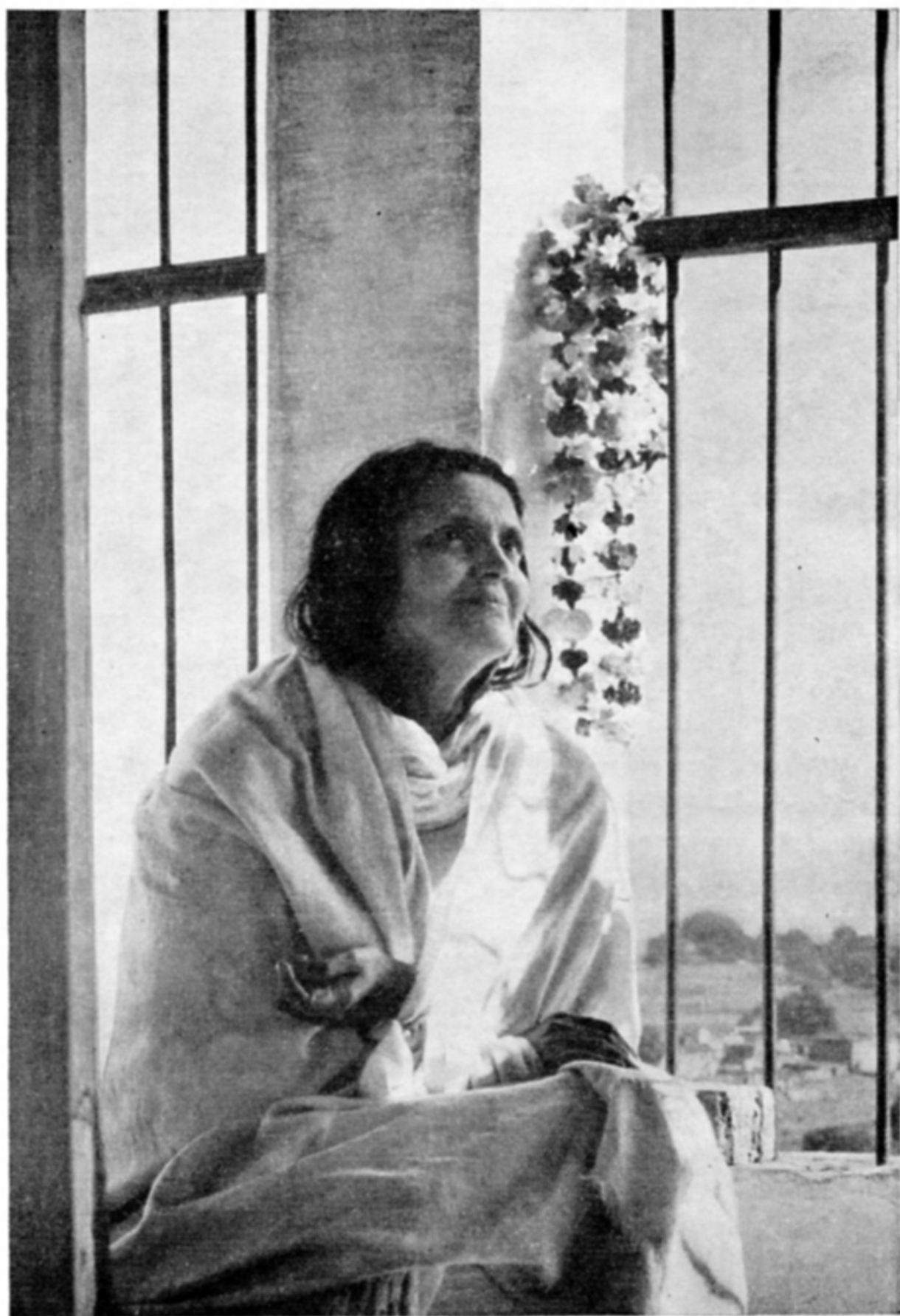


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*The Self, self-contained,
calling to Itself for its own Revelation—
this is Happiness.*

Matri Vani

Wherever God may keep you at any time, from there itself must you undertake the pilgrimage to God-realization. In all forms, in action and non-action is He, the One Himself. While attending to your work with your hands, keep yourself bound to Him by sustaining japa, the constant remembrance of Him in your heart and mind. In God's empire it is forgetfulness of Him that is detrimental. The way to Peace lies in the remembrance of Him and of Him alone.

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Where the search after Truth is really genuine there can be no failure. In order to purify body and mind one practises the Presence of God, the repetition of His name, meditation ; one seeks *satsang* and studies scriptures. Of special importance are the Guru's instructions.

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The disciple prays for the Guru's grace and the Guru's power works through him. All this is the manifestation, the form of Him who stands revealed within. The Guru's grace should be solicited without ceasing.

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Striving to dedicate this transient ego or 'I' to the eternal 'I' leads to one's real Good. In order to keep the mind

fixed continuously on the Supreme Quest, one should ever be engaged in spiritual practices, the study of Scriptures, the awareness of God and so forth. At some auspicious moment in the life of the aspirant his prayer should receive full response. Do not even look in the other direction. Bind yourself solely and with unshakable determination to the practice that will take you to the goal of your pilgrimage.

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A traveller on the path to God-realization has to obey his Guru's instructions so that his journey may be crowned with success. However, in a case where there are no such instructions, one should, according to the dictates of one's heart, keep oneself occupied in calling out to God, in prayer or meditation. If someone prays to Him with a sincere and simple heart, God will fulfil his cherished desire. To yearn for Him with his whole being is man's duty.

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What fear is there for a man whose one and only object in life is the Supreme Quest? The One who is the goal of the journey is all-pervading. What is needed is His revelation. Nevertheless, the longing for Him must become genuine. If He manifests as longing, He will also manifest as fulfilment. Whatever arises spontaneously from within is good. Watching as a spectator, place your reliance in the Guru in all matters. The Guru is very, very near.

From the Diary of a European

MELITA MASCHMANN

(Translated from the German)

(2)

Vindhyachal, October 1963.

Today Mataji saw me standing near her trellised window and suddenly broke out into ringing laughter. Just as she had calmed down, a second fit of laughter came over her and then a third. Her laughter is something very mysterious. For me it is quite irresistible. Even when I have no idea why she is laughing, I am forced to laugh with her. This morning I had for the thousandth time just asked myself the question : "Who is Mataji ?" Her laughter came as a reply, but when I try to translate it into my language I notice that I have not understood it.

In the evening we again sat in her room, while she was dictating replies to letters. One of them was from a South Indian Christian, who asked whether it was true that Christians were not liked much in Mataji's Ashrams. Ma said : "Write to her : Under whatever name anyone may seek God, this little child most heartily welcomes him."

Later Mataji suddenly said to me : "Melita, sing a German song to us !" I objected vehemently. How could I explain to her that I am unable to sing in tune ? Indian music is so fundamentally different. Never in my life have I sung to anyone. I like to sing to myself, but I know that it is out of tune. Mataji was adamant. "Why should you not be able to sing ? When you talk your voice sounds so nice. But whether you have a beautiful voice is not at all important. What alone matters is the feeling with which you sing. Or are you not in a mood to sing today ?" — "When I am with you I am singing constantly, but without sound." — "Then sing now with sound !"

We fought on for a little while, finally I gave in. I sang three couplets of a German song about the moon (grateful that no European was there to criticize). Mataji slightly bent forward and listened attentively and lovingly. Then she said: "It was very beautiful. You have a sweet voice." I felt amused and embarrassed. "No, of course not, but it is sweet of you to say so" — "You find me sweet only because you yourself are sweet."

This may sound like an exchange of rather cheap compliments. But there is more behind it. According to Mataji, we see in the people with whom we deal, that which is in ourselves. If they seem wicked to us, it is but our own wickedness that we find reflected in them. Consequently: Be good and those around you will be good.

Is this really so ?

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Today I had a long personal talk with Mataji about prayer. Panuda translated with great care, putting many counter questions. I want to note one question which is as European as it is Asiatic.

"Again and again it occurs to me that I should stop praying altogether. Whether intentionally or not, our prayer usually becomes a petition. Does this not amount to some kind of interference with God's Will ?"

Mataji: "You should pray, in fact you can never pray enough. And you may also ask for something, but ask only for God Himself, for His advent. When the time comes for you to cease from praying, you will stop of your own accord. Then the question whether you should pray or not will not arise anymore."

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For many years a record has been kept of Ma's life and her sayings. A small portion of it has been published

also in English translation.* Amongst those reports I have found an account that states something very interesting about Mataji's deep cosmic understanding, or perhaps I should say "cosmic love". This is a feature of her being that I often sense very strongly although I have really never observed her in a corresponding situation. Her relationship to the sky, to air, water, earth, sun, the stars and so forth is different from ours. One can recognize this when watching her gaze over the Ganges or at a flower.

Except in very rare moments of mystic union, nature for us ever remains "the other life," foreign to human existence. For Ma, nature is the same one life : All life is rooted in the Self, there is nothing outside of the Self. The distinction between nature (*prakriti*) and spirit (*purusha*) is annulled in the Self in which she lives.

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Today I had a very impressive talk with Mataji. I was assisted by an excellent interpreter, an elderly lady who teaches English at the Allahabad University. She is not only intelligent, tactful and well educated, but also has for years been at home in Ma's spiritual world and can translate correctly even hints of Mataji.

No doubt, my personal contact with Ma gains intensity every time she talks to me. I feel that she listens with ever growing attention and her answers are more and more closely adapted to my individual approach.

Today she sat on the very edge of her bed, slightly bending forward—and while at times one has the impression of being watched through a telescope turned upside down : (although the picture remains clear-cut it yet seems very remote)—this time I feel under her gaze like in the focus of a magnifying-glass. I am convinced that she sees everything.

* In "Ananda Varta and four English books.

In fact, I should prefer to remain silent, for she anyway knows what I want to ask or say. But this would be against the rules of the game.

I am not noting down the personal problems that were discussed. Only a general query : Misfortune—for instance in the history of peoples or in the lives of families and individuals, seemingly senseless destruction—how are these facts compatible with the idea of God, whom we should like, not only to fear but also to love ?

Mataji : Do you believe that God is the creator of the world and therefore its Lord ?

I : Let us anyway in our discussion take this for granted.

Mataji : Very well. If God is the Lord of the world, He can do with it as He pleases. Suppose you have grown beautiful flowers in your garden, but decide to plant fruit-trees in their place, won't you have to remove the flowers ? If you have a fine house, but wish to build a larger and better one on the same plot you will be obliged to demolish the old one. The freedom that is yours in small things, God wields in great ones. In both is He, in destruction as well as creation. The history of nations, families and individuals is the great *Līlā* (play) that He stages with Himself.

I : What about evil in the world ?

Mataji : When you have realized God, then good and evil are like two ways of dressing your hair. (While saying this, Mataji pulls her hair first to the right and then to the left side of her forehead.) Good and evil do not exist for you anymore when you have realized your union with God.

I cannot grasp the simile with the hair dress, I do not see what it intends to convey. So I say : “Probably I do not understand rightly what you have told me about good and evil. Do you mean to say that I should refrain from fighting the evil in my surroundings ?

Mataji : Serve human beings as much as you can; but do not identify yourself with their wants and needs. You must go beyond all this and seek God.

I : Where does the source of evil lie ? If *Brahman* is all in all, as Hinduism teaches, then evil must also derive from Him and occur within Him.

Mataji : Good and evil are distinctions that arise in human thought and experience. Only when entering the world of duality we begin to distinguish between good and evil.

* * *

Evenings are lovely here. We either sit in Mataji's room or on the veranda in front of it. When sitting outside I find a place from where I can see Mataji. On the verandah there is only the light that the moon sheds. In the room a dim kerosene oil lamp is burning. Sometimes there is singing for hours together, with short intervals. I never get tired of listening to the beautiful songs that often transport the audience.

* * *

Twenty or twenty-five men and women sit scattered over the verandah. Rarely does one hear anyone talk. Probably most of them are praying or meditating; many hold a rosary in their hand. For the first time here something like a community feeling arises in me. I never missed it, as I was not intent on finding it. But I often ask myself whether it exists in the people with whom I am together here, and if it does, of what substance it may be. That I sense little of it, is only natural. I can hardly talk to the people and very rarely understand their conversations amongst themselves and what concerns them under what circumstances.

In general, as far as their religious life is concerned, the individualistic element among men and women here

seems much more dominant than with us Westerners. What we call a community does not appear to exist here. Everyone has his own personal relationship to his Guru and proceeds along his own path. Temples where congregations assemble are the exception here. Nevertheless, some kind of community feeling seems to develop. It is too dark to distinguish anyone's features. Everyone abides undisturbed in his own contemplation and everyone knows of the others that soul and spirit are open to the common centre. Of course, in a very individual manner. Many of my companions must be praying to Ma as in the West one prays to Christian saints or to the Christ Himself. I am not praying, neither do I attempt to meditate, and even if I try to reflect over a question, my thoughts soon stop. I just keep still and absorb something that is as mysterious as the beauty of a landscape, the radiation of a sublime thought or the charm of lovely music.

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This afternoon we went for a walk with Mataji for the first time. Nobody seemed to have known it beforehand. The girls were as usual barefooted and had to perform a painful dance on the path that was strewn with thorns. But apart from this we all enjoyed it immensely. At first Mataji advanced at great speed so that we found it difficult to keep pace with her. Later she slowed down. On the way there was much laughing and joking. When we passed a high, solitary house, the men amused themselves by waking the echo from its slumber : "Jai Ma, jai Ma !"

It was dusk by the time we returned. Mataji ascended the platform that has been built over the foundation of an ancient temple, and for a long while walked up and down in silence. We remained standing on the edge. In the West the evening sky was flaming as if the jungle were on fire. In the East it was already night. Venus hung above us, glittering brightly.

Somewhere nearby a peacock screamed again and again. "Do you hear", said one of the men, "this is Krishna's bird." Later we all sat on the platform and it became a wonderful night. A lengthy conversation ensued, interrupted at intervals by laughter or by silence. Everyone who had something to say participated. Then Mataji told us about her childhood and about her pilgrimage to Mount Kailash from which Bhaiji did not return. That evening Pushpa sang more beautifully than ever and the silence that followed was full of intensity. The stars joined into our meditation.

Teachings of Shri Aurobindo

PROF. BIRESHWAR GANGULY, PATNA UNIVERSITY

The birth of Shri Aurobindo, the philosopher-saint of India synchronizes with the day of independence of our country. According to his teachings, evolution is more important than involution. Sri Aurobindo believed that India had a special mission to fulfil on earth after attaining independence.

Sri Aurobindo Ghose, popularly known as Sri Aurobindo, one of the greatest philosopher-saints of the modern age, was born in an anglicized Bengali Civil Surgeon's family of Calutta, on the 15th of August, 1872.

After completing his brilliant educational career at London and Cambridge he had a short-lived academic career as a Professor and Principal at Baroda and a political career in Bengal, as a revolutionary leader of the Nationalist party. While in the Alipur jail as an undertrial prisoner in connection with the famous Alipore Conspiracy Case, he caught a glimpse of his future spiritual mission in life after having a unique vision of Lord Krishna as the immanent Being in everything.

His spiritual life (*Yoga-sādhanā*) began at Pondicherry in 1910 and continued up to 1950, when he gave up his mortal frame. During this long period of 40 years he not only carried on his integral yoga of supra-mental *sādhanā*, but also wrote several volumes on literature, philosophy and yoga, the chief published books among them being: *Essays on the Gita*, *The Renaissance in India*, *The Ideal of Human Unity*, *The Human Cycle*, *Savitri* (a long spiritual epic poem), *Bases of Yoga*, *The Life Divine* (his magnum opus), and many smaller works.

Apart from these books we can get a glimpse of his encyclopædic mind from his articles published in the "Arya",

a magazine published in 1918-19 and his omnibus *sādhana* from the official publication, viz. "Sri Aurobindo on Himself and the Mother."

The teachings of Sri Aurobindo may be traced back through the Gita, the Upanishads, the Tantras to the Rig-Veda itself. Though a Vedantist, he was deeply influenced by Tantra and Vaishnavism and Darwin's Theory of Evolution, and therefore, his new theory of the Life Divine or supra-mental manifestation may be said to be a kind of humanistic evolutionary 'Vishistadwaita-vada' (qualified monism). According to Sri Aurobindo, "Super-mind is the grade of existence beyond mind, life and matter and as mind, life and matter have manifested on earth, so too must Super-mind in the inevitable course of things manifest in this world of matter. The supra-mental is a truth and its advent is in the very nature of things inevitable."

In order that this supra-mental civilisation or life divine of *satya-yuga* (golden age) may be an immediate reality, it is necessary that a growing number of intelligent men should take to the integral yoga. Fortunately enough, in the words of Sri Aurobindo, "The *sādhana* of this yoga does not proceed through any set mental teaching but by aspiration, by a self-concentration inwards and upwards, by a self-opening to the Divine Presence in the heart". This yoga is an integral yoga because it combines the best elements of *karma*, *jñāna*, *bhakti* and *rājayoga* of Hindu *sādhana*. It is universal in its appeal because it does not depend upon the prescribed ritual of any particular religion. It is also easy because half of the work is claimed to be done through divine grace, which supplements human effort. For Sri Aurobindo asserts, "The power that mediates between the call of the evolving earth-consciousness from below and the sanction of the supreme from above—is the presence and power of the Divine Mother".

As the prose style of his greatest work, viz., "Life Divine", has the characteristic faults of obscurity, monotony

and prolixity which are found in his great epic, "Savitri", even teachers of literature and philosophy find it difficult to understand him. But his "Synthesis of Yoga", which is an inspired writing in a very lucid and simple style, and his letters throw a flood of light on his fundamental teaching even for laymen. Most of his works have been translated into Bengali, Hindi, French and a few other languages.

If we approach Sri Aurobindo's philosophy and yoga without going into much metaphysical technicality, we may present the following short critical survey of his teaching :

(1) Sri Aurobindo's metaphysical reasoning is based on the Vedantic formula, "All that is, is God : beside Him nothing else exists". But in the monistic Vedanta of Sankaracharya, which is based on "*Māyāvāda*", the term *Brahman* is used instead of God to signify Reality and a difference is made between Changeless Reality (*Paramarthic Satta*) and changing reality (*Vyavahāric Satta*), the latter being fundamentally illusory in nature, as the phenomenal world vanishes after Self-realization and everything appears as *Brahman*. Sri Aurobindo, however, takes the *Tantric* stand and asserts that even before Self-realization (*Brahmajñāna*) the phenomenal world should be accepted as real, for the created universe is not the dream-like *Māyā* of God but the *Līlā* or the joyful play of the Divine.

(2) The Vaishnavas of India also believe in "*Līlāvāda*", but they aspire to be divine instruments of God's *Līlā* in the supra-mundane world of "*Goloka*" or celestial "*Vrindaban*", as the Hindus believe in seven grades of the created universe, viz. *Bhu*, *Bhuwah*, *Swaha*, *Maha*, *Jana*, *Tapah*, and *Satyam* (*Brahmaloka*), - this earth being the lowest—*Bhu*. Sri Aurobindo, however, asserts time and again that heaven should be established here on earth in this very life.

(3) His insistence on Life Divine on earth is akin to the Hindu conception of *Satya-yuga*, with the exception that instead of completing the cycle of 4,32,000 years (of

which only about 5,000 years have elapsed) the present Kali-yuga is at its end now and, according to the Mother of Pondicherry Ashram, the Supra-mental descended on earth on the 29th February, 1956 in a subtle form. Everybody is supposed to feel its impact by and by, as people grow in spiritual consciousness, which also is inevitable and imminent.

(4) The theory of the descent of the supra-mental on earth is based on a new orientation of the Tantric and Darwinian Theories of Evolution. According to Darwin's Theory of the process of evolution, life has emerged from matter and mind from life through millions of years and through millions of species. But according to Sri Aurobindo, mental man or rational animal is not the last step in evolution. The time has come for the evolution of a supra-mental race of gnostic beings on earth. Sri Aurobindo's ideal of the society of gnostic beings is akin to the Hindu conception of a liberated soul or the '*sthita-prajñā*' of the Gita, with the exception that not a few, but the many would attain to this status and instead of giving up the works of life, they would on the contrary enjoy the works of life, for the works of life would be sacrificed or consecrated to God. A gnostic being is a fully integrated being—his body, life and mind having been thoroughly transformed and made automatically responsive to the demands of the spirit.

Creation, he says, is a movement of ascent and descent, involution and evolution, "a movement between two involutions, Spirit in which all is involved and out of which all evolves upwards to the other pole of Spirit". Evolution, therefore, is an unfolding of the divine potentialities inherent in matter. God or *Satchidānanda* has descended into matter through mind and life. Similarly matter is ascending to Him through life and mind.

From our standpoint, evolution is more important than involution. The ascent from matter to Supermind through life, mind and psyche means the transformation of the physical being into the supra-mental being through the

intervening stages of vital, emotional and intellectual beings. Matter or body is only apparently unconscious. Consciousness of the highest order is hidden within it. To reveal this fact in time is the aim of Nature in all her processes of evolution, which pass through its temporary phases of imperfection and pain.

(5) Sri Aurobindo (like Swami Vivekananda) believed that India had a special mission to fulfil on earth after attaining independence. Politics or industrialisation cannot be the main theme of the national life of Bharat. In the words of Sri Aurobindo, "God always keeps for Himself a chosen country in which the Higher Knowledge is, through all changes and dangers, by the few or the many, continually preserved ; for the present, in this century at least, that country is India". The "*Swadharmā*" or the special mission of India now is the spiritualization or supramentalization of the human race. Instead of the gospel of "māyā" and escapism, Sri Aurobindo gives India a message of spiritual leadership of the coming World-state, based on the highest ideals of mankind.

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The Path of Devotion

SOME REFLECTIONS

M. M. Verma

The path of *Bhakti* (devotion) is one of the universally accepted highways to God-realization. A lot of literature exists on *Bhakti*, not only in Sanskrit and other Indian languages but also in the other languages of the world. Names of great devotees are household words in our country. So are those of *Sufis* in Islam. Devotees like St. Theresa and books like *The Imitation of Christ* are the pride of Christianity. There is little that a humble aspirant like me can contribute on the subject. In this short article I propose, in all humility, just to share with my august readers some reflections—one or two points of view, so to say—on our devotional approach to God.

Some of us carry on various devotional practices and try to concentrate our minds on God, our *Ishtha Devata* or our *Sad Guru*, we go on and on with much effort to meditate on the Divine, and yet often feel frustrated, as if He were too far above—or too deep within us to be reached by our humble efforts. I confess that this has been my sorry plight for years and years—till lately the grace of the Lord inspired a new, revolutionary feeling in the heart that the feeble mind, instead of trying to meditate on Him, had better try only to keep *still* and realize that, far from our adventuring to meditate on Him, *He* is meditating on us, so to say, all the time ! In other words, the Divine Mother is verily holding us all in Her warm bosom ; and we have only to *quieten* the distractions and dissolve the distortions of our minds to enjoy the bliss of the Mother's love.

If only we could realize this bare truth—a fact, and no mere fancy—one would gladly suffer all pain and all trials that fall to one's lot as a result of past *Sanskāras* and their momentum, assured that Divine Mother is holding us in Her arms all the while. She unfailingly provides all the succour needed. This ought to mean a virtual rebirth: to be a Child of the Divine and no more a child of the earth, earthy: How beautifully has Sri Aurobindo pen-pictured the simple process of the transformation:

“The soul goes to the Mother-Soul in all its desires and troubles and the Divine Mother wishes that it should be so, that she may pour out Her heart of love. It turns to Her too because of the self-existent nature of this love and because that points us *to the home towards which we turn from our wanderings in the world and to the bosom in which we find our rest.*”

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Prayers to God may be selfish for fulfilment of petty desires, in the beginning. Even so, the touch of Him at the other end, to whom they are addressed, not only fulfils our desires in so far as permissible in His wise dispensation, but purifies our minds at this end, from which they arise. And the more we turn to Him, in whatever way to begin with, the more we begin to perceive something of His all-satisfying universal love and transcendent power, wisdom and beauty. This leads us to the dedication of ourselves, to loving surrender; which results in the melting of our ego and all egoistic desires. One who, ceasing to beg of the world, has still been begging for things *of the world* starts begging for the Bestower of things Himself, so that he need not beg again and again! Then comes the awakening that we have been like thirsty fish floating on infinite waters. If only we turned our mouths, our thirst would be quenched, and quenched for all time.

It may perhaps not be inappropriate to conclude with prayers to the Mother Divine, in the words of a devotee :

Thou art so high, so great, Mother, yet so near to me, so much my own ! By Thy great love Thou hast awakened me to my own greatness ; I am no worm of the earth, mean or low, but am really a part of Thy divine self, Thy own child, Thy flesh and blood.

Descend into me, Mother, in all Thy divine glory ; seize my mind and fill it with Thy light ; seize my will and make it an instrument of Thy work ; seize my whole being and make it a perfect vehicle of the great joy of divine love.

FOR THE GURU

EILEEN WOOD JASNOWSKI

In the kingdom beyond the heart
We are never apart, we are never apart.

In the kingdom beyond the mind
We are no longer blind—no longer blind.

In the kingdom beyond the dream
Thou art memory's recurrent theme.

In the kingdom beyond the breath
Thy song weaves between devotee and death.

In the kingdom beyond the soul
Thy love has shaped its miracle.

In the kingdom of samadhi
I am Thou and Thou art me.

The Quintessence of the Yoga Vasistha

DR. B. L. ATREYA, M. A., D. LITT.;

III

Padma-Bhusan

The Self

The concept of the Self is different from that of the individuality: The Self is that within us which never changes in spite of perpetual change in the personality. It is the essence of the subjective aspect of the Universe. To find the Self we have to find out what aspect of us endures throughout all the levels of experience, namely, waking, dream, sleep and the "fourth" in which the previous three are transcended. The Self, being the ultimate Subject within us, we have to find out what aspects of our personality can be made objects of our knowledge and so cannot be regarded as the Self. The Self must also be the Ultimate Source of all our movements. Judged by these tests, the body, the senses, the mind, intellect, ego and individuality cannot be regarded as the Self, as each of them can be transcended on one or the other level of experience ; as each of them is an object of our consciousness ; and as each of them is moved to activity by something else from the deep within. Again, there cannot be duality between subject and object ultimately, otherwise knowledge would be impossible. The Self in the subject, therefore, should be identical in essence with the Ultimate Substance of the Objects, the Ultimate Essence of the Universe. The Self, therefore, according to the Yogavasistha, is the Reality at the root of the Universe, which manifests itself in all individuals and things of the world. (IIa. 78. 18-27 ; VIa. 6. 15.16 ; V. 73.4:IV.22.33 : V.26.12 ; V.34.52).

Death and After

The individuality, however changing and impermanent, it may be, is not dissolved with the decay of the physical

body and its total dissolution by death. The body is only an external manifestation of the inner will to be, which, with countless desires and hopes, persists to continue as an individual mind and shall, as a consequence of the unfulfilled desires, surely experience another body and another world after the death of one body. What the loss of the physical body does, is only that it shuts the individual away from the experience of this world, which is relative to these senses. Death brings about only a change in the kind of the objective world of the individual. It excludes from us the world with which we are no longer *en rapport*. It is not necessarily a passage of the individual to any distant place, but an experience, after temporary insensibility consequent upon the shock of losing the vision of this body and this world, of a new body and a new objective world in this very place, if the expression can be rightly and seriously used in this connection. This new experience is, of course, not accidentally determined. It is what the "dead ones" morally deserved, although coloured by and imagined in accordance with their long cherished beliefs. Having thus enjoyed the joys of "heaven" and suffered the torments of "hell", according to their desires, beliefs and merits, they again experience the life of this world, if any desire for the objects of this world, remained potential in them. For, the chain that binds us to anything of the world is our own desire. It is only those persons who have become absolutely free from desires who, having given up their physical bodies, do not undergo any further experience of worldly life. They attain the state of Nirvana, after the death of the physical body. They cease to be individuals and become completely identified with the Absolute Brahman.

The Cosmic Mind (Brahma)

Most of the minds reproduce rather than create actually, although potentially all are endowed with the greatest creative power. But there is a mind that really creates ideas in its consciousness, which for others are the real things

of the external world like mountains, rivers, oceans, etc. which are regarded by them as facts and things unalterable by their thought. We may or may not experience them, but these things are there. The mind that creates the objects real for us is called Brahma in the Yogavasistha. It is the Cosmic Mind which has imagined the world-idea. Brahma creates the world through his imaginative activity with the freedom and skill of an artist. He is not determined by any previously existing plan, for there is none in existence or in memory, Brahma being a fresh wave of creative activity in the ocean of the Absolute Consciousness. He is the Lord of our Cosmos which continues as long as his imagination is at work, and will collapse or dissolve when he ceases from the play of imagination. The rise of Brahma in the ocean of the Brahman is the most mysterious fact for the human mind. He is like a sprout coming out of the seed of the Absolute, when it tends to evolve the objective world out of itself. The Absolute, in its creative aspect or power, in a merely playful overflow by its own free will, comes to self-consciousness at one point, which brings about the forgetfulness of the whole, and on account of intensity there, begins to vibrate, pulsate or agitate in the form of thinking or imagining activity, and finally assumes a separate and distinct existence for itself as apart from the Whole whose one aspect it is in reality. (III.55.47 ; 111.3.35 ; VIb. 208.27-28 ; IV. 44.14 ; IV. 42.4 ; VIa. 114.15-16 ; VIa. 33.21 ; III.114.10.20 ; VIa.11.37;IV.42.5.)

The Creative Impulse

Brahma is regarded by Vasistha to be a wave of mentation in the ocean of the Absolute Consciousness, the Brahman. The cause of the rise of this wave is not an external or quasi-external force or influence. It is the Creative Impulse (Spanda Shakti), an inherent energy, a power of movement, a will to manifest in finite forms, of the Reality itself, which is ever present in the Reality, either

in actual operation or in potential rest. The Power is ever identical with the Absolute. When the Power is active it may falsely assume a separate and distinct reality for itself, but when it ceases to work, it turns back to its source, and merging therein becomes undifferentiated. In that state there is no creation. In the *Yogavasistha* the Creative Power is called by various names, such as, Spanda-Shakti, Samkalpa-Shakti, Jaganmaya and Prakriti etc. (VIa.84.6.3.2.26-27 ; VIa.83,16,14; VIa.85.14.15-19).

The Absolute Reality

It is very difficult to speak about the essential nature of the Absolute. What can we say of That which is the Ultimate Substance of all things, the Unity behind the subject and the object and the objects of experience, the Essence of all forms, the ocean of Being in which we all live and move; from, in and into which, we, down from the Logos to the tiniest vermin, originate, stay and dissolve? Words fail to describe it, for they are all but linguistic symbols for things of the manifested world, and the Reality is much more than its manifested aspects. The categories of our experience are, one and all, incapable of expressing the Reality which is in and beyond world-experience. No aspect of the Whole can be equated with the Whole. All our concepts—matter, mind ; subject, object ; one, many ; self, not-self ; knowledge ignorance ; light, darkness ; etc. etc.—comprehend one or the other aspect of the Reality but not the Absolute Reality as such. They prove unsatisfactory when applied to the Reality which is inherent in everything denoted by these concepts as well as in their opposites. All conceptual moulds break under the weight of Reality. All the grooves created by philosophy to fit in the Reality are unsatisfactory, for there always remains much of the Reality that “cannot be fitted into a groove.” The Reality, therefore, if it is to be described at all, should be described in all terms, positive and, negative, and not in any

of the opposite terms. Either affirm everything of it, or deny everything of it, if you have to speak of it at all. Otherwise, keep silent, if you have already intellectually arrived at a synthesis of all affirmations and negations in the silent realisations of the Absolute Calm, the Blissful Nirvana. (VIb.184.86 ; VIb.52.27 ; VIB.31.37 ; III. 5.14; VIB.104.11.III.7.20.22 ; III.10.7.14.36 ; III.9.50.55-59 ; etc. vide our Vasistha-darsanam, pp. 134-145).

Everything is Brahman

Everything in the world is a manifestation of the Absolute Reality, the Brahman, the Eternal Conscious Blissful Existence. There is nothing here or anywhere, which is not a mode of this Reality, which, inspite of being differentiated in countless forms, keeps its Unity intact, because it in itself is the continuous medium in which all forms, which are such only in relation to each other, persist temeporarily. One form may be separate and distinct from the other, but can never be separate and distinct form the Reality of which it is a form. An ornament of gold is never different from gold with which it is ever one and identical. Bubbles, ripples, waves, etc. are never different from water of which they are forms, and abstracted from which they will cease to be anything at all. In the same way, everything in the Universe is Brahman, we are Brahman. "Thou art That", (VIa.49.29.32 ; III. 100.17 ; III. 1.17 ; V.57. 1-12 ; VIb. 63.28).

(to be contd.)

Evolution of Matter

2

MATTER IN THE MAKING

D. S. MAHALANOBIS

Unmanifested Primordial Stuff

(Avyakta)

Akasa—1	(non-atomic)	
Sabda	::	Akasa-II (atomic)
Sparsa	::	Vayu
Rupa	::	Tejas
Rasa	::	Ap
Gandha	::	Kshiti

MATTER (Kshiti) = Sabda + Sparsa + Rupa + Rasa + Gandha

The origin of matter, and of our world, is a cyclic event in space. This space of the ancient cosmogonists is not a vacuum, an amorphous nothingness, as we are apt too easily to think. Space, to them, is a space-substance called *akasa*. It is the universal ground, and basically the living space, the container, of all phenomenal existence.

Akasa has two aspects or forms¹, original and derivative, that is, non-atomic and atomic, as we can see from the table above, which is arranged to show the order of evolution and not its manner of operation. The first *akasa* evolved out of *Avyakta*, which is, as the name indicates, the unmanifested primordial stuff at rest or in a state of equilibrium—formless, limitless and indeterminate. The original

1. Vijnana-bhikshu, quoted by Dr. B. N. Seal.

akasa is the subliminal base that projects the cosmic urge into phenomenal unrollment. It is the stable motif, the eternal Idea, with a potential function. The derivative *akasa* is an energized form of it, continually evolving towards greater and greater determination and order. The energization results, at first, in the atomicity of an extensive area in the original *akasa*. This corpuscular area of space is known as the phenomenal or derivative *akasa*, existing in the original *akasa*, which is all-pervasive. We can at once see that two things are involved in this operation, viz., *akasa* and an energizing force, which is called *parispanda*. *Akasa* is the space-stuff and *parispanda*² is a whirling or rotary motion potentially inherent in *akasa*, that is, priorly in *Avyakta*.

It is assumed that atomicity in the space-stuff is the result of *parispanda*. The ancients have called this first pattern in *akasa sabda-tanmatra*, 'sound-principle'. Hence, *sabda*, according to them, is the attribute of atomic *akasa*. We must note here that *parispanda* itself is not regarded as *sabda*. *Sabda* is an effect.

Thus, the phenomenal series evolves on the subliminal base towards an orderly system and in course of time becomes our universe. The subliminal *akasa* is analogous to our subliminal consciousness which supports our surface consciousness and life-activities. The surface *akasa*, i.e., derivative *akasa*, has an equivalent status to that of our surface consciousness. Evolution, however, does not end with the unfoldment of the cosmic system ; in due time a reverse process sets in and the world comes to an end, that is, disintegrates. This is a cyclic event, as already indicated, of birth, becoming, and dissolution of the world. The process is repeated eternally.

2, "The radical meaning of the term is whirling or rotary motion, a circular motion, but it may also include simple harmonic motion (e. g., vibration)." —Dr. B. N. Seal.

After the emergence of *śabda*, the remaining four *tanmatras* evolve, each in its turn, and join their forces in the evolutionary process. As each *tanmatra* evolves, it is integrated with the earlier evolved stuff, resulting in the formation of a new product. The first product, we know, is atomic *ākāśa*. To this is integrated the next *tanmatra*, *sparsa*, 'contact-principle', and the combination is known as *vāyu*. *Vāyu* incorporates with it *rūpa-tanmatra*, 'luminosity-principle', which gives rise to *tejas*. *Tejas* now unites with it *rasa-tanmatra*, 'affinity principle', and the new combination is known as *ap*, which is the penultimate gradation. Then *gandha*, 'inertia-principle', evolves last and is intergrated with *ap*, resulting in the final product called *kṣhiti*, i.e., undifferentiated quinary matter. It all happened in the following order :—*Ākāśa-1* ; *śabda*, *ākāśa-11* ; *sparsa*, *vāyu* ; *rūpa tejas* ; *rasa*, *ap* ; *gandha*, *kṣhiti*.

We have come across a set of terms. To avoid confusion, let us remember the following rubrics :

1. Śabda	Sparsa	Rūpa	Rasa	Gandha
2. Sound	Touch	Colour	Taste	Smell
3. Sound- principle	Contact- principle	Luminosity- principle	Affinity- principle	Inertia- principle

The three series mean the same things, and they exclusively are the participants in the making of matter. They are the five *tanmatras*. They are all subtle entities, and as single principles do not figure in our experience. We shall study them one by one in order that we may fix upon their true significance and assign them the technical values that the ancient cosmogonists had intended.

SABDA : SOUND PRINCIPLE

We already know that *śabda* is the attribute of *ākāśa-11*, and *śabda* first manifests itself in the soundless and motionless original *ākāśa-1* energized by *parispanda*, which is the infra-sensible subtle principle of kinesis, the fore-

runner of all later kinetic modes. That is to say, the energy in its primeval dynamic form produces the first movement in the original space-stuff at rest and causes atomicity in the rest-mass, i.e., in the *akasa* at rest. The resultant corpuscles are the first specimens of form, which the ancients have termed *sabda-tanmatra*.

'Sound', that is, *sabda*, is the first principle that writes on the supra-cosmic *tabula rasa* its maiden signature as it were, to initiate the course of evolution. All that happens in this first phase of evolution is that *parispanda*, energized out of its state of equilibrium, creates an atomic field in the original space continuum, to serve as the base for further evolution. This atomic base is the finite cosmic space that we know. This is the beginning of the phenomenal series.

Now, what is this 'sound'? And how can it be the property of *akasa*? This 'sound' is not what we can hear, nor is *akasa*, original or derivative, the same that we call sky or the starry heaven. *Sabda* is the basic sound due to the circular motion of *parispanda* in the original *akasa*, which is thus made cognizable as *akasa-11* in this area of *parispandic* activity. Conceptually all motion is sound, whether one can hear it or not. What we hear as sounds are restricted to a small range of molecular vibrations, say, between frequencies of 16 and 38,000 per second.³ But, are we justified in arbitrarily excluding other vibrations from the category of sound because we cannot hear them? The ancient physicists did not. Vibration in a medium is the effect of a movement; the movement itself may or may not be vibratory. Yet, it will, in making its way through a pack of molecules, set up other movements, say, waves, in the surrounding area, whether the initial force be circular, curvilinear or straight. We call these secondary movements sounds,—audible, supersonic or infra-sonic. The ancient

3. The figures are from Helmholtz.

physicists made no such half-way stop-overs to harbour unreason. All kinds of motion, to them, were sounds, even in such sub-molecular media as atoms, electrons, photons, and other finer particles. But, they reserved the name *śabda*, 'sound' for the most refined category, i.e., the original 'sound' associated with *ākāśa-11*; the rest are sounds too, but as modes of the original. They are secondary sounds. The difference should be noted, between our conception of sound and that of the ancients.

And what is sound, intrinsically ?

A sound represents an idea or a form, whatever it is. Can we hear a sound and form no idea about it, apart from the idea of its association with a known object ? Every sound is an idea of itself. It may be a vague idea, say, of a gale, of an igniting match stick, or of a crashing tree. What is the shape of such a sound ? The vibrating molecules certainly call up an image in our mind in each case, a vague sprawling form that we fail to define. Man cannot think of anything without a form. When the form is vague, for instance, like that of infinity, we call it formless, unreasonably. But, a song recorded in a notation has a definite form we recognize.

There can be *no sound without a form*, for sound, intrinsically, is motion in a medium, which is disturbed. The disturbance is a graphic picture. Similarly, there can be *no form without a sound*, audible, or inaudible for, the form, as we view it, is an expression of motion, i.e., a pattern of energy-in-motion in a restricted space. If this energy is brought to absolute rest, it goes back to its uncognizable state of amorphous existence. Time stops in such a condition, and the world comes to an end. Sound represents objectified being or becoming of something, whether we can hear it or not. The original sound is associated with the primary space-particles in the atomic *ākāśa*. They are the first appearance of forms in the formless unknowable space-stuff. The circular micro-motion that gives rise to these

infinitesimal bodies is a sound, of course inaudible. If we have to choose a name for this sound-pattern, we have to designate it as '*śabda*', that is, 'sound' or 'word'. This is a unique 'world', the only one in existence till now, till others are created stage by stage in the course of evolution. This first 'word' is the basic type. It is, in fact, a point-form, like the Pythagorean point or number, which is of Indian origin. This original 'word' is the basis of all true words, i.e., words identical with objects. Let us try to realize the phoneticism involved. Every physical object is a composite or simple sound, that can be heard (by mystics). It is a kind of image-hearing by the mystics who are awakened to this subtle plane. It is something akin to the image brought in by supersonic vibrations, like echoes reflected from an object in definite outlines. It is not the reflected vibrations however, that are heard in this case; the mystics hear the true image of an object, its intrinsic subtle life-expression externalized to us as an object. This inner pattern which we see as an object is a form, (an idea, a true 'word', phonetically uttered as it were, by the object itself to be heard by the mystics. A word in common usage, as distinct from a true 'word', represents on the other hand, an idea or a mental form which we express by means of an arbitrary sound-symbol in our speech. It is a conventional symbol. Words exist on different planes,——molecular, atomic, electronic, etc., and are audible to subtle beings. An object to them is, thus, a pattern structured by its moving constituents, which are collectively heard as a composite sound or form. Let us try to understand it explicitly by means of an example. We look up at a rose and perceive a sensible form. This form is the image we perceive of a pattern, a structure of micro-particles in motion and concentrated in definite outlines. We know it as a flower, solid, stable, colourful, sweet-scented, etc. But these are notions created in our minds by the active forces in it. That is to say, this rose is a motion-pattern, basically. Since motion is

sound, it is a sound-pattern too, a true 'word'. This sound-pattern we cannot hear nor utter, that is, reproduce phonetically by articulation. Hence, we choose a symbolic sound 'rose', a conventional term or word, and associate it with the objective form, as a name to denote it. The real flower, apart from its extrinsic qualities, exists actually as a sound-form or motion-form, and is a true idea or 'word', whereas 'rose' is an arbitrary word, a conventional sound-symbol invented by us. All physical objects or true 'words' on our plane represent, as we shall see, complex motion-forms formed by five types of energies, which are their constituents, solely. These different types of energies are modes or modified forms of a single corpuscular energy, which the ancients call *śabda* or the manifested 'word'. It symbolizes, and is traced to, the Universal Idea and "expresses that which is self-hidden in the Silence."⁴ The WORD, the uncognizable original Archetype, is however, a tier above, as it were. It actually connotes, to us, the subtle rudimentary *ākāśa-1*, as if it were a mass-idea, covering a whole series of ideas or forms that could manifest out of it *ad infinitum*. The externalized 'word', *śabda*, is the energized form-stuff of micro-particles existing in *ākāśa-1*. It is the first *tanmatra*. Before it was the Word, i.e., *ākāśa-1* : "Before there was anything, there was the Word".

The Word appeared as the first creative urge in the unmanifested a cosmic space at rest, and brought it out by gradation into manifestation as physical *ākāśa* of atomic particles. It is, in fact, *parispanda* that does it. *Parispanda* is the agency by means of which limitation is faked up and atomicity induced in an amorphous continuous medium.

Now, what really is ment by the term *ākāśa* ?

Ākāśa comes from the root *kāś*, to manifest, to light up. The prefix 'ā' is significant for the reason that *ākāśa*

4. Sri Aurobindo.

is all-pervasive. That is the attribute that we ascribe to ether, a term ancient Greek philosophers used with remarkable precision to express the Indian conception of *akasa*. "The ether is the mother and reservoir of visible creation — an invisible and formless *eidos* most difficult of comprehension and partaking somehow of the nature of mind."—Plato.

Ether, from Greek aither, means to light up. This term is a cognate of Sanskrit *indhan*, from *indh*, to burn, to light up. *Akasa* is an illuminant. Ether too was supposed to be luminiferous, although scientists have now practically discarded this epithet, which to them no longer bears the significance that it once did.

There are aspects or gradations of this supra-cosmic principle, *akasa*, which we need not discuss here. Let me quote an excerpt in this connection from "The Secret Doctrine" :

"Whatever the views of physical Science upon the subject, Occult Science has been teaching for ages that *Akasa*—of which Ether is the grossest form—the fifth universal Cosmic Principle (to which corresponds and from which proceeds human Manas) is, cosmically, a radiant, cool, diathermanous plastic matter, creative in its physical nature, correlative in its grossest aspects and portions, immutable in its higher principles. In the former conditions it is called the Sub-root; and in conjunction with radiant heat, it recalls 'dead worlds to life.' In its higher aspect it is the Soul of the world; in its lower—the DESTROYER."

SPARSA : CONTACT PRINCIPLE

The evolution of ether was followed by that of the 'Contact Principle.' We have thus in the next stage: Ether + 'Contact Principle' (*sparsa*) = *Vayu* or Tactile Energy.

The Sankhyas point out that space and time originate, in a rudimentary form, from *sabda*, i.e., atomic *akasa*, which

is the beginning of the cosmic cycle, its embryonic life. The spatial and temporal qualities become more realistic after the emergence of other categories. A space-particle or an *ākāsa*-atom has both extension and duration, the unit of duration being measured by the time a particle takes to describe a cycle of rotation. It is a space-time unit, a unit of both energy and motion. This vague mathematical notion of space and time is made explicit in our perception of space by the tactile organ.

How do we perceive space ?

The tactile organ alone can perceive it directly ; the eye can only cognize space indirectly and imperfectly. Space or extension is an aggregate of co-existing points related to one another by distance, direction and position. Active or moving contact is essential in its perception. It requires tangential or lateral motion, which was lacking in the space-atoms till now. Our capacity to move our hands in touching things is derived from the tactile atoms, which are the tactile constituents of our body cells and tissues. Evolution in the second stage proceeds by developing this tactual quality in space, which till now was in a rudimentary state, cognizable as 'form' and not as space, since extended movement was not possible yet. In the second stage, atomic *ākāsa* incorporates with it *sparsa tanmatra*, 'Contact Principle', converting the rarefied stuff into a tangible one, which is capable of displacement of position in space and is known as *vāyu*, Tactile Energy.

But, what is 'Contact Principle ?'

It is a kinetic principle and evolves out of *parispanda*, which primarily is a circular motion. *Sparsa*, however, is associated with lateral motion, without which moving contact is meaningless. It requires *ākāsa* as the base to develop its characteristic mode of movement. Hence, it may be assumed that *ākāsa* particles are capable of developing lateral motion. The second *tanmatra* is thus a

distinct type of particles with lateral motion. Tactile energy, *vayu*, is therefore, a binary product of *sabda* and *sparsa*. *Vayu* has the primary property of *sparsa*, that is, tangential or lateral motion.

But, how does lateral motion evolve from *parispanda*, a circular motion? We know that "In the Einstein universe there are no straight lines, there are only great circles."⁵ This is the conception implicit in the ancient term *parispanda*. Since *parispanda* is the fundamental motion, all motion must have this circular characteristic. That is also the view of the mystics: "It is one of the fundamental dogmas of Esoteric Cosmogony, that during the Kalpas (or aeons) of life, MOTION...assumes an ever-growing tendency from its first awakening of Kosmos to a new 'Day', to circular movement."⁶

Hence, what we call lateral motion in a straight line is only motion in a great circular path; we perceive a segment of this great curve as a straight line, that is, rectilinear motion.

What then is Tactile Energy?

It has the exclusive property of kinetic contact, that is to say, it has this unique characteristic that it contacts or touches all points in its path in space. It has therefore, to move like a tangent, successively contacting every space-particle (ether) in its displacement. That is the reason it bears the name Tangential or Tactile Energy. We can see that Tactile Energy is nothing but a form of kinetic energy. It is the non-periodic form. It is important to note that the ancient conception of kinetic energy is very precise and rigid, and every different characteristic mode of it on a different plane is recognized as a different energy under a different name, as we shall see. This non-periodic tactile

5. L. Barnett

6. "The Secret Doctrine"

stuff is known as *vayu*. It moves tangentially from point to point across space. It is the first sensible form of motion energy, the only form which the ancients call kinetic energy, *vayu*. In any phenomenon of motion in space, the displacement of the moving object is represented by a succession of contact-points in space, that is, by a chain of point-events. Motion therefore, is nothing but kinetic contact, a state of flux of a contacting point or points in space. That is the characteristic of *vayu*, which may lend its characteristic to other bodies as well.

Why did the ancient physicists call this Tactile Energy *vayu* ?

Vāyu, from Sanskrit *vā*, to blow, literally means that which blows. Hence, *sparsa*, a constituent of *vayu*, is not a static principle. The term *vayu* represents non-periodic motion energy and not air, a mechanical mixture of gases, as is often supposed. *Vayu* is not a gross thing at all as air is, nor has air motion of its own as, according to the Sankhyas, *vayu* has. It is kinetic energy that drives air in its course. Tactile Energy is subtler even than light; it evolved as an earlier product and is one grade more rarefied. It contacts all successive points in its path like blowing air, hence technically termed *vayu*. The literal meaning of the term is air no doubt, but that is not what the Sankhyas meant by it.

In the physiological sphere, *vayu* has been described as *sarirachara*, that is, operating in the body (*vide* Charaka Samhita). Here it is classified according to functions, into five different categories, viz., *prana*, *udana*, *vyana*, *apana*, and *samana*. Analysing the principle of *tridosā* in Ayurveda, Dr. S. N. Ghosh has identified *vayu* with 'neural current'. This neural energy flows through our cerebro-spinal and sympathetic systems to all parts of the body to keep it functioning. *Vayu*, in this aspect, is an analogue of external

vayu, not air. It is the functional energy in the biological sphere⁸.

It should be remembered that, in our empiric experience, we hardly ever find any basic energy in its pure form, and our body *vayu* too, one may suppose, is not an exception.

The ancient discovery of motion as kinetic contact leads to an interesting point. It seems to suggest that "energy in action is not continuous but in definite little jumps," which, we have just seen, is the characteristic of kinetic contact and of the Quantum Theory. Tactile Energy must necessarily move in little dribblets because it has to contact every successive space-particle in its path. It follows therefore, that there can be no motion in empty space, in absolute vacuum; "absolute motion, i. e., variation of absolute position in empty, amorphous mathematical space, can have no significance."⁹ In fact, as already pointed out, empty space does not exist.

Did the ancient physicists recognize the quantum nature of Tactile Energy? Perhaps they did, since the *tanmatras* are atomic: "In the Sankhya doctrine, the atomic structure is ordinarily accepted."¹⁰

(*To be contd.*)

8. The five *vayus* move in the body like air-current, and is therefore, known as *vayu*.—Sankhya Pravachana Bhasya.

9. A. d'Abro

10. Dr. B. N. Seal

Bhāsa Dhāranā Mālā

Being extracts from a journal of the Western aspirant who wishes to remain anonymous.

“All this is strung on me
Like jewels upon a thread.”

—Bhagavad Gita

“In a garland the thread is one but there are gaps between the flowers. It is the gaps that cause want and sorrow. To fill them is to be free from want.”

—Mataji



How full of paradox and contradiction is the spiritual life as seen from the level of *sādhanā* ! We are to “pray without ceasing,” as Saint Paul has said, and Mataji says, “On this pilgrimage one must never slacken : effort is what counts !” Yet, through all our striving He cannot be known, “because Supreme Knowledge does not come *through* anything—Supreme Knowledge reveals Itself.”

I think of this notebook as a small attempt to fill in some way the great gaps that seem to be inherent in all human striving toward him who is self-revealing ; as little essays—in the true sense of the word—at reminding oneself of that which is so easily forgotten in this world of *Maya* : that “Self is all in all; none else exists.”

Among my papers I find the following lines, dated May 2, 1965—some thoughts for a poem that I might have written for Mataji’s birthday, had I the gift for real verse :

When thought will not be kept on God,
a fault, agreed, too often mine
to know His vision in this life,
I come with little flowers to her feet,
and prayer :

Do not forget, our Holy Mother,
 this your stray and alien daughter.
 Her will is yours, but O ! her heart
 still lives in webs of fancy's wearing ;
 a child's at play with phantoms there.
 You be the child within my heart,
 O, come ! with blissful, wise concern
 instruct its nursery in your Play.
 Does laughter heedless rise to passion ?
 Her steel gaze is quick recalled,
 mirror to freedom's aberration.
 Is sorrow grown beyond enduring ?
 The silver of her laughter comes,
 note for note response ensuring.
 When in the end the *mā's* done,
 dim spectres of this world fled,
 it may well be that *all* discover,
 straying heart and monk the same.
 It was enough to claim this Mother,
 sufficient once to breathe her Name.

* * * *

June 7, 1965.

We are told that in the condition of deep sleep mind is merged in *Atma*. This thought perplexes me. I wonder how this can possibly be *known*. By whom has it ever been perceived that oneself or another is in such a state of union when in dreamless sleep ? How can one have such knowledge except in a state of yoga which is a logical impossibility, for yoga is the very antithesis of sleep ? How can one have conscious knowledge of an unconscious condition and thus be able to make a statement about it ?

Perhaps the solution lies in Sankaracharya's answer to the objection that "knowledge and ignorance are qualities of the Self."* To this he replies : "Not so, for they are perceived.

* Commentary on Taittiriya Up. II. VIII. 5.

Discrimination (i. e. knowledge) and non-discrimination (i. e. ignorance) are directly perceived—like colour, etc. as attributes of the mind.”

Is the very fact that this state of deep sleep is *not* perceivable by the mind the criterion for its being adjudged as self-absorption? Is it then a matter of philosophical conclusion rather than experience? I do not understand, but no matter. Mataji says that to understand (*bojhā*) intellectually is but to be burdened (*bojhā*) with mental conceptions, which prevent one from grasping the Truth. “Nay, to become fully conscious is not enough; you will have to rise beyond consciousness and unconsciousness.” How we take such utterances for granted! We repeat the words “beyond mind and speech” as if we knew exactly what we are talking about, when in fact we *cannot* ‘know.’ These words express, as far as language can do so, a truth so sublime that mind falls back from any attempt ever to imagine what its experience might be like.

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August 1, 1965.

Something very curious and delightful ‘happened’ this evening. Just as I sat down to meditate the neighbours across the way launched into a loud and furious argument. Such disturbances I usually find terribly irritating. On this occasion, however, it was very different. Quite unexpectedly, in my mind, I was back in India, in Allahabad with Mataji. It was morning and we were all in the open hall near the shrine-room of the Sri Gopal Thakur’s Ashram, having Mataji’s *darshan* as she strolled about the room. Suddenly two towns-women began a fierce quarrel across the road, over the use of the water-pump—a quarrel of the shrieking proportions that only Southerners or Latins can have without one expecting violence to ensure! I had not thought of the incident since its occurrence, nearly three years ago. Nevertheless, there it was, as if happening all over again, and I heard Mataji say, as before, for my benefit, “a little

local colour.” And I laughed aloud at the memory, taking its ‘message’ seriously, however ; for it seemed to say : This is how we must learn to receive all the disturbing elements in our life—as ‘a little local colour’ on the landscape through which we pass on our pilgrimage towards *Paramrātha*.

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Jhulan Purnima.

Mataji is in Dehradun and I am on the other side of the planet. One of Ma’s Brahmacharinis wrote me not long ago, “.....but in spirit we are all the same – at the feet of Ma.” Mataji also says that she is here in this country. Once she said to me that her ‘connection’ with everything in the universe was eternal. A staggering statement, deserving of much contemplation. Of course one might assert that everything in the universe is eternally connected with every other thing. “Everything is contained in everything,” Mataji says. But there does seem to be a lot of difference between her saying it and my saying it !

O, thou, Help of the helpless! Is it Thou Thyself who keepest us in darkness? Do not be *Mahamaya*, Ma; become *mahayogini* in our hearts. How indeed shall we be *sādhakas* except you play your *līlā* of *sādhanā* within us—you yourself *Guru*, *mantra* and disciple, you yourself eternally giving yourself *diksā* in the hearts of men. Is that the significance of the *Jhulan Purnima* of long ago that commemorate tonight? “It is thou that criest out helplessly in distress and it is Thou Thyself that art the Way and the Goal.” *Devo bhutva devam yajet* (only by becoming identified with the Lord can one Worship Him.)

Matri Lila

(JULY-OCTOBER, 1965.)

On July 19th, Mataji arrived in Kishenpur, Dehradun from Varanasi. Throughout her stay there, not only did one function succeed another, but quite often two or three functions took place simultaneously. We have already in the last issue of 'Ananda Varta' reported about the chanting of one hundred *Durga Saptah Satis* by ten pandits at Kalyanvan temple, from July 21st to 24th, followed by *Havan* and *Rudrabhisheka* on July 25th and 26th.

From August 2nd to 3rd the whole of the *Ramayana* was recited in the hall of the Kishenpur Ashram, devotees taking turns of one or two hours at a time. From August 4th to 11th a *Bhagavata Saptah* was held. Pandit Srinath Sastri of Vrindaban read the Sanskrit original every morning, and every afternoon for about four hours explained very lucidly in Hindi. As usual devotees of Dehradun attended in large numbers. At the request of a bhakta, about a dozen pandits who had been summoned from Hardwar performed ceremonies at the Kalyanvan temple from 6th to 10th August which were followed by a *Gayatri yajña* in an improvised shed in front of the temple, the next morning. Twice daily Mataji was present at the *Bhagavata Saptah* in the Ashram and gave some time to the function at Kalyanvan as well. On the 8th morning, there was also an opening ceremony of the newly built house of a Calcutta devotee near our Ashram.

From August 7th to 11th, *Jhulan Ekadasi* to *Jhulan Purnima*, the usual *Jhulan* festival was celebrated every evening on the verandah of the Brahmacharinis' building. A beautifully decorated swing had been suspended at one end of the verandah. Several *vigrahas* of Krishna and Radha were placed on it and *puja* and *Kirtan* performed daily in front

of them. On *Jhulan Purnima* which is also the festival of *Raksha Bandhan*, many tied bracelets of silk-thread (*rākhis*) round Mataji's wrist and Mataji distributed *rākhis* to all who approached her that night and the next day. The culmination and climax of all the festivities was a very wonderful midnight meditation in Mataji's presence. On *Jhulan Purnima* (full moon) night in August 1922, Mataji gave herself *diksha* (initiation), as it were, which was followed by an incredible variety of *sādhanas* during the next few years. Mataji has repeatedly declared that there was nothing for her to be attained and that therefore all these practices, which came to her spontaneously, were nothing but a play (*līlā*). For us, however, the *Jhulan Purnima* has great significance and it is the custom in our Ashrams, to commemorate this sacred night by silent meditation, preceded and followed by devotional music.

On the 13th morning *Rāmarchā* was performed in the Kishenpur Ashram hall and the same evening Mataji boarded the train to Delhi en route to Vrindaban.

One can well imagine what hectic days Mataji had in Kishenpur, but one must have seen for oneself how gracious she was to everyone and how she found leisure for the thousand and one things that had to be arranged and attended to. However, for twelve nights Mataji slept in the room on the upper storey of Kalyanvan house, where she did not receive people and so could at least enjoy quiet and solitude during the night, which is very exceptional indeed with Mataji. On most mornings, after visiting the Rama and Siva temples at Kalyanvan and sometimes strolling about in the gardens, she walked the distance of half a mile back to the Ashram, accompanied only by one or two devotees. At the end of her sojourn in Dehradun, Mataji spent one night in the new house of the Calcutta devotee and one night at our Sādhan Ashram, Jakhan.

On August 14th morning Mataji alighted in Vrindaban with only a very few companions and the next day she proceeded from there to Jodhpur, where she spent one night, leaving for Hardwar on the 17th. On her way she paid a flying visit to the Delhi Ashram on the 18th morning and from there motored to Baghat House, Kharkhari at Hardwar, reaching in the early afternoon. The bulk of her party had remained at Dehradun and gone directly from there to Hardwar, where Sri Krishna's birthday (*Janmastami*) was celebrated with great solemnity by midnight *pūjā* and *kīrtana* on the 19th. At the end Mataji herself distributed the *prasād* to all present. Many had come for the occasion from Dehradun, Delhi and other places. The next morning a somewhat abbreviated *Nandotsava* (the joy of the cowherds over Krishna's birth) was arranged. After the traditional amusing dance of two or three devotees dressed up as *Gopas* and *Gopis*, carrying vessels full of curds on their heads and letting one of them drop down and break into pieces, Mataji with her own hands fed everyone with curds, so there naturally was much merriment and laughter.

Immediately after, Mataji left for the Kankhal Ashram (4 miles from Baghat House) where she remained until August 26th. At Kankhal a devotee had arranged for the ceremonial recitation of the *Durga Saptah Sati* and *japa* of the *Mahamrityunjaya mantra* by a group of pandits from 19th-24th August, followed by two *Havans* (fire sacrifices) on August 25th and 26th. New rooms had recently been built for Mataji and Didima on the roofs of the Ashram. Ma, Didima and a few others stayed at Kankhal for the whole of the week, while Didi and the majority of the party remained at Baghat House, but spent the day at Kankhal. The Kankhal Ashram, called 'Santiniketan' is solitary and beautifully situated between the Ganges and a canal. Next to it there is an old Siva temple, named '*Dakshālaya*', where Mataji stayed with Bhaiji many years ago, when nobody could have dreamt that Mataji would one day have an Ashram next

door. At Kankhal Mataji gave darshan on the roof when the weather was good, and later in the evening when only very few visitors were left, sometimes replied to interesting questions. Once she said to a very hard-working, elderly person : "The more work in the world you undertake, the denser become the veils that hide the *Ātmā*. For whom are you doing all this work ? Like a creeper it grows and grows. Give time to the contemplation of the self (*Ātmachintā*). Find out who you are !" Then she added : "Of course, if you do service to God in the guise of man, this also can be a *sādhana*.

On the 26th evening Mataji came to Baghat House to see to the finishing touches of the preparations that were being made for the ceremonial reading of the *Devi Bhāgavata* that takes nine days and was held in the hall of Baghat House from August 27th to September 5th, followed by *Havan* on September 6th. While the *Srimad Bhāgavata Saptāh* is a regular feature in our Ashrams, the *Devi Bhāgavata* is read only rarely. As in the *Bhāgavata Saptāh*, the Sanskrit recitation was performed every morning and the Hindi translation given every evening, with kirtan to fill in the 3-4 hours of interval at midday. The function took place at the request of the Rajmata of Sirmur for the good of the soul of her son who passed away fairly recently. A pandit had been called from Vrindaban to officiate, assisted by a number of other pandits, who also read with him or did japa. The atmosphere became more intense day by day and towards the end of the nine days, the presence of Devi could be felt tangibly by some. Many had come from Dehradun to participate. No sooner had the function been completed, than Mataji returned to Kankhal on the 6th evening for a night and half the next day. Another fire sacrifice was held at Kankhal on the 7th morning.

During Mataji's stay at Hardwar and Kankhal, Sannyasis and other inmates of the Sivananda Ashram at Rishikesh came very frequently for Mataji's darshan. Sri

Swami Chidanandaji, the head of the Divine Life Society, came twice in person. At his special invitation, Mataji visited the Sivananda Ashram on September 8th, which was the birthday of their Guru, Sri 1008 Swami Sivanandaji. Last year also Mataji attended part of the celebrations on the same day. This year Mataji remained there for about an hour in the afternoon on her way to Dehradun. There was beautiful chanting and music and, like last year, Mataji was received with great veneration and enthusiasm by all.

While Mataji was at Hardwar and Kankhal, a number of visitors from foreign countries had Mataji's darshan and interesting talks with her. A few of them came from Sivananda Ashram, others from greater distances just for a day or two, among them a French dancer and a Canadian University Professor. A gentleman who lives in England and had come all the way from Bombay to see Mataji, asked : "I suppose my case is hopeless since I can spare only one or two hours daily for meditation, although I try to do all work as God's work." Mataji said : "It is not the number of hours that matters, but rather the intensity with which your heart and mind are centred in God."

When Mataji reached Dehradun on September 8th, the days of 'black-out' had began. Whenever Mataji gave darshan, people talked to her about the war or beseeched her to protect their sons, husbands and brothers who were serving in the Army. Some wanted to know what the future would bring, but Mataji never makes prophesies. She only said : "God will let you know in His own time." When people asked her what should be their attitude of mind in those troubled days, Mataji enjoined on them to turn to God with even greater concentration and fervour than usual; to practice *japa*, to pray and meditate. She also advised everyone to read regularly every day a portion of some sacred book, be it the *Gītā*, the *Rāmāyana*, the *Bhāgavata* or any other scripture, depending on each one's predilection. Mataji always radiates peace and light, but in those agitated days,

this could be felt much more powerfully than at normal times. To be able to sit by her quietly for a while made a vast difference. One experienced a deep inner peace that remained unaffected by war and natural fear.

On Sunday, September 12th, a *Nāma Yajña* had been planned and our *Kīrtana* party from Delhi, who are great experts, had been invited to come for the occasion to lead the *kīrtana*. However, everything was uncertain in those gloomy days, and trains were irregular, or at any rate arrived late by many hours. It therefore became very doubtful whether our friends would be able to come. But lo and behold, they all turned up by car and bus in the late afternoon on Saturday. Without delay some one got into his car and went round to invite devotees residing in various localities. Mataji wanted everyone to spend the whole day in the Ashram and join the *kīrtana*. The attendance was very large, in spite of the short notice. The devotees from Delhi led the *kīrtana* with ever increasing enthusiasm throughout the day. Mataji was present for hours on end. We were transported into a realm that was far removed from the depression and excitement that held the whole country in its grip. New hope and faith stole into our hearts. The *kīrtana* sounded like a song of triumph over the forces of dissension and hate. We felt : the power of the Divine must and will conquer the evil that had started creating havoc. The *nāma yajña* of September 12th at Kishenpur will remain unforgettable to those who had the good fortune to participate.

On September 15th, the greater part of Mataji's companions, including almost all the women headed by Didi Gurupriya Devi, left for Varanasi. Mataji was to follow a few days later. She had already some months ago provisionally agreed to be in Agarpara Ashram for Durga Puja, but due to the insecure situation, her journey to Calcutta had been as good as cancelled. It was understood that Mataji might remain at Varanasi instead. On September 19th,

