Sources of Inspiration

Sources of Inspiration and Variety
If there were not different sources of inspiration, every poet would write the same thing and in the same way as every other, which would be deplorable. Each draws from a different realm and therefore a different kind and manner of inspiration — except of course those who make a school and all write on the same lines. 18 July 1936

Different sources of inspiration may express differently the same thing. I can’t say what plane is imaged in the poem [submitted by the correspondent]. Planes are big regions of being with all sorts of things in them. 17 October 1936

Poetry of the Material or Physical Consciousness
The Vedic times were an age in which men lived in the material consciousness as did the heroes of Homer. The Rishis were the mystics of the time and took the frame of their symbolic imagery from the material life around them. 20 October 1936

Homer and Chaucer are poets of the physical consciousness — I have pointed that out in The Future Poetry. 31 May 1937

You can’t drive a sharp line between the subtle physical and the physical like that in these matters. If a poet writes from the outward physical only his work is likely to be more photographic than poetic. 1937
Poetry of the Vital World

I had begun something about visions of this kind and A.E.’s and other theories but that was a long affair — too long, as it turned out, to finish or even do more than begin. I can only now answer your questions rather briefly.

There is an earth-memory from which one gets or can get things of the past more or less accurately according to the quality of the mind that receives them. But this experience is not explicable on that basis — for the Gopis here are evidently not earthly beings and the place Raihana saw was not a terrestrial locality. If she had got it from the earth-mind at all, it could only be from the world of images created by Vaishnava tradition with perhaps a personal transcription of her own. But this also does not agree with all the details.

It is quite usual for poets and musicians and artists to receive things — they can even be received complete and direct, though oftenest with some working of the individual mind and consequent alteration — from a plane above the physical mind, a vital world of creative art and beauty in which these things are prepared and come down through the fit channel. The musician, poet or artist, if he is conscious, may be quite aware and sensitive of the transmission, even feel or see something of the plane from which it comes. Usually, however, this is in the waking state and the contact is not so vivid as that felt by Raihana.

There are such things as dream inspirations — it is rare however that these are of any value. For the dreams of most people are recorded by the subconscient. Either the whole thing is a creation of the subconscient and turns out, if recorded, to be incoherent and lacking in any sense or, if there is a real communication from a higher plane, marked by a feeling of elevation and wonder, it gets transcribed by the subconscient and what that forms is either flat or ludicrous. Moreover, this was seen between sleep and waking — and things so seen are not dreams, but experiences from other planes — either mental or vital or subtle physical or more rarely psychic or higher plane experiences.
In this case it is very possible that she got into some kind of connection with the actual world of Krishna and the Gopis — through the vital. This seems to be indicated first by the sense of extreme rapture and light and beauty and secondly by the contact with the “Blue Radiance” that was Krishna — that phrase and the expressions she uses have a strong touch of something that was authentic. I say through the vital, because of course it was presented to her in forms and words that her human mind could seize and understand; the original forms of that world would be something that could hardly be seizable by the human sense. The Hindi words of course belong to the transcribing agency. That would not mean that it was a creation of her personal mind, but only a transcription given to her just within the bounds of what it could seize, even though unfamiliar to her waking consciousness. Once the receptivity of the mind awakened, the rest came to her freely through the channel created by the vision. That her mind did not create the song is confirmed by the fact that it came in Hindi with so much perfection of language and technique.

To anyone familiar with occult phenomena and their analysis, these things will seem perfectly normal and intelligible. The vision-mind in us is part of the inner being, and the inner mind, vital, physical are not bound by the dull and narrow limitations of our outer physical personality and the small scope of the world it lives in. Its scope is vast, extraordinary, full of inexhaustible interest and, as one goes higher, of glory and sweetness and beauty. The difficulty is to get it through the outer human instruments which are so narrow and crippled and unwilling to receive them.

9 June 1935

I may say that purely vital poetry can be very remarkable. Many nowadays in Europe seem even to think that poetry should be written only from the vital (I mean from poetic sensations, not from ideas) and that that is the only pure poetry. The poets of the vital plane seize with a great vividness and extraordinary force of rhythm and phrase the life-power and the very sensation of the
things they describe and express them to the poetic sense. What is often lacking in them is a perfect balance between this power and the other powers of poetry: intellectual, psychic, emotional etc. There is something in them which gives an impression of excess — when they are great in genius, splendid excess, but still not the perfect perfection.

In purely or mainly vital poetry the appeal to sense or sensation, to the vital thrill, is so dominant that the mental content of the poetry takes quite a secondary place. Indeed in the lower kinds of vital poetry the force of word and sound and the force of the stirred sensation tend to predominate over the mental sense or else the nerves and blood are thrilled (as in war-poetry) but the mind and soul do not find an equal satisfaction. But this does not mean that there should be no vital element in poetry — without the vital nothing living can be done. But for a deeper or greater appeal the vital element must be surcharged with something more forward or else something from above, an element of superior inspiration or influence.

Poetry essentially psychic can have a strong vital element, but the psychic being is always behind it; it intervenes and throws its self-expression into what is written. There comes an utterance with an inner life in it, a touch perhaps even of the spiritual, easily felt by those who have themselves an inner life, but others may miss it.

The World of Word-Music

Nishikanta seems to have put himself into contact with an inexhaustible source of flowing word and rhythm — with the world of word-music, which is one province of the World of Beauty. It is part of the vital World no doubt and the joy that comes of contact with that beauty is vital — but it is a subtle vital which is not merely sensuous. It is one of the powers by which the substance of the consciousness can be refined and prepared for sensibility to a still higher beauty and Ananda. Also it can be
made a vehicle for the expression of the highest things. The Veda, the Upanishad, the Mantra, everywhere owe half their power to the rhythmic sound that embodies their inner meanings.

6 December 1936

Mental and Vital Poetry

All poetry is mental or vital or both, sometimes with a psychic tinge; the power from above mind comes in only in rare lines and passages lifting up the mental and vital inspiration towards its own light or power. To work freely from that higher inspiration is a thing that has not yet been done, though certain tendencies of modern poetry seem to be an unconscious attempt to prepare for that. But in the mind and vital there are many provinces and kingdoms and what you have been writing recently is by no means from the ordinary mind or vital; its inspiration comes from a higher or deeper occult or inner source.

17 May 1937

Poetic Intelligence and Dynamic Sight

On the plane of poetic intelligence the creation is by thought, the Idea force is the inspiring Muse and the images are constructed by the idea, they are mind-images; on the plane of dynamic vision one creates by sight, by direct grasp either of the thing in itself or of some living significant symbol or expressive body of it. This dynamic sight is not the vision that comes by an intense reconstruction of physical seeing or through a strong vital experience; it is a kind of inner occult sight which sees the things behind the veil, the forms that are more intimate and expressive than any outward appearance. It is a very vivid sight and the expression that comes with it is also extremely vivid and living but with a sort of inner super-life. To be able to write at will from this plane is sufficiently rare, — but a poet habitually writing from some other level may stumble into it from time to time or it may come to him strongly and lift him up out of his ordinary sight or intelligence. Coleridge had it with great vividness at certain moments. Blake’s poems are full of it, but it
is not confined to the poetry of the occult or of the supernormal; this vision can take up outward and physical things, the substance of normal experience, and recreate them in the light of something deep behind which makes their outward figure look like mere symbols of some more intense reality within them. In contemporary poetry there is an attempt at a more frequent or habitual use of the dynamic vision, but the success is not always commensurate with the energy of the endeavour. 9 July 1931

**Poetic Eloquence**

It [*poetic eloquence*] belongs usually to the poetic intelligence, but, as in much of Milton, it can be lifted up by the touch of the Higher Mind rhythm and largeness. 29 November 1936