightened, tolerant, assimilative and synthetic than that of other religions, still the attempt to yoke every field of knowledge and life to an imposed religious aim and formula prevented to a certain extent the growth of free and independent critical thought and enquiry in other fields of secular knowledge. This was a major defect of the ancient Indian socio-political thought.

For, as we have said in our previous article, criticism and critical thought are not always negative things. Critical Reason has an important role to play in social progress. The psychology of the human collectivity is subconscious, mechanical, conservative and unprogressive with a tendency to fossilise every higher ideal within the bounds of the tradition, custom and habit. It is the work of the critical Reason to break down and destroy this thick hampering crust of superstitions, established customs, entrenched prejudices and deadening habits of the past which have grown within and around the social mass. The critical Reason has to clear the way for new and higher ideals and motives and a new era of progress. Without this destructive and purifying work of the critical Reason the work of the creative and constructive mind cannot be very effective. In earlier India, the attempt to yoke every activity of life to a religious aim and formula and calling it the God-ordained *sanatana dharma* which cannot be questioned, prevented to a certain extent the full flowering of the critical and enquiring Reason and hampered its purifying effect on the society. As a result, every misunderstood and misapplied ideal, corrupted into a superstition, paraded itself as *sanatana dharma*. No serious attempt was made to question such claims. As Sri Aurobindo points out:

“In India, since the great Buddhistic upheaval of the national thought and life, there has been a series of recurrent attempts to discover the truth of the soul and life and get behind the veil of stifling conventions, but these have been conducted by a wide and tolerant spiritual reason, a plastic soul-intuition and deep subjective seeking, insufficiently militant and destructive. Although productive of great internal and considerable external changes, they have never

succeeded in getting rid of the predominant conventional order. The work of a dissolvent and destructive intellectual criticism, though not entirely absent from some of these movements, has never gone far enough, the constructive force, insufficiently aided by the destructive, has not been able to make a wide and free space for its new formation.”¹

On the other hand modern systems of knowledge proceeded in a very different direction than that of earlier times. Each system of knowledge detached itself totally from the religious umbrella and went on its own independent career seeking the truth of things in more and more narrow specialisations. This has its advantages as well as drawbacks. We hear nowadays much lamentation among modern progressive thinkers about narrow specialisations and lack of a “holistic” perspective among specialists. But the evolutionary utility of such a trend is not fully understood. This modern approach to knowledge has given each system of knowledge complete freedom from all forms of imposed religious or intellectual authority. It is interesting to note that even spirituality, mysticism and Yoga have declared their independence from Religion. Some of the modern spiritual masters and yogis like Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, Swami Vivekananda and J. Krishnamoorthy have severely criticised the aims and methods of organised religions.

Thus each system of knowledge is now free to seek the highest truth of its field of activity according to its own dharma. If the spiritual truth is the highest truth of knowledge and life, then all sincere quests for truth in whatever fields of activity have to ultimately converge on the spiritual truth. But each system of knowledge has to arrive at this highest discovery through a free growth from within and not under the compulsion of an imposed religious or spiritual authority from without.

So we cannot go back to the ancient systems of holism. Independent specialisations have come to stay. Both Psychology and Yoga have divorced themselves from the religious aims and the religious formula. Modern spirituality and Yoga are moving towards an all-embracing life-affirming vision which aims at spiritualising the whole of life. And modern psychology is also moving towards a less material and more positively psychological and spiritual aim.

In this mutually converging movement both modern psychology and the ancient Indian Yoga can gain much from each other. Indian Yoga is already profoundly influencing modern psychology. The influence of Indian yogic thought, especially that of moderns, in shaping some of the latest developments in Psychology like the analytical, humanistic, transpersonal, and spectrum psychology is now a well-recognised fact. In all these new developments we can see modern psychological thought under the influence of Indian Yoga moving from purely academic or curative aims to more positive aims like integration of the personality, mental health, self-actualisation, etc.

One of the most interesting developments in the field of applied psychology

is the increasing application of Psychology in the management of industrial and commercial organisations, especially in the field of what is now called "human resources" management. Here there is an immense scope for research in bringing the insights of the ancient and modern Indian masters of Yoga for enhancing and elevating the quality, motives and aims of the modern corporate life. Some of the major areas in this field which holds a great promise for the future are motivation, quality of work-life, decision-making, leadership, creativity, interpersonal relationship, group-psychology and its application to community development. Among these, group-psychology is an area which has the greatest potentiality for the future. Ancient yogic psychology paid very little attention to this field. Modern industrial psychology has done some significant work here. But still the nature of research is minute rather than deep and wide. The quest is mostly confined to the subconscious and surface movements of the group-psychology and the aim of research is also not very high, being focussed mostly on the utilitarian aims of the industrial and commercial systems like productivity, morale, job satisfaction, team building, harmonious interpersonal relationship, etc. All these aims are perfectly legitimate under modern conditions. And, as we have said elsewhere, even the yogic psychology of the future, emerging from the increasing life-affirming and life-embracing tendencies we notice in the new spiritual philosophies, has to pay much greater attention to some of these mundane aims and explore how these aims can be more enduringly and effectively realised from a higher level of consciousness. But modern psychology has to free itself from its excessive preoccupation with "subconscious" or "unconscious" domains and focus its attention more on the higher and more luminous realms of the individual and collective consciousness. Let us for example take this phenomenon of culture. What is the place and function of culture in the psychological organization of the collectivity? What are the psychological laws and processes which govern the cultural evolution of a community by which the consciousness of the community as a whole moves on to a new paradigm of values? What are the psychological conditions or factors which can bring about this collective evolution towards a higher system of values? How do these values emerge and get diffused into the society? This line of enquiry may lead to a psychological approach to social development which could be an important contribution of Indian psychology to the future. Among psychological sciences the yogic sciences of the future have to pay much more attention than the ancients to these new vistas of human development.

A valuable contribution which can be made to the future of Psychology is to bring out clearly the universal psychological insights and principles behind the various yogic disciplines of ancient India. The yogic texts of ancient India focus most of their attention on the metaphysical principles and the practical discipline but not much effort is made to bring out clearly and precisely the psychological principles and insights behind the discipline. For each yogic system of practice

evolved in ancient India is based on a system of psychological and spiritual insights, intuitions and experiences and designed to achieve a clearly defined spiritual aim. But the same systems of insights can be applied or put into practice in many different ways to achieve the same aim or different aims. For example, Rajayoga is based on certain verifiable psychological and spiritual experiences and insights. But the method of discipline evolved by Patanjali is not the only way these insights can be put into practice. As Sri Aurobindo has pointed out, the system of Rajayoga can be practised in a very different way than the one developed by Patanjali.² This fact applies to every system of Yoga. If we are able to disengage the essential psychological and spiritual insights behind the various systems and practices of Yoga, then we acquire a certain freedom and flexibility in its application. This will help in eliminating the rigidity and religious formalism which has crept into many of the ancient yogic disciplines and will bring the much needed plasticity to the yogic sciences. For more than any other science it is in the field of applied psychology and Yoga that we need the capacity for infinite plasticity and flexibility in the application of universal psychological principles, truths and laws to the needs of an infinite variety of individual temperaments, capacities, conditions, difficulties, situations and aims.

But the yogic psychology of the future should not confine itself exclusively to the past aims of Yoga. It should aspire for something beyond spiritual liberation and self-knowledge, Moksha and Atmajnana, and move towards self-mastery, self-integration, self-perfection and the spiritual fulfilment of the whole being of man—his body, life, mind and soul. This larger aim has to include in its scope the highest fulfilment of the legitimate aspirations of the physical being of man for perfect health, his emotional being for love and enjoyment, his dynamic vital force and will for power, mastery and creative self-expression, his mind for knowledge and his soul for the highest Truth and God. To discover the truth and law of this higher integral spiritual fulfilment and its application to the individual and collective life is the challenging task ahead for the future of Indian yogic psychology.

M. S. SRINIVASAN

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1 SABCL, Vol 15, p 22

2 *Ibid* , Vol 20, p 50

MUSINGS ON *PRAYERS AND MEDITATIONS*

(Continued from the issue of August 1996)

Effective Words

MANY are the beautiful books full of uplifting thoughts, philosophical ideas, religious teachings and moral pronouncements, homilies and eternal codes of conduct, written with the best of intentions, by various savants of different countries throughout the ages. Sadly the morals codified therein do not evoke any great self-appraisal or change of character in the readers and rarely effect a radical shifting of consciousness. They might dazzle the mind for a moment or touch the ascetic or aesthetic being for a brief while, but mostly, as far as the upliftment of consciousness is concerned, the readers remain where they were before. People regularly attend discourses and lectures exhorting them to rise to the pinnacles of every conceivable virtue but human nature remains imprisoned and stunted and continues to walk in its accustomed grooves.

Why is it so? Why do the beautiful teachings of even the scriptures leave a great majority of their readers no better than before and sometimes even worse, because now the readers indulge in their ignorant activities with the added justification of the moral superiority bestowed upon them by their piety?

Why this wastage of consciousness and good intentions? Why do the words of the worthy people of the world not change this errant humanity? The Mother has given the reason in the short and pithy prayer of January 12, 1914.

A teaching can be profitable only if it is perfectly sincere, that is, if it is lived while it is being given, and words often repeated, thoughts expressed frequently can no longer be sincere. .

This solves the riddle. Firstly, many of the teachings in the world originate from the mind. The teacher tells the disciples what should be done according to the teacher's mental conception. The preceptors themselves do not follow most of these precepts and therefore their teachings can have no dynamic effect on their listeners. The effect of what they say is annulled by the subtle vibrations of their contrary acts. The teachings can have a dynamism which can convince and convert others only when they are already such a powerful truth of the teacher's being that they cannot but follow it and to do its contrary would be something impossible for them. If their conviction is rooted deep enough and if it is reflected in and reinforced by their actions and their lives then they would have electrifying effects on the listeners and a whole army of converts would be ready to follow them, and for good or ill would depend on the truth of the teacher. After all there were millions who followed Hitler. The question is not how an

insane mind could have so many ready to commit heinous crimes, it is a sad example of the effectivity of a firm conviction, which could motivate millions to follow into the path of criminal destruction.

The power of doing good through a sincere teaching has been witnessed with the upsurge of each new religion such as Buddhism, Christianity and Islam. But it has been observed that the power of a master's words diminishes with time. Many of us wonder why a particular mantra, which at one time enlightened thousands, acts no more. Why is it that those who read scriptures are not transformed by the scriptures' indwelling powers? This too the Mother has explained. the truth of oft-repeated things escapes, especially when we recite and repeat them parrot-like, just out of habit. Such words have hardly any value and consequently do not carry us far.

Insincere repetition kills the truth behind the words, however great they may be, and changes them into clichés. If we were sincere in practising what we preach then we would walk on the ways of life like a sun which effortlessly and automatically illumines those who enter its sphere.

Tears of Peace

Sri Aurobindo has said in his *Thoughts and Aphorisms* that the manifestation of the Divine Force and Compassion is not enough to transform the world. For this supreme divine Consummation the victorious manifestation is needed of the Incarnate Divine Love on this earth.

What does Divine Love mean? Only those who live in its consciousness can know it. It is impossible to understand mentally but we can surely try to understand what it is not. 'Love' is one of the most deformed and degraded words in the human lexicon. A sensual and emotional concentration of thoughts and feelings at a particular moment on a particular person is ordinarily called 'love'. Looked at dispassionately, we shall discover that this emotion is an intense and somewhat exalted selfishness in which the heart and the senses declare, like a wilful child, that they have chosen a particular person as the object of their desire and unless the desire is granted they refuse to be happy. They sulk, weep, even commit suicide or murder in the name of love. It is a peculiar madness of the sensual being. It is one of the ruses or means used by Mother Nature to perpetuate the species. We find a rudimentary stirring of this emotion which concentrates on an exclusive partner even in evolved animals. The swans mate only with one bird and if one of the pair dies the other one does not take another mate.

This emotional excess for one object of desire might have been an advance upon the mechanical mating instinct but ultimately, in its naked truth, it is only an exalted selfishness, whatsoever the poets might say. In human love there is always an expectation of return from the other party.

Though most of world literature has lifted this emotion sky-high, it is a very elementary thing. Once, at a given stage of Creation, it played an important, even capital role in taking humanity forward by granting sublime intensities to mundane emotions but now, after the advent of the Supramental Power, its utility is much reduced. Anyway, this very humane quality or rather weakness, which mostly agitates and destabilizes the human heart, has nothing to do with what Sri Aurobindo and the Mother call Divine Love. Divine Love is something that has created these manifest worlds, which upbears all the travails of existence, which has led and is leading creation from its base in the Inconscient through ignorance towards Divine Knowledge. It is the instinct which has made the atomic aggregates draw together and has forged this wonderful world. All that is beautiful, generous or great in life is the *prasad* of the Divine Love. In human terms it is best symbolized by the love of Sri Radha, who surrendered totally to Sri Krishna.

On January 13, 1914 the Mother wrote:

Thou hast passed, O Lord, like a great wave of love over my life, and when I was immersed in it I knew integrally and intensely that I had offered to Thee—when? I do not know, at no precise moment and most probably always—my thought, my heart, my body in a living holocaust.

Once Nolini Kanta Gupta explained, “Devotion is experienced only by the heart but Divine Love can be experienced by all the parts of the being, even the body.” This is what our Mother refers to in this prayer. It is the Fire that burns and only the Purest Beings can bear this Love which requires a *living holocaust* of the totality of one’s being. The Mother further reveals the nature, the action and the results of the experience of this Love

And in that great love which enveloped me and that consciousness of perfect renunciation there was an immense serenity vaster than the universe and a sweetness so intense and so full of infinite compassion that tears began to flow slowly from my eyes. Nothing could have been more remote from both suffering and happiness, it was unutterable peace.

This is the most salient difference between what humans call love and what it is in its essence. Human love is a constant see-saw of joy and sorrow, in its course there are always ups and downs of dark despairs and wild exultations and above all there is a constant agitation. Rarely does human love bring peace. Secondly it is, save for a very few exceptions, always centred on one’s desire-soul, whereas the Divine Love brings in its wake a *perfect renunciation* and a *serenity vaster than the universe* and an intense sweetness full of compassion. There is not an iota of selfishness in it. Such is the nature of Divine Love, these

are its attributes and its results. This also throws some necessary light on the *swarup* of our Divine Mother. For we cannot understand, even mentally, the dimensions of her Divinity. Let us try to comprehend something of this Love from her luminous words:

O sublime Love, centre of our life, marvel of marvels, at last I find Thee again and live anew in Thee, but how much more powerfully, how much more consciously than before! How much better I know Thee, understand Thee! Each time I find Thee anew, my communion with Thee grows more integral, more complete, more definitive.

O Presence of ineffable beauty, thought of supreme redemption, sovereign power of salvation, with what joy all my being feels Thee living within it, sole principle of its life and of all life, wonderful builder of all thought, all will, all consciousness. On this world of illusion, this sombre nightmare, Thou hast bestowed Thy divine reality, and each atom of matter contains something of Thy Absolute.

Thou art, Thou livest, Thou radiatest, Thou reignest.

The Divine Love was not always a part of the Creation. The Mother has revealed somewhere that, to make up for the deformation which had crept in the Creation, Divine Love descended on earth. I feel that if we can read this sublime and revelatory prayer again and again, we can come in contact with the Divine Love which permeates the Creation.

Tuning

While fiddling with one's TV set, suddenly one tunes in to a station where a brutal murder is being shown or a song-dance sequence of naked gyrations is taking place. Suddenly a dark hand snuffs out the light and joy in the being which one felt before picking up the remote-control unit. On some days dark heavy sombre shadows weigh our smiles down. To escape our black mood we pick up the remote-control and are suddenly tuned in to a beautiful hymn being sung soulfully by a true devotee, or see a documentary about the Ganges gushing out of Gomukh with mute snow-clad pinnacles standing guard; then one's consciousness is shifted away from the depression which had a stranglehold on one's aspiration. Suddenly, with its pinions freed from the clutch of depression by the sight of those pure waters, one's aspiration rises to the tops and a Ganges of faith floods away all defeatism and dross from the being.

Thus our life's present orientation depends more or less on whom or what we are attuned to at a given moment. We can deliberately open the floodgates of hate and read the ledger to take stock of past wrongs done to us or open the heart to let it soar in the future effulgences which the Divine Mother has promised.

Our mind has the control of what we choose to be at each moment. It is a shoddy play of human imbecility which chooses 99% of the time to be miserable, to bewail the past or belittle the present. While all the time we are at liberty to tune in to the frequencies of love, beauty, gratitude—in short, to all that is high and great. Each human being is free to choose heaven or hell. It does not take much effort to open a pure channel but alas, even when we know that a particular channel will pull us down into the vortex of hell, we, out of habit, find it difficult to switch on to positive things.

The Divine's manifestation is not limited to the 20 or 30 or 100 channels that a television set offers. There are infinite fields for us to choose from. We can tune in to cannibalistic instincts of revenge and war or to the highest thoughts or emotions we are capable of.

On January 19, 1914 the Mother wrote:

O Lord, divine Master of Love, Thou art the eternal victor, and those who become perfectly attuned to Thee, those who live for Thee alone and by Thee alone, cannot but win all victories, for in Thee is the supreme force, the force of complete disinterestedness, of perfect clear-sightedness, sovereign kindness.

In Thee, by Thee, all is transfigured and glorified; in Thee is found the key to all mysteries and all powers.

The Divine is the greatest Thriller one can ever read. She, the Creatrix, can take us into realm after realm of Beauty, Love, Peace or Courage. Herself infinite, her creations have no end and if we would try to tune ourselves to her frequencies, life would become the most absorbing book. It can stretch to many lives and many epochs. She is ready to take us by the hand and guide us on towards the Everests that exceed all heights or she can sit idle on the shores of our existence if we insist on groping our way in the dark, and if we revel in falls.

The Mother says.

But one can attain Thee only if one no longer desires anything except to live in Thee, serve Thee, make Thy divine work triumph more swiftly for the salvation of a greater number of men.

Is it too great a price to pay for an assured entry into the mysteries and powers of the Lord, to renounce our ego and to forgo our petty triumphs—to come out of this sordid drama of life? Only thus have the realised souls achieved an equal status with the Creators. When we achieve this freedom from desire then begins the great Adventure, more thrilling than a million Arabian Nights. The Mother wrote:

O Lord, Thou alone art real and all else is an illusion; for when one

lives in Thee one sees and understands all things, nothing escapes Thy perfect knowledge, but everything wears another appearance, for all is Thou in essence, all being the fruit of Thy work, of Thy magnanimous intervention, and in the most sinister darkness Thou couldst kindle a star.

When we tune in, accidentally or deliberately, to the Divine Consciousness through a good thought, a prayer, a supplication or aspiration, a generous deed, a heart set free by thoughts of forgiveness, a noble disregard for self, a renunciation of desire, then takes place his *magnanimous intervention*, which can in a trice change the course of our destiny and place firmly our feet in the golden furrows of the gods. Our Mother teaches us the very words of invocation we should use if we aspire to set our feet on the Heights:

May our devotion grow ever deeper.

May our consecration grow ever more perfect

And mayst Thou, already the real sovereign of life, become in effect its true
sovereign

The Quest

Nothing suffices, nothing gives satisfaction. A divine thirst pushes human beings to make greater and greater efforts for something or other, one goal or another—it may be having a simple hut, a good harvest, a bountiful catch of fish, a spouse, a child, wealth or power. The hunger for more and yet more of everything drives humans to toil endlessly, yet true satisfaction and joy elude them.

They run in all directions, pursue will-o'-the-wisps, catch at straws. They try to grab the skies. The fame and power they acquire mock them. When most powerful, they are most insecure. Afraid of losing their power they build ever stronger castles and ever more lethal arms to make secure their position and wealth. Thus the very thing they fought for and achieved at great sacrifice becomes a cause for anxiety, requiring greater vigilance and care. Then where is fruition, where the ultimate sigh of relief?

No, there is none and there can be none. Because all those things which keep our consciousness tied to the outer world can never satisfy us fully. They are toys which cannot hold our interest for ever. As we grow in consciousness we naturally discard them.

On January 24, 1914, the Mother wrote

O Thou who art the sole reality of our being, O sublime Master of love, Redeemer of life, let me have no longer any other consciousness than of Thee at every instant and in each being. When I do not live solely with Thy life, I agonize, I sink slowly towards extinction, for Thou art my only reason

for existence, my one goal, my single support. I am like a timid bird not yet sure of its wings and hesitating to take its flight, let me soar to reach definitive identity with Thee

This is the truth of all life and the cause of our dissatisfaction. Behind each outer and ephemeral desire is the thirst and hunger for immortality, for life divine and ultimately for the Divine himself. This thirst of the soul for the Lord makes tasteless, at some stage or another, all the *rasa* of life. Ultimately all pleasures pall, every activity bores. A conqueror may pillage and pillory millions, his thirst of satisfaction through hatred and annihilation of his enemies never ends. He seeks new lands to burn, new victims to behead. The avaricious may gather all the riches of the world yet they would not be satisfied and would covet the treasures of the gods. The epicureans would get jaded by the innumerable beauties that are easily available and would seek celestial nymphs.

This is because we seek satisfaction wrongly. Once the feet are turned towards the Supreme, nothing less than a constant union with the Divine, even if at first only partial or incomplete, satisfies. And, after a few hundreds of our early births, when the soul turns towards the Lord, *maya* can snare it no more. As the Mother points out, once this state is reached, when the soul loses the union or nearness of the Divine, days become dark and intolerable. Riches seem poor, worldly delights boring, success a burden.

O Lord! The wings of our devotion are too weak at first to dare the heavens. Grant us strength so that we may not give up on the way. Support our soaring aspiration, accelerate our flight and let us not aspire too high before we are ready to bear Thy sun

(To be continued)

SHYAM KUMARI

THE ULTIMATE SAVIOUR

I HAVE never seen Thy glowing face,
 O Lord Supreme!
I have never heard Thy golden speech,
 O Spirit Sublime!
Yet I always run after Thy receding shadow,
To meet Thee in the worldly wilderness,
Or discover Thy sweet Presence
In the midst of all bitterness;
I offer my little self to be lost in Thee
And reach the ultimate goal of Life Divine.

Hast Thou ever cared for my pursuits,
 O All-fulfilling Lord?
Dost Thou ever bother about my prayers,
 O All-merciful God?
When I shrink and shudder on beholding
The hanging dark clouds, the thunder and lightning,
As Nature tears asunder my stagnant being,
My heart weeps profusely, invoking Thy protection,
My tormented soul cries for Thy benediction
And parental care, it thirsts to join Thy perennial stream.

The whole wide world is altogether Thine,
 O All-creating Lord!
In life and death I belong to Thee eternally,
 O All-transforming God!
My past, present and future becomings
Are meaningless without Thy glorious Presence,
Life wallows in cant, sans Thy efflorescence,
My journey is misdirected, sans Thy monitoring,
Only Thy Grace can change my aimless living,
Thou alone canst save me, O Saviour Supreme!

SURESH DEY

POLITICAL VEDANTISM—ITS CONCEPT AND PRACTICE

(Continued from the issue of August 1996)

CHAPTER II

THE VISION OF THE LIGHT AND FORCE OF THE MOTHER

“India must be Reborn, because her Rebirth is Demanded by the Future of the World... It is she who must send forth from herself the future religion of the entire world, the Eternal Religion which is to harmonise all religion, science and philosophies and make mankind one soul.”¹

It may be recalled, before proceeding further to seek the answer to the question we have put, that from the very beginning of his political activity Sri Aurobindo had felt that a strong religious basis should be given to the revolutionary movement. In pursuance of this idea he visited several Ashrams on the banks of the river Narmada and met a number of Sannyasis. “It was curious how many sannyasis have thought of India’s freedom,” he remarked later to Nirodbaran. Sri Aurobindo was deeply impressed by the fact that the Yogins and Sannyasis took their political plans as forming part of their spiritual sadhana. Later he incorporated some of their features in his *Bhawani Mandir* scheme as noted earlier. Mention may be made here that “Sri Aurobindo had some connection with a member of the governing body of the Naga Sannyasis who gave him a *mantra of Kali* (or rather a *stotra*) and conducted certain *kryias* and a Vedic *yajna*, but all this was for political success in his mission...”²

During the hectic days preceding the partition of Bengal, Sri Aurobindo wrote in detail on the scheme of *Bhawani Mandir*. Thousands of copies were printed and circulated. It frightened the British Administration, while it inspired many an ardent youth. Though the idea was Barin’s, it was Sri Aurobindo who gave a form to it. It envisages the building of a temple to Mother Bhawani where workers for the liberation of the Motherland were to dedicate themselves totally as Karma-yogins, in a spirit of complete renunciation. Others, who could not thus renounce, were to be of help to them.

This booklet, issued anonymously, drew the special attention of the Government authorities as was evident from the confidential report of Mr. Denhaw, the Superintendent of Police, Special Branch, Calcutta, in which he wrote:

“Bhawani Mandir was nothing but a gigantic scheme for establishing a

central religious society, outwardly religious but in spirit, energy and work political. From this centre missionaries well-versed in religious-political argument were to go on their wanderings over India, to form fresh centres and gain fresh recruits. The argument in the pamphlet is ingenious and when examined shows that extraordinary adroitness with which its author has misinterpreted the Vedantist ideas for his own purposes, and to adorn his talk and point his moral.”³

In the aftermath Sri Aurobindo commented.

Bhawani Mandir was written by Sri Aurobindo but it was more Barin’s idea than his. It was not meant to train people for assassination but for revolutionary preparation of the country. The idea was soon dropped as far as Sri Aurobindo was concerned, but something of the kind was attempted by Barin, in the Manicktola Garden ..⁴

However, the idea, as we shall see later, guided him at the initial stage to formulate his plan of armed revolution, if necessary, for the liberation of his motherland.

In his speeches in the Indian Majlis in Cambridge, as we have indicated earlier, he had hinted at some of his future plans. The ultimate aim of this plan was to create a free India through revolution.

Now we shall see how he translated his plan into action.

A study of his writings in the *Indu Prakash* clearly reveals that Sri Aurobindo firmly believed that by their servile attitude the Congress leaders were not only deceiving themselves but also the nation. He had no doubt that the overthrow of the British Government by force was perfectly possible and that freedom could be achieved by a mass-uprising at an opportune moment, supported by arms, if necessary.

Hence he wanted to “capture the Congress and to make it an instrument for revolutionary action instead of a centre of a timid constitutional agitation which would only talk and pass resolutions and recommendations to the foreign Government; if the Congress could not be captured, then a central revolutionary body would have to be created which could do this work. It was to be a sort of State within the State giving its directions to the people and creating organised bodies and institutions which would be its means of action; there must be an increasing non-cooperation and passive resistance which would render the administration of the country by a foreign Government difficult or finally impossible, a universal unrest which would wear down repression and finally, if need be, an open revolt all over the country.”⁵

His plan of open revolt and armed insurrection was founded on the strong basis of what he had learned from history. He “had studied with interest the

revolutions and rebellions which led to national liberation, the struggle against the English in mediaeval France and the revolts which liberated America and Italy. He took much of his inspiration from these movements and their leaders, especially, Jeanne d'Arc and Mazzini⁷⁶ Besides, the temperament and characteristics of the British people and the turn of their political instincts were well-known to him. And "he believed that... [the British people] were not of the kind which would be ruthlessly adamant to the end if they found resistance and revolt becoming general and persistent they would in the end try to arrive at an accommodation to save what they could of their empire or in an extremity prefer to grant independence rather than have it forcefully wrested from their hands"⁷⁷

During the first few years after his arrival in India Sri Aurobindo abstained from any open political activities and chose to work silently from behind the scene to create:

(a) a secret organisation for the propagation of the idea [of freedom], the central object of which was the preparation of an armed insurrection,

(b) a public propaganda intended to convert the whole nation to the ideal of independence which was, at that time, regarded by the vast majority of Indians as unpractical and impossible, an almost insane chimera;

(c) an organisation of the people to carry on a public and united opposition and undermining of the foreign rule through an increasing non-cooperation and passive resistance

It may be that many of us are still of the opinion that Sri Aurobindo did not believe in violent revolution but on the contrary was a pacifist, an ardent champion of the doctrine of non-violence.

There is no doubt that at the initial stage of his political activities Sri Aurobindo took up non-cooperation and passive resistance as a means in the struggle for independence but not as the sole means. Once he went to Bengal he maintained a secret revolutionary activity as a preparation for open revolt in case passive resistance proved insufficient for the purpose. As a matter of fact "Sri Aurobindo has never concealed his opinion that a nation is entitled to attain its freedom by violence, if it can do so or if there is no other way; whether it should do so or not, depends on what is the best policy, not on ethical considerations."⁷⁸ He also emphasised that he had neither been an impotent moralist nor a weak pacifist.

This then was his secret plan which he had chalked out silently behind the scenes. Now we shall see how and where in India the secret societies were set up and organised to work out the plan, and what exactly was Sri Aurobindo's role in the struggle.

During the close of the last century a few advanced souls in the western and eastern parts of India came forward to organise secret societies for carrying on a revolution to set India free from the foreign yoke by establishing institutions of physical culture which were to propagate, of course covertly, the revolutionary

ideas Sisir Kumar Mitra said in his book *Sri Aurobindo Towards Victory of the Light Supreme* (1976):

“Thakur Saheb (a noble of the Udaipur State) set up a secret society at Poona, and in 1896 Sri Aurobindo was elected its president.

“Later, he became the President of the central organisation for the whole of Gujarat with which was amalgamated the Secret Society of Thakur Saheb.”⁹ “He was not a member of the Council in Bombay,” said Sri Aurobindo of himself, “he stood above it as the leader of the whole movement while the Council helped him to organise Maharashtra and the Maharatta States”¹⁰

During this time Sri Aurobindo's friends in Baroda enlisted a young Bengali—Jatindranath Banerjee—as a trooper in the cavalry regiment of Baroda State in spite of the prohibition by the British Government of the enlistment of any Bengali in any army in India. This young Bengali was exceedingly energetic and capable. In 1902 Sri Aurobindo initiated him in secret revolutionary work. He was sent to Bengal by Sri Aurobindo as his lieutenant with the programme of organising revolutionary propaganda and recruiting young men under various pretexts and covers throughout Bengal. It was this young Bengali who formed the first group in Calcutta. Centres began to grow rapidly and afterwards many branches were established.

Here it may be recalled that in 1902, when Barindra Kumar Ghosh, the younger brother of Sri Aurobindo, came to Baroda, Sri Aurobindo also initiated him into revolutionary work. Barin was advised to join Jatin in Calcutta. Jatin also met P. Mitter and other revolutionaries already at work in Bengal. In the same year under Satyen Bose of Midnapore a centre was also established in Deoghar, Bihar, where Sri Aurobindo's maternal grandfather Rajnarayan Bose had been staying. Satyen was recruited by Sri Aurobindo himself during his visit to the district

“Besides P. Mitter and others, the Calcutta Centre,” as Sri Aurobindo later said, “had behind it the inspiration of Okakura Kakuzo—the famous Japanese art critic and historian, who had plans of an All-Asian uprising against European domination in Asia”¹¹ Sister Nivedita—the Irish disciple of Swami Vivekananda—met Sri Aurobindo at Baroda in 1902. Sri Aurobindo had discussions with her on various aspects of his revolutionary programme. From then on, Nivedita was Sri Aurobindo's collaborator in revolutionary work till he left Bengal for Pondicherry.

In 1904 Sri Aurobindo came to Calcutta and after studying the situation set up a Council of five members: P. Mitter, C. R. Das, Sister Nivedita, Jatin Banerjee and Surendranath Tagore. Through this Council Sri Aurobindo maintained his connection with the revolutionary activities in Bengal—which enormously spread among thousands of young men who were imbued with the spirit of revolution

For obvious reasons it was not possible for Sri Aurobindo to publicly take

part in politics while he was in the Baroda State Service Besides, temperamentally he preferred to remain, act and even to lead from behind the scenes without his name being known in public. He had, therefore, to take leave from time to time to visit Bengal and other places where revolutionary activities were being carried on. From February 1906 Sri Aurobindo took privilege leave for two months. This, combined with the summer recess, enabled him to go to Bengal and stay there for a long time at a stretch. And in June when the new term began, he took one year's leave without pay and went back to Bengal.

His soul's urge was to concentrate exclusively on patriotic actions to give shape to his vision of the future of India and the world, so that humanity might move along the right track in its terrestrial journey towards its destined goal.

As a beginning towards this end efforts were made first to set up centres and enlist young men who were to be trained in activities which might be helpful for an ultimate armed insurrection, if necessary Then visits to various places were to be undertaken to come into contact with the people to imbue in them the urge for freedom Sister Nivedita took the leading part in this endeavour She visited Rajputana and preached revolution among the Thakurs of the State. "I myself met several Rajput Thakurs," said Sri Aurobindo to Nirodbaran, "who, unsuspected by the Government, had revolutionary ideas and tendencies. One Thakur, Ram Singh, joined our movement. . I knew a Punjabi sentry at Alipore who spoke to me about the revolution"¹²

This was the first practical move of Sri Aurobindo on the chessboard of Indian politics. The next phase of his political activities began with the partition of Bengal in 1905.

(To be continued)

SAMAR BASU

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SRI AUROBINDO—THE SOUL OF INDIA

(Continued from the issue of August 1996)

THE first issue of the monthly *Arya* came out on August 15, 1914, Sri Aurobindo's forty-second birthday. It opened with the first chapter of *The Life Divine* which is his philosophical *magnum opus*. The *Arya* was printed at Modern Press, Pondicherry, and published from 7, rue Duplex, where the Mother was staying at the time. In September 1916, the "Aryan Stores" was opened. Saurin took charge of the management. The capital was provided by the Mother.

The corpus of knowledge, however, in the new monthly was not a product of mere brain-brilliance. The whole of the *Arya*, Sri Aurobindo recalls, was transmitted directly into his pen. As he once commented to his disciple Dilip Kumar Roy

"And philosophy! Let me tell you in confidence that I never, never, never was a philosopher—although I have written philosophy.... I knew precious little about philosophy before I did the Yoga and came to Pondicherry—I was a poet and a politician, not a philosopher. How I managed to do it and why? First, because Richard proposed to me to co-operate in a philosophical review—and as my theory was that a Yogi ought to be able to turn his hand to anything, I could not very well refuse; and then he had to go to the war and left me in the lurch with sixty-four pages a month of philosophy all to write by my lonely self. Secondly, because I had only to write down in the terms of the intellect all that I had observed and come to know in practising Yoga daily, and the philosophy was there automatically ..."

The *Arya* created a profound impression on the mind of its readers. Annie Besant, leader of the Theosophical Movement, is said to have observed that she had seen such an afflatus in only one other—Mme Blavatsky. Dwijendranath Tagore, elder brother of the poet Rabindra Nath Tagore, used to say that not since the days of the Vedic hymns was such God-knowledge given to humanity. Alexandra David-Neel found that Sri Aurobindo had a "perfect familiarity with the philosophy of India and the West."

"... [The] Review will also serve as an organ for the various groups and societies founded on its inspiration.

"The Review will publish;—

"Synthetic studies in speculative Philosophy.

"Translations and commentaries on ancient texts.

"Studies in Comparative Religion.

"Practical methods of inner culture and self-development."

Most of the major writings of Sri Aurobindo came to be first serialised in the *Arya*. There was an underlying plan. It is what Sri Aurobindo explains below:

“.. We start from the idea that humanity is moving to a great change of its life which will even lead to a new life of the race,—in all countries where men think, there is now in various forms that idea and that hope,—and our aim has been to search for the spiritual, religious and other truth which can enlighten and guide the race in this movement and endeavour. The spiritual experience and the general truths, on which such an attempt could be based, were already present to us, otherwise we should have had no right to make the endeavour at all. This truth had to be worked out first of all from the metaphysical point of view; for in philosophy, metaphysical truth is the nucleus of the rest .. therefore we gave the first place to *The Life Divine* ... It was necessary to show that these truths were not inconsistent with the old Vedantic truth, therefore we included explanations from this point of view of the Veda, two of the Upanishads and Gita. But the Veda has been obscured by the ritualists and the scholiasts. Therefore we showed in a series of articles, initially only as yet, the way of writing of the Vedic mystics, their system of symbols and the truths they figure. Among the Upanishads, we took the *Iśa* and the *Kena*; the Gita we are treating as a powerful application of the truth of the spirit to the largest and most difficult part of the truth of life, to action, and a way by which action can lead us to birth into the Spirit and can be harmonised with the spiritual life. Truth of philosophy is of a merely theoretical value unless it can be lived, and we have, therefore, tried in *The Synthesis of Yoga* to arrive at a synthetical view of the principles and methods of the various lines of spiritual discipline and the way in which they can lead to an integral divine life in the human existence. But this is an individual development, and therefore, it was necessary to show too how our ideal can work out in the social life of mankind. In *The Psychology of Social Development [The Human Cycle]* we have indicated how these truths affect the evolution of human society. In *The Ideal of Human Unity*, we have taken the present trend of mankind towards a closer unification and tried to appreciate its tendencies and show what is wanting to them in order that real human unity may be achieved.”³

The principal contributor to the *Arya* was Sri Aurobindo and without him the *Arya* would not have been completed, Paul Richard's *Eternal Wisdom* and *The Wherefore of the Worlds* also appeared serially, while Mirra Richard did most of the translations for the *Revue*, the French edition. When war came, Paul Richard was called up for military service, and the Richards had to leave for France, and so the *Revue* ceased publication after its seventh issue. The *Arya*, however, was continued without interruption in the publication of even a single issue. After a modest celebration of her birthday on February 21st, 1915, Mirra and Paul Richard left for France. And in a letter Sri Aurobindo commented on the *Arya*:

“The *Arya* presents a new philosophy and new method of Yoga and everything that is new takes time to get a hearing. Of course, in reality it is only the old brought back again, but so old that it has been forgotten. It is only those

who practise and experience that can at first understand it. In a way, this is good, because it is meant to change the life of people and not merely satisfy the intellect. In France it has been very much appreciated by those who are seeking the truth, because these people are not shut up in old and received ideas, they are on the look-out for something which will change the inner and outer life. When the same state of mind can be brought about here, the *Arya* will begin to be appreciated.

“Soon after the *Arya* began, I got a letter from some graduates saying that what they wanted was ‘man-making’ I have done my share of man-making and it is a thing which now anybody can do, Nature herself is looking after it all over the world, though more slowly in India than elsewhere. My business is now not man-making, but divine man-making. My present teaching is that the world is preparing for a new progress, a new evolution. Whatever race, whatever country seizes on the lines of that new evolution and fulfils it, will be the leader of humanity. In the *Arya* I state the thought upon which this new evolution will be based as I see it and the method of Yoga by which it can be accomplished.”⁴

Nolini Kanta Gupta points out:

“Sri Aurobindo began to proclaim his message with the opening of the guns in the First World War. The War began in August 1914; on the 15th August of the same year came out the first number of his Review, the *Arya*. Another point of note: the *Arya* continued almost as long as the War lasted. The ‘official end of the War’ came towards the close of May 1921. the *Arya* ceased in January of the same year.”⁵

In the *Arya*, under the heading, “The News of the Month”, it was announced:

“The *Arya*, a Review of Pure Philosophy, has no direct concern with political passions and interests and their results. But neither can it ignore the enormous convulsion which is at present in progress, nor at such a time can it affect to deal only with the pettier happenings of the intellectual world as if men were not dying in thousands daily, the existence of great empires threatened and the fate of the world hanging in the balance. The War has its aspects of supreme importance to a synthetic Philosophy, with which we would have the right to deal. But now is not the hour, now in this moment of supreme tension and widespread agony. Therefore, for the time, we suppress this heading in our Review and shall replace it by brief notes on subjects of philosophical interest, whether general or of the day. Meanwhile, with the rest of the world, we await in silence the predestined result.”

On the completion of the first year of the *Arya*, Sri Aurobindo announced in the July number of 1915:

“The *Arya*, born by a coincidence which might well have been entirely disastrous to its existence in the very month when there broke out the greatest catastrophe that has overtaken the modern world, has yet, though carried on

under serious difficulties, completed its first year...

“We have been obliged in our first year for reasons we shall indicate in the preface to our August number to devote the Review almost entirely to high philosophy and severe and difficult thinking. But the object we had in view is now fulfilled and we recognise that we have no right to continue to subject our readers to the severe strain of almost 64 pages of such strenuous intellectual labour. We shall therefore in the next year devote a greater part of space to articles on less profound subjects written in a more popular style. Needless to say, our matter will fall within the definition of a Philosophical Review and centre around the fundamental thought which the *Arya* represents.”

(To be continued)

NILIMA DAS

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A GREAT DISCOVERY

No, it was not a perilous expedition to the North or South Pole. Nor was it any discovery of prehistoric ruins like Harappa or Mohenjodaro. Then what was it? Why such a high-sounding title? This title I have given to satisfy one of my friends. He suggested it and I complied with his suggestion. He was satisfied and his satisfaction was mine as well.

That is understandable, but actually what was the discovery and in which country, forest or mountain did one go? According to me there was no discovery worth naming. As for my friend he himself knew what made him suggest the title. In fact we had not gone to any distant country, forest or mountain. We simply went for an excursion to the Lake Estate area, situated only about 15 kms west from the Ashram.

Presumably one discovered there a bronze or stone statue of Vishnu, Shiva, Krishna, Buddha or Ganesha of archaeological importance and interest? No, that was also not the case. Then what was the case? Will you please be a little more explicit? I have already stated that I had no idea about my friend's feeling in suggesting the title. I shall now narrate the episode of our excursion so as to enable you to guess the implication behind the title.

On one fine Sunday morning we two friends set out by cycle for the Lake Estate area to spend the whole day in a mango-grove just beside the lake. The young sun from behind focussed its tender rays on our way and we pedalled on along a number of ups and downs. After an hour or so we turned right and entered the village-road leading towards the Lake Estate.

On our left, a little afar, stood some dilapidated buildings shrouded in a wild overgrowth of vegetation. Beyond them, as far as I remember it, was the mango-grove, our destination. Due to rocky, uneven red soil, thorny bushes and thickets, we could find no approach towards it. So we headed forward hoping to have a leftward clean slope. Shortly after, the Mother's creation, the Lake Estate, appeared before our eyes. Green cultivated fields, huts, houses, sheds, poultry and dairy farms, gardens, etc. were its constituents. The place was solitary and silent and an all-pervading peace overwhelmed us. My friend whispered, "Oh, what a silence! I feel indrawn and meditative." "Quite true, we will surely meditate, but not now. Let's first reach the mango-grove." "What is special about the place?" "It is said to be sanctified by the presence of the Ashram-artists during the forties. Krishnalal, Jayantilal, Anil Kumar, Sanjiban, Nishikanta and others used to frequent the place for sketching and painting the exquisite natural surroundings. The Mother favoured them with her blessings and guidance as she herself was a fine artist.

"Amongst them Nishikanta was a poet in Bengali and could be ranked with the English-writing Ashram-poets, namely Dilip Roy, Amal Kiran (K. D. Sethna), Arjava (Chadwick), Harin Chattopadhyaya, Nirodbaran, who were

helped, inspired and directed by Sri Aurobindo himself in their poetic work.” “But what will be the purpose of our going to the mango-grove? We are not artists ” “Doesn’t matter, we shall while away the whole day reading, reciting, gossiping, eating and relaxing on the auspicious spot.” Seeing the vast expanse of the lake through gaps of trees my friend exclaimed, “Why is the rippling water of the lake yellowish green in colour instead of bluish?” At first I was taken aback but then remembered immediately and said, “The life-stream of this lake is rain-water only. During the last two years there has hardly been any rain As a result all the water has evaporated without being replenished. What you see is not water, but plenty of tender green grasses grown on the fertile bed of the waterless lake.”

“Oh, I see Very strange, but the ripples?” “Those are tossings of grass-tops by the ghost of a wind.” “What beauty! It is a pity that I am not an artist. At least a camera would have done justice to this wonderful gift of nature.” Meanwhile we traced a slope on our left, leading to the lake We glided downward while appreciating the plenteous season-flowers on both sides. But before long we had to stop and get down; the way was uncyclable due to plants and shrubs.

We had advanced far from those broken buildings So we had to turn backwards on foot driving the cycles by hand After a while those broken buildings became visible Amidst them I could see a dilapidated church and shouted joyously, “We have found the place, the mango-grove was just opposite to that church at the border of the lake.” After crossing a lot of hurdles of diverse kinds we reached at last the searched-for site of the mango-grove. But to our dismay we could find no trace of it Instead we saw an elevated plot of ground-nut cultivation hedged around. It was a great pity indeed that a shadowy and solitary grove was converted into a ground-nut field. However, we made our passage through the fence and went up with our cycles We looked around and discovered in a corner a lone mango tree quite big and bushy yet appearing melancholy and morose, perhaps at the loss of its brethren Behind it through the deep green foliage a white structure was visible. We neared it and observed that it was an incomplete bathroom more than 7 feet high A part of its roof was occupied by an overhead tank On its lake-side there was a very big well equipped with pipes for pumping water to the tank

We stood there like fools, not knowing what to do. Just then the structure beckoned us, as it were, “Come up, and enjoy yourselves with the uncommon beauty of the lake seen from above.” But how to climb? There were no stairs to go up. We looked around the bathroom for some means to climb and found on the wall near the well a small window-like opening with 3 iron rods at the mid-height. I stretched my hands and could catch hold of two rods and with a lot of exertion and gymnastic feats lifted my legs and perched on the window like a monkey. There was no gripping device on the roof. I could merely touch it with one hand. It was only when my friend gave a strong push from below that I

managed to jerk myself up on the roof

But such a method was not workable for my friend. Who would give him the much-needed push? He scratched his head for a while and then found the device himself. He placed his cycle against a wall and managed to stand on its seat. He handed over to me our bags and baggages one by one and then extended his hands upwards for help. I gripped them firmly and pulled, while he, taking help of the wall with his feet, slowly managed to come up. After wiping our perspiration and dusting the roof we sat down and relaxed under the shadow of the tank.

Suddenly we remembered that our purpose of coming up was to have a better view of the lake. So we extended our look to the far distance and lo, wonder of wonders! At the centre of the vast green expanse a circular white design decorated the place. With keen observation we could perceive that scores of white herons had assembled together. Instantly I could guess the cause. There was still a little water left at the centre, around which the herons sat and were making a feast of the trapped fishes. Not only the herons but a few multi-coloured kingfishers also joined them. Hearing a faint *chi hi..hi* sound we observed that some kites were flying in the sky above, as if sending signals below, "Please don't finish all, keep something for us also."

Our astonishment subsided and we felt a solid silence and tranquillity all around which made us indrawn, motionless and meditative for a long time. Meanwhile the shadow of the water-tank shortened and noon-day sun-rays were fast approaching us. We felt hungry. The place got heated and wouldn't allow us to sit there any longer. My friend opened the tiffin-carrier for our lunch. We relished everything, but the meat-curry needed a little more salt. We had forgotten to bring salt but consoled ourselves saying, "Much salt is injurious to health."

The cool and sweet shadow of the mango tree below attracted us like a magnet. But we were faced with the problem of getting down from such a height. To reach the cycle-seat groping with our feet was uncertain and risky. On the other hand to take help of the small window as support was still more dangerous, the deep well being just next to it. Suddenly my friend jumped and fell on the ground like a potato sack, hurting his left foot. I followed suit but with more caution and got down unhurt.

We spread our mini-tarpaulin on the grassy carpet under the mango tree and appreciated the soothing shade and cool breeze of the place. My friend opened an English journal and I lay down with a very interesting Bengali novel. In no time we were absorbed in our respective subjects. But before long the picture of the mango-grove in its full form, depth and dimension came floating into my vision. I forgot the book and remained in a trance-like immobility thinking of the grove. Then I fell asleep without my knowing it.

I woke to my friend's call. He said, "Let's go to see that dilapidated church." "How can we go, crossing those thickets and bushes? Moreover, there

may be snakes and scorpions. It will not be wise to take the risk.” “Let me go and try,” he said and went away. I started reading the book again, I did not know how long I was thus concentrated. A feeling of uneasiness disturbed my mind. I heard a rustling sound nearby, but could not locate the source. Was it my friend trying to frighten me to have some fun?

Oh no, not my friend, it must be something else. My God! what's that? An apparition through the opening of the hedge—a huge black head with two big blood-shot eyes observing me fiercely. The bulging mouth moved rhythmically chewing something. I was about to faint but the sight of two sharp horns made me aware of the situation and I thought my life was at great risk. Only a few forward steps of the devil and I would be gone. Suddenly the picture of a matador flashed in my mind and I decided not to give way easily. I must deceive the demon as long as possible. I snatched the red towel from my bag and jerked onto my feet. The bull was set to charge but then, what a miracle, within the twinkle of an eye it turned right back and ran across the grassy lake raising its tail upwards like a flag. At the same time a small naked boy was seen to chase it with a thin stick in his hand.

The concentration of the herons for fishes was broken by the sudden approach of the bull. The frightened birds flew upwards flapping their wings. Stretching their long necks they made a few garland-like formations on the background of the reddish sky of the declining day. Then the garlands moved ahead towards the land of the setting sun. It was a spectacular sight. Below, the bull and the boy growing smaller and smaller got lost behind the silhouette of trees at the horizon.

Meanwhile my friend was beside me without my knowing it. Slowly he lifted his folded hands and touched his forehead whispering, “O saviour God, please accept my grateful salute.”

CHUNILAL CHOWDHURY

THE SPIRITUAL MESSAGE OF FLOWERS FOR THE INTEGRAL YOGA*

IN the evolution of Nature from Matter to Man, the vegetal kingdom and especially flowers have played an important role. They not only cheer us up, but touch our heart and refine our feelings, bringing beauty into our life. If you have ever watched trees or plants growing, you might have observed how they turn towards the sun, aspiring to absorb light. You might have also noticed how sensitive they are to our touch, our voice, our feelings and our vibrations. Their *Receptivity* is extraordinary.

The Mother gave spiritual significances to flowers and used them as an aid in our sadhana for the spiritual awakening in all parts of our being and for our work on the different planes of consciousness, thus teaching us how to master and transform our lower nature and realise the highest possibilities of manifestation that await us.

Let us therefore try to identify ourselves with flowers as the Mother did and understand their spiritual significance so that our life may blossom like a flower offering itself spontaneously to the Divine as the Mother wished.

The Divine's Presence is everywhere with its magnificent and never-failing Love—*Divine Love*, which is without preferences and without repulsions.

However, if we wish to manifest the Divine in our life, we must have a fixed, unflinching and constant *Aspiration* that leaps forth like an unselfish *Flame* from the heart, obstinately and untiringly repeating itself.

And yet, nothing can be done without the *Divine Grace*, which answers from above. But, as you know, the Supreme Grace acts only in the conditions of the *Light* and *Truth*; it will not act in conditions of the Falsehood and the Ignorance

What are the conditions of the Light? The first and the foremost is a total and sincere *Surrender*—nothing anywhere in us that makes a reserve, revolts or refuses the Light. . “the surrender of a living being, not of an inert automaton; not an inert passivity, but a glad and strong and helpful submission.”

Is this possible? Well, the *Divine Help* is constant and never fails those who seek it sincerely.

We must *Love the Divine*. Roses express this love most beautifully. Look at a rose opening in the morning with the first contact of the sun. Look at its great perfection of form, colour; mark its fragrance. It is a magnificent self-giving aspiration. Let us, then, have a *Flaming Love for the Divine* in all parts of our being: from the psychic down to the physical—a *Love in the Physical for the Divine*. Let *All our human passions be turned into love for the Divine*.

* Based on the writings of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo
The significance of the flowers are printed in italics

This is our *Prayer*, an intense collective prayer For, a *Spiritual Atmosphere* is helpful. "light, fluid, clear, transparent and so clean!" But to benefit from it the most, we require a *Concentration*, simple and persistent, with our *Consciousness always turned towards the Light*—the Light of the *Supramental Sun* so that its rays may enlighten and transform us.

Then, our *Initiation* begins, requiring *Psychological Perfection* which consists of five elemental qualities

1 *Sincerity* which is an essential condition for integral honesty The other name for sincerity is *Transparency*, which can come only as a result of perfect sincerity

2 The second aspect of the psychological perfection is *Faith*. It is indispensable—faith, ardent and active, absolute and unshakable Another name for faith is *Trust in the Divine*. It is the true support of our life

3. Then, comes *Gratitude*—gratitude for all that the Divine gives us for our progress. The other name given for it is *Devotion* It is modest and fragrant and gives itself without seeking for anything in return, the Mother tells us.

4. The fourth petal of the flower of psychological perfection is named *Aspiration* or *Courage*,—"calm and assured, it faces all dangers to go to the end of the endeavour till it has realised its goal." *Boldness* is another name for courage

5. Then, comes *Endurance*. The Mother says "Unless you are resolved to begin the same thing over and over again a thousand times, if needed, you will arrive nowhere " And the most material form of endurance is *Perseverance*. In other words, *Victory* is for the most enduring

Now, once initiated, we must aspire for the *Intensity of the Consciousness in the full Supramental Light* so as to realise *Supramental Psychological Perfection* with the supramental truth at the centre manifesting in the triple worlds of body, life and mind.

This means an aspiration for *All the Movements of our Being* to be in *Light*, with all our *Thoughts turned towards the Divine*—the *Sweetness of Thought turned exclusively towards the Divine*.

Full of *Enthusiasm*, all our actions done with energy, ardour and joy, with *Perfect Surrender* to the Divine, we must aspire for *Truth-Consciousness*, "gloriously awake, and powerful, luminous and sure of itself, infallible in its movements "

At each moment of our life, we can offer our *Love to the Divine*, "passive and active, calm and ardent, sweet and strong, silent and expressed", so that our *Consciousness* may be *One with the Divine Consciousness*, seeking *Communion with the Divine* with all the *Tenderness in our love for the Divine*

Yearning for *Friendship with the Divine*, and "awaiting all our joys and our pleasure from the Divine alone", let us *Seek All our Support in the Divine* so that He and She may take us in their strong arms of love and wrap us in their soothing sweetness.

This will help us to realise integral *Intimacy with the Divine*. But to keep and maintain it constantly, our *Attachment* must be *to the Divine* alone, with *Constant Remembrance* of the Divine. The Mother reminds us that “When the resolution has been taken, when you have decided that the whole of your life shall be given to the Divine, you have still, at every moment, to remember it and carry it out in all the details of your existence ”

Once the *Psychic* has made its *Offering* to the Divine, the *Fire* is burning and the *Flame* of our aspiration is mounting, there must be a *Perfect Vigilance*. We must feel at every step that we belong to the Divine: we must have the constant experience that in whatever we think or do, it is always the *Divine Consciousness* that is acting through us. In other words, it must be the perfect vigilance of a *Sentry*—a sentinel who is always awake so that “even the smallest thing to which, till then, we attached little or no importance or care, ceases to be trivial or insignificant, it becomes full of meaning and it opens up before us a vast horizon for observation and study.”

For, in the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo, we do not aim merely at spiritual *Realisation*. What is demanded of us is an integral *Transformation* of our whole being. Our aim is the *New Creation* with a new consciousness, the *Supramental Consciousness*, the Truth-consciousness. We aspire for the *Beauty of Supramental Love*, the *Beauty of Tomorrow*, for the realisation of which there must be a complete *Detachment from All that is not Divine*. Sri Aurobindo reminds us that “We must first detect what is false or obscure in us and persistently reject it.”

There is a *Surrender of All Falsehood* to the Divine, knowing that “truth and falsehood, light and darkness, surrender and selfishness cannot dwell together in the house consecrated to the Divine ” Determined and willing, we aspire for the *Right Attitude* with the *Joy of Integral Faithfulness* and a *Pure Spiritual Surrender* to the Divine.

We know that now we must obey the Divine alone with “the obedience of the illumined disciple of the Truth, of the inner warrior who fights against obscurity and falsehood, of the faithful servant of the Divine”, so that everything in us may be suffused with *Light without obscurity*. Then alone can we manifest *Spiritual Beauty* in our entire life with its immaculate white *purity*—with the whole being purified of the ego. This means *purity down to the very cells of our being, a perfect radiating purity*—the *Divine Purity*.

In short, this is our *Tapasya*, the personal effort and the *Discipline*, indispensable in order to know, to serve and to manifest the Divine.

Undoubtedly, there are other qualities required for *Progress* in our *sadhana*: for example, *Attentive Mind*,—mind that is ready to listen to the higher inspiration; *Mental Honesty*, not trying to deceive others, nor oneself; *Mental Simplicity* without any complications to the extent that we *Never tell a lie*. The Mother once told us: “If we allow a falsehood, however small, to express itself

through our mouth or pen, how can we hope to become perfect messengers of Truth? A perfect servant of Truth should abstain even from the slightest inexactitude, exaggeration or deformation.”

Unselfishness also is a necessary condition for a collective living. Well, *Determination* may be there, but it is not enough. Our *Aspiration* must be integral. All the parts of our being must burn with that *Flaming Aspiration*. For example, there must be an *Aspiration in the Physical for the Supramental Light, for Refinement of Habits*.

There must be a *Spiritual Awakening in the Vital,—Nobility in the vital*. There must be an *Aspiration in the Vital for Union with the Divine, for a Steadfast Vitality*.

There must be an aspiration for a *Pure Sense of Beauty*, which is acquired through a great purification. “Pure beauty is universal, and one must be universal in order to see and recognise it.” We could then have an *Aristocracy of Beauty*.

We equally need an *Enlightened Mind with Supramental Plasticity*

Let us try equally for *Harmony*, that is to say, first of all, *No quarrels*, but a sweetness of life without clashes. But to be perfect, there must be an *Integral Harmony and Victorious Beauty*—“.. harmony and beauty of the thoughts and feelings, harmony and beauty in every outward act and movement, harmony and beauty of the life and surroundings,” and above all, harmony of all aspiration directed towards the supreme Truth.

And as the most ideal condition for progress, we must establish in ourselves *Silence*—a *Quiet Mind and Peace in the very Cells* of our being. But it is not possible to realise *Peace* without *Balance*. Let us, therefore, aspire for a *Perfect Balance*.

When we have achieved this immutable peace and calm, we will have *Equanimity*, which is indispensable for the realisation of the *Supramental Consciousness*.

This is the Sunlit Path of our being with the *Supramental Sun* radiating its light to guide us at each step of our journey—the *Perfect Path* of Truth which we can safely follow with *Faith, Sincerity and Surrender*. And in proportion to our *Self-consecration*, we shall become conscious of the Divine Shakti doing our sadhana.

Let us then march forward, and soar higher and higher in our *Spiritual Ascension* till the Divine’s *Victory* is achieved and a complete *Transformation* of our entire being is realised. May we be granted this precious boon of *Spiritual Happiness*!

We have the *Promise of Realisation* from Sri Aurobindo. But we must not stop in our personal effort till the *Total Conversion* of our being is achieved—that is to say, till the whole being has given itself in all its movements and impulses to the Divine and is ready to receive the Divine’s guidance with

absolute and total surrender.

In our *Soaring*, let us suffuse our whole being with the Truth, Consciousness-Force and Ananda of the *Sat-chit-ananda* so as to realise the *Supramental Manifestation* upon earth with its power of Truth-Consciousness

May we realise this *Collaboration* with the highest consciousness in our life and work for the advent of the *New World*, manifesting the *New Creation* and the *Power of Spiritual Beauty*.

Let us pray as we work, and work as we pray. For, *Work* is “the body’s best prayer to the Divine”. But let there be *Cheerfulness in the Work done for the Divine*, and *Thoroughness*, too, with a constant *Thirst for Perfection*—perfection in our consecration as well as in the *Faultless Planning* and *Skill in Works*. It is understood that it must be a *Disinterested Work done for the Divine* without any attachment to the work or its fruits.

And whatever *Wealth* we acquire through our *Works of Love*, let us use it in *Service* of the Divine.

We pray for *Dynamic Power* with *Purified Dynamic Life Energy*—*Supramentalised Life Energy*—*Energy Turned towards the Divine* to realise this goal of *Superhumanity*.

Let this *Lasting Inspiration* guide us in the use of our *Wealth* and our *Riches* for the Divine realisation on this very earth.

And in all *Humility*, let us offer ourselves totally, offer all that we are and all that we have, to *Avatar—the Supreme manifested in a Body upon Earth* and to *Aditi—the Divine Consciousness*, and realise *Divine Ananda*, the supreme bliss on earth!

RICHARD AND KAILAS

IF TRUTH BE TOLD...

INFINITE diversities are the components of the ultimate supreme Oneness that Sri Aurobindo is. Each of these components is his distinct Truth. If figures were taken from the physical world to describe his oneness, he is the whiteness that contains many colours fused together. All creations are the boundless variations played on his oneness. They are the diversified displays derived from his whole; the displays enacted and projected by the miraculous magic and loving logic of Douce Mère's Mahamaya. Her displays are her dedicated love for Sri Aurobindo, providing him with self-vision, self-experience. Her creative play, which represents the activation of his divine truths, emphatically indicates that there are no monotonous rigidities and limitations in Sri Aurobindo's oneness. Whenever we came into contact with his and her embodiments, he and she brought near to us all that they are above the earth-plane. They never displayed their supremacies outwardly in their embodiments. Such displays had to be the personal experience of a sadhak in the process of the Integral Yoga. In Sri Aurobindo's body each cell embodied his truth that was diverse in its divinity. As a result, the oneness of his physical body had components of truth-cells which were distinct, different and unique. When we attempted to offer our beings to him we actually were surrendering to his supreme Oneness that had an ever-fresh newness. In our heart he has projected himself as all that he was in his embodiment. Display of diversities and variations radiating from his oneness continuously go on in our hearts. Sri Aurobindo in our hearts represents his divine diversities in a oneness of highest harmony. His special presence in our hearts is the biggest boon given by him to us, his children. The exploration of this boon is expected from us, he is waiting within our hearts patiently.

*

Earth's matter embodies spiritual significance. Earth's matter contains Sri Aurobindo's promise of spiritual completeness emerging out of evolution. Rebirth as a result becomes the sole possible machinery for the soul to evolve. The soul remains an incomplete being until it reaches that high state of evolution where it can bring Sri Aurobindo into its body's matter. The soul's evolutionary journey is through the rock-tunnel of matter. Its journey is complete when it becomes the master of matter by psychicising it. On the other hand simultaneously, consequently, earth's matter also evolves in the direction of realisation because in matter's growth towards realisation, the soul is the element of continuity. Nature emerging out of matter, the Mother Nature proper to earth's matter, provides experiences for the soul by the mechanical machinery of karmas until the soul rises above karmic compulsion, and karmic experiences cease to be a spiritual necessity for the soul's evolution.

*

SRI Aurobindo can pull us out of all difficulties provided we hand over all our problems to him. He can pull us out because he is the solution. He can pull us out because he is the certitude. He can pull us out because he is the peace. But most of all he can pull us out because, above all, he is the Supreme Harmony. However, we cannot hand over our problems to him unless we have discovered him in our heart, and we cannot so discover SRI Aurobindo unless we have made SRI Aurobindo the purpose of our life. When in life all is only for SRI Aurobindo, we are put in the process of making SRI Aurobindo the purpose of our life.

*

The Life Divine, if truth be told, is SRI Aurobindo's own autobiography. *The Life Divine* is his own self-analysis, description of his own self, his own history—past, present and future. His humility and his modesty have restrained him from stating that Brahman, Purusha and Ishwara are but his own triple aspects. He has restricted himself from announcing openly the truth he conceals in the complexities of complex sentences which comprise his autobiography, *The Life Divine*, the truth that all creations on their highest levels are his purest, holiest and deepest dealings with the Mother.

*

Savitri is a biographical poetic adoration of Douce Mère—SRI Aurobindo's love for her, brought from above into manifestation and expressed in a literary classic of all times. The Mother, in *Savitri*, is life in a new action. This makes *Savitri* also the future history of the Mother. *Savitri* captures the multi-dimensional personality of our Douce Mère as the Supreme Mother. Within the human language limited by the alphabets, SRI Aurobindo has revelatorily described the Divine Mother who by all means and by all ways is indefinable.

Savitri, if truth be told, is the certitude of the Mother's Victory. It is therefore SRI Aurobindo's supreme certification of the Mother's inevitable conquests.

*

In the Integral Yoga "equality" forms a very important part. Equality is that quality which is preceded by the letter 'E'. 'E' represents Eternal. Supreme Balance of the Eternal is the source of the equality of the Integral Yoga. If we open to SRI Aurobindo and pray to him to let his Supreme Balance descend and settle down in our mind, vital being and body, we will gain equality naturally from the highest source. Equality then becomes an integral part of our being. Once we establish this Supreme Balance in the most minute parts of our being,

the quietude, the faith and the receptivity will become spontaneous in our nature. No perfection is possible unless we have established this Supreme Balance in ourselves. Sri Aurobindo is the absolute of perfection because he is the Supreme Balance. Sri Aurobindo is the unity that is composed of infinite diversities. All these diverse components of Sri Aurobindo are eternally united in oneness by the duality of equality that is the Supreme Balance. It is only when we are blessed by Sri Aurobindo with this Supreme Balance in response to our efforts that fundamental alterations in us become possible.

*

When the soul enters into 'earthly-time' through a body, it progresses. Every heartbeat in the body is beating a bit of 'earthly-time'. When 'earthly-time' teams up with the march of nature, the soul which is subjected to such a time progresses so slowly that to move just a little forward takes hundreds of centuries consuming thousands of rebirths of the soul. When 'earthly-time' teams up with sadhana, the soul makes a true progress—progress that is most conscious and rapid. In the Integral Yoga 'earthly-time' gets attracted with its full force and releases the spiritual speed of which it is a 'concentrate'. 'Earthly-time' is of immense importance to us because losing it unproductively would mean losing of progress and delay in the soul's journey to Sri Aurobindo. 'Earthly-Time' is the eternal movement of the Mother. In living in 'earthly-time' we are actually living in the Mother. If we become conscious of the Mother in this terrestrial time, we progress very fast. Each dimension has its own time. Each planet in endless space has a time proper to it. But no 'time' elsewhere equals 'earthly-time' because 'earthly-time' is the concentration of spiritual evolution and spiritual progress.

*

We believe that we have a soul, the psychic being, because we are born in the culture and the religion that says so. We have this conviction because Sri Aurobindo has said that it is so and we have wholeheartedly accepted his verdict. However, if we were to ask ourselves whether we have actually felt our psychic being or are really conscious of it, many of us may say "no," because we really do not know what our psychic being is like. The psychic being is our first mystery, and the Integral Yoga demands that we meet this mystery in order to uncover and realise it. The psychic being has to become the centre of all our actions. Until this takes place, all our actions that go forth from our mind and vital being, however spectacular they may be, are actually inactions in the Integral Sadhana because they do not originate from our soul. It is only when we meet this mystery and uncover it by our own tapasya that the psychic being can

become the centre of all our actions. Till then our sadhana may come to a certain point of progress and get stranded. We would be stuck in the revolving door. If one sincerely wants to be rescued out of this trap, the mind and vital being have to develop the aspiration and desire to be loved, claimed and rescued by the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. To meet this mystery and discover our psychic being in order that it may come permanently in front, is the first fulfilment of the Integral Yoga.

Explication of the psychic being is not mentioned by Sri Aurobindo among the yogic pointers. This prerequisite has been explicitly made the foundation of the integral sadhana by him. Developing the psychic being amounts to kindling the whole being and reviving the outer person's lost memory of its divine origin.

*

We are within the focus of the Mother's eyes always. All our activities, all our non-activities, all our thoughts and feelings bad and good, all our efforts to do sadhana or our negligence towards sadhana, all our sincerity and insincerity, all our genuine problems and difficulties, all our shortcomings and incapacities, all these and much more are constantly charted in her consciousness by these lenses of love that remain focused on us. All our life-movements come within the radius of her focused supreme sight. She instantly and ceaselessly monitors, documents and records them. She sums up our every moment, our every movement, and registers them in our soul as progress in sadhana. One thing we can never do is to escape her focus.

In response to our aspiration this focus becomes a force in action. In response to our sincere efforts to surrender, her focus abolishes the obstructing karmas that block the progress of our sadhana. In response to our unshakable faith, this focus becomes the fortress of protection. In response to our call her focus effectively fights off the attack of adverse forces, provided this call depends confidently on her help.

Compassion is blissfully, softly and constantly pouring out of her omnipresent focus which holds each of us. If we do not feel this compassion of the Mother, it is evident that we are not making an attempt to open to it.

When Draupadī asked Lord Krishna why he took time to respond to her call in the time of her distress—that terrible time when she was almost on the verge of being dishonoured by the Duryodhana-gang attempting to undress her in the open—Lord Krishna explained that since she had addressed him as Dwarakesha, it took a little time for him to come from Dwarka. Had she addressed him as “Sarvavyāpi” i.e. ‘all-pervading’ or ‘omnipresent’, he would have instantaneously manifested.

The same principle is applicable to us in the context of the Mother. We cannot always run to the Samadhī when in need of help or in need of a solution to

our problem. Instead, if we simply turn our eyes to her in adoration, our eyes meeting her beautiful eyes with faith, the help will instantaneously come from the global glow of the gaze of the omnipotent and omniscient Goddess. The Mother is described in *Savitri* as “Omnipotent Goddess” and also as “Omniscient Goddess”. Her omnipresent eyes are the ‘compassion-concentrate’ which can release an immense love that can actually conduct our sadhana provided we get tuned to her by our love, devotion and self-giving.

When a sadhak is so much targeted by difficulties that he finds a revolt growing rapidly stronger, negative suggestions playing at a high pitch, dissatisfied desires upsurging, faith fast declining and depression deepening into gloom, if the sadhak has by practice established contact with the focus of the Mother’s omnipresent gaze, the love-light of her compassion will simply dissolve all difficulties.

*

Free boarding and lodging (that is to say to be on the prosperity list) are not the only factors that constitute an “Ashramite” although these factors do contribute in making an inmate. The word “Ashramite” is tuned to the words “Sadhana” or “Sadhaka”. Anyone who is residing for the sake of the Ashram in Pondicherry, anyone who has migrated from a different part of the country to Pondicherry especially because of the Ashram, because of his or her devotion for Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, because of his or her aspiration to do sadhana or live a spiritual life, is an “Ashramite” in the inmost sense. Whether such a person, such an aspirant, is supported by the Mother materially or manages his or her own daily expenses, makes no difference to the essential definition of an “Ashramite”.

An Ashramite is not a product of religion because Sri Aurobindo’s Yoga is neither a religion nor a dogma nor a doctrine, nor a process of ceremonies. Sri Aurobindo is the truth; Sri Aurobindo is the way of truth in life—life that is service of the Mother. When we allow Sri Aurobindo to live his life in us, we truly are Ashramites. For this our body has to become his body. Our body can become his body only when the Mother becomes the centre of our life, when we sincerely and constantly make efforts to surrender to the Mother. The true meaning of an “Ashramite” in the broader sense is the individual sincerely practising the spirituality of the Integral Yoga at the centre of which is the Mother. In the absence of these sincere efforts to live the spiritual life, the individual is only an inmate and does not fall into the category of “Ashramite” in the most profound sense of this word.

The “Sri Aurobindo Ashram” is a formation of individuals, who, having accepted the Mother and Sri Aurobindo as the Supreme incarnate, have come together to practise the newly created Integral Yoga in the light of the supreme wisdom of Sri Aurobindo; the centre of the Yoga being the Mother and the resulting spiritual life being collective,

The “Sri Aurobindo Ashram” is the world in miniature because its component members are the representative distinct types of the people residing in the outside world. The “Sri Aurobindo Ashram”, in addition to its directly spiritual aim, is a laboratory for Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, where, using directly these representative categories as a medium, they work powerfully on the world at large to help, rescue and change it in the process of time. The “Sri Aurobindo Ashram” will reach its fulfilment and climax when it becomes successful in establishing the Divine Truth of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on earth. This fulfilment, this climax has to follow the work of transformation of consciousness. This transformation covers the mental, the vital, the physical being. It is in these three areas that the major work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother continues in the “Sri Aurobindo Ashram”.

The pressure for transformation of consciousness in the Ashram is attracting those opposite forces that are responsible for causing warfare in the world. These forces are aware that the end of their play is being worked out in the Ashram and so they target the Ashram to every possible extent by piercing through the protective cordon of the Mother. The Ashram being in the Mother’s full protection, these forces are in no position to cause physical damage to it but are permitted by the Mother to cause psychological warfare within the nature of the Ashramites and inmates, so as to bring out their latent nature that can become part of the spiritual scheme of transformation for the benefit of the world. In this way these forces are actually trapped within the Ashram without their knowing that they are being tackled in the divine strategy of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo.

JAGAT KAPADIA

APROPOS OF K. B. SITARAMAYYA'S CONTINUING NEW COMMENTARY ON THE BOOK OF JOB

Dear Dr. Sitaramayya,

Warm and loving greetings from Raj. I have been receiving your letters regularly. I am sorry that I could not write to you earlier. The only reason for the delay is that I could not write to you without sending you some comments on your learned work. I had taken some time out and had gone, once again, through your commentary and had made some notes. And now finally I have managed to write them down and send them to you. Hope you will appreciate my comments and I hope they will be useful to you in case you are thinking of bringing out a book. Whatever I am going to write below I am doing it with a deep sense of appreciation, including the comments that might appear as negative.

First, I will comment as I go along through your commentary. The page numbers refer to the page numbers of the series of your commentary as they appeared in *Mother India*. At the end I hope to make some general comments, if I feel the need.

I am not very familiar with "Maha Bhagavata" and so I would not know if there are texts there that would be more appropriate than the one you cite. But the text you quote seems to bring out the main theme of the Book of Job, at least as you seem to have perceived it, and quite consistently so. (And the quotation from C. D. Lewis on p. 467 seems to reiterate the same point at an appropriate juncture.)

P. 33. Your comparison of Job with Abraham is an interesting one. I do see that there are different rungs in the ladder of man's relationship with God, but I am not sure if the words you use—moral, religious, spiritual—are adequate to express them. Maybe in the Hindu theological parlance they have the nuances that you seem to take for granted. For the sake of a wider public, it would be better if you clarify and define these terms and the corresponding stages of man's relationship with God. Because these distinctions seem to be significant in your overall perspective on the theme of Job. You do come back to it in pp. 246, 333, 640, etc.

P. 34: Quite aptly and very creatively, you defend the unity and integrity of the present text of Job on the basis of the theme. "evolution of the soul" In my limited reading experience, this is very original and it could be your unique contribution to the study on Job. However, I wonder whether you should dedicate more space to this issue, either at this juncture or at the end of the commentary.

P. 35. Your application of the Indian psychological categories to describe the personality of Job is also creative and original and it does match your overall perspective of the theme.

P. 104: I fail to grasp your intention in your dispute with Terrien regarding "the statement of the Adversary"! You may disagree with the theme of "disinter-

ested religion” as Terrien and others have perceived it. But, you are making them say things which they in fact *are not* saying—“to make Satan greater than God”. I think it is not so uncommon in literature to make the antagonist/villain utter “the basic verse of the whole book”. It is definitely ironical, but not certainly abnormal. Both from the point of view of literature and the concerns of theology, I don’t think one could exclude the theme of “disinterested religion”. In your recent reading of Gutiérrez’s commentary On Job, you would have encountered it once again and it comes pretty close to what we call “Nishkama karma”. In my opinion, the genius who was responsible for the final text has produced a fabulous but a complex fabric weaving into it a variety of themes. What would be worthwhile is to study if there is a harmony among these themes and a point of convergence.

P. 105: Your comment on the verses of 11 and 12 of Ch. 1 has a very deep insight. I think one of the problems of the Book of Job is the sudden shift in the character of Job—from the Job of the narrative prologue to the Job of the poetic section. And your insight seems to solve this puzzle. (You say the same thing in slightly different words on p. 246 while discussing Ch. 3.) One may, however, question your insight on the basis of exegesis and textual evidence. But I firmly believe that in the art of interpretation such imaginative and intuitive insights play a more important role than the dry scientific exegesis. (And you are well aware of this as you yourself say on p. 564 in another context that “Precision is a laudable aim. But an experience is communicated not to the intellect alone.”) I liked it very much.

P. 246: (towards the end of the page) Your dispute on the western concept of body and soul is very brief and not clear at all. It is ironical that you attribute the confusion of religious and moral life with the spiritual to the western mind, because they blame us, the orientals, for such a confusion. If the reality is so interrelated and not a single entity then there is no surprise that there is a “confusion” among the concepts that designate the various aspects and dimensions of that reality. After this, you proceed to make a brief statement which may be obvious to you but not to others. So, this paragraph needs a little clarification.

P. 250: This time, in your criticism of Terrien, I take your side and congratulate you for capturing the essential meaning of life and death in the *Old Testament* as union with God and alienation from God respectively. And this does give a spiritual depth to the lamentation of Job in Ch. 1.

P. 330: (Job 4 1-6) I think you have rightly grasped the intention behind Eliphaz’s reference to Job’s past. I also think it is a common human experience that we find it quite easy to counsel others but find it extremely difficult to apply the counsel to our own personal life!

P. 334 (towards the end of the page): You rightly and beautifully emphasize the mystery of God’s ways *both* with the good and with the wicked. One of the greatest temptations of theology in all religions is to make God fit our puny little mind and its logic, its concept of order and justice. You yourself quite aptly

quote Sri Aurobindo while discussing the visions Eliphaz describes on p. 336 and while discussing 9 4 on p. 569 But the quotation at the end of the page sounds ironic and sarcastic!

Pp 403, 406 & 726: Another problem in the Book of Job is the question of “mediator” that Job talks about in 5.1, 9.33, 16 33 and 19.25. Whom does he refer to? Is it a prophetic reference to Christ? That would be a pious Christian reading, which I don’t subscribe to. Is it someone other than God? I don’t think so either. Some say that Job refers to God himself, the God as Job had experienced back in his good old days, the God who was present with him as against the God who seems to be absent now Perhaps it is Gutiérrez who brings out the heart of the paradox (which might have been the real experience of Job) when he quotes a Latin American poet. (I don’t remember the exact quotation, but it runs somewhat like this: “I will run away from you my God into the bosom of my God!” See Gutiérrez’s comment on these verses in his “On Job”.)

P 470: (verse 14) I congratulate you for your bold stand against all the other commentators in bringing out the “underlying” simplicity of the verse. Once again you have done well in using your “intuitive reasoning” while the others seemed to have been struggling with their “logical reasoning” and according to the logical reasoning this terse verse is undeniably difficult.

Dear Dr. Sitaramayya, these are some of my comments. Obviously they are not exhaustive. Definitely more could be said about a lot of minor points and insights. Just for an example, your analysis of the characters and the theologies of the three friends of Job, viz., Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, is very perceptive And now, let me make some general comments I was amazed at the fact that you have referred to so many good commentaries (although your dialogue seems to be mainly with Terrien, Scherer and Habel) and at the fact that you are familiar with so many versions of the text (although you seem to have a special attachment to AV. as any professor of English literature would). It is really laudable. You have definitely brought an oriental, specifically Indian, perspective into the reading and interpreting of the rich and complex text of Job. Your sectional summaries are very good. But regarding the verse-by-verse commentary, at times I used to wonder as to why you have entered into certain minute and minor points which don’t seem to have much of a bearing on your major theme! (One last minor comment, more from the practical point of view: At some places the chapter references are not clear. When the commentary appears in book form this difficulty ought to disappear.)

Dr. Sitaramayya, I am very sorry once again for sending these my comments so late. Hope they are useful. I on my part enjoyed reading your commentary and profited a lot from your deep insights. Thank you very much for giving me such an opportunity and such an honour. I keep you and your work in my prayers. May God bless you and grant you success in your endeavour!

PREMAL JYOTI

EARTH HYMN

How long was the waiting, how desperate the searching,
What depth to the desolate hours, what heights to our dreams,
The fond hopes for a good end to strife and toil,
Is there measure to it on this sad terrain?
Is there, where you reign?
Who measures the tears shed and who the blood spilt
And who records the cries of woe and the rise of pain?
Who makes weight of desperation, of the biting pangs of needs,
Who heeds the calls for rescue, when terror strikes the prey
And horror roams at large?

The pains of the world cry in my heart,
Knowledge of eons rushes through my veins,
All memories are stored in my cells' labyrinthine rounds,
In my bones all the lands live, rivers flow, mountains rise,
The earth's heart breaks in mine,
In me the loved ones part, never to meet another time,
Men go to war, the women wait, children's sad eyes look into mine,
Spears of questions make their home in my wounds,
Why those born to love and to live must suffer, leave and die?
Who made enemies of brothers and kin,
Who shattered their lands and lives?
Where did all the laughters go and their happy dance?
The devil took their joys away, their cries trouble my nights,
The peoples weep in my heavy eyes.

Oh High Lord of our souls, Mother of love in Heaven high,
I bring you prayers from this earth, made of tears and sighs,
Prayers made for bread and good, prayers made for love,
I gathered these and enshrined them in my living heart.
Take my treasured archives, accept my burden—
Empty my heavy store! See, large passions burn through my frame,
Flames of high aims from me rise, aspirations mount to the sky,
My arms outstretched, like a cross,
From my bosom love for all things flows,
Great thoughts get born in my head, utterances in my breath,
Wondrous music wafts from my hair,
My eyes glow like the suns.
Fountains of coloured jets spring where my feet tread—
Beauty is born everywhere...

My smiles heal all wounds, abolish pain,
 Make all things good and right.

Great Mother, who bore me, High Lord, who made of me
 An instrument for your heart's strings,
 Through me you turned all pain into joy!
 Lord of the Worlds, Purushottama! Mother of Light,
 Eternal Suns to this darkened world,
 Beacons to the searching souls,
 Lords of my being—
 Salutations,
 Om.

GEORGETTE COTY

ALCHEMY

No sun or sun—no moon or moon—no stars
 Or stars—it's but appearance; they are there,
 That we in deepest night may not despair
 And find their light within our silent hearts.

When veiled from us the light of sun and moon,
 The night may last still long, the stars may fade,
 Man's mind may be pursued by phantoms' shade,
 The time has come, a new world will be born

Meanwhile all things will change upon our earth,
 No single stone escape this alchemy,
 For Nature's deepest longing will give birth
 To earth's new race, that lives in ecstasy.

All contraries will find that they are one,
 And all opposing forces will have gone

RUTH

IN MEMORY OF KISHOR GANDHI

DR. KISHOR GANDHI, born on March 5, 1915, passed away at 3 p m on August 13, 1996. As is well known to the readers, he compiled and edited the letters of Sri Aurobindo and published them in six large volumes: *Letters on Yoga* (in three volumes), *Sri Aurobindo on Himself*, *Sri Aurobindo on the Mother* and *Letters on Poetry, Literature and Art*. Further, he edited a book called *Lights on Life-Problems* giving Sri Aurobindo's answers to various life-questions. He was also the author of *Social Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo and the New Age* and *The Fallacy of Karl Marx*. Kishor Gandhi was closely associated with the Sri Aurobindo Ashram from the early forties. He settled down in the Ashram in the early fifties and resided there till his passing.

When the Sri Aurobindo International University Centre was established at Pondicherry in 1952, the Mother chose him to be the professor of Sociology and Political Science and to teach Sri Aurobindo's *The Human Cycle*. Later on he taught there many other subjects such as Sri Aurobindo's *The Life Divine*, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, *Essays on the Gita*, *Letters on Yoga* and *The Foundations of Indian Culture*.

The following piece of writing is a personal tribute rendered to Kishor Gandhi's memory by one of his friends and ardent admirers. It has been penned on the day following his demise, at a time when his lifeless body was still resting on his bed.

Kishorbhai, Where Are You? Do You Hear Me?

On February 26 our dear Ashram-sister Paru Patil, the Registrar of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, suddenly passed away after a very brief illness. You were not keeping well at that time. It was difficult for you even to walk over a short distance with steady steps. But you asked me to help you go to Paru's house to pay respects to her body. We walked together the two hundred metres to Paru's place, climbed the stairs to reach the room where her body was lying in state and you stood by our departed sister's bed for a long time.

When we came down and started walking towards your house, I casually remarked. "How strange! She and I conversed together for a long time only a few days back and she is no more!" You turned to me and softly said: "No, Jugal, you must not say, 'She is no more', you should rather say in Sri Aurobindo's words, '*Transut, non perit*'—'departed but not in annihilation lost.'" I smiled and nodded in assent. For, has not Sri Aurobindo reminded us "For the spiritual seeker death is only a passage from one form of life to another, and none is dead but only departed" (*Letters on Yoga*, p 463)

Kishorbhai, barely five months and a half after that memorable day I am now standing by your flower-decked bed where you have been lying in peaceful

slumber. I hear people outside your road-side window whispering amongst themselves, "Kishor Gandhi is dead." Dead? How can that be? For, "Life only is, or death is life disguised" Kishorbhai, I know very well your 'pilgrim's journey' continues with unabated vigour. And this journey will not end, cannot end, till, in Sri Aurobindo's words:

An artist Godhead here
Ever remoulds himself in diviner shapes,
Unwilling to cease

Till all is done for which the stars were made,
Till the heart discovers God
And the soul knows itself And even then
There is no end

(*Collected Poems*, p 108)

Kishorbhai, your serene face with its eyes closed in relaxation reminds me of the words the Mother wrote down on the eve of the day you were born She writes *inter alia* in her Prayer of March 4, 1915:

" just a poor child is left, capable only of nestling in Thy arms and sleeping there in the sweet dreamless sleep where nothing else exists but Thou."

This seems to be your present state, Kishorbhai—lying blissfully in profound slumber on the Mother's lap But this cannot be the last chapter of the drama of your existence. You will wake up again after "a fruitful stage of death" and a period of "reconstituting sleep" and come back to participate actively in the Master's and the Mother's unfolding divine Action upon earth. For, you knew very well that on one August 13 of the past, incidentally the day of your departure, the Mother prayed to the Divine on behalf of all of us:

"Transfigure and illumine. Work this supreme miracle so long awaited, and break all ignorant egoisms, awaken Thy sublime flame in every heart Do not let us become benumbed in a tranquil serenity. We ought not to take any rest before Thy new and sovereign Love is manifested.

"Listen to our prayer, answer our call: Come!"

(*Prayers and Meditations*, p. 219)

Kishorbhai, was this your prayer when you closed your eyes at 3 p.m. on 13 August 1996? I do not know. But this I do know that during the last few days before your departure, you were remembering those sweet old days when the Mother used to visit your place on your 'Bonne Fête' anniversaries. When

somebody asked: “Kishorbhai, why don’t you write your reminiscences of the Mother?” you kept quiet for a few seconds and then simply smiled.

Kishorbhai, do you know we are all grateful to Amal Kiran [K. D. Sethna] for keeping on record one of those Bonne Fête interviews? This is what he writes in one of his old Diary Notes of 1953:

“Friday, 6th March—Yesterday was Kishor Gandhi’s birthday. But Mother did not give him an interview that evening. She was coming to his room the next day—that is today.

“In the evening she came to our house to meet K.G. I sat with Pavitra in my room, while S.A. [Soli Albles] shut himself up in his. After a few minutes I felt a tremendous pressure on my head—as if an extraordinary descent had been taking place. In all these two and a half weeks in the Ashram I have never felt so strong a push from overhead. The Mother seemed to be emanating a gigantic power from where she sat [in Kishor’s room]. K.G. told me afterwards that he had never had such a wonderful interview before” (*The Mother Past Present Future*, pp 72, 73).

Yes, Kishorbhai, such were the interviews given you by the Mother and these you were remembering during the last days of your terminal illness. Very few people know that you have been a child of the Mother to the very marrow of your being. Such undiluted and unreserved love for our Mother I have rarely seen in any of my acquaintances. How many evenings, while passing by your residence on my way to the Ashram, I stopped near your road-side window and was almost on the point of calling you when suddenly a sublime sight used to grip my attention and I decided to withdraw in silence without disturbing you. I used to see you sitting in your chair in an upright posture with a picture of the Mother placed in front of you on your table; you were holding the two sides of the framed picture with your outstretched hands and gazing intently into the eyes of the Mother.

In the ‘Knowledge’ Building too where you used to go to take your classes with the Higher Course students, you had placed a large-sized picture of the Mother on a table and you used to look at it standing in front of it in your leisure time.

Kishorbhai, the Mother’s words settled everything for you. Even if you had some reservations before on any issue whatsoever, once you heard from the Mother what she had to say about it, that was the end of the affair. You never felt like contesting any of the Mother’s opinions or judgments. I still remember, when the Mother once wrote to Huta that Sri Aurobindo was a part of the Lord, you got disconcerted for a moment; for, your love for the Master was equally boundless. But you regained your composure in no time and told me that as the Mother had written so there must be some deep truth in her statement which

may not be comprehensible to our pigmy perception.

And your fidelity to Sri Aurobindo's directions? It had to be seen to be believed. In connection with the task of compiling and editing Sri Aurobindo's letters to his disciples, all the original letters or authentic copies of the originals were made available to you in their unedited and "unexpurgated" form which contained many confidential personal references. Sri Aurobindo asked you not to publish these portions nor to show these to any other sadhak nor even to speak about them to anyone ever in the future. And you faithfully carried out Sri Aurobindo's instructions. Till the day of your passing, nothing of this sort came out of your mouth or pen during the last five decades.

Kishorbhai, your deep but undemonstrative love and adoration for Sri Aurobindo and the Mother showed themselves in sharp outline when someone complained to you about the dinginess of the narrow strip of bedroom that was allotted to you by the Ashram authorities. The room does not have sufficient ventilation, being closed almost entirely on three sides but having two openings to the West facing the Ashram Main Building. The visitor queried: "How do you manage to live in this kitchen-like room during the sultry months of summer? Why don't you shift to a better-ventilated residence?"

Kishorbhai, your reply was astonishingly disarming. You merely said, "Shift from this room? What are you saying?" and then moved near your open window and looked up to Sri Aurobindo's Room and the Mother's Balcony on the opposite side of the road. The interlocutor immediately understood that you considered yourself thrice blessed that you had been allotted this room having its privileged location *vis-à-vis* the objects of your constant Darshan and meditation.

Kishorbhai, another remarkable trait of your character was your total faith in the curative power of the Mother's Grace. Once you had a virulent bout of eczema invading almost the entire extent of your body from head to foot; and it was not a simple type, it was 'weeping' eczema giving out profuse watery discharge from its vesicles. You decided not to take any medical treatment but to depend entirely on the Mother's action. At regular intervals Sri Aurobindo used to enquire about the state of your health and the Mother used to send to you for dressing purposes cloth-pieces cut from her own *Saris*. Kishorbhai, you were completely cured. Even today Nirod-da remembers with admiration the tenacity of your faith.

Kishorbhai, your memory was simply prodigious and you have been a living mobile encyclopaedia so far as Sri Aurobindo's writings are concerned. You had once asked the Mother: "What should be the spirit and character of education when it is undertaken as a part of the discipline of Yoga?" The Mother's short but pregnant reply was: "Read Sri Aurobindo."

Kishorbhai, you have carried out the Mother's instruction with utter faithfulness. How many times, I wonder, you have gone through the entire

corpus of Sri Aurobindo's Works! Every day you used to study two or three pages of *Savitri* and meditate on their content. After your passing I have looked into your copy and found that till the day you took to your bed due to your debilitating sickness, you had read *Savitri*. You had put a double pencil-mark at the end of a line and indicated the date there. Surprisingly the verse of *Savitri* at which you stopped for this life is the most significant line:

“And death a spur towards immortality ”

(Book X, Canto 3, p. 621)

Kishorbhai, your commitment to the Teachings of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo was total and your faith in the ultimate Victory of their mission remained ever intact. Along with that your vision of the glorious destiny of the Ashram in spite of some passing turmoils remained always undimmed.

Almost a year back I wrote a long essay entitled *Sri Aurobindo Ashram at Pondicherry Its Role, Responsibility and Future Destiny (An Insider's Personal View)*. It was divided into twenty-one sections and covered fifty-two pages in typescript. I submitted a copy of this manuscript to each of the four Trustees (Harikantbhai, Manojda, Albertbhai and Parudi) for their perusal.

Kishorbhai, I decided to show my manuscript to you as I used always to do with all my writings in English, for I greatly valued your perspicacious wisdom and critical acumen. You were kind enough to go through my long essay very carefully. But what came as a happy surprise to me was what you wrote to me as your considered comment. That brought out in full measure your unbounded faith in the future glory of our Ashram. Now, when you are no more in the body, let me share your unpublished note with the readers of *Mother India*:

“Jugal,

Your marathon writing on the Ashram is really very well done; it is not only very instructive but also very inspiring, especially in its last section.

“I have thought over the problems you have raised a great deal, and it has raised a number of points in my mind. Instead of mentioning them in detail, I will sum them up in one sentence of Sri Aurobindo which seems to provide the real answer to all these problems: ‘My opinion is that Allah is great and great is the mystery of the universe and things are not what they seem, etc.’ [Underlined by Kishorbhai himself.]

“The Ashram is an epitome of this mystery; so any attempt to unravel it by the human mind is bound to be unfruitful. The only thing to hold on to is this faith: ‘The Ashram is the cradle of the new world.’

“Many thanks for showing me your manuscript—

Kishor.”

Kishorbhai, the Mother and Sri Aurobindo have taught us again and again

to be sincere and skilful workers in the service of the Divine. You tried to put their teaching into living practice to the best of your ability and that too always and in every field of your activity. As the editor of the Annual *Sri Aurobindo Circle* your work has been impeccable, as the organiser of the Seminars and Conferences of the New Age Association your labours against all odds have been beyond comparison; the perfection that you brought into the matter of systematic and sequential arrangement of Sri Aurobindo's letters in the bulky volumes edited by you was so thorough that it elicited the appreciation of both the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. And your work as a teacher in the Ashram Centre of Education? It has been simply unparalleled. Never missed a class unless you were incapacitated by illness, never became late in your attendance; took your class right up to the last available period of the last working day of the academic session every year; noted down in exercise books in the minutest detail all that you taught every day and whatever you allotted as homework to your students: such were you, Kishorbhai.

After you passed away I chanced to open one of your notebooks. There I found on the very first page written in your own hand the following message of the Mother:

“If one does not love work, one is always unhappy in life. In order to be truly happy in life one must love work.”

This has consistently been one of the mottoes of your life; therefore, you have been always basically happy and contented in spite of some rough winds occasionally blowing on the surface.

Kishorbhai, your personality was somewhat complex; it was not easy to unravel it. Many deeper trends of your nature you kept hidden from the unobservant eye. You were not sociable and not at all communicative except to a few dear and intimate friends; and I am privileged to count myself as one of them. To the general run of observers you appeared to be a serious-looking unsmiling person bereft of all sweet and delicate sensibilities.

But, Kishorbhai, those who knew you intimately know very well that inside your gaunt and stiff appearance there dwelt a soft and compassionate and deeply loving heart.

Kishorbhai, may I be allowed to reveal a secret to the readers? Do you know what I have discovered in one of your exercise books? This has given me a peep into your heart. I found to my surprise that on the reverse side of the cover page you had pasted a passport-size picture of a sweetly smiling tiny tot barely five or six years old and that too just above the formulation of the “Students’ Prayer” given by the Mother to the students of our Centre of Education and printed on the back of the cover.

Kishorbhai, what did it signify? Did you look at the smiling face of the child

every day? Did he symbolise for you an “ideal Child” as conceived by the Mother?

A few years back your sister had sent you by mail an auspicious *Rakhi* (wrist band) You had brought it to “Knowledge” where you used to hold your classes and asked one of your students to tie it around your right wrist. While Gayatri Mahapatra was doing it, the stony Himalayas melted and we saw silent tears trickling down your cheeks. Surely that was not your usual figure known to many in the Ashram!

Kishorbhai, once you had asked the Mother: “What is the need of the hour?” The Mother replied in one single word: “SINCERITY”. Yes, sincerity has been the hallmark of your character. You were sincere in all that you said and all that you did. And you were so full of a sense of gratitude. You never forgot any good thing done to you by anybody in the past. How many times you have talked to me about the deep gratitude you bear towards Jayantilal-da for the help he rendered to you when you came to settle down in the Ashram!

You were a sensitive person and felt hurt at others’ actions and words if these seemed to you unjust and undeserved. But after having expressed your opinion firmly but politely you used to withdraw, keep quiet and bear the pain in dignified silence. You never liked to engage in any aggressive disputation.

You were so independent-minded. You used to do all your work yourself without anybody else’s help as far as possible. When you were lying on a Nursing Home bed during your last fatal illness, you were too weak to walk unaided. When the kind-hearted sister in attendance offered to hold you by the hand and thus help you to go to the WC near by, you flatly refused the help and addressed the sister thus: “Why are you trying to persuade me to break my principles? Am I a child to require somebody’s help?” The sister smilingly insisted. “Yes, Kishorbhai, now you *are* a child to us.” You kept quiet.

What is still more striking is that just two hours before you breathed your last, when you had already started panting, the sister came near your bed and offered to feed you a little drink with the help of a spoon. You were too weak at that time but were in your full senses. You insisted: “No, why should *you* make me drink. Please help me to sit up on the bed, I shall sip the drink by myself.” Incidentally those were the last words uttered by you, you would not speak again.

Kishorbhai, you were a man of principles, deep in feelings but not expressive in words. For example, your profound respect for both Nirod-da and Amal-da was so apparent to me; yet you never for a day became eloquent about it before the two senior sadhaks concerned. But it is a fact that on many occasions you used to remind me: “Jugal, even if you have some differences with Amal and Nirod on some questions, never forget that both of them are special recipients of Sri Aurobindo’s boundless Grace.”

Kishorbhai, am I seeking to portray you as a paragon of virtue? No, how can

I do that? I know you were painfully aware that all of us, children of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, who have, in the felicitous expressions of Amal-Kiran, “ventured forth on the delightfully difficult path of the Integral Yoga” and who are the “toilers towards the depths and heights” have, each one of us, his feet of clay to start with and have to carry for a long period of time his own bundle of frailties and foibles. The only difference is that some sadhaks are complacent about it while some others are not. Kishorbhai, you belonged to the second category. You were not blind to what others saw in you as your weak points.

Yes, you had in one part of your character a streak of childlike unreasonableness which at times exasperated those who had to deal with you. But that was only a minor and superficial element in your personality; behind there was pure gold. But all that is past now.

In a few hours’ time your lifeless material frame will be taken to the cremation ground. We two shall never again meet for discussing various topics. No one will ever again see your dignified figure gracing the First Floor Central Hall of the “Knowledge” Building. Nirod-da will never again ask me after seeing your windows shut: “Jugal, how is it that I do not see any light in Kishor’s room at night? Why are his windows closed?”

Let it be as it has been the Mother’s Will to ordain. But all this absence is only on the physical plane and that too not for eternity. All of us will meet again at the feet of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, albeit in different names and different forms. For has not the Mother assured us:

“We have all met in previous lives. Otherwise we would not have come together in this life. We are of one family and have worked through ages for the victory of the Divine and its manifestation upon earth” (*Questions and Answers*, MCW, Vol 3, p 3).

So, Kishorbhai, on this day of the cremation of your body I would not mourn your departure from our midst nor would I bid you “Goodbye! Adieu!” I would rather say: “*Au revoir!* Till we meet again!”

I shall fondly cherish your love and affection for me and try to emulate your whole-hearted devotion to the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. Repose peacefully at the feet of the Mother in your psychic sleep.

JUGAL KISHORE MUKHERJEE

Students' Section

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

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FUNDAMENTAL ASPECTS OF SRI AUROBINDO'S AND THE MOTHER'S TEACHINGS

THE OBJECT OF INTEGRAL YOGA

Speech by Anirban Deb

AMONG the fundamental issues of Sri Aurobindo's yoga, as of all yogic systems, the most fundamental is the question of the object or the aim of yoga, and it is on this subject that I shall try to present to you a line of thought in this speech.

The initial question we have to answer before we start doing yoga is: Why do we want to do it? What is the reason, the purpose, the intention that impels us to undertake it? All spiritual seekers, to whatever path they may belong, will give a common answer to this question. They will say that union with the Divine or realisation of God or the supreme Self is the object of their endeavour

But this answer by itself is not sufficient, for it raises a further question: Why do we want to unite with the Divine or to realise God? What is our object or motive in doing so? To this second question there is no common answer; different seekers give different answers to it; there are in fact innumerable answers.

This means that though all spiritual seekers take up yoga with the common aim of union with the Divine, they do not seek that union for the same purpose or reason. All seek God but with different motives.

Since there are several motives or objects for seeking the Divine, which of them are right? And even among the right ones, if all are not of equal value, which one is of the highest value or of the supreme worth? In brief, what is the highest motive or object of yoga?

Before we try to find an answer to this centrally important question from Sri Aurobindo's viewpoint, let us first take a brief note of some of the most important motives of seeking the Divine, generally accepted by spiritual seekers. There are some, a very large number in fact, who seek the Divine for what is traditionally known as liberation—Mukti, Moksha. Some of these seek this liberation from the bonds of the individual ego in the freedom of the universal or cosmic Self; others try to go beyond both the individuality and the universe to

merge in the supreme Transcendent. There are others who seek the Divine for self-perfection or self-fulfilment (Siddhi), sometimes here on earth but more often in some supra-physical heaven. Others seek Him for Knowledge, others for Power, others for Ananda, Love, Beauty. Some seek Him for helping humanity or service of mankind. And there are several other motives traditionally accepted and followed by spiritual seekers. Undoubtedly, all these are very high motives for seeking the Divine, but are they the highest? Do they bring to us the fullest and complete realisation of the Divine?

Sri Aurobindo says that they do not. However high they may be, they do not give us the total and integral perfection; they stop short of the supreme realisation.

You will naturally ask. What then is the highest motive which will give us the supreme realisation and how is it different from other generally accepted motives that I have mentioned?

Instead of answering these questions in my own words, I prefer to read out to you a fairly long writing of Sri Aurobindo himself in which he has answered them very precisely. In this writing he refers to himself in the third person although it is his own writing.

Sri Aurobindo's Teaching and Method of Sadhana

The teaching of Sri Aurobindo starts from that of the ancient sages of India that behind the appearances of the universe there is the Reality of a Being and Consciousness, a Self of all things, one and eternal. All beings are united in that One Self and Spirit but divided by a certain separativity of consciousness, an ignorance of their true Self and Reality in the mind, life and body. It is possible by a certain psychological discipline to remove this veil of separative consciousness and become aware of the true Self, the Divinity within us and all.

Sri Aurobindo's teaching states that this One Being and Consciousness is involved here in Matter. Evolution is the method by which it liberates itself; consciousness appears in what seems to be inconscient, and once having appeared is self-impelled to grow higher and higher and at the same time to enlarge and develop towards a greater and greater perfection. Life is the first step of this release of consciousness; mind is the second; but the evolution does not finish with mind, it awaits a release into something greater, a consciousness which is spiritual and supramental. The next step of the evolution must be towards the development of Supermind and Spirit as the dominant power in the conscious being. For only then will the involved Divinity in things release itself entirely and it become possible for life to manifest perfection.

But while the former steps in evolution were taken by Nature without a conscious will in the plant and animal life, in man Nature becomes able to evolve by a conscious will in the instrument. It is not, however, by the mental will in

man that this can be wholly done, for the mind goes only to a certain point and after that can only move in a circle. A conversion has to be made, a turning of the consciousness by which mind has to change into the higher principle. This method is to be found through the ancient psychological discipline and practice of Yoga. In the past, it has been attempted by a drawing away from the world and a disappearance into the height of the Self or Spirit. Sri Aurobindo teaches that a descent of the higher principle is possible which will not merely release the spiritual Self out of the world, but release it in the world, replace the mind's ignorance or its very limited knowledge by a supramental Truth-Consciousness which will be a sufficient instrument of the inner Self and make it possible for the human being to find himself dynamically as well as inwardly and grow out of his still animal humanity into a diviner race. The psychological discipline of Yoga can be used to that end by opening all the parts of the being to a conversion or transformation through the descent and working of the higher still concealed supramental principle.

This, however, cannot be done at once or in a short time or by any rapid or miraculous transformation. Many steps have to be taken by the seeker before the supramental descent is possible. Man lives mostly in his surface mind, life and body, but there is an inner being within him with greater possibilities to which he has to awake—for it is only a very restricted influence from it that he receives now and that pushes him to a constant pursuit of a greater beauty, harmony, power and knowledge. The first process of Yoga is therefore to open the ranges of this inner being and to live from there outward, governing his outward life by an inner light and force. In doing so he discovers in himself his true soul which is not this outer mixture of mental, vital and physical elements but something of the Reality behind them, a spark from the one Divine Fire. He has to learn to live in his soul and purify and orientate by its drive towards the Truth the rest of the nature. There can follow afterwards an opening upward and descent of a higher principle of the Being. But even then it is not at once the full supramental Light and Force. For there are several ranges of consciousness between the ordinary human mind and the supramental Truth-Consciousness. These intervening ranges have to be opened up and their power brought down into the mind, life and body. Only afterwards can the full power of the Truth-Consciousness work in the nature. The process of this self-discipline or Sadhana is therefore long and difficult, but even a little of it is so much gained because it makes the ultimate release and perfection more possible.

There are many things belonging to older systems that are necessary on the way—an opening of the mind to a greater wideness and to the sense of the Self and the Infinite, an emergence into what has been called the cosmic consciousness, mastery over the desires and passions, an outward asceticism is not essential, but the conquest of desire and attachment and a control over the body and its needs, greeds and instincts are indispensable. There is a combination of

the principles of the old systems, the way of knowledge through the mind's discernment between Reality and the appearance, the heart's way of devotion, love and surrender and the way of works turning the will away from motives of self-interest to the Truth and the service of a greater Reality than the ego. For the whole being has to be trained so that it can respond and be transformed when it is possible for that greater Light and Force to work in the nature.

In this discipline, the inspiration of the Master, and in the difficult stages his control and his presence are indispensable—for it would be impossible otherwise to go through it without much stumbling and error which would prevent all chance of success. The Master is one who has risen to a higher consciousness and being and he is often regarded as its manifestation or representative. He not only helps by his teaching and still more by his influence and example but by a power to communicate his own experience to others.

This is Sri Aurobindo's teaching and method of practice. It is not his object to develop any one religion or to amalgamate the older religions or to found any new religion—for any of these things would lead away from his central purpose. The one aim of his Yoga is an inner self-development by which each one who follows it can in time discover the One Self in all and evolve a higher consciousness than the mental, a spiritual and supramental consciousness which will transform and divinise human nature. (*On Himself*, Cent Ed, Vol 26, pp 95-7)