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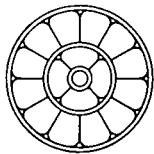
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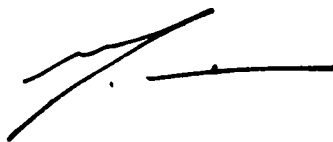


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled



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MOTHER INDIA

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No. 6

“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”

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THE WEDDING

As when a soul is merging into God
To live in Him for ever and know His joy,
Her consciousness was a wave of him alone
And all her separate self was lost in his.
As a starry heaven encircles happy earth,
He shut her into himself in a circle of bliss
And shut the world into himself and her.
A boundless isolation made them one,
He was aware of her enveloping him
And let her penetrate his very soul,
As is a world by the world's spirit filled,
As the mortal wakes into Eternity,
As the finite opens to the Infinite.
Thus were they in each other lost awhile,
Then drawing back from their long ecstasy's trance
Came into a new self and a new world.
Each now was a part of the other's unity
The world was but their twin self-finding's scene
Or their own wedded being's vaster frame.
On the high glowing cupola of the day
Fate tied a knot with morning's halo threads
While by the ministry of an auspice-hour
Heart-bound before the sun, their marriage fire,
The wedding of the eternal Lord and Spouse
Took place again on earth in human forms:
In a new act of the drama of the world
The united Two began a greater age.
In the silence and murmur of that emerald world
And the mutter of the priest-wind's sacred verse,
Amid the choral whisperings of the leaves
Love's twain had joined together and grew one.
The natural miracle was wrought once more:
In the immutable ideal world
One human moment was eternal made

Then down the narrow path where their lives had met
He led and showed to her her future world,
Love's refuge and corner of happy solitude.
At the path's end through a green cleft in the trees
She saw a clustering line of hermit-roofs

And looked now first on her heart's future home,
 The thatch that covered the life of Satyavan
 Adorned with creepers and red climbing flowers
 It seemed a sylvan beauty in her dreams
 Slumbering with brown body and tumbled hair
 In her chamber inviolate of emerald peace.
 Around it stretched the forest's anchorite mood
 Lost in the depths of its own solitude.
 Then moved by the deep joy she could not speak,
 A little depth of it quivering in her words,
 Her happy voice cried out to Satyavan
 "My heart will stay here on this forest verge
 And close to this thatched roof while I am far
 Now of more wandering it has no need
 But I must haste back to my father's house
 Which soon will lose one loved accustomed tread
 And listen in vain for a once cherished voice.
 For soon I shall return nor ever again
 Oneness must sever its recovered bliss
 Or fate sunder our lives while life is ours."
 Once more she mounted on the carven car
 And under the ardour of a fiery noon
 Less bright than the splendour of her thoughts and dreams
 She sped swift-reined, swift-hearted but still saw
 In still lucidities of sight's inner world
 Through the cool scented wood's luxurious gloom
 On shadowy paths between great rugged trunks
 Pace towards a tranquil clearing Satyavan.
 A nave of trees enshrined the hermit thatch,
 The new deep covert of her felicity,
 Preferred to heaven her soul's temple and home.
 This now remained with her, her heart's constant scene.

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Savitri*, SABCL, Vol 29, pp 410-12)

THE IDEAL OF THE KARMAYOGIN

A NATION is building in India today before the eyes of the world so swiftly, so palpably that all can watch the process and those who have sympathy and intuition distinguish the forces at work, the materials in use, the lines of the divine architecture. The nation is not a new race raw from the workshop of Nature or created by modern circumstances. One of the oldest races and greatest civilisations on this earth, the most indomitable in vitality, the most fecund in greatness, the deepest in life, the most wonderful in potentiality, after taking into itself numerous sources of strength from foreign strains of blood and other types of human civilisation, is now seeking to lift itself for good into an organised national unity. Formerly a congeries of kindred nations with a single life and a single culture, always by the law of this essential oneness tending to unity, always by its excess of fecundity engendering fresh diversities and divisions, it has never yet been able to overcome permanently the almost insuperable obstacles to the organisation of a continent. The time has now come when those obstacles can be overcome. The attempt which our race has been making throughout its long history, it will now make under entirely new circumstances. A keen observer would predict its success because the only important obstacles have been or are in the process of being removed. But we go farther and believe that it is sure to succeed because the freedom, unity and greatness of India have now become necessary to the world. This is the faith in which the *Karmayogin* puts its hand to the work and will persist in it, refusing to be discouraged by difficulties however immense and apparently insuperable. We believe that God is with us and in that faith we shall conquer. We believe that humanity needs us and it is the love and service of humanity, of our country, of the race, of our religion that will purify our heart and inspire our action in the struggle.

The task we set before ourselves is not mechanical but moral and spiritual. We aim not at the alteration of a form of government but at the building up of a nation. Of that task politics is a part, but only a part. We shall devote ourselves not to politics alone, nor to social questions alone, nor to theology or philosophy or literature or science by themselves, but we include all these in one entity which we believe to be all-important, the *dharmā*, the national religion which we also believe to be universal. There is a mighty law of life, a great principle of human evolution, a body of spiritual knowledge and experience of which India has always been destined to be guardian, exemplar and missionary. This is the *sanātana dharmā*, the eternal religion. Under the stress of alien impacts she has largely lost hold not of the structure of that *dharmā*, but of its living reality. For the religion of India is nothing if it is not lived. It has to be applied not only to life, but to the whole of life, its spirit has to enter into and mould our society, our politics, our literature, our science, our individual character, affections and aspirations. To understand the heart of this *dharmā*, to experience it as a truth, to feel the high emotions to which it rises and to express and execute it in life is what we understand by *Karmayoga*. We believe that it is to make the *yoga* the ideal of human life that India rises today; by the *yoga* she will get the strength to realise her freedom, unity and

greatness, by the *yoga* she will keep the strength to preserve it. It is a spiritual revolution we foresee and the material is only its shadow and reflex.

The European sets great store by machinery. He seeks to renovate humanity by schemes of society and systems of government, he hopes to bring about the millennium by an act of Parliament. Machinery is of great importance, but only as a working means for the spirit within, the force behind. The nineteenth century in India aspired to political emancipation, social renovation, religious vision and rebirth, but it failed because it adopted Western motives and methods, ignored the spirit, history and destiny of our race and thought that by taking over European education, European machinery, European organisation and equipment we should reproduce in ourselves European prosperity, energy and progress. We of the twentieth century reject the aims, ideals and methods of the anglicised nineteenth, precisely because we accept its experience. We refuse to make an idol of the present, we look before and after, backward to the mighty history of our race, forward to the grandiose history for which that destiny has prepared it.

We do not believe that our political salvation can be attained by enlargement of Councils, introduction of the elective principle, colonial self-government or any other formula of European politics. We do not deny the use of some of these things as instruments, as weapons in a political struggle, but we deny their sufficiency whether as instruments or ideals and look beyond to an end which they do not serve except in a trifling degree. They might be sufficient if it were our ultimate destiny to be an outlying province of the British Empire or a dependent adjunct of European civilisation. That is a future which we do not think it worth making any sacrifice to accomplish. We believe, on the other hand, that India is destined to work out her own independent life and civilisation, to stand in the forefront of the world and solve the political, social, economic and moral problems which Europe has failed to solve, yet the pursuit of which and the feverish passage in that pursuit from experiment to experiment, from failure to failure she calls her progress. Our means must be as great as our ends and the strength to discover and use the means so as to attain the end can only be found by seeking the eternal source of strength in ourselves.

We do not believe that by changing the machinery so as to make our society the ape of Europe we shall effect social renovation. Widow-remarriage, substitution of class for caste, adult-marriage, intermarriages, interdining and the other nostrums of the social reformer are mechanical changes which, whatever their merits or demerits, cannot by themselves save the soul of the nation alive or stay the course of degradation and decline. It is the spirit alone that saves, and only by becoming great and free in heart can we become socially and politically great and free.

We do not believe that by multiplying new sects limited within the narrower and inferior ideas of religion imported from the West or by creating organisations for the perpetuation of the mere dress and body of Hinduism we can recover our spiritual health, energy and greatness. The world moves through an indispensable interregnum of free thought and materialism to a new synthesis of religious thought and experience,

a new religious world-life free from intolerance, yet full of faith and fervour, accepting all forms of religion because it has an unshakable faith in the One. The religion which embraces Science and faith, Theism, Christianity, Mahomedanism and Buddhism and yet is none of these, is that to which the World-Spirit moves. In our own, which is the most sceptical and the most believing of all, the most sceptical because it has questioned and experimented the most, the most believing because it has the deepest experience and the most varied and positive spiritual knowledge,—that wider Hinduism which is not a dogma or combination of dogmas but a law of life, which is not a social framework but the spirit of a past and future social evolution, which rejects nothing but insists on testing and experiencing everything and, when tested and experienced, turning it to the soul's uses, in this Hinduism we find the basis of the future world-religion. This *sanātana dharma* has many scriptures, Veda, Vedānta, Gīta, Upanishad, Darshana, Purāna, Tantra, nor could it reject the Bible or the Koran, but its real, most authoritative scripture is in the heart in which the Eternal has His dwelling. It is in our inner spiritual experiences that we shall find the proof and source of the world's Scriptures, the law of knowledge, love and conduct, the basis and inspiration of Karmayoga.

Our aim will therefore be to help in building up India for the sake of humanity—this is the spirit of the Nationalism which we profess and follow. We say to humanity: "The time has come when you must take the great step and rise out of a material existence into the higher, deeper and wider life towards which humanity moves. The problems which have troubled mankind can only be solved by conquering the kingdom within, not by harnessing the forces of Nature to the service of comfort and luxury, but by mastering the forces of the intellect and the spirit, by vindicating the freedom of man within as well as without and by conquering from within external Nature. For that work the resurgence of Asia is necessary, therefore Asia rises. For that work the freedom and greatness of India are essential, therefore she claims her destined freedom and greatness, and it is to the interest of all humanity, not excluding England, that she should wholly establish her claim."

We say to the nation: "It is God's will that we should be ourselves and not Europe. We have sought to regain life by following the law of another being than our own. We must return and seek the sources of life and strength within ourselves. We must know our past and recover it for the purposes of our future. Our business is to realise ourselves first and to mould everything to the law of India's eternal life and nature. It will therefore be the object of the *Karmayogin* to read the heart of our religion, our society, our philosophy, politics, literature, art, jurisprudence, science, thought, everything that was and is ours, so that we may be able to say to ourselves and our nation, 'This is our *dharma*.' We shall review European civilisation entirely from the standpoint of Indian thought and knowledge and seek to throw off from us the dominating stamp of the Occident, what we have to take from the West we shall take as Indians. And the *dharma* once discovered, we shall strive our utmost not only to profess but to live, in our individual actions, in our social life, in our political endeavours."

We say to the individual and especially to the young who are now arising to do India's work, the world's work, God's work: "You cannot cherish these ideals, still less can you fulfil them if you subject your minds to European ideas or look at life from the material standpoint. Materially you are nothing, spiritually you are everything. It is only the Indian who can believe everything, dare everything, sacrifice everything. First, therefore, become Indians. Recover the patrimony of your forefathers. Recover the Aryan thought, the Aryan discipline, the Aryan character, the Aryan life. Recover the Vedanta, the Gita, the Yoga. Recover them not only in intellect or sentiment but in your lives. Live them and you will be great and strong, mighty, invincible and fearless. Neither life nor death will have any terrors for you. Difficulty and impossibility will vanish from your vocabularies. For it is in the spirit that strength is eternal and you must win back the kingdom of yourselves, the inner Swaraj, before you can win back your outer empire. There the Mother dwells and She waits for worship that She may give strength. Believe in Her, serve Her, lose your wills in Hers, your egoism in the greater ego of the country, your separate selfishness in the service of humanity. Recover the source of all strength in yourselves and all else will be added to you, social soundness, intellectual pre-eminence, political freedom, the mastery of human thought, the hegemony of the world."

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Karmayogin*, SABCL, Vol 2, pp 16-21)

OM IS THE ETERNAL

ओमिति ब्रह्म । ओमितीदं सर्वम् । ओमित्येतदनुकृतिर्हं स्म वा अप्यो श्रावयेत्याश्रावयन्ति । ओमिति सामानि गायन्ति । ओम् शोमिति शस्त्राणि शंसन्ति । ओमित्यध्वर्युः प्रतिगरं प्रतिगृणाति । ओमिति ब्रह्मा प्रसूति । ओमित्यग्निहोत्रमनुजानाति । ओमिति ब्राह्मणः प्रवक्ष्यन्नाह ब्रह्मोपाप्नवानीति । ब्रह्मैवोपाप्नोति ॥

OM is the Eternal, OM is all this universe. OM is the syllable of assent saying, 'OM' let us hear,' they begin the citation With OM they sing the hymns of the Sama; with OM SHOM they pronounce the Shastra. With OM the priest officiating at the sacrifice says the response With OM Brahma begins creation.¹ With OM one sanctions the burnt offering. With OM the Brahman ere he expound the Knowledge, cries "May I attain the Eternal." The Eternal verily he attains

SRI AUROBINDO

(*The Upanishads*, SABCL, Vol 12, p. 323)

1 Or, with OM the chief priest gives sanction

DYUMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE MOTHER

(Continued from the issue of May 1998)

My dear Mother,

Things are becoming difficult to manage in Aroumé The workers want to do things according to their wish and a sort of negligence has come into the work, there is idleness, laziness, indolence, unwillingness, etc Sincerity is getting clouded everywhere.

Today a thought runs on and on in me. O Mother, tell me, how much am I responsible for this condition in Aroumé and the quarrels between the workers?

I DO not see in what way you are responsible for that.

So often in recent days I was going to get entangled in the network of bad disturbances, but as yet I have resisted it firmly Now I ask for Your help, a help that completely removes all the disturbing elements from the co-workers, so that they may turn towards You

Those who are sincere, I can help and turn them easily towards the Divine.

But where there is insincerity I can do very little And as I told you already, we have only to be patient and wait for the things to become better But surely I do not see why you should get disturbed and in what way your disturbance would help things to be better You know by experience that there is only one way of getting out of confusion and obscurity, it is to remain very quiet and peaceful, firm in the equanimity and to let the storm pass away Rise above these petty quarrels and difficulties and wake up once more in the light and the power of my love which never leaves you.

15 June 1935

My dear Mother,

In all clouds, all difficulties, all obstacles faith in the Divine is the only guide, strength and protection It is faith in the Divine and love that save a sadhak and carry him beyond the dangers to a life of immortal bliss

Fortify my faith, O my dear Mother

Yes, never let anything cloud your faith in my love for you and in my constant presence and help And rise high enough above these difficulties which try to seem big, so that you may see them as they really are, that is to say, very small and insignificant

Always with you

15 June 1935

My dear Mother,

Once more I am out of the clouds of confusion and obscurity. A firm quietude and equanimity and a reliance upon the Divine has dispersed them. The Divine is my strength and force, and I live for the Divine alone

Yes, my child, it is quite true that the Divine is the sole refuge. With Him is absolute safety.

My love and blessings are always with you.

16 June 1935

My dear Mother,

The sword of Damocles hangs over our kitchen. We shall have to remain alert, watchful, full of force, quiet and patient My dear Mother, I am full of confidence in the divine Victory.

Yes, as you say, one must keep up the entire confidence in the Victory of the Divine—and this general Victory will include in itself the personal victory of all those who will have kept faithful and confident.

29 June 1935

My dear Mother,

There is an adverse force in the Ashram that goes from inmate to inmate and it wants only to destroy. When inmates leave the Ashram, it does not go; it only becomes more violent If the inmates remain faithful and sincere, it is bound to go in one second

I ask for the wrath of Mahakali, the intensest love of that warrior Mother, to chase away this obstinate force and free the Ashram from our everyday trouble

The wrath of Mahakali manifests from time to time and acts all right, but the effect of it does not last because those who answer to the adverse force do not truly want to be cured They are not sincere .

We have only to remain quiet and confident, unshakeable in our faith and trust in the Divine's Grace

1 July 1935

My dear Mother,

I worked hard today in our courtyard garden and had a new vision: as humans are beings, so also plants are beings, and they too respond in proportion to one's love and affection for them And if a sadhak with insight develops this, it will be a great help in the evolution of Nature

Yes, plants have a consciousness of their own, they are very receptive and respond quite well to the force

Always with you my dear child.

2 July 1935

My dear Mother,

If there were even a little sense of gratitude in the hearts of the inmates, no one would dare to tell You "I am leaving" May the Ashram inmates learn to be grateful and bow down in gratitude to the Divine.

Yes, my dear child, you are quite right—but gratitude is a virtue of the psychic and very few people live in their psychic consciousness

5 July 1935

My dear Mother,

The physical work done in our courtyard these last few weeks has given me a very nice training But I saw people looking at us with contempt when we were soiled and working; it has given me a better understanding of where they stand I wish we would realise that physical work is in no way inferior to meditation In fact if we think of the manifestation, work will surely be an important factor for the new creation

There is no doubt about that.

I am always very happy to see you work physically A good material work not exceeding normal capacities is most useful for keeping a good physical and moral poise

13 July 1935

(To be continued)

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SRI AUROBINDO'S SPIRITUAL SYSTEM AND THE MOTHER'S CONTRIBUTION TO IT

(Continued from the issue of May 1998)

3

(b)

Now we may turn to ponder the Mother's usage of the term "physical mind". She equates it to "the body mind" or "the mind that is in the body" and the letter editorially excerpted from Sri Aurobindo as relevant, with its mention of "this body mind" to signify "an obscure mind of the body, of the very cells, molecules, corpuscles", leaves us in no uncertainty about the Mother's meaning. She means by "the physical mind" the dim mental consciousness which is working in the cells of the body. And such a meaning is even explicitly mentioned by her in April 1967 "there is the consciousness of the physical mind (what I call cellular mind)"¹ But "the physical mind" figuring in the note sent from her by Nolini to me in 1953 is surely a different proposition. What it was may be perceived from her declaration to me on an earlier occasion. "As soon as Sri Aurobindo withdrew from his body, what he had called the Mind of Light got realised in me"² The word "realised" is most important here it stands for the Higher Power's permanent stabilisation, an achieved conversion of the instrument, an entry and settlement of the new consciousness for good.

There is no question of a continuing process. The Mother's "physical mind receiving the supramental light" is not like the physical mind of the two talks which is said to be "on the way to being converted" and in which "the work" for the Supramental's entry and settlement was "being done. .for months" in order to stabilise it. The precise realisation is flash-lit by her comment on the two opening lines of a poem I wrote in the early fifties on the Mind of Light. The lines were.

The core of a deathless Sun is now the brain
And each grey cell bursts to omniscient gold.

The Mother said that the expression here was revelatory, an absolutely inspired and accurate transcription of what had happened, whereas the rest of the poem was an imaginative reconstruction by me of the phenomenon envisaged. Thus the physical

1 *Bulletin*, August 1967, p. 63

2 *The Vision and Work of Sri Aurobindo*, p. 100. To mask the personal element a little, the closing words in the book run "got realised here."

mind concerned was only the mind in its brain-functioning, the cells concerned were solely the brain-cells and not those of the whole body though these must have been partially affected. We are face to face with an understanding of 'the physical mind' dissimilar to the one prompted by 'the body mind'. Not to appreciate the dissimilarity would confuse the sense of 'the Mind of Light' and the place of this Mind's realisation in the progressive stages of the Integral Yoga, the Yoga of Supramental Descent and Transformation.

How is 'the physical mind' of those two talks to be interpreted in the light of Sri Aurobindo's employment of the term in his various letters? We may outline his usage with the help of his *Letters on Yoga*, from which the extract in the *Bulletin's* footnote was made.

In Sri Aurobindo the term covers two aspects. First, 'the externalising mind' (p 326) which is 'a prolongation of the mind proper' (p 340)—that is of 'the thinking mind' which 'does not belong to the physical' but 'is a separate power' (p 327)—into the physical formula. This prolongation he labels as 'the physical mental' (p 373) as distinguished from 'the mental physical' or 'mind in the physical' (p 326). The latter is the second aspect of 'physical mind' (*ibid*) insofar as a certain functioning which is not too distant from the former is concerned. In this functioning, the physical mind 'is limited by the physical view and experience of things, it mentalises the experiences brought by the contacts of outward life and things, and does not go beyond that (though it can do that much very cleverly), unlike the externalising mind which deals with them from the reason and its higher intelligence' (pp. 326-27). We may consider the 'physical mental', which Sri Aurobindo designates 'the true physical mind' (p. 328), as the high part of the physical mind, and the 'mental physical' at its best operation as the low one.

Another 'part of the physical mind' (p 329), a 'much lower action of the mental physical' (p 327), is 'the mechanical mind which, left to itself, would only repeat customary ideas and record the natural reflexes of the physical consciousness to the contacts of outward life and things' (*ibid*). The mechanical mind is also called 'body-mind' (p. 328). A turn of phrase similar to 'body-mind' occurs when Sri Aurobindo says: 'Everything has a physical part—even the mind has a physical part, there is a mental physical, a mind of the body and the material' (p 351). It is evidently the 'mind of the body and the material' that he speaks of in writing of 'the gross material part' thus 'it must be remembered that this too has a consciousness of its own, the obscure consciousness proper to the limbs, cells, tissues, glands, organs' (p 348).

The description 'body-mind' is not applied by Sri Aurobindo to anything above 'the mechanical mind whose nature is to go on turning round in a circle the thoughts that come into it' (p 329). At its lowest the description applies to 'an obscure mind of the body, of the very cells, molecules, corpuscles' which has a 'mechanical clinging to past movements and docile oblivion and rejection of the new' (p 340). Hence 'the physical mind' of the two talks by the Mother may be taken, from the Aurobindonian

viewpoint, to cover in general all that works mechanically in the mental physical and in particular the element of mental mechanicality in the cellular stuff of the body. We may broadly name it "body-mind" in distinction from "brain-mind"

Broadly, because the mechanical mind has still to do with "thoughts" and hence with the brain and so cannot quite be on a par with "the obscure consciousness" of the sheer bodily components. Strictly speaking, it is this consciousness that the Mother mentions by her specially narrowed employment of the words "physical mind" and it is also from this consciousness that, strictly speaking, the "brain-mind" is to be demarcated. In the latter the externalising mind and the mental in the physical, though unlike each other in several respects, are "in practice mixed together" (p. 327). Further, through the externalising mind still greater mental activities than its own come into play in the mind of the brain. For, as we have noted, the externalising mind prolongs into the physical the mind proper and consequently what is characteristic of the mind proper is drawn to some extent into this aspect of the physical mind.

"The mind proper," says Sri Aurobindo, "is divided into three parts—the thinking Mind, dynamic Mind, externalising Mind—the former concerned with ideas and knowledge in their own right, the second with the putting out of mental forms for realisation of the idea, the third with the expression of them in life (not only by speech, but by any form it can give)" (p. 326). How the greater mental activities enter in may be yet more vividly seized from Sri Aurobindo's elaboration of his phrase "the true physical mind". He says "The true physical mind is the receiving and externalising intelligence which has two functions—first, to work upon external things and give them a mental order with a way of practically dealing with them and, secondly, to be the channel of materialising and putting into effect whatever the thinking and dynamic mind sends down to it for the purpose" (p. 328).

Thus the mixture of the physical mental and the mental physical has a halo as it were of higher things than its actual constituents. And this subtly rich mixture, which is full sense of the "brain-mind", is what, on receiving the supramental light, gets converted into the Mind of Light. The conversion of the "body-mind" by means of the supramental light cannot be quite the same phenomenon. Inasmuch as mentality is still present we should adopt the same nomenclature but a new shade of it has to be clearly set forth, a corporeal shade standing off from the cerebral.

In a talk almost seven years earlier than the two we have discussed, the Mother does actually imply a distinction between the brain-mind and the body-mind, giving the term "physical mind" a higher connotation than in these two talks. She draws even finer lines of difference while pinpointing her subject—the part of the being with which she is busy—thus "It is not the physical mind—it is the mind of *Matter*. It is the mental substance which belongs to *Matter* itself, to the cells. That is what was once called 'the spirit of the form' when it was said that the mummies kept their body intact so long as the spirit of the form persisted. It is that mind, this wholly material mind"¹ In the same

1 *Bulletin*, November 1965, p. 87

talk she says about herself. “It is long since the physical mind has changed”—and explains “The physical mind is the mind of the physical personality formed by the body but it is not the mind of Matter it is the mind of the physical being” In differentiating what she has been working upon at the moment she goes so far as to state “You cannot even call it the bodily mind—it is the mind of the cells.. .” Then we learn from her “...the physical mind, as soon as you take up an integral yoga, must be dealt with, but this material mind, the cellular one, I assure you, is altogether new. ” Finally, we get an autobiographical disclosure “Sri Aurobindo had said that it was unorganisable and it had only to be thrown out of existence. And I too had the same impression But when the action for transformation upon the cells is constant, this material mind begins to be organised It is this that is wonderful ”

A year later (1966) the Mother has another pronouncement on the same lines and of autobiographical interest “When we were working in the physical cells, Sri Aurobindo realised the difficulty of transforming the mind of the physical cells I am not speaking of the physical mind or physical consciousness He thought of leaving the mind of the physical cells alone. Then I saw that their refusal to change was not due to any bad will but to ignorance The cells have a great aspiration and the progress is steady, there is no vacillation as in the mind of the vital So Sri Aurobindo, before he left his body, entrusted to me this work and said that I alone could do it, but it takes long and I can’t give sufficient time to it I work upon it only in the first part of the night. In the second part I go about [in the subtle body] visiting people and things Otherwise they go wrong When the work in the cells will have been finished, there won’t be any further difficulty.”¹

The Mind of Light in an increased aspect which has to do with the mental substance belonging to Matter itself—an aspect involving an extension of the Supermind’s establishment in the cerebral mentality which the Mother had realised in the immediate wake of Sri Aurobindo’s departure—is the goal she posited for herself in the period of the two talks when she wanted her “physical mind” to be “developed under the Supramental Influence ”

Already at the time of talking, a remarkable development was in evidence, since, in her own words, “this physical mind, the mind that is in the body had become wide, had a global view of things and the entire way of its seeing was absolutely different.” As hers had been the first incalculable experiment in supramentalising the most obscure part of bodily existence, the process had been fraught with a great deal of suffering, but she was well on the way to acquiring a radical lever for the transformation which would pass from the mental physical to the vital physical and then to the material physical, which is the physical proper Suddenly on 17 November 1973 she chose to give up her embodied state, put in abeyance her terrestrial progress and join Sri Aurobindo to work from behind a veil—for reasons which must essentially be the same as inspired his strategic self-sacrifice: the future good of humanity’s spiritual career.

¹ *The Mother—Sweetness and Light* by Nirodbaran (Auropress, Auroville 1978), p 149

Before she took the momentous step, she had contributed appreciably to Sri Aurobindo's spiritual system not only in the realm of visioning but also in the field of living.

(To be concluded)

AMAL KIRAN
(K D SETHNA)

ABLUTIONS

In the early morning
On the furthest rock-point

I unfold my soul
And dip it again and again
In the deep clear water
Rinsing away all the pain.

Then I hang it to dry
Bleached with salt and sunlight.

I pray "Soak up this sea, this air—
Become this mirror-calm,
This pure wide sunlit-blue "

SHRADDHAVAN

“INSPIRATIONS FOR PROGRESS”

(Continued from the issue of May 1998)

REMAIN detached from the surface nature, untroubled, calm, equal, confident.

Do not worry about the defects and difficulties, the faults, the weaknesses, the mistakes, do not consider them to be your own.

Remain separate from them, detached, and continuously offer them to the Mother for deliverance from them

Do not identify with them, do not feel troubled by their persistence Remaining separate from them, simply offer them to the Mother and call Her Force to liberate you from them

Remain confident that She never blames or condemns or punishes or withdraws but always helps, liberates, purifies, changes, transforms—always with solicitude and unflinching love

Remember always that She is constantly with you to protect, to guide, to help, to do everything for you

Take entire refuge in Her Arms with *absolute* confidence in Her All-Powerful Love and depend on Her for everything

Do not be anxious about the future—be sure that She is leading you towards Victory

Do not worry about what others think of you, say to you, do to you—leave all to Her, She will arrange everything Care only for your relation with Her.

Be more and more quiet, open, surrendered and plastic to the Mother, more and more confident and happy.

26-11-66

*

All fear, conscious or subconscious, must be absolutely thrown away—I must always remember

I am Mother’s child, She is constantly with me, to guard and protect me, to help me in all ways in all situations

She has told me: “Fear nothing ” Relying on Her entirely, I must cast away all fear and must always remain *confident*

14-1-67

*

Keep the will always clear and firm and *confident*

Never allow any depressing feeling or dark suggestions to enter the consciousness
Do not accept your helplessness against them With a firm and resolute will throw
them away every time they come

Whatever may be the defects and difficulties, they have only to be seen without
any exaggeration and steadily worked out, never admit any suggestions of weakness,
incapacity, doubt and dejection

Remain always clear, firm and confident, whatever may be the immediate pressure
of darkness, it is only a temporary condition which will surely disappear

Remain not only confident but also very quiet and very happy

The Sure Friend is always with you Relying on Him with absolute trust throw
away resolutely this black blanket of depressing darkness and weakness Go on giving
to Him all your weaknesses and difficulties and remain confident that he will set them
right.

Open out, expose yourself completely before Him without shame or fear

He does not mind anything, He never blames or accuses, He never punishes He
always loves, always understands, always forgives, always helps

And there is nothing that He cannot do

So put yourself entirely in His Hands and let Him do all

And be *patient* and *enduring*, but always with the absolute certitude of Victory

28-1-67

*

Inspite of my weaknesses and defects, He will bring me liberation, He will bring me
New Birth and New Life of union with Him.

I must no more think of my defects and difficulties, but think of Him alone
Relying on Him with absolute trust, I must persevere—His Love is All-Powerful I
must give all to Him, my defects and difficulties also, and depend on Him to deliver me
from all of them

No anxiety, no worry, no fear, no guilt, no doubt, no despair

Always more and more happy, assured, confident, more and more loving trust and
reliance on Him

I must learn to be patient, to endure, to persevere in the right endeavour as long as
is necessary, but always with absolute confidence in His Victory

Not to fall or fold upon myself, but simply and entirely to open to Him and give all
to Him and leave all to Him, always confident of Victory—that is the only thing to be
done now

And I must do it quickly

24-3-67

×

Be firm and severe in dealing with yourself.
 Follow resolutely the inner indications.
 No more drifting
 Be very *quiet* and very *steady*

Remain always entirely turned to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother Open to Them, surrender to Them more and more with complete confidence and trust.

Do your work as best as you can, relying on Their Help But do not interfere with anyone else's work; do not compete, do not criticise, do not advise.

6-4-67

(*To be continued*)

KISHOR GANDHI

(Compiled by Arvind Akki)

LIGHT AND GRACE

THE Light pours on and on—
 Brilliance of a thousand suns,
 pure, pulsating, golden, soothing,
 It floods my Being,
 permeating every cell and pore.
 All grossness is dissolved

She is everywhere,
 here, there, all around,
 Her Presence fills all inner space.
 Self is not even a dot in existence.

Nothing but the Light
 Nothing but Her Grace.
 Nothing can rattle the Spirit's perfect poise
 Nothing of me is mine anymore

VIREN

QUOTATIONS FROM CHAMPAKLAL'S PAPERS

(Continued from the issue of May 1998)

Faithfulness

OPEN with faithfulness That means to be open constantly and always, not to open one day and withdraw the next

Sri Aurobindo

*

Few are those from whom the Grace withdraws but many are those who withdraw from the Grace

Sri Aurobindo

*

Those who are not straightforward cannot profit by the Mother's help, for they themselves turn it away

Sri Aurobindo

*

Let all the clouds disperse, all the attachments disappear, all the obstacles vanish, so that you can enjoy fully the peace and joy of being here so close to me, in the Divine's abode

The Mother

The Psychic Being, Mind and Vital

One who wants his yoga to be a path of peace or joy must be prepared to dwell in his soul rather than in his outer mental and emotional nature

Sri Aurobindo

*

Purity, simple sincerity and the capacity of an unegoistic unmixed self-offering without pretension or demand are the condition of an entire opening of the psychic being

Sri Aurobindo

*

Psychic bhakti does not make any demand, makes no reservation. It is satisfied with its own existence. The psychic being knows how to obey the Truth in the right way. It gives itself up truly to God or to Guru, and because it can give itself up truly, therefore it can also receive truly.

Sri Aurobindo

*

What was meant [by plasticity within] I suppose was the psychic plasticity which makes surrender possible along with a free openness to the Divine working from above. Plasticity within is opposed to the rigidity which insists on maintaining one's own ideas, feelings, habitual ways of consciousness as opposed to the higher things from above or from the psychic within.

Sri Aurobindo

*

You asked for the understanding and the way out and at once Krishna showed you both—the way out was the change of the consciousness within, the plasticity which makes the knowledge possible and also the understanding of the condition of mind and vital in which the true knowledge or power of knowledge could come. For the inner knowledge comes from within and above (whether from the Divine in the heart or from the Self above) and for it to come, the pride of the mind and vital in the surface mental ideas and their insistence on them must go. One must know that one is ignorant before one can begin to know.

Sri Aurobindo

*

The activities of the outward intellect in matters of yoga lead only to the formation of personal opinions, not to the discovery of truth. It has always been understood in India that the reason and its logic or its judgement cannot give you the realisation of spiritual truths but can only assist in an intellectual presentation of ideas, realisation comes by intuition and inner experience. Reason and intellectuality cannot make you see the Divine, it is the soul that sees.

Sri Aurobindo

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You may have all the mental knowledge in the world and yet be impotent to face vital difficulties. Courage, faith, sincerity towards the Light, rejection of opposite sugges-

tions and adverse voices are there the true help. Then only can knowledge itself be at all effective

Sri Aurobindo

*

If the vital is not to deceive you, you must not only be very mindful, but your sincerity also must be almost miraculous.

The Mother

*

It is in the silent mind that the true consciousness can be built.

Sri Aurobindo

(To be concluded)

HAIKUS

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| — WHERE art Thou? | — How to love Thee? |
| — Within
thy question | — Down to the body's
tiniest cell |
| — What is to be? | Give Me |
| — When mind-questions
will fall away | enough silence
to speak |
| — Am I doing Thy will? | — What is behind |
| — Dost thou need
to always know? . | appearances? |
| | — Only Me! |
| — I have need
of Thee | |
| — So do I of thee! | |

JYOTI SOBEL

INTEGRAL YOGA IN THE ERSTWHILE U.S.S.R.

Extracts of Letters from Russian Correspondents

(Continued from the issue of May 1998)

FOR over three years I have been reading the books of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and I make an effort to follow the things I find in these books. Now that the Mother has left her body, how does one establish contact with her? I have photographs of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and I am trying to address myself to them. The Mother's eyes especially are striking and I have a feeling that she is still here beside me and my questions reach her when I look at the photos, but sometimes I doubt it.

24 August 1995

Andrei D. Harlakın (Haale, Germany)

*

I have read many books of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. They were interesting and useful for my spiritual life.

I have the sensation of pressure in my "third eye". Sometimes I feel afraid. One day, as I woke up, I experienced a great strength come into me; it was compelling. I felt afraid and the strength went away. After that I didn't sleep for three days. Many times I see a blue light or a flare in the "third eye". I don't understand these things.

Undated c. November 1996

Thank you for your letter. Now I would like to share some of my experiences with you. I cannot say that I am a yogi, but judging by some signs, the force of the heavenly Mother is always with me and it does not take much effort for me to make the force enter my being. I feel it constantly.

I know I must escape from the fear which is in me. I think my love for God is still not adequate and my vital nature is not clean. About four years ago I felt something strange happening within me and it was so strong that I thought my heart would not endure it, so I resisted it. Later, analysing everything, I realised that I was not clean in my heart and that is why I felt that unpleasant feeling. Now I am working on it. I hope that the book *Diagnostics of Karma* by Lazarev, our Russian healer, will help me.

I pray constantly and try not to have any claims on God or people. I ask God to forgive all my wrong-doings and selfish desires. Doing this I feel that my heart has become quieter and I myself have become a more peaceful person. I also try to develop my love for God. In every situation I say, "God, I love you more than anything else on earth and you are the purpose of my life."

I cannot say that I meditate often, just from time to time. But I like this way of healing and my soul accepts it. I heard about yoga in 1990 and since then I have been

doing special exercises of this wonderful system and in two months I felt the presence of the Mother's force. As I wrote to you earlier, it entered my "third eye" (ajna chakra). I think it will be all right if I concentrate on it and open the mental centre at the crown of my head. Sri Aurobindo has said that the best concentration is in the region of the heart, but it is difficult for me to concentrate my attention there.

25 September 1997

Evgenii Rushnov (Neftekamsk, Russia)

*

The discovery of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother is one of the greatest events of my life. Sri Aurobindo's genius gave all the answers to the questions that have plagued me all my life—questions of existence, creation, evolution, God and religion. This encounter with Sri Aurobindo, whom I worship, was the beginning of my new and true birth. The path of Integral Yoga is difficult, but still I follow it. There are a few true devotees around me. I love everything about Sri Aurobindo. His works are now coming out and I read them over and over again. My admiration for his genius is without limit and my love increases as I read more and more.

I would appreciate your sending me a leaf from the tree under which They repose. I have a postcard of the inner courtyard of the Ashram and this tree. Don't take this as being sentimental because I deeply and profoundly love Sri Aurobindo and the Mother—they are my saviours.

19 March 1997

Ludmilla M Ignatieva (St Petersburg—Pavlovsk, Russia)

*

I am thirty-three years old (born 1 April 1964) and a bachelor. I became acquainted with yoga for the first time at the age of twenty-nine after reading Satprem's *Sri Aurobindo. The Adventure of Consciousness*. I had at last found what I had been seeking for and realised the illusoriness and transience of all the ideals of the "outside". From that time, I decided with an inner enthusiasm and joy to devote myself to yoga. It has taken some time for me to submit all my being to it. But the calling for this way has become more and more firm and is the foundation of my entire life. I have been practising sadhana as much as I can and studying the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother through their works published in the Russian language.

22 March 1997

Alexander V Marinin (Sevastopol, Ukraine)

*

When communism and its ideology disintegrated, the world of consciousness began to

widen and to melt in this new thing, there was a flood of occultism, religion, philosophy. In this flood one could easily drown, but by chance I discovered in the flood the books of Sri Aurobindo and Satprem. They shook me To express so clearly and directly the aim of human existence as a search for the Divine in oneself, but not in a god outside, could only be done by a great and wise man Later, I became acquainted with the ideas and action of the Mother and became enchanted with her humour, femininity and was astounded by her success. Now I am on the edge of the ocean where the answers could be found, but I do not know where to go. How to change from self-contemplation to practice I do not know

10 June 1997

Nina A Khaderi (Ekaterinburg, Russia)

(To be concluded)

MOTHER, OUR PRECEPTOR

ONE of the Mother's most arduous tasks was to widen and raise our consciousness from the present level. Mind and reason have run their course, we have seen their workings, their successes and their failures. Today mind is in a state of bankruptcy. It must surpass itself and contact a higher plane.

Sri Aurobindo wrote in his *Thoughts and Glances*:

When we have passed beyond knowing, then we shall have knowledge. Reason was the helper, Reason is the bar.

Superannuated mind is erring, stumbling, groping at each step in its effort to lead mankind further in its presumption that it can do so.

Our Mother has the key to a happy solution. She has the knowledge and the power to bring down in us a higher consciousness that will save humanity. By the word 'us' I do not mean just the few of us gathered here in this Ashram, but all those who are ready to take Her help. For man today is in possession of a power that has no corresponding vibration in his moral being. His moral stature must grow before he can make good use of all that he has seized from Nature. Otherwise an utter destruction may be in the offing.

The Mother's task is made infinitely more arduous by the fact that the mind of humanity today is divided into two hostile camps, the literary intellectuals and the scientists. There is no sympathy, no understanding, no language for the exchange and interchange of their views. To the scientists the other culture fails to give an answer to world problems. To the literary intellectuals science is blasphemous, at best a dash of cold water thrown on their sensibility, and its verdicts are unacceptable.

If we want a concrete example of the Mother's influence we should look at the community She has created with so much care. Here a poet of the first rank can write a historical treatise, discuss the Quantum Theory. A diplomat becomes an author. A physical culturist can write poems and can develop into a first-class photographer. I have seen the Mother listening intently to a poet's reading of his translation of Mallarmé. I have seen her giving expert advice on physical education, I have seen Her talking about Science with Her private secretary who was a very good scientist. Did the Mother know all the details and all the solutions of these varied subjects and also all the big and petty difficulties of the innumerable departments that She had created? Perhaps not. But She received all the knowledge from the planes above so nicely or aptly graded and named by Sri Aurobindo. Above the mind there are the Higher Mind, the Illumined Mind, the Intuition and the Overmind, and the Mother's and Sri Aurobindo's own plane the Supermind. The Mother's responses were direct and quick. She did not have to think as we do. She did not have to work out the solutions to problems presented to Her. Nor did She have to make an effort to understand the details. Knowledge and power came automatically from the higher planes. And to this sort of consciousness She

invites us Not that we will ever attain Her stature, for that is not possible, but with Her help we could do Her work with a spontaneous knowledge and enjoy a happy power to bring success to the work allotted to each of us.

An evolution of consciousness, a unified culture are the requirements of our age Even the great Darwin in his autobiography regretted that his mind had become a kind of machine for grinding out general laws, and that a part of his brain had become atrophied, this enfeebled the emotional part of his nature and all this because he had not pursued anything else but science Yet to a lesser scientist all else is useless and science and technology are the be-all and end-all of life But we have occasion to see that at times science too has to say, "I don't know" The Mother once commented "If only humanity consented to be spiritualised" In spirituality we get all the answers Science and technology are just branches of the great tree of knowledge. They are a phase in the life of human beings on earth.

Nothing exists if it does not present itself to our senses this idea originated from Nominalism taking for its axioms some sayings of Aristotle. But the Mother was nearer to Plato from whose teachings came the theory of Realism The Realists believed in extra-terrestrial existence, of archetypes in the superior planes, in fact in God And some equated God with Good. When once someone asked the Mother why one should be good, She avoided all other arguments and simply said, "Just because of the joy of being good"

Darwin's theory of evolution with all its complications of selection and rejection and genetic variation is interesting. The Mother found it interesting. But She would have been far more interested to read an exposition of the evolution of consciousness No one has done that yet Very few recognise that there is such a thing as an evolving consciousness. That mental knowledge, no matter how pure and elevated, does not satisfy even a great mind is well illustrated in the story of Thomas Aquinas. He was a Realist, and he had been writing profusely. One day he stopped writing When his assistant pressed him he said: "All that I have written seems to me like straw compared with what has now been revealed to me" He had just had a wonderful experience at Mass But his mind was not trained enough to report to mankind his unique experience. Therefore the Mother laboured to make our mind quiet and make it a fit instrument of the higher knowledge. And according to Her we must learn to express the truth in our activities as beautifully and as harmoniously as we can I remember once I took special care to select a flower for the Mother When I was in front of Her I was about to blurt out something but suddenly stopped remembering that the Mother's name for that flower was *Silence* The Mother saw my quandary and smiled She gently put Her hand on my shoulder and said "It is the inner silence that I mean" From then onwards I might be shouting at the top of my voice but my inner being remained peaceful as a lake on a windless day Such were Her Blessings

At one fell swoop science cleared away all the spiritual experience of saints and sages by declaring that all that stuff was an illness of humanity, and that science can and will cure it. Those borderland phenomena belong to a realm of superstition

Mankind aided by science has escaped from a murky and unhealthy twilight into broad daylight. Some scientists term spiritual experiences the ‘‘magic feeling’’ Magic or no, one can ask them, ‘‘From where did consciousness come? To what is it reaching out?’’ Sri Aurobindo has written about the Mother that She did not take all spiritual things at their face value and that She experimented at each step like a great scientist. To Her this decline of the magic feeling must have appeared as a disaster. That does not mean the Mother abhorred science or technology. A very casual glance at the Ashram should reveal to anyone with the onlooker-attitude that every use is being made of it to improve the life here by technology. The Mother’s vision of the future is a golden one. The scientists’ future is uncertain. I would like to quote one of Sri Aurobindo’s poems.

One dreamed and saw a gland write Hamlet, drink
 At the Mermaid, capture immortality;
 A committee of hormones on the Aegean’s brink
 Composed the Iliad and the Odyssey

A thyroid, meditating almost nude
 Under the Bo-tree, saw the eternal Light
 And, rising from its mighty solitude,
 Spoke of the Wheel and eightfold Path all right.

A brain by a disordered stomach driven
 Thundered through Europe, conquered, ruled and fell,
 From St Helena went, perhaps, to Heaven.
 Thus wagged on the surreal world, until

A scientist played with atoms and blew out
 The universe before God had time to shout.¹

CHAUNDONA S BANERJI

A NEW YEAR EXPERIENCE

THIS happened on the new year day, 1st January 1998. In the morning I was going to the Ashram for the New Year Meditation. It was already 5.25 a.m. when I was near the Balcony Street. I thought that the Ashram would be full and I would not be able to get a place to sit inside. But I heard a voice. It told me, "Don't worry, my child. You will get a good place." I reached the Gate, but no chance.

I was there standing, knowing not what to do. Then suddenly I saw the Mother's symbol first and immediately following it Sri Aurobindo's symbol. Also, I saw Sri Aurobindo seated on a sofa. The Divine Mother came with a flower *mālā* (garland) in her hand, put it around Sri Aurobindo's neck and did Pranam to him. I also did Pranam.

And the wonder! By the Grace of the Divine Mother the door opened a little and I quickly entered in. There was a chair and I sat on it. But an Ashramite told me that I could not sit on it. He also told me that I could instead sit on the staircase. I went there.

The New Year Music started at 6.00 a.m. I am mad about music and during the meditation I concentrated on it. While doing so, I saw the Divine Mother and Sri Aurobindo. Both of them blessed me. The Divine Mother asked me, "Come with me, to see my Room in Paris, France." I replied, "O Divine Mother, as you wish I will do." In that beautiful meditation she took me to Paris. It was so nice, that place, so calm and clean. I told the Divine Mother, "Mother, I am very, very happy that you brought me here. In the same way, I want that your Grace and your Blessings are always there for me."

Om Ma, Shanti!

ISHWARADATTA

THE WAGER OF AMBROSIA

VIII. Awakening the Kundalini

(Continued from the issue of March 1998)

THE sixth chapter of the Gita begins with a description of the Sannyasin-Yogin who, though engaged in action, is without the expectation of returns from it. He desires no fruit and is not like men hankering after rewards and trophies. Certainly, he is not like those who never light the sacrificial fire and make no offerings to it. As a matter of fact, the real meaning of Sannyasa is to remove the desire that binds the doer of the works with work. The purpose of asceticism and renunciation is only to get rid of the bondage of the lower nature, so that the enlightened will can have its free play in him. By overcoming the sway of the lower nature and subduing the ego-sense does he prepare himself to make progress on the spiritual path. By action does the Yogin climb the difficult Hill of Yoga and acquire self-mastery. "By the self thou shouldst deliver the self,"—says the Gita. All that is gross and crude and degrading has to be rejected and replaced by what is subtle and fine, noble and elevating. When the Yogin has self-mastery and self-possession, then indeed the Self becomes his friend and from him disappear all conflicts and dualities, dualities of heat and cold, pain and pleasure, love and hatred, honour and dishonour, life and death. In all circumstances he remains calm, standing aloof and unperturbed, above these thousand distracting and troubling demands of the world. Established in the Knowledge of the Self, *ātma-jñāna*, he sees everything with an equal eye and, even as he recognises the essential truth of things and objects in their intrinsic nature, all superficialities and differences vanish from his vision. He is simply given to the moods and modes of the spirit in its wide-ranging splendour of manifestation.

But how to get this *siddhi*, acquire the true merit that comes by doing Yogic action alone? The Gita in just a few verses, as usual brief and terse in their character, expounds the Science of the Yoga of Meditation, Dhyana Yoga, as follows.

योगी युञ्जीत सततमात्मानं रहसि स्थितः ।
एकाकी यतचित्तात्मा निराशीरपरिग्रहः ॥
शुचौ देशे प्रतिष्ठाप्य स्थिरमासनमात्मनः ।
नात्युच्छ्रित नातिनीच चैलाजिनकुशोत्तरम् ॥
तत्रैकाग्रं मनः कृत्वा यतचित्तेन्द्रियक्रियः ।
उपविश्यासने युञ्ज्याद्योगमात्मविशुद्धये ॥
समं कायशिशोर्ग्रीवं धारयन्नचलं स्थिर ।
संप्रेक्ष्य नासिकाग्रं स्व दिशश्चानवलोकयन् ॥
प्रशान्तात्मा विगतभीर्ब्रह्मचारिव्रते स्थितः ।
मनः सयम्य मच्चित्तो युक्त आसीत मत्परः ॥

युञ्जन्नेव सदात्मान योगी नियतमानसः ।
 शान्तिं निर्वाणपरमा मत्सस्थामधिगच्छति ॥
 नात्यश्रतस्तु योगोऽस्ति न चैकान्तमनश्रतः ।
 न चातिस्वप्नशीलस्य जाग्रतो नैव चार्जुन ॥
 युक्ताहारविहारस्य युक्तचेष्टस्य कर्मसु ।
 युक्तस्वप्नावबोधस्य योगो भवति दुःखहा ॥
 यदा विनियतं चित्तमात्मन्येवावतिष्ठते ।
 निःस्पृहं सर्वकामेभ्यो युक्त इत्युच्यते तदा ॥
 यथा दीपो निवातस्थो नेङ्गते सोपमा स्मृता ।
 योगिनो यतचित्तस्य युञ्जतो योगमात्मनः ॥

(The Gita, 6 10-19)

Let the Yogin practise continually union with the Self sitting apart and alone, with all desire and idea of possession banished from his mind, self-controlled in his whole being and consciousness. He should set in a pure spot his firm seat, neither too high, nor yet too low, covered with a cloth, with a deer skin, with sacred grass, and there seated with a concentrated mind and with the workings of the mental consciousness and the senses under control, he should practise Yoga for self-purification. Holding the body, head and neck erect, motionless, the vision drawn in and fixed between the eyebrows, not regarding the regions, the mind kept calm and free from fear, and the vow of Brahmacharya observed, the whole controlled mentality turned to Me, he must be firm in Yoga, wholly given up to Me. Thus always putting himself in Yoga by control of his mind, the Yogin attains the supreme peace of Nirvana which has its foundation in Me. Verily this Yoga is not for him who eats too much or sleeps too much, even as it is not for him who gives up sleep and food, O Arjuna. Yoga destroys all sorrow for him in whom the sleep and waking, the food, the play, the putting forth of effort in works are all *vukta*. When all mental consciousness is perfectly controlled and liberated from desire and remains still in the self, then it is said, "he is in Yoga." Motionless like the light of a lamp in a windless place is the controlled consciousness of the Yogin who practises union with the Self.

(The Message of the Gita, pp 98-100)

This way, without wavering from the path, steady like a flame and fixed ever in the Self of Knowledge, proceeds the Yogin. He grows in the awareness that the supreme Self is present everywhere and he sees all in it and is never lost to it, nor does it lose him, he lives and acts in it. Such a Yogin is dear to the Lord of Yoga, Yogeshwara, and in it is his entire fulfilment. "He is greater than the doers of askesis, greater than the men of knowledge, greater than the men of works, become then the Yogin." That is how the Teacher of the Gita exhorts his disciple facing the harsh and difficult battle of life.

Become the Yogin,—such is the imperative. But how to become so? What are the prerequisites or stipulations for the seeker of Knowledge of the Self to proceed forth?

Jñāneshwar comments upon the relevant verses of the Scripture in considerable detail. Utilising this occasion he also gives a fairly long description of the traditional Hathayogic-Rajayogic sadhana. It is a spiritual discipline that leads to the awakening of the dormant life-force, the occult-vital energy, *prāṇic śakti*, lying coiled up and asleep in us, the power of Kundalini. One who is *jitendriya*, has conquered the senses, and who makes no distinction between the big and the small, between a tiny speck of dust and a huge quantity of gold heaped like a mountain, of the size of the mythical Mt Meru,—he is to be recognised as the Yogin. In him never arises the feeling of jealousy or passionate friendship. For him there is none as a foe or an expectant guest and friend, nor is he deceived by outward appearances. He is one who is firmly established in the idea that this whole universe is like a single piece of cloth woven from one length of a thread, the Brahman. Indeed, he is a sacred ford, *tīrtha*, a bath in which washes all our sins, his presence arouses in us benign reverent happiness, association with him leads us to the realisation of the Self, his speech is a confirmation of the possibility of living a life of truthful conduct, on him attend the great riches and gains, the exceptional Yogic *rddhis* and *siddhis*, he always inspires in us the spirit of the Perfect. The Sun of Knowledge never sets on this Advaitin, the knower of the One.

About the greatness of such a Yogin Jñāneshwar says.

He is the father-king of the knowers of knowledge, and of the sight of the seers he is the flame-vision, it is by his resolve that into existence comes the order of the worlds. Even a full length of the cloth made from the yarn of the great creative-expressive Word will fall short if his glorious majesty is to be wrapped around. It is because of the brilliance embodied by him that there runs the commerce of the sun's and the moon's brilliance, without it will the transactions of the universe come to a standstill, or be reduced to nought. Oh the wonder! In that name's marvellous infinity even the vastness of a blue sky appears no bigger than just the size of a small patch. Indeed, his innumerable qualities escape all our comprehension.

जो ज्ञानियाचा बापु । देखणेयाचे दिठीचा दीपु । जया दादुलयाचा सकल्पु । विश्व रची ॥ प्रणवाचिये पेटे । जाहले शब्दब्रह्म माजिठे । ते जयाचिये यशा थाकुटे । वेढू न पुरे ॥ जयाचेनि आगिके तेजे । आवो रविशशचिये वणिजे । म्हणऊनि जग हे वेसजे —। वीण असे तया ॥ हा गा नामचि एक जयाचे । पाहता गगनही दिसे टाचे । गुण एकैक काय तयाचे । आकळशील तू ॥

(*Jñāneshwarī*, 6 108-111)

In these *ovīs* we first get a good authentic account of the kind of ascetic life a seeker of the Knowledge of the Self is enjoined to follow. It also corroborates the scriptural stipulation as to how the inner being of the doers of askesis is purified by the Yoga of Renunciation, *sannyāsayogād śuddham* (*Mundaka Upanishad*, 3 2 6, SABCL, Vol 12, p 285) We are then told that wherever does such a seeker put his step, while proceeding on the Path of Yoga, there opens out for him the rich mine of liberation. In the worst case, if he should encounter an obstacle and fail to attain the goal, even then is

assured for him the happiness of heaven. Go he may towards the east or towards the west, in whichever direction be the journey taken by him in calm steadfastness, faltering in the least, for him the fruition of effort is always there. Truly, when he approaches the village of his destination, that village moves towards him and presents itself to him, becomes him

The poetry as we have in these *owis* is pure gold, bearing the mint-mark of what Sri Aurobindo calls as the sheer 'Overhead' But, then, immediately following it is a singsong description, most probably inserted later into the text by some lesser composers or copiers of *Jnāneshwarī* Such interpolations are not infrequent and a proper editing of the work still remains undone One of the methods could be to go by the stylistic coherence of the composition itself, though it may appear to be somewhat subjective. More importantly, an appeal more to the spiritual character of poetry, the Overhead inspiration, than to the doubtful nature of the substance or the metaphysical details could prove to be profitable in several respects It may, in spite of the hazard of such a procedure, turn out to be the only satisfactory way to approach the otherwise intractable issue At the moment, however, we shall restrict ourselves only to the aspect of the Yogic discipline *Jnāneshwarī* is expounding in the immediate context of the Gita's verses

(To be continued)

R. Y . DESHPANDE

THE VIBRATED MOOD

I SAT upon the brink of depths for hours
And moved not, for my breath was one with thine,
And we were as a carnival of flowers
Floated upon a sea of glowing wine

The silence that descended was a rain
Of colours mixed with flame, and through the heart
Flowed like a river seeking the vast main
Rolling with crowded waves and yet apart

I dreamed upon the summit of a mood
Which everywhere wrought summits of white sleep,
Encircled by gigantic solitude
I mingled with the spirit of the Deep.

O miracle of the eternal pause!
Possess me wholly, body, mind and soul,
See, the entire being now withdraws
And gathers all the lights in its control

Possess me, O divine unrestless thirst,
As thou hast now possessed me, lifting up,
My earth-existence [in]to unversed
Sensations pouring into God's own cup.

15 to 12, morning
2nd April, 1935

HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAYA

(This poem appears in a bound typescript volume entitled "Homeward" Under the title of the book the poet has written "Harin—The Divine Mother's 'Blue Bird' " It may be noted that 2nd April 1935 was Harindranath's 38th birthday —*Editor*)

TWO POEMS

MAHARSHI'S WATCHWORD

How long live wed, O soul, to words dream-spun?
Kindle the yearning flame of Love's own sun
Invoke the luminous day,
Burn fancy's flickering play,
Wither the phantom gardens of siren bloom
Rise, radiant Love, life's shadow-whispers' doom
Let the hue-hunter float
Upon his irised boat
Not he—who stakes his all to adore the fire
Come, light of lights!—O gloom of glooms retire!

MAHARSHI RAMANA

(EXPLAINING)

“What was my yoga-process?—By whom empowered?
I know of no high mantra or Guru or vow
The Bliss that had lain in bud within—outflowered
Spontaneously and took my soul in tow

Since then I simply *am* in my self at home
With open eyes or closed—but lo, they said
‘He is a sage and therefore will not roam,
But, bulwarked in God's Grace, lives lone—unafraid!’

Words, words, words—bulwarks, fear and sage and Grace!
You ask—I answer, in words, as best I can
To seize with words what no words shall appraise,
And make them see who have only learned to scan!

Breath-taking things I never saw nor gained
What never I had—what happened simply was
My thoughts and ego left and there remained
The Timeless Self of Peace in endless pause ”

8-10-46

DILIP KUMAR ROY

YOU PARTOOK OF DEATH

DEMONS from tupal worlds seized your space
You who once had fed forty brothers
Fed them your mind
Only the moon-demons ate it.
They waxed for a fortnight
And waned for a fortnight
And came back for more
They gouged you with their horns
The cumulus gloom of their appetite
Settled in you like clouds
Words, words poured from your mouth.

You who once had fed forty brothers
Fed them your flesh
The demons of the vital
Tore at your limbs
And exhaled through your eyes
They came and went freely
Your mouth was their gate
They came and went freely
Your navel too was their gate.

To time you fed your chants.
To space you fed your feet
Demons do not eat men for men have walls
To cause you had nothing to give.
So your heart flowed out to all that is.
You who once had fed forty brothers
Partook of death

AKASH DESHPANDE

ONLY THE OTHER DAY I WAS SAYING TO ST. FRANCIS

ONLY the other day I was saying to St. Francis,
Put away your austerities and tools of physical torture—
a new dawn of love has burst out and is overflowing!
But before I could finish speaking, he had walked into the ocean,
never to return, and I became hopelessly bewildered again—
standing before the very same ocean without a door to enter it

You awoke the unforgivable in me when you broke up my home
and I've been weeping an eternity in this wilderness ever since
Where is this dawn now? This new age of love overflowing?
I am a fresh orphaned child, a daytime moth, a frozen seal,
I am a man sitting next to himself as if he was a stranger!
I am blood become urine—an animal who cannot lick its wound!

Who is it that I cannot forgive? You for being love itself
or myself for still loving you though I'm falling over the world's edge?
Even now that I'm crawling numb and dumb in this burning pain
and aloneness ravages me like a crazed insatiable lover—
I find myself holding your photograph and hourly writing love letters to you
It was you who said we can never be separated—so where else can I go?

The memory of your kiss is a burning home, a dying planet!
The thought of your embrace breaks every bone in my being!
Longing for you, rips me open and floods me with salt water!
Whenever I step into the sun, rains lash down and crush me!
I am not dead, yet I would hardly call this living!
There is no place I can go, where I will be free of you—
yet whenever I step closer to you, your lips burst into fire!

MIREK

HYMN TO ABIRAMI

(Continued from the issue of May 1998)

In this world men with worship for years sempiternal
In this life high-born men and maidens with love and longing
Whoever submit to thy hoary and hallowed feet
Possess chariots and palanquins, elephants, jewelled crowns—
the signs of prosperity (52)

Prosperous, with red silken robes round thy waist,
Huge breasts, the string of pearls, flower-decked tresses
Three-eyed, meditative, ever alone, single and solitary
No austerity is comparable to thine, none (53)

None Given to no lies, approaching none for favours,
Steady and joyous at heart with love of penance
Ever desiring men with austerity and penance
O, Tripurasundari! ever I like to lie at thy feet. (54)

Ever at thy feet, thy body a confluence of a thousand lightnings,
Ever joyous at heart, the beginning, middle and end of the Vedas,
Sacred and secret lore anterior to the Vedas
At the hands of none do thou desirest anything (55)

Desiring nothing, thou art the One and the Many, Universal,
Distanced from everything in the inner cave of thy heart,
But very near to my pitiful heart, teach the Truth to me,
The Truth only the elder gods and the *rishis* know (56)

Well-known, with Shiva's two measures of grain
Thou hast appeased the hunger of the world
With thy gift I sing in sweet Tamil thy glory
Thou hast made me sing of things true and untrue (57)

Thy true body and limbs partake the beauty of the lotus,
Thy breasts the red rapture flowers of Paradise,
Thou art ever in the mystic lotus heart of mine,
Thy lotus eyes, face, hands and feet are my refuge (58)

My only refuge, abode of peace and asylum
Yet have I not linked my heart's devotion to thine;

Forsake me not for this weakness, O, Mother of Mercy!
As human mothers forsake not their erring children (59)

Mother, thy words are sweeter than milk, thy snow-white feet
On Shiva's head with the matted locks and Konrai blooms,
On the crest of the four Vedas of the highest realms,
On my head too, worse than that of a dog (60)

Worse than a dog, yet worthy in thine estimate
Thou hast graciously taken me as thine own
And granted me the vision beatific and divine,
Mother, daughter of Himavan, Vishnu's Sister! (61)

Vishnu's sister, the mountain is thy bow, the elephant skin thy apparel
The three-eyed destroyer is thy Lord Thou hast enticed him
With thy shapely breasts, wearied and vanquished him,
The sight of thy weapons linger in my mind, O Abirami! (62)

Abirami, goddess of the six great religions,
For the ignorant thou art the Path-finder and salvation
Still some seek alien gods and stay on the periphery,
Vain is their attempt like breaking rock with a wooden club! (63)

Goddess demanding no bird or beast for food-offerings
I sing endless songs in praise of thee,
Over the wide sky and the four different directions
I see nothing but the beauty of thy body (64)

Thy body is Shiva's own, the vanquisher of Manmatha,
For Shiva thou hast borne a brilliant son,
Muruga, the War-God with six faces and twelve hands
The darling child of ancient Wisdom Such is thy Love! (65)

Love absolute, golden bride! I am poor in words for proper praise,
I hold between my hands the World-Mother's feet
With no skill or talent, my songs tell only thy Names
Accept them as mantras in adoration of thy Grace (66)

Grace absolute descended from the supernal infinities,
Men waste their lives without inward look or yearning
Without a glad uplift and a new working they go
With a begging-bowl to every hut and hamlet, O Mother! (67)

Mother, far above the five elements of earth or sky,
 Kindling in man's thought and sense a heavenlier sense,
 O Shivakamasundari of the triple worlds and the Vast beyond,
 The trance-held tapaswini look up to thee and enjoy all wealth (68)

Giver of wealth, learning, a tireless mind ever fresh,
 A body divine, true relations and guileless friends,
 And all good things of life and respect
 All these with a gift of a sidelong glance! (69)

Glances that give a happiness too high for heart and sense
 Thy voice in unison with the music of the Vina, the stringed harp
 In the forest of Kadamba trees, lush green maiden!
 I am blessed with the vision of thy All-Beauty and All-Bliss (70)

Matchless Beauty with the spell of intoxicating sweetness,
 Thy feet atop the luminous and undying Vedas,
 Thy head with the cool crescent of a horned moon!
 With Thee as prop, O failing heart! what is Thy grief? (71)

(To be concluded)

THE VALLEY OF VIOLETS

THE Poet looked surprised and happy at the children shouting, waving and running towards the valley from the two opposite mountains. He had heard the bugles in the morning—the sound of peace—bringing the five-year old battle to an end. For generations the valley between the two mountains—Mount Suleiman mostly inhabited by the Muslims and Mount Solomon by the Christians—was the meeting place of one and all—children, grown-ups and aged ones. The Poet, that was the name by which everyone had called him ever since his childhood, could never remember any trace of hatred let alone fights between the two communities, living side by side, celebrating each other's festivals, sharing each other's grief and joy. And the valley in between full of flowering violets—that was why it was called the Valley of Violets—suddenly became the bone of contention between the two groups five years ago.

In winter the valley would be covered with snow. The elders stayed back home but the children used it for skiing. As spring approached, from nowhere the tiny violets would creep up and it was a competition among the children as to who would see them first and get the coveted "Valley of Violets" prize. In no time the valley would be full of flowers, in the lake the lilies would bloom, the lilacs and the wild roses would burst out in bright colours. The fish would swim and gulp the titbits thrown by the children. The rabbits, the squirrels and sometimes even the snakes would appear. The trees would be full of chirping birds. The whole populace from the two mountains would climb down and savour the joy of spring and of summer and of autumn. In winter the valley would become the skiing ground for children alone. The poet would mix with one and all as he was dear to the children as well as to the aged, and write poems on this beloved Valley of Violets.

By whom and when the seed of resentment was sown he did not know. Being a poet he never got mixed up in politics. Soon the resentment turned to hatred. He was shocked but ignored it. But when the atmosphere of the valley changed from laughter and greetings to shouts and abuses and fist-fights he was worried. What right has man to vitiate the natural beauty and harmony of the valley? The birds don't fight, the squirrels don't fight, neither the rabbits nor even the fish. What sort of animals are the human beings that spoil Nature's peace?

Luckily enough the winter came early that year and the communities stayed in their houses. But he was dismayed to see the absence of children. It had never happened before. What was wrong with the children?

His habitat was both the mountains. He stayed with his Muslim father on Mount Suleiman. His mother was a Christian from the other mountain. Yes, their love grew in the Valley of Violets where they had met. He was a frequent visitor to his maternal uncle's house on Mount Solomon.

He asked the children why they were not going skiing. They looked at each other and whispered that the elders had forbidden them to go to the valley and play with the children of the other valley. The poet shook his head in sadness. He went to Mount

Solomon and begged the children to come out and play. "Can't you hear the snow creaking and crying for you all?" "No, we won't, we do not want to mix with the other children," they replied. So the valley remained a no-man's-land that winter five years back.

With the spring the first violets appeared but there was no shout of joy as to who saw them first. It was all silent, an ominous silence—a lull before the storm—he felt.

One night he saw the torches burning, heard the sound of digging and dragging in the valley. In the morning he found a big boulder on the side of Mount Suleiman. There were shouts and abuses thrown from the mountain. The next morning he found a similar boulder on the side of Mount Solomon. Abuses and shouts went across the valley. He asked the elders why the boulders had been put. They ignored him. Then Maddy (that was the name given to him as he was supposed to be mad) called him aside and asked "Don't you know what's going on?"

"No, not at all. How did the quarrel start?"

"Well, they call me Maddy but I do understand some things. The Muslims wanted to build a mosque in the valley and the Christians said that for a long time they had wanted to build a church."

"But where will the children play or the people walk?" asked the poet.

"Well, that's the quarrel, we can't have both. The Muslims said our proposal came first so only the mosque should be built. The Christians refused, saying that they had thought of it first and had been waiting for the appropriate time. There was a meeting with representations from both the communities to decide to whom the valley belonged. I am supposed to be mad, so they did not object to my being present there. They nearly came to hand-to-hand fights," Maddy giggled. He continued "So I said, 'Ah-ha! how much do you people care for Allah or Christ that you are fighting over them? Build a Church or a Mosque in your hearts if you care so much.' They glared at me with red eyes and asked me to shut up." Maddy giggled. "Then they started fist-fights. So I shouted and said I had a brilliant idea. They stopped. Why not have a Two-in-One—Church *cum* Mosque! Oh, Poet, you should have seen how they forgot their own fights and all of them together attacked me. I got a black eye, a bone broken, head injury and what not. They took out their wrath on me and sat down calmly to discussions. No decision taken—they agreed to meet after the winter to sort out the problem. During the winter no one would use the valley. I spent all the winter thinking what to say in the next meeting so that I could disarray their minds like the first time. And now you see, the Christians have put a boulder on the side of Mount Suleiman for building a Church and the Muslims have put a boulder on the side of Mount Solomon to build a Mosque. They call me Maddy. Nice sane people these are," and he giggled again.

The Poet patted his back and said, "I will call you the wise one. You are the wisest of all."

"Yes, dear Poet, I too think so. Great men think alike. Don't they?" Again he giggled.

The Poet was alarmed They must remove the boulders. The spring had come The children would play and stumble and fall on them He pleaded with both sides.

“If I have no contradiction, no controversy in my own self, having a Muslim father and a Christian mother, then why should you have them towards each other? How much time do we spend thinking of God? Why spoil our love for each other by demarcating religion? Isn’t human bondage more important and humane than religious bondage?”

But no one would listen to him and rather started suspecting him as the spy of the other side In disgust the Poet built a hut for himself on Mount Suleiman facing the side opposite to his beloved valley

Soon the Valley of Violets turned into a Valley of Violence He could hear the rifles, the bombs, the mortars He would close his ears with both his hands but in nightmares saw them and heard them

One day Maddy came to see him He too had built a hut on Mount Solomon facing the opposite side of the valley He said, “Look at the deeds of sane men and they call me Maddy,” and he giggled

The war for possession killed many near and dear ones The number of people killed would decide who the winner would be The Poet was disillusioned He was writing an epic on this lovely valley and had titled it “The Valley of Violets” Disenchanted, he changed it to “The Valley of Violence”, with a sad heart

Yes, five years have passed, five summers with five long winters The spring has come The bugles heralding peace blew from both the mountains The children looked surprised The elders laughed and said it was peace. They would hear no more the rifles and gun-shots The children laughed and asked, “Can we go to the valley?” “Yes, of course!” So, waving small white flags, hugging each other, they ran down from both the mountains The elders watched Five years—a long time! The children of five years back had already reached their adolescence But they too ran to make up for the lost years The Poet ran too His valley had come to life He must change the title of the epic to “Happy Valley” now But the Poet stood thunderstruck! Where had disappeared the green valley, the grass, the lake? Just a few trees and these too black and skeleton-like! Can man be so savage, such a demon, to transform a beautiful valley into such sordid ugliness? But he saw the children—the spirit of innocent and unadulterated minds—running back to their mountains and carrying back with them shovels, brooms, dust-collectors and whatnot to clean their valley The elders were dumbfounded All day long they struggled on. Where had the lake disappeared? The lake with fish and cranes and lilies It was only a small muddy patch of water The children stood around with sadness on their faces as if bewailing some dear one’s death The adolescent boys and girls got together They remembered their lake so well! They resolved to clean it and slowly bring it back to life. All had to work hard, day after day, to bring back the beauty of the valley One day as the sun was setting, they were going back They hugged each other, wishing they could spend the night too in their beloved valley Then there was a shout! “Violet, there is a violet! Hurrah!” The Poet heard the shouts of joy and ran

fast, he looked surprised—a violet in this mortar-infested land? And moments later there was a deafening blast. The Poet ran. He was the first one to reach the spot of calamity from Mount Suleiman. Minced bodies lay all around. He saw a tiny hand waving a white flag and rushed towards it. He held the hand with the flag. The girl opened her eyes and gasped for breath.

“Poet I saw first violet shouted violet I get prize ”

“A violet, dear, where?”

“By sto . sto ”

“By the mossy stone?”

“Yes hid hid ”

“Half hidden?”

“We ran I stum ”

“You fell?”

“Yes Poet. it hurts ”

The tiny hand holding the white flag went limp. Gently he laid the hand on the ground. She had tripped and stumbled on the boulder.

He looked up towards the other end. Maddy was already there rushing down from Mount Solomon. He was standing by the other boulder with a violet in his hand—among bodies of children scattered around the boulder.

He shouted harshly at the Poet. “The land-mine was planted behind the boulder by sane men, Poet, and the violet hid by it.” And he sobbed.

The Poet looked down at the inert body and gently closed her eyes. He kissed her softly on her forehead and said, “This is the only prize I can give you, darling.”

The bugles from the mountains blew—heralding the peace for the night. The echoes crossed one another dying, dying, dying over “The Valley of the Dead.”

KRISHNA CHAKRAVARTI

K. D. SETHNA: THE PROSE WRITER

VISION AND THE THINKING MIND

(Continued from the issue of March 1998)

LIKE SRĪ Aurobindo, Sethna knows how to fuse the vision and the brain-stuff in his critical prose. The difference should be marked. SRĪ Aurobindo did not have time to be very exhaustive and his fusion of the two modes was absolutely spontaneous. Sethna's blend of the intellect and the vision is not similar to the Master's mode.

Even if we call it a "fusion", we can easily see the two colours separately. In Sethna, the poetic vision creeps in to illustrate an argument. This is just one method in SRĪ Aurobindo, but his supreme mastery lies not in exposing but keeping it in the background. Sethna does not hide this fusion, maybe because he depends more on particularisation. Also, you listen to his strong argumentative voice and the poetry separately in his prose. However, Sethna's pure thinking mind is not always an ordinary intelligence. His poetry in prose is also free from the Tagorean blemish, of which Buddhadev Bose has spoken thus: "When an intellectual debate is expected, Tagore passes on to enchantment" (*Centenary Volume*, Sahitya Akademi, 1961). Let us see how Sethna differs from Tagore in his treatment of poetic logic.

Aureoled flowers grow on the peaks of paradise. It is these that poets pluck, flowers that seem shining perfections, born without a moment's pain, but do you think they can be reached without the prodigious effort necessary to scale those peaks? To a few lucky ones the amaranthine blooms drop of themselves. The poet has only to open his palms and catch the glimmering charity. Others are not so blessed. But it is the same miracles they manifest, and these miraculous rhythms of beauty have to be considered, not the easy or arduous means employed to achieve them. Besides, some poets—especially those who receive their raptures easily—are content if their song-flowers come from heaven and do not worry whether they bring the full freshness and integrity of the altitudes. Though made of light, the petals in the act of being brought down to earth may bear stains and shadows left by the contact of mortal regions. No cheap sweat of the brain can wash them clean.

(The Thinking Corner, p. 2)

Although there is a memory here of SRĪ Aurobindo's commentaries on Vyasa and Valmiki, the flourish is more characteristic of K. D. Sethna's comparatively light style, where he indulges in fancy at a greater length. However, he never sacrifices his logic, as does Tagore.

There is a misconception, in certain circles in Calcutta, that Sethna overdoes the exhaustive method and he does not have that power of focusing. I would like to open the eyes of those critics with just one passage on Yeats.

Yeats is acknowledged universally as the greatest English poet of our age. What does his poetry consist of? In his youth, a good amount of the most exquisite love-lyricism woven into patterns of Irish myth and mystic symbol; in his old age, a vigorous utterance on the one hand of a zestful, inquisitive, flesh-accepting, death-confronting realism touched by what seems a scientific attitude, and on the other hand of an occult and esoteric vision that regards all things here as a faint representation of some secret Spirit within us, of archetypes and archimages that are beyond the physical universe. Yeats was a many-sided genius and in his poems he focussed all those sides, with an underlying mystical sense which was somewhat ivory-towerish in his young days but altogether life-gripping in the days of his maturity.

(The Thinking Corner, pp. 49-50)

This is the typical Aurobindonian mode created by an original critic and the chief force behind this generalised prose is the force of concentration and condensation. This is a swift, inspired summary, which defends Sethna against the charge of over-abundance.

(To be continued)

GOUTAM GHOSAL

ON TRADITIONAL SADHANA

FULFILMENT of our inner hunger for unitive knowledge, for spiritual felicity, for harmony and peace which is co-existent with supra-intellectual awareness, is attained by transcending the mind and intellect, including the ego-consciousness. For attaining this goal, the essential step is to make the mind and intellect one-pointed. The effort required for reaching such a goal is known as Sadhana. Sadhana is a kind of self-research, rather search for the self.

The fundamental requirement for Sadhana is a way of life based on Dharma. A righteous way of life, according to Dharma, is a necessity not only to spiritual seekers, but also to all those who are genuinely interested in culture, inclusive of scientific culture.

Just as in scientific research one needs a guide in the early training period, similarly the necessity for a guide or a Guru arises in spiritual pursuits. If there is an intense craving for Truth and Fulfilment, then a Sadguru would surely appear on the scene, at least that is the assurance of our sages and seers, the knowers of the path.

There are obviously as many paths as there are types of human nature, the paths being known as Yogas, and are generally grouped into four well-known divisions, viz., Karma Yoga (the Way of Work), Jnana Yoga (the Way of Discrimination and Knowledge), Raja Yoga (the Way of Meditation) and Bhakti Yoga (the Way of Devotion). The various Ways are, of course, interdependent, though in a particular aspirant, depending upon his natural inclination, one particular Way might play a more dominant role.

As regards the problem of controlling the mind, for making it one-pointed, the following observations are relevant.

A disturbed mind is a constant source of trouble. The Gita as well as Patanjali (and other authorities) prescribe the practice of detachment coupled with meditation for attaining control over the mind. Through mastery of one's mind one attains control over one's thoughts, feelings and emotions. But the effort involved in controlling the mind is indeed far beyond description. In the Gita Arjuna complains to Krishna, "My mind is restless. I find its control as difficult as controlling the wind." Krishna encourages Arjuna to continue the effort relentlessly. He suggests that the mind should be brought to one-pointedness through constant practice and detachment. The effort so made results in divesting the mind of thoughts and fixing it on the Atman.

Unless one has some concept of the Atman, it is well-nigh impossible to stabilise one's emotion, devotion and love towards it. Understanding this difficulty of the seeker, our sages and seers suggest the use of symbols and images as aids in the above process. For example, according to Patanjali (*Yoga-Sutra*, III, 1-3) the absorption of the mind in the Divine takes place in three stages—the word 'Divine' standing here for the Ultimate Reality, source of Enlightenment. These

he designates as Dharana, concentration with the aid of the symbol, Dhyana, meditation, and Samadhi, total absorption in the significance of the symbol. In other words, during Dharana, the mind takes the aid of the symbol and, when gradually the form of the symbol vanishes from the mind, it is totally absorbed in its (the symbol's) significance only, it is said to be in Samadhi.

The pertinent question might arise as to which particular symbol should be chosen by a particular aspirant. Normally, the advice of the Sadguru is the most dependable guide in this regard. The power and efficacy of certain mystic symbols are not readily comprehensible to a mind too much engrossed with the phenomenal aspects of this world.

Illumined life

An illumined mind only can be the guiding light to a seeker of illumination, and for this a science of mind called Yoga (or Applied Psychology) is very important. Through Yoga one attains Samadhi or the state of quietude and awareness of the Absolute. Thus in Samadhi peace, tranquillity and an experience of unity in diversity persist. This culmination of spiritual quest is termed 'Self-realisation'. With such an experience, one's intellect gets freed from all shackles of egoistic preferences. One thereby attains *paripurnatā*, fullness and perfection, and *paritripti*, total fulfilment. One thus becomes totally free and truly wise at the same time. And our sages and seers have declared that this supra-mental experience is open to every seeker.

ARDHENDU SEKHAR GHOSH

DEVELOPMENT AND SYMBOLISM OF SHIVA IN INDIAN SPIRITUAL LITERATURE

THE history of Indian spiritual thought is marked by successive bodies of literature each of which stands together by dint of its internal consistency of linguistic elements, imagery and emphasis. The earliest of this corpus is the Vedas, particularly the Rīg Veda Samhita, composed of hymns to a pantheon of gods, that seem at first sight to be personifications of natural forces. One of these gods, who appears a relatively small number of times, is Rudra, literally, “The Howler”, who is hymned by the poets of the Veda, in awe of his unsparing wrath. Later spiritual literature establishes the equivalence of Rudra and Shiva,¹ but in the Vedas, Shiva is used only in an adjectival sense, as one of the triple attributes of the One—Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram—respectively, the True, the Auspicious, the Beautiful. The relative paucity of mention of Rudra in the Rīg Veda combined with the lack of internal evidence in that body of literature for the equivalence of Rudra and Shiva has led Indologists to question the continuity of Shiva from the Rīg Veda to his emergence as a powerful pre-eminent deity in the Svetashwata Upanishad.

The hymns to Rudra in the Rīg Veda establish him as a fearsome deity, ruddy-hued, with long braided hair and with a destructive aspect. He is sometimes accompanied by the Maruts, the storm-gods. He is entreated to spare the speaker from his severity and to show his other face of beatitude and benevolence. He is the drinker of Soma, the wine of Immortality, and in this aspect, is also himself the bestower of the boon of Immortality (the *Tryambakam* hymn)². He is the friend of the long-haired sages (*keśin*)³ who share with him the cup of poison. Through these attributes a somewhat hazy picture emerges, cryptic and sometimes self-contradictory. Even within the hymns, the linguistic complexity often engenders paradoxical imagery. The *keśin*-hymn, for example, speaks of Rudra as the drinker of *visa*—which could be interpreted as meaning intoxicant or poison. Though an intoxicant is a toxic substance, and therefore a poison, there is much difference in the intention of Rudra, seen as a consumer of intoxicant or poison. The consumption of the intoxicant could be a pointer to Soma, the intoxicating drink of Delight, disclosed in later Śaivite imagery as that god’s fondness for *gānjā* and *daturā*, while the consumption of poison is directly reminiscent of the Puranic tale of the churning of the ocean.

All the qualities attributed to Rudra above persist in later literature, gaining greater distinctness in Puranic imagery, through a crystallized symbolism. However, the relative lack of mention of Rudra in the Rīg Veda has led some Indologists to surmise that this was an unimportant deity in the Vedas, while his unsocial ways have led to the speculation that he has been appropriated from native (Dravidian) or aboriginal worship into the Vedas. While these issues are not of central concern here, we may comment in passing on them. I believe the relative paucity of mention of Rudra in the Rīg Veda does not constitute a conclusive measure of the god’s importance in Vedic worship for

the following reasons (1) We have no way of knowing if the extant corpus of the Rīg Veda constitutes the entire body of hymns as it existed in its origin, and (2) in esoteric literature, it is often the case that the most powerful names are the least uttered. As to the theory of appropriation, an excellent case has been made by Doris Srinivasan on the Vedic origins of Shiva,⁴ but whether appropriated or not, a symbolic continuity is traceable in the development of Shiva in Hindu spiritual practice. It is our intention to explore some attributes of that continuity.

When we focus on Hindu spiritual practice, we must distinguish this from popular Hindu religion, which is based on ritual worship of Puranic deities and devotion arising from literal understandings of Puranic stories. We must, as well, distinguish it from classical or courtly narrative, the products of romantic imagination at play with scriptural or secular material with the intention of engendering a high aesthetic enjoyment. The spiritual practice of Hindu India aims at the realization of Truth or Reality, and the spiritual practicante is one who has dedicated his entire life to this practice. It is at this level that the Hindu scriptures primarily operate, and therefore it is at this level that the primary meanings of Hindu symbolism must be sought. Hinduism has always laid claim to verifiability in experience, and since all Hindu spiritual literature acknowledges the primacy of the Vedas, there must presumably exist correlates in spiritual experience of Vedic textual material. In this spirit, a delineation of the spiritual symbolism of the Vedas may be found in Sri Aurobindo's *Secret of the Veda*.

In the body of literature known as the Upanishads, a general change of tenor from the Vedas is immediately perceptible. Instead of the symbolic language of the ritual, the enumeration of deities resembling nature forces and possessing mysterious and far-reaching powers, the emphasis shifts to more abstract, impersonal and formless principles. Terms such as Brahman, Maya, Sat-Chit-Ananda appear and assume pre-eminence over the Vedic gods. In fact, a major Upanishad, the Kena, speaks explicitly of the process of such a subservience. In this Upanishad Agni, Vayu and Indra, all major Vedic deities, are challenged in turn by Brahman, who demonstrates to each of these his impotence when operating independently, separate from the Brahman. In each case, the Brahman disappears before the god can find out who this challenger was or whence it came. It is only at the final encounter that India manages to pursue the track of the vanishing Brahman till the mountain summits, where he is informed and enlightened about Brahman by Uma, the Mother Goddess. This Upanishad is very germane to our present discussion for two reasons (1) as mentioned above, it demonstrates most explicitly the dethronement of the Vedic deities in favour of the impersonal principle of consciousness, Brahman, (2) for the first time in extant recorded literature, we come across the goddess Uma, find her a native of the mountain summits and established as superior to Indra, as a knower of the Brahman and thus, his teacher.

It is in the Upanishads again, as mentioned earlier, and specifically the Swetasvatara, that Shiva makes his appearance in his full glory, and becomes equated with the primordial principle, Brahman.

“Know Nature for the illusion and Maheshwara, the Almighty, for the Lord of the illusion this whole moving world is filled in with created things as with His members,” reads verse 10 of chapter 4 ‘The word “member” here is the translation for Sanskrit “avayava”, which means limb or portion, and as such could have entirely generic connotations. However, the very next verse is interesting from iconic considerations. “He being One entereth upon womb and womb, in Him all this manifest world cometh together and breaketh up again, lo, the Master, the Giver, the Lord Adorable whom having increased within himself man goes to unutterable peace.” Here, the word “womb” has been used to translate “yonī”, and the appearance of this verse after verse 10, could point to a possible reading of “avayava” as “linga”. In the next verse he is equated with Rudra, and later in the same chapter (verses 21, 22) Rudra takes on attributes and is approached in a manner familiar to us from the Veda. “Knowing Thee unborn, one cometh to Thee and his heart is full of fear. O Rudra, O thou Terrible, Thou hast that other kind and smiling face, with that sweet smile protect me.” (21)⁶ “O Rudra, smite not our sons nor our little children, nor our lives nor our horses nor our cattle, slay not our heroes in thy wrath, O Terrible One; lo, we come with offerings in our hands and call Thee in the assembly of the people.” (22)⁷ In verse 21 above, there is but one element which strikes a note alien to the phrasing of the Veda, and which betrays its Upanishadic origin. This element will also be very important for our consideration of the spiritual symbolism of Shiva. It is the unborn nature of the deity, here Rudra, an abstraction whose riddling quality is enhanced by the surrealistic citation of fear as a consequence of this approach.

The name Shiva also occurs explicitly in this Upanishad. In the same chapter as above, Shiva is seen as the Immanent, Universal and Transcendental Godhead. “As the rare and fine cream in clarified butter, and it is richer than the butter, so Shiva the Blessed One hath hidden Him in every one of all His creatures, but as the One He encompasseth this whole world and girdeth it around. Know God and you break every bondage.” (16)⁸ Here, the image of the clarified butter (again, familiar to the Veda) is used to emphasize the secret Immanence of Shiva in all things, while the girding of the world as the One shows Him as the all-embracing Universality. Soon, the Transcendental aspect is revealed in a verse reminiscent of the famous Nasadiya Sukta of the R̥gveda. “When Darkness is not and day dawneth not, nor Night cometh, nor reality nor unreality, but all is Shiva, the Blessed One pure and absolute, that verily is the Imperishable and the Sun, more glorious than Savita and from Him Wisdom, the Ancient Goddess, was poured in the beginning.” (18)⁹

The rest of the verses in this chapter now amplify on this transcendental quality. In a typically Upanishadic turn, the god is now raised above limiting form and personality. “Not on high have any laid hold of him, nor shalt you take Him on the level nor seize Him, but lo, He hath no likeness nor image, whose glory verily is great among the nations.” (19)¹⁰ “The Eternal hath not form that He should stand in the dominion of the Eye, neither by vision doth any man behold Him but with heart and mind who truly know This, which is in the heart, they become deathless.” (20)¹¹

Transcendental, standing above the manifest creation, eternally unborn, Universal, Substance of all substance, all-embracing, all-containing, Immanent, hidden in the heart of all things—this is the triple poise of the Brahman according to the Upanishads, and Shiva in this Upanishad is being clearly equated with this triple-aspected Brahman. However, iconically, Shiva has grown even more hazy than Rudra in the Vedas. This is typical of the Upanishads, which I believe, constantly play this game of impersonalizing the Personal and personalizing the Impersonal. One possible reason for this would be the fact that the esoteric sense of the Vedas can very easily, due to the mundane concreteness of its images, be misconstrued into a system of sacrificial ritual,—a fact, deriding which, the Buddha broke from the Brahmanical tradition.¹² In the Shwetashwatarā, in fact, there is an interesting verse which spells out the Upanishadic view on this matter. Just before the introduction of Shiva as the Great Lord, and the Master of Maya, a verse goes: “In that highest and undying Heaven where all the Gods have taken their session, there are the verses of the Rīg-Veda, and he who knoweth not its abiding place, how shall the Rīg-Veda help him? They who know it, lo! they are here, they have their firm seat forever”(8)¹³ The Rīg-Veda is thus held up as esoteric scripture, the knowledge of which is impossible without the knowledge of its place of origin—i.e., experiential knowledge. The Bhagavad Gīta, which is considered a post-Upanishadic treatise, yet basing itself on Vedānta, takes a similar approach towards the Veda. Vedic ritual is seen as Karma or Works in the Gīta and is treated as an inferior path to spiritual Realization. It is quite possible that this widespread misconstruction of the Veda’s original intent occurred prior to the Upanishads, and the seers who sought to preserve the knowledge of Reality, struck upon the koan-like paradoxical linguistic method of the Upanishads to force the mind beyond literal understanding. However, this has its own limitations, becoming intellectually challenging and therefore distant from the popular approach.

This may well have led to a second shift from the Upanishadic to the narrative allegories of the Purānas. In these, the gods are delineated in clear physical terms for the first time. They become iconically concrete and subjects for standardized depiction. Our present-day popular knowledge of Hinduism is based largely on these icons and allegories, and most Hindu art (I am excluding here the metaphysical abstractions of Tantra) follows these in its representation.¹⁴

(To be concluded)

DEBASHISH BANERJI

References

- 1 *Shwetashwatai Upanishad*, Chapter 4, Verses 16, 21
- 2 *Rig Veda*, Mandala 7, Sukta 59, 12
- 3 *Ibid* , Mandala 10, Sukta 136
- 4 *Vedic Rudra-Siva*, Doris M Srinivasan, Journal of the American Oriental Society, Vol 103, No 3 (July-Sept 1983)
- 5 Sri Aurobindo, *The Upanishads*, SABCL, Vol 12 p 369
- 6 *Ibid* , p 371
- 7 *Ibid*
- 8 *Ibid* , 360
- 9 *Ibid* , pp 370-371
- 10 *Ibid* , p 371
- 11 *Ibid*
- 12 This is a debatable issue The ritualistic interpretation of the Rig Veda comes from the commentary by Sayana, which has been seriously challenged by several scholars See Sri Aurobindo, *Secret of the Veda*, A B Purani, *Studies in Vedic Interpretation* or David Frawley, *Wisdom of the Ancient Seers*
- 13 *SABCL*, Vol 12 p 368
- 14 Alternatively, the Art may have preceded the Literature This does not weaken essentially the hypothesis regarding the shift in thinking from the Upanishads to the Puranas

SRI AUROBINDO'S CONCEPT OF ETHICS

(Continued from the issue of May 1998)

Man's Ethical Development

IN accordance with Sri Aurobindo's metaphysics, as the Consciousness-Force emerges in us due to our efforts in integral yoga, we become aware of the rightness and wrongness of our particular actions. We know how the natural world has evolved; there is a change in the world, and each turning-point is marked by mutations, the critical step at which a thing modifies itself and evolves into an even finer or higher thing. The evolution consists of a chain of such mutations, but during all this change there remains something fundamentally unchanged. Even at the levels of infra-ethical and infra-rational existence of our evolutionary stages there was something in us which would enable us to aim for the supra-ethical and supra-rational. In other words, in the Aristotelian way of explanation, human beings at their barbaric stages of undeveloped and irrational selves had the potency in them to act ethically and think rationally. This potency or the ordained ability of a being becomes an act later in evolutionary development. *Naturally*, the animals or the trees cannot have such ethical or rational potency, for they are not ordained by nature to possess such faculties, only rational animals (man, as defined by Aristotle) possess such faculties which, if developed in a congenial environment, come to fruition.

Man desires self-expression, self-development, in other words, the progressing play in himself of the conscious-force of existence; that is his fundamental delight. Whatever hurts that self-expression, self-development, satisfaction of his progressing self, is for him evil, whatever helps, confirms, raises, aggrandises, ennobles it is good. Only his conception of the self-development changes, becomes higher and wider, begins to exceed his limited personality, to embrace others, to embrace all in its scope.⁶

The term 'aspiration' has an enormous significance in Sri Aurobindo's yoga and thought, for without aspiration man cannot achieve any lofty aim. The only aim of our life is to seek happiness, as Socrates taught—to attain the aim of our life through ethical behaviour. The great religions of the world, too, have this principle embedded in their moral codes: the purpose of man is to love and serve God in this world and to be with Him after his death, to enjoy everlasting happiness (Muslim), or beatitude (Christian), or liberation. *mukti* (Hindu). The way to such happiness is, of course, charted by our conduct.

In man's ethical development Sri Aurobindo's concept of Consciousness-Force plays a great role. As we grow in self-consciousness we grow in a threefold way. *sat*, *chit* and *ananda*—existence, consciousness and bliss or delight. According to Sri

Aurobindo, we can find delight or happiness or bliss already in this world. If the theory of evolution is true then we must be able to experience to a certain degree the bliss that our conduct seeks.

Ethics as Stages in Development

For Sri Aurobindo 'evolution' is a truism, it applies to all the beings which have an inner inclination for self-expression, and these in their own way find delight upon realization of their being. While the drive of the lower beings may be termed non-ethical, in human beings it may even turn out to be anti-ethical, this is so because they can wilfully perform an action that goes against ethics. The struggle between the forces of ethics and those of anti-ethics is a characteristic of the infra-ethical stage. The stage of ethical behaviour is a stage of struggle to empower good over evil and the stage of supra-ethics is where equanimity is achieved with 'final reconciliation'.

The ethical impulse and attitude, so all-important to humanity, is a means by which it struggles out of the lower harmony and universality based upon inconscience and broken up by Life into individual discords towards a higher harmony and universality based upon conscient oneness with all existences. Arriving at that goal, this means will no longer be necessary or even possible, since the qualities and opportunities on which it depends will naturally dissolve and disappear in the final reconciliation.⁷

What is important in our study of ethics is not to lose sight of the context in which it functions. Ethics belongs to the temporal mode of human action, to apply it to any other mode would result in failure. Hence, Sri Aurobindo reminds us

If, then, the ethical standpoint applies only to a temporary though all-important passage from one universality to another, we cannot apply it to the total solution of the problem of the universe, but can only admit as one element in that solution. To do otherwise is to run into the peril of falsifying all the facts of the universe, all the meaning of the evolution behind and beyond in order to suit a temporary outlook and a half-evolved view of the utility of things. The world has three layers, infra-ethical, ethical and supra-ethical. We have to find that which is common to all; for only so can we resolve the problem.⁸

Our life is marked by the struggle between good and evil. The force of these two aspects of human conduct has been so influential that, in the early religio-philosophical developments of the third and fourth centuries there developed in the West a doctrine called Manicheanism, which advocated these, the good and the evil, as separate and supreme principles. This theory of Good and Evil, God and Devil, respectively, was able to reasonably solve many pressing problems. *e.g.*, it offered a sound explanation

for suffering suffering resulted from the evil principle and the good principle was not responsible for it The then ecclesiastical authorities, however, condemned such teachings as heresies Sri Aurobindo found no difficulty in distinguishing good from evil and establishing the one supreme principle Good and evil, for Sri Aurobindo, belong to the infra-ethical plane, it is a stage where the struggle between these two is natural But as we progress in our consciousness and attain true Consciousness, we free ourselves from evil and progress in good The aim of life is that *dharma* must triumph, the good must overcome the evil, man, out of his antithetical situation, must realize the ultimate Good, Truth and Beauty To quote Sri Aurobindo

Evolutionary Nature, the terrestrial cosmic Force, seems then at first to have no preference for either of these [two: good and evil] opposites, it uses both alike for its purpose And yet it is the same Nature, the same Force that has burdened man with the sense of good and evil and insists on its importance evidently, therefore, this sense also has an evolutionary purpose, it too must be necessary, it must be there so that man may leave certain things behind him, move towards others, until out of good and evil he can emerge into some Good that is eternal and infinite ⁹

Aim of Ethics

The students of philosophy learn in their lessons that the aim of ethics is to make out of man a good human being That, for Sri Aurobindo, would be the minimum accomplishment of ethics, the maximum being able to get to God and cultivate the life divine. Religion gives us a foothold to come into His presence Whatever we may pursue, whether the devout way, the active way or the pursuit of eternal knowledge of life in the world of religion, art, science, etc , all is done with the single aim of attaining the ultimate Good—

In all the higher powers of his life man may be said to be seeking, blindly enough, for God To get at this as a spiritual presence is the aim of religion, to grow into harmony with its eternal nature of light, love, strength and purity is the aim of ethics, to enjoy and mould ourselves into the harmony of its eternal beauty and delight is the aim and consummation of our aesthetic need and nature, to know and to be according to its eternal principles of truth is the end of science and philosophy and all our insistent drive towards knowledge ¹⁰

(Concluded)

DANIEL ALBUQUERQUE

References

- 6 Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, SABCL, Vol 18, p 97
- 7 *Ibid*
- 8 *Ibid*
- 9 *Ibid*, p 625
- 10 Sri Aurobindo, *Social and Political Thought*, SABCL, Vol 15, p 145

AS I SEE IT

(Continued from the issue of May 1998)

So far in our discussion we have been concerned with the nature and form of the creator and the creation. We have seen that God is both the efficient cause and the material cause of this world. But, why this creation? What is its purposive cause? Scientists generally keep silent about purposive causes, for they regard them as beyond their jurisdiction. But our life-sense is intimately connected with the view we take about the purpose of creation. There is a line of thought holding that God being the supreme being cannot have a purpose before him to fulfil, for that would imply a feeling of want in the mind of God and thus would be a sign of imperfection, which is not conceivable about the supreme being. But is the matter really so? Since God is the supreme being without a second, whatever he does, he does all by himself. So the question of any imperfection cannot arise. The point is, God is the only ultimate reality. But who does want to remain alone forever? In fact, we cannot imagine God as choosing to remain lonely forever, engrossed in his own magnanimity. Magnanimity itself would then lose its meaning. In the Vedantic philosophy the purposive cause of creation is simply God's *līlā* or his will-to-play, *lokavat tu līlākaivalyam* (*Vedāntadarshanam*, 2.1 33). God engages himself in this play out of sheer joy and therefore everything is born out of joy indeed, *ānandāddeva khalvimāni bhūtāni jāyante* (*Tait. Up.*, 3:6 7). But why? Well, the reason is simply that He (God) desired to be many, *tadaikṣata bahusyām* (*Chhandyogya Up*, 6 2 3).

Following Sri Aurobindo we may say in our own way, that creation is a self-imposed vast experiment of God himself and this experiment is his play. God's experiment is whether a plurality of conscious beings can be created out of the single self that God himself is. To create the plurality, separation is necessary, and to give stability to separation gross matter is perhaps essential. Gross matter cannot surely be completely bereft of consciousness, for then it would not be able to do the work it will be required to do by Providence. On the other hand, the created objects must have been required to be initially sufficiently unconscious so that separation could be established. But paucity of consciousness must have been an initial requirement only, for the ulterior goal of creation must be developed consciousness so that God may have the true satisfaction of companionship. So the creation takes the form of first creating the opposite or rather the apparent opposite—'nescient' matter—out of the Supreme's own self and then developing consciousness or multiple consciousness in that 'nescient' ground. Creation as an experiment may have to face a challenge. One may say that God being the supreme being should also be omnipotent. Why then would he require to go on experimenting over a thing? Whatever he wills, he should be able to work out in the twinkling of an eye. So, why should he take aeon after aeon to manifest himself in the evolutionary process? Our above description itself contains an answer to the question. We believe that God is omnipotent, but also believe that, because he is omnipotent, he

can create a problem and conditions such that, under them, the solution of the problem is not trivial. We have to remember that in the act of creation God has first created the opposite of himself, the manifold mass of inert and apparently unconscious matter and he wants to manifest himself, that is, consciousness, in that ground. In the act, he has to accept the fundamental limitations of the ground. For quicker performance he cannot abolish those limitations through any vanishing trick, for then there will be no embodied plurality of consciousnesses and the situation that he would arrive at would be the same in which he, as the transcendental being, was before the creation. Surely, that is not what he is experimenting to do. The thing to be understood here is that the work of manifesting oneself in one's opposite and to do it in multiple ways is not a trivial task.

Though we declare that the Absolute is beyond our ken, there is actually no end in our endeavour to understand the nature of the Absolute. We say that God (the Absolute) is omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient. But this requires analysis.

First, it may be mentioned that since the Absolute is one without a second and everything is his creation out of himself, it automatically follows that the Absolute is omnipresent. It is almost tautologically true.

Next, we come to the question of omnipotence. Since the Absolute is without any second, so all potency should be his potency and in this sense the Absolute is surely omnipotent. It would be a triviality to use the word in this sense and we do not use the word in this sense either. What we mean by the word is that whatever we may conceive of, the Absolute, if he so wills, can do it. We may even indulge in a scientific explanation of the same. The Machian principle states that inertia is not an intrinsic property of matter, it states that the inertia of a material body is thrust on the body by the aggregate of all bodies external to it and, had a material body been the only one in existence, it would not be subject to any inertia. Very similarly, it will be quite reasonable to suppose that, since the Absolute is the one and the sole ultimate reality, it must be free from any inertia. So it will not be unreasonable to suppose that whatever we may conceive of, the Absolute will indeed be able to do it, if he so wills. But here we must take note of two points. Nothing involving any internal contradiction can be done by any agent, not even by the Absolute. Thus nobody, not even the Absolute, can produce a table which is white and non-white at the same time. Again, we can create fallacies to put the Absolute in trouble. If we ask whether the Absolute can create such a heavy object that he himself will not be able to lift it, then since here ability to do one thing implies inability to do some other thing, the Absolute will be in jeopardy. Fallacies may be created by creating opposition between omnipotence and omnipresence or between omnipotence and omniscience. If we ask whether the Absolute can create a ball such that he is not inside it or does not know what is inside it, then again the Absolute will be in trouble. By 'omnipotence' we should mean the capacity for doing anything that does not involve logical self-contradiction, nor is fallacious. In this proper sense of the term, we do believe that the Absolute is omnipotent.

Now, let us come to the question of omniscience. Since the Absolute is the only reality and since it may be taken for granted that the Absolute will know himself fully, we may say that the Absolute should be omniscient also. But it is better to be clear that, in the context of knowledge, we are not concerned with God's knowledge about his own self. God in his own self transcends the world and is unchanging. So the past, the present and the future lose their differences. In the context of knowledge we are concerned with the world and its time-history. It is in this connection that we should be clear as to what 'knowing' means. We want to state that we can know only the things that exist or existed. Hence only the past and the present are the objects of knowledge, not the future. About the future we can only hold beliefs. Our belief in the future rests upon our knowledge of the past and the present, our reasoning and our faith in the uniformity of Nature. When the belief in anything future appears to us to be beyond any doubt, we describe it as 'knowing'. But this knowing is different from the knowing, taken in the correct sense of the term. We may call this knowledge 'foreknowledge'. (In life's journey and in the formation of our world-view, foreknowledge, which is the same as our power of prediction, is perhaps more important than knowledge. But that is a different question.) As regards knowledge (*i.e.* knowledge of the past and the present,) the difference between the Absolute and mortals like us is that, while about any object of knowledge we know only partially or perhaps nothing at all, the Absolute knows it in full. The Absolute is omniscient in this correct sense of the term. Again, since the knowledge of the past and the present and the reasoning faculty of the Absolute must be both perfect and full, it may be said that in the realm of uniformity of Nature the Absolute's 'knowledge' of the future must also be perfect and full. But uniformity of Nature surely does not prevail in the same degree in the life-stage as it does in the material plane. The reason is, so we believe, a living creature, though limited by the boundaries of its power, does possess some freedom, and this freedom grows more and more with growing consciousness. It goes without saying that, since the creator is the sole ultimate reality, this freedom is a grant from the creator. But freedom gained through a grant is also freedom within its own boundaries. By freedom of a living creature we mean its free-will and the capacity to work according to its free-will (within the limits of its capabilities). A denial of this would be a denial of the difference between the inanimate and the animate. In this case creation itself would amount to a puppet-show. There is indeed a formidable school of thought that denies individual freedom on the ground that it contravenes the oneness of the ultimate, who only, according to this school, can be free. We fail to follow this line of thought. If we can believe that the one consciousness can give rise to many consciousnesses and many egos, then there can hardly be any justification in holding that freedom cannot be given to such consciousnesses. We think that individual freedom (within limits of capabilities decreed by Nature) is a fact in the history of evolution. And precisely for this reason, the activities of living creatures, specially the humans, may not always be completely foreknown to the Supreme, and may not always be desirable to the Supreme. Who

knows whether on this account, God at times chooses to intervene in the affairs of the world. Though God is often called *Trikālañña* (the knower of the past, the present and the future), we are of the opinion that, by knowledge of the future, we have to understand belief in the future, and there too, we think, our analysis through division between the material-deterministic level and the conscious level is a justified analysis.

(Concluded)

ASOK KUMAR RAY

SRI AUROBINDO—THE SOUL OF INDIA

(Continued from the issue of May 1998)

IN the three essays—“The Supreme Divine”, “The Secret of Secrets” and “The Divine Truth and Way”—Sri Aurobindo continues his presentation from the seventh chapter to chapters VIII and IX. The starting-point of the new and fuller position has been found. We are to change from an earthly imperfection to a divine perfection, but ‘by a higher, a spiritual fulfilment of all that we now essentially are.’ Ignorance and egoism are to be discarded and in their stead has to come the rule of the spirit, made dynamic and active. This is the characteristic teaching of the Gita, there is to be no self-annulment of Nature but its self-fulfilment in divine Nature. Devotion has come in definitely as a path of Sadhana though it is not as yet fully developed. That will come in a later essay, “The Way and the Bhakta”. Sri Aurobindo says here, “The passion of love in our self-giving carries us up to him and opens the mystery of his deepest heart of being. Love completes the triple cord of the sacrifice, perfects the true key of the highest secret.”

Sri Aurobindo further says, “The God-lover dear to God is a soul of wide equality, equal to friend and enemy, equal to honour and insult, pleasure and pain, praise and blame, grief and happiness, heat and cold, to all that troubles with opposite affections the normal nature. He will have no attachment to a person or thing, place, or home, He will be content and well-satisfied with whatever surroundings, whatever relation men adopt to him, whatever station or fortune. He will keep a mind firm in all things, because it is constantly seated in the highest self and fixed forever on the one divine object of his love and adoration.”

We have to know the Purusha integrally in all his three aspects; the word used in the text is *tattwatah*, “in its true principle.” It is the knowledge of the Supreme Purusha which constitutes the true and complete knowledge. Certain metaphysical terms like *adhibhuta*, *adhidaiva*, *adhyātma* and *visargah* have been introduced and defined in chapter VIII. They sum up briefly the “essential truths of the manifestation of the Supreme Divine in the cosmos.” *Adhyātma* is the principle of the self in Nature, *adhibhuta* and *adhidaiva* are the outward and inward phenomena of being, *visargah* is the creative impulse and energy, *adhyajña* is the secret of Karma and Yajna in the world. Krishna says in the Gita, “By *adhyajña*, the Lord of Works and Sacrifice, I mean myself, the Divine, the Godhead, the Purushottama here secret in the body of all these embodied creatures.” Within this formula falls all that is existent. We need not dwell on these terms any more here; *adhibhuta*, the Kshara Bhava and *adhyajna* the Purushottama, the three aspects of the Purusha, are clearly indicated. We shall content ourselves with citing one important verse from chapter VIII of the *Essays on the Gita*. “Arjuna accepts the entire knowledge that has thus been given to him by the divine Teacher. His mind is already delivered from its doubts and seekings, his heart turned now from the outward aspect of the world, from its baffling appearances to its supreme

sense and origin and its inner realities, is already released from sorrow and affliction and touched with the ineffable gladness of a divine revelation. The language which he is made to use in voicing his acceptance is such as to emphasise and insist once again on the profound integrality of this knowledge and its all-embracing finality and fullness. He accepts first the Avatar, the Godhead in man, who is speaking to him as the supreme Brahman, as the supracosmic All and Absolute of existence in which the soul can dwell when it rises out of this manifestation and thus partial becoming to its source, *param brahma, param dhāma*. He accepts him as the supreme purity of the ever-free Existence to which one arrives through the effacement of ego in the self's immutable impersonality calm and still for ever, *pavitram paramam*. He accepts him next as the one Permanent, the eternal Soul, the divine Purusha, *purusam sāśvatam divyam*. He acclaims in him the original Godhead, adores the Unborn who is the pervading, indwelling, self-extending master of all existence, *ādi-devam ajam vibhum*''²

Sri Aurobindo has explained further that, "He (Arjuna) has accepted the truth with the adoration of his heart, the submission of his will and the understanding of his intelligence. He is already prepared to act as the divine instrument in this knowledge and with this self-surrender''³

We quote one passage from the Gita "Therefore at all times remember Me and fight, for if thy mind and thy understanding are always fixed on and given up to Me, to Me thou shalt surely come'' The essential condition is the constant memory of God in every action in life, even in battle, thus turning the entire life into an uninterrupted Yoga. The one essential thing is to make the whole being one with the Divine.

A foundation has now been laid on which Sri Krishna is proceeding to open Arjuna's mind to the knowledge and sight of the integral Divinity and to prepare him for the World-vision of chapter II

(To be continued)

NILIMA DAS

References

- 1 *SABCL*, Volume 13, pp 390-391
- 2 *Ibid* , pp 342, 343
- 3 *Ibid* , p 343

THE INDIAN VISION OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

THE FOUR AIMS AND STAGES OF LIFE

(Continued from the issue of May 1998)

THE third and last quartet of the Indian social Ideal, is the four Ashramas. Ashramas are the four stages of human development, the first stage is Brahmacharya, the stage of the student life, second is Samsara, the stage of the householder, third is the Vanaprastha, stage of the "forest dweller", fourth is Sannyasa, the stage of the renunciate. Let us look at this classification deeply and closely going behind the words and forms to the psychological truth behind them.

The first stage Brahmacharya is the life of the student. This concept of Brahmacharya is another deep and profound Indian concept which requires a separate article to bring out its deeper meaning and significance. This we will be doing in subsequent articles. For the present, we may keep in mind that the word Brahmacharya does not mean, as it is ordinarily understood, mere celibacy. It is a discipline by which sexual energy is transformed into spiritual energy. In ancient India, education is not merely a matter of information and knowledge or acquiring professional skill to earn a living but learning the Art and Science of living which means to know the highest aims and laws of life, Nature and Spirit and harmonise human life with these higher laws and aims. The purpose of student life is to realise the ideal of Brahmacharya, which means transformation of sexual energy into vital, intellectual and spiritual energy.

The next stage is that of the Samsari, the householder. In this phase, the individual puts into practice what he has learnt during his previous life, he satisfies his Arthakama needs and motives, takes up and fulfils his civic and social responsibilities to the family and community, all these under the restraining guidance of some higher moral standards of Dharma of his species, type, profession, group or community, with a conscious understanding that these are not the highest aims of life but only the indispensable preparation and training for the realisation of the highest spiritual aim of Moksha. If the individual goes through these two stages with the full understanding of their meaning and significance, by the time he reaches the end of the second stage, say around the age of fifty, he has fulfilled most of his social responsibilities, he has the full experience of life, his faculties are well exercised and developed, and his basic natural needs, desires and cravings are satisfied. Now he is mature enough to pursue the higher spiritual aim of life and devote his attention exclusively or more and more to these higher aims. At this advanced stage, the Indian culture counsels the individual to gradually relinquish his civic, social and professional responsibilities, transfer them to competent young men, and retire into seclusion to contemplate on the higher aims of life. Here the extreme view holds that the individual at this stage has to renounce life and go to the forest or an Ashram for the full-fledged pursuit of the contemplative life. It is this view which gives the name of Vanaprastha, "forest-dwelling", to this third

Ashrama But the less drastic and more balanced views counsel that the individual may remain in life, but without any active interest and responsibility in society, as an experienced and wise veteran, offering the wisdom and knowledge of his experience to the community, especially to the younger generation

This Indian perception has specific relevance for the modern age. One of the disturbing features of contemporary society, especially in India, is the phenomenon of old men who are in positions of power in higher levels of the hierarchy obstinately clinging to their power and refusing to delegate their power to the younger generation at the lower levels of the hierarchy. And the result is, not only the younger men are denied opportunities for professional and personal growth, but the society as a whole is deprived of the fresh outlook, creative dynamism and vitality of youthful leadership. In the royal traditions of ancient India the ruling king normally relinquished his throne and royal responsibilities at the age of around fifty and handed over the responsibility of government to his son or whoever was chosen as the prince. But long before this transfer of power the young sovereign was groomed for his future responsibilities by a rigorous "inhouse" education, training and discipline and followed by "on-the-job" training by assigning to him important administrative and military responsibilities. Normally the prince took charge at the age of 25 to 30, and the king retired at the age of around fifty, not to relax and enjoy the life of retirement, but to pursue the higher aims of life. In this advanced stage of his life he may go to the forest or the monastery, renouncing life altogether, or remain in the palace free from all responsibilities, preparing himself for the spiritual life, giving his guidance and advice to the young sovereign. In fact, the executive training methodologies of most of the large modern industrial-commercial organisations are very much on the lines of this ancient Indian method of grooming the royal prince.

Here again the modern management concept of Line and Staff position which we have already explained in relation to Chaturvarnya may help in understanding the psychological significance of this Indian perception. Line positions are those which involve power and responsibilities for decision-making, whereas staff positions involve advisory functions giving expert and specialist guidance to line managers. Line managerial positions require, apart from the qualities of intelligence needed for making right decisions, a lot of youthful vitality and energy to get the decisions executed in the organisations. But staff positions, which do not have the power and responsibility for making or executing decisions, require not much of vitality and energy, but more of the qualities of intelligence and therefore can be staffed by older men. The vital energy of youth is normally driven by the motives of ambition, success, achievement and enjoyment. This youthful vital energy of the community has to be channelised at the right psychological moment in "line-management" positions of the society. On the other hand, the vitality in the old is waning, though in many cases their intelligence may be sharp, active and creative. So it is easier for the old—especially those who had gone through all the joys, experiences and responsibilities of the *samsaric* life—to renounce the desire for wealth, power and enjoyment and turn their intelligence and

energies to the pursuit of some higher spiritual aims. This is exactly what the Indian approach to human development attempts to do. It tries to solve at one stroke the problems of the young as well as the old. The energies of both the old and young are channelled in appropriate directions at the right psychological moment of their life

The last stage or Ashrama is Sannyasa, the life of the absolute renunciate, the wandering ascetic, or the cloistered monk, one who has no outer responsibility whatsoever and who has dedicated the whole of his life exclusively to the spiritual pursuit. Indian culture gave the highest respect to such spiritual renunciates and this quality of renunciation still holds a great motivational appeal for the Indian mind and for the Indian masses

This is in short the ancient Indian synthesis on human and social development. The whole of life is viewed as an evolutionary pilgrimage to the Spirit, moving towards self-realisation in the divine and universal Self of all. All individual and collective endeavour of Man, his society, economics, politics, religion, culture and spirituality is viewed as unconscious or conscious striving towards this spiritual goal. All human life is a field of education, training and experience which gradually prepares the human soul for the highest goal. The primary aim of Indian socio-political thought and practice is to evolve a social system which will help the individual and communal life of man to grow consciously towards this highest spiritual ideal.

From the point of view of an integral spiritual vision of life, there are two major shortcomings in this ancient Indian scheme of life. In the integral vision of life, the spiritual aim and motive should not be relegated to the last stage of life but the entire life—of the old and the young, of the individual and the collectivity, and in all the stages of life—has to be lived as a conscious seeking for this highest aim. Sri Aurobindo, pointing out this defect of the ancient Indian system in the light of his own integral spiritual ideals, says.

“Still it tended not only to put the last (the ideal of Moksha) forward as the goal of all the rest, which it is, but to put it at the end of life and its habitat in another world of our being, rather than here in life, as the supreme status and formative power on the physical plane. But this rules out the ideal of the kingdom of God on earth, the perfectibility of society and of man in society, the evolution of a new and diviner race, and without one or other of these no universal ideal can be complete. It provides a temporary and occasional, but not an inherent justification for life, it holds out no illumining fulfilment either for its individual or its collective impulse.”¹

But this new integral vision and ideal of life does not invalidate the psychological principles behind the Indian social ideals. These principles still provide a sound and rational inner psychological basis for planning, organisation and development of the outer life of man.

The second defect of the ancient Indian scheme is an undue emphasis on outer renunciation as the means of spiritual development. Though some of the Indian scriptures like the Gita laid a greater emphasis on inner renunciation, after the advent of Buddhism the ideal of world-negation and outer renunciation somehow impressed

themselves upon the Indian mind as the sign of highest spirituality. But the integral view will go back to the viewpoint of the Gita with its emphasis on the inner renunciation of ego and desire as the sufficient basis for spiritual liberation and perfection. But here again, since all are not capable of this highest inner renunciation—which is in fact a more difficult spiritual achievement than an ascetic outer rejection of life—the graded and graduated approach of the ancient Indian scheme still has a practical validity. The individuals and the community are educated and enlightened on the highest spiritual aims and values of life and the various methods to realise these aims. But for practical motivation, to take each individual and the group as he is or as it is in his or its present state of evolution and gradually elevate their consciousness—through a path of progressive renunciation of the lower motives and aims for higher motives and aims until the human consciousness is prepared for the highest—may probably be the right strategy of development.

(Concluded)

M S SRINIVASAN

Reference

- 1 *Social and Political Thought*, SABCL, Vol 15, pp 153-54

SUNIL-DA

SUNIL-DA was a man of many parts. Born on the 3rd of November 1920, in a musical family that was already devoted to Sri Aurobindo, he grew up to become a brilliant student of Science, having studied at St. Xavier's College, Calcutta. He also was a very gifted football player as well as one who taught himself to play the sitar wonderfully well. When he came to Pondicherry in 1942, he not only helped to shape the Ashram football team, but became one of the finest teachers of Mathematics and Botany at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram School. From 1945, he began composing musical pieces as accompaniments to the dance performances that were staged during the School Anniversary Programmes on the 1st of December. From these simple beginnings grew the splendid body of sound that has come to be known as Sunil's Music. Gradually music became the means of his sadhana and, after having taught at the School for twenty years, he gave up teaching to devote himself almost entirely to composing. When, in 1959, the Mother asked Sunil-da to orchestrate Her New Year Music, it was a great event in his life. Later, from 1965 onwards, he was entrusted by Her to compose the New Year Music, the theme of which She always gave him, usually on his birthday. This music became an important part of our Ashram life. In 1966, the Mother requested him to write the musical accompaniment for Her *Savitri* readings, a work he continued to do till the end of his life. He had just finished the composition of the music for the last part of Book X and for a portion of Book XI,—but these were never recorded, for his work was interrupted by his illness.

In the middle sixties, Sunil-da recorded for the Delhi Music Archives, which wanted some of his music, how music had been revealed to him.

Some twenty years ago I heard for the first time the Mother of our Ashram improvising on the organ. In the beginning the music seemed strange to me. It was neither Indian nor Western, or shall I say it sounded like both? The theme She was playing came very close to what we know as *bhairon*, the whole closely knit musical structure expanding melodiously. Then suddenly, notes came surging up in battalions, piled one on top of another, deep, insistent, coming as if from a long way down and welling up inevitably the magnificent body of sound formed and gathered volume till it burst into an illumination that made the music an experience.

Thus She revealed to me the secret of a magic world of music where harmonies meet and blend to make melodies richer, wider, profounder and infinitely more powerful. I have tried to take my music from Her.

My music is my labour and my aspiration for the Divine and what I try to convey through it are the voices of my inner experience.

My grateful thoughts are with Her who has been my Guide, Guru, Mentor and Mother. One day it was Her Light that sparked my heart, it is Her Light that has sustained its glow, it is Her Light that I seek through my music. If this music

brings some comfort, some delight or some message to someone, I have achieved that for which She has placed Her trust in me

For indeed, She had placed Her trust in him One day, on the 10th of February 1966, She wrote to him,*

Sunil, my dear child,

We need music to accompany and frame my readings of passages from *Savitri* illustrated in *Meditations on Savitri*.

You alone can make this music the way it should be done.

Would you be interested in this work? It would make me very happy

At other times, She wrote to him

Sunil, this is genius! It is magnificent, with a deep and true emotion It has made me very happy

With my blessings

29 12 64

Sunil, my dear child,

I would be very happy if you composed the music for the 1st of December, Anu's dance-drama Because *you alone* can do it the way it should be done Your music is, according to me, the music of the future and it opens the ways to the new world Blessings

13 8 65

Again, later She wrote,

My child,

Yesterday, at a quarter past twelve and (again) today, at the same time, I have heard your music with deep emotion and I can tell you that I have never heard anything more beautiful, in music, of aspiration and spiritual invocation.

Another letter, this one written in English,

I heard the music—it is wonderful! Music itself pure and high and strong—It is delightful and leaves you waiting and wanting to hear more

After listening to another composition, She sent him the following letter

I heard it with deep emotion as something *exceptionally beautiful* I want to

* All the letters except one are in French Here are their English translations

repeat again here that this music opens the doors of the future and reproduces admirably the musical vibrations of the higher regions.

On 8.12.65, She wrote to him.

Sunil, my dear child,

I have just heard what you have recorded. It is beautiful, *very beautiful*. It is the first time that I have heard music express true power, the power of Mahakali, the power of the Mahashakti. It is formidable and at the same time, so deeply sweet.

And specially, while listening to it, I had the impression of a door opening on to a still more beautiful future realisation.

The following letter is dated 30th of December 1965

Sunil, my dear child,

It was with impatience that I was waiting to listen to your music and I am so happy to have heard it today . .

Sunil-da was always modest to the point almost of shyness. And though he received so much praise from the Mother, he continued his work quietly, unassumingly, in all simplicity. But about that too, She had once written to him: "Sunil, my dear child, those who are truly capable are always modest."

He passed away, just as quietly as he had lived, at 1 p.m. on the 30th of April, held closely in the arms of Her whom he had always loved.

JHUMUR BHATTACHARYA