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"GREAT IS TRUTH AND IT SHALL PREVAIL"

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SHOULD RED CHINA BE RECOGNISED?

A lot of irresponsible talk is going on in our country, urging the immediate recognition of the so-called People's Republic of China. Barring the Communists whose impatience can be traced to blind partizanship, the worst talkers hail from the Socialist ranks. At Bangalore recently they expressed the opinion that the Government of India should forthwith establish diplomatic and trade relations with Mao Tse-tung. The Government, however, is better advised. It has not extended official recognition to the new regime and, whatever informal contacts it may keep with Mao's group, there is on its side a commendable wariness about formal commitment. This is as it should be, and Pandit Nehru's assurance to America that no hasty step would be taken in the matter without joint consultation with the western democracies makes us thankful that we have at the helm a responsible statesman conscious of the many world-problems connected with Communism, and not a mere party man with an anti-capitalist anti-imperialist bee in his bonnet buzzing outworn slogans so loudly that the word of the Time Spirit never reaches his tympanum.

Can Recognition be Legally Justified?

Let us look clearly at the whole issue of Red China's status. Just because the Nationalist Government is being beaten in battle it is not rendered illegal. Chiang Kai-shek was recognised as China's legitimate head by the whole world. In 1945 even Russia agreed by treaty to acknowledge no other government than his. On the strength of its legitimacy this government was allotted a seat in the U.N. To repudiate it is to act in flagrant contravention of international law. And so long as this government is still on Chinese soil, however battered, however shrunken, it remains all the more the sole legal representative of the Chinese people. Even if it were forced out of China, the legality would not lapse. During the last war, the Free French Government had its headquarters in London; so too did the Polish Government. Nobody talked of recognising Hitler's Yes-men at Vichy or his stooges at Warsaw. If Russia has lost little time in breaking with Chiang she has gone back on her 1945 agreement and violated international law. To ask India to follow suit is to recommend a thoroughly dishonest and reprehensible policy.

Russia's argument is that Chiang's government is now proved to be a provincial affair and not representative of the Chinese people's will. Before going deeper into the subject, we have to reply: "Suppose Mao were in Chiang's shoes. Would Russia have condemned him as merely provincial?" The fact is that, if the conditions had been reversed, she would never have treated Mao as she has done Chiang. She has welcomed Mao because he is a Communist and because Chiang has been sufficiently defeated and deserted and because her possession of the atom bomb has emboldened her to flout treaties. Her action has really nothing to do with the question whether Mao stands for the bulk of the Chinese people. It is wholly a party-move made at the right psychological moment—a move which comes as the logical culmination of the policy she has been pursuing for a long time. It will be remembered that the entire military equipment of one million Japanese troops captured in Manchuria had been handed over to Mao by Stalin and that Chiang's *débaclé* started as the direct result of this gift.

Is There Any Moral Ground for Recognition?

The question, however, still faces us: Is Mao China as at one time Chiang was? If he is, there would be some sort of moral argument for officially accepting him even though the cause of civilisation might demand opposition on the ideological level. But there is not the slightest doubt that the entire revolt of the Communists has been inspired and engineered by Russia, directly as well as indirectly. The Chinese Nationalist Government has brought in the U.N. General Assembly the charge that the Soviet Union has violated the U.N. Charter by acts undermining the political and territorial integrity of China. Until the General Assembly

passes judgment, no western state can technically be in a position to take Mao at his word that he stands for the Chinese people. Technicality apart, every western state knows that the uprising in China was never a spontaneous one so far as the Communist colour it has assumed is concerned. What was spontaneous was the dissatisfaction of several groups with Chiang—not of course, Chiang the man with his ascetic virtues, his mellow Confucian wisdom, his passionate love for his country, but Chiang the politician and the ruler with his inefficient corrupt bureaucracy, his impotence to check greedy landlordism and capitalist exploitation, his recourse to the Secret Police originally as a counter-move against Communist intrigue but ultimately as a weapon wielded by fear and suspicion on a rather indiscriminate scale. Yes, there was considerable resentment at Chiang's failure to live up to his ideals. Yet this resentment had nothing to do with preference for Communism. Naturally the landless peasants were glad to see their oppressors "liquidated" and to get property for themselves without paying anything. But more than three-quarters of the population—some observers estimate as much as 95%—are not concerned with and do not understand the Communist ideology. In the first flush of their good fortune they do not realise what horrors of subservience and slavery are in store for them under the name of collectivisation. Nor do the other under-dogs look beyond their noses: it is sufficiently exhilarating to find society being overturned, workmen in factories becoming managers, postmen becoming postal commissioners, inexperienced students becoming mayors of cities. For various reasons the Kuomintang regime has been attacked by various sections of the Chinese people. But to call the people Communist is a grave blunder. It is the leaders who are Communist. Mao does not represent China by his Communism. If he is claiming that there is anything else behind him than a good number of ignorant masses who had been fed up with the incompetence and cupidity of the Kuomintang regime, he is making false pretences.

This is the first fact we have to keep in mind. The second is that in the territories occupied by Mao, a large number of men are forcibly herded under the Communist banner. One particular party has imposed itself: that is all. The ruthlessness that goes with all Communism has been at work in China. No opposition is tolerated. Nobody dare think as he likes. You are either a Communist or a corpse. Mao has been trained in Russia and we must not let his elegant habit of writing poetry or his powers of persistence and endurance or his military qualities blind us to the pitiless iron that has entered his heart with Stalinism. What is working through him is Stalin. And it is not even a nationalist Stalin as in the case of Tito who has learnt all his lessons from the terrible Master of Kremlin but who has refused to let Yugoslavia dance to Russia's puppet-strings. Mao is utterly Stalin's man. Even against a remote chance of Titoism Stalin has taken precautionary steps by securing from Mao the autonomy of Sinkiang, Inner Mongolia and Manchuria—border provinces which lie along Russia's eastern frontier from Turkestan to Siberia and which, being under inevitable Russian influence, can be pressed any time as a lever to force Mao into collaboration. But Mao is not likely to contemplate any falling away from Stalin. Without the slightest reservation he has declared his solidarity with him. And he has also made no secret of Stalin's having cooked the entire dish of the revolt against Chiang by using for Communist purposes the growing discontent with the old system. Was it not only a few weeks ago that Mao proclaimed his undying gratitude to the glorious Soviet Union without whose aid and support his victory would never have been possible?

This is the second fact we have to remember. The third fact is that, as American papers have observed with a grasp of fundamentals, the Red Commissars installed by the Communists are only titular heads of a military government. There has been no election such as a democratic country could respect. The Government cannot, therefore, claim to be based on the popular will. It is just a replica of the puppet regime

in North Korea. One recalls also the "State of Manchukuo" set up by Japan in Manchuria in the heyday of her Fascism. Communism and Fascism operate behind absolutely identical fronts so far as general government machinery goes: no free choice of representatives is allowed. To speak of a popular base to the present Chinese rule is to forget that political democracy is the first casualty under Stalinists just as it is under Hitlerites. It is noteworthy in this context that the United States and the other western democracies had resolutely refused to recognise Japan's "State of Manchukuo." The situation at the moment is in no political respect different from the one which faced these countries at that time.

Already the uncontrollable vastness of China and the half-as-old-as-Time temperament of the people are bringing out, despite every Communist curb, the non-representative character of Mao's new-fangled Marxism. Hordes of guerillas, having not the least affiliation with the Kuomintang, are scorching the tail of the Red armies. The Communist High Command has admitted, as Bruno Kroker lately pointed out, that there is about as much trouble brewing in the rear as if the Nationalist armies were making a stand—a firm stand—in the field against them. Civil disobedience campaigns are being formed whenever a new Red regulation cannot be enforced with a sufficient number of bayonets. Independent non-Kuomintang uprisings have been reported from Taming near Tsinan in Shantung, Hsuehchang near Kaifang in Honan, the Soochow-Wusih rice-growing area in central China and the Lake region between Hankow and Kiukang. In diverse localities which the southward-advancing Red troops have left loosely policed, the masses are reawakening and in some instances goig to the extent of even massacring the Communist officials. A strange state of affairs, indeed, in a People's Republic!

Recognition a Grave Danger to Civilised Values

Neither morally nor legally can there be by any right-thinking democratic nation an official recognition of Mao. What will tempt Britain and America to put moral and legal factors aside is business interests. They have large investments in China and they must be asking themselves whether by establishing diplomatic relations with Mao they can safeguard these investments in spite of his Communist dye. Again, it is patent that China is in vital need of reconstruction and she cannot do without British and American help by way of industrial equipment and "know how". This was hinted by the Chinese Foreign Minister, Chou En-lai, in his statement: "I believe the establishment of normal relations between my Government and the countries of the world is necessary." But a colossal folly would be committed if business took precedence over wider considerations. And we may remark that the wider considerations are much more than simply a moral and legal punctilio. Although morally and legally the case for not recognising the new Government is sound enough, an even greater reason is the increase of strength such a recognition would bring to a cause violently antagonistic to civilised values. For one thing, it would open the gates to the flow of British and American industrial equipment into China, which while filling the pockets of businessmen will turn what is now a mere military success into a fast-developing all-round efficiency. A China growing technologically a second Russia would be a mighty menace to all countries, and most to India who is at present the best bulwark the spirit of democracy has in the South-Asian continent. In the second place, an officially recognised Red China would have one of the five permanent seats in the U.N. Security Council and serve Russia as an important ally in challenging every progressive measure initiated by America and Britain: only France's vote would then remain to be influenced—and France, owing both to her variable internal condition and the Viet-Namense imbroglio, might not in every instance be quite invulnerable to high-power diplomatic offensives. In the third place, embassies of Red China would be set up all over the world, enjoying various privileges and functioning as centres for disseminating violent doctrines and sowing fanatic hatreds and blind discontents. The Chinese Reds have done immense harm in Malaya and Indo-China. They are hovering dangerously on the outskirts of India today, and their having an official acknowledged embassy in our country would provide them and their subversive Indian comrades with huge advantages. More than any other country India has to be vigilant against Red China.

The *entente* of Mao Tse-tung with Stalin constitutes an alarming aggrandisement of anti-civilisation forces. America seems to realise this more clearly and acutely than either Britain or India. That is why Mr. Acheson has been in a hurry to get Mr. Be-

his. A thorough survey of vital problems has been made, with the result that trade interests have been put definitely on a lower shelf. Of course, Mr. Acheson's view must be high-lighting the threat mainly to American power and the American constitution and the American way of life and whatever in the rest of the world resembles or approximates to it. But, even in a proper envisaging of this threat to things American, there is the nucleus of a true vision of world values. For, no matter how faulty America may be in part of her racial policy, her business methods, her cultural temper, she cherishes the ideals and institutions of intellectual and political freedom, which leave the way open for evolution of the divinity hidden within the human consciousness. India, historically, has been the intensest aspirant after the Godlike, the Eternal: if she is to be faithful to her own soul and to the cause of human evolution she would do well to walk hand in hand with America in all matters pertaining to international relationships at a time when the two giants in the field are the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. Her acting in close concert with America will help the latter herself to acquire a more sensitive grip on essential issues and develop a finer receptivity to the Powers of the Spirit that are striving in India today to inaugurate a new age.

We are not asking India to commit herself to the western bloc. The western bloc is not a system of infallible and all-wise agencies: it is built of human stuff and is likely to make mistakes. Besides, its aims may not always conduce to India's welfare. India need not be bound to it in every respect nor become a helpless instrument to whatever business-mentality may operate within it. But she must never fail to see that America's policy *vis-à-vis* Soviet Russia is mostly on the right lines and that therefore she herself whose culture is the very antithesis to all that is signified by Dialectical Materialism must never do anything that may strengthen the turbulent and tyrannical forces embodying this doctrine. It is curious how, on the one hand, all parties in India denounce the Communist rebels and saboteurs within the country and, on the other, several of them want India to stretch the hand of friendship to those who are vehemently in sympathy with these disruptionists and are agog to back them up actively. Pandit Nehru must never forget that Socialist doctrines about landed property are one thing on paper and quite another when woven into a scheme of Stalinist world-revolution and totalitarianism. The Chinese Reds are not disinterested apostles of agrarian reform: they must be viewed in the ominous context of a global strategy to put back the clock of human history. If Mao Tse-tung were working in India he would be at the head of just the men against whom the Home Ministry has published a devastating charge-sheet. Stalin has entrenched himself in official recognition everywhere and enough damage has been done. We must cry a halt and refuse to give Mao an international status. To recognise Red China is to increase enormously the chances of disaster to civilisation.

Apart from the concrete evil consequences that we can foresee, our open and effective acceptance of Mao's *fait accompli* will grant, as students of Yoga can tell us, the occult *Asuric* powers at work on his side a foothold in the race-mind by means of which they may leap forward to greater undreamed-of achievements. Gradually we may be inclined to acquiesce in more and more suggestions favourable to the Communist programme; gradually a larger field of thought may be laid open to the Communist fanaticism. An insidious defeatism is encouraged as soon as the mind accords explicit status to an undesirable influence. Surely we must not shut our eyes to realities: Mao and his colleagues are realities solid enough, but so long as we do not instal them in our consciousness as inevitable, firm-founded, fully moulded, we keep our inner defences intact and deny them that last touch of subtle dynamism by which alone they can play to their utmost a destructive part in our own future.

QUESTION OF RECOGNITION



With acknowledgment to "Amrita Bazar Patrika"

EDUCATION—TOP PRIORITY

By NORMAN C. DOWSETT

India's education is the most momentous question of the day. Progress in all other fields is dependent on it. It is more important than the heart or life blood of the country, for it is the nervous impulse that sets the heart to action, the throbbing pulse that echos in every walk of life, the nerve fibres that vitalise the nation's every limb. It is the unifying link that joins the country's mass to its soul.

Even today the leaders scarcely realise the tremendous responsibility that India will have to bear in the near future. The high spiritual mission which is to be her destiny is already traced in the approaching Dawn. Therefore she must be a fit and ready instrument to manifest this responsibility and translate its significance to every life cell of her being. The evolutionary impetus, the march of life increases its tempo with every step. We have to keep time with it, there is no lagging behind dreaming of bygone days. Our vision must be ever in the future. If old ideas and customs do not serve, they must go. New methods must be found, new byways explored. All avenues which promise greater possibilities must be traversed with the spirit of pioneers adventuring into greater worlds to conquer the darkness of ignorance.

A New Educational Method

It is obvious, that with India's teeming millions and the legacy of a very sketchy educational system, this huge problem cannot be attempted as things are; the means are hopelessly inadequate. It would take a hundred years, perhaps more, to arrive at western standards of education with the present apparatus. To replace this apparatus by another is in itself a huge problem, for it has to overcome the academic conservatism of educational authorities, which is no mean task. It is almost as bold as asking the established Army and Navy heads to become subservient to the Air Force. It is clear, then, that if any appreciable change is to come about it must be organized by the central government, and it must be such a change as will be acceptable to every province and state. Not a dictatorial order, but a new method which will be recognised immediately as beneficial to educational progress. It would be useless for the central government to devise some hotch-potch of a few new ideas and enforce them on the country as a whole. A new educational method must be scientifically studied and worked out with world-wide educational knowledge to support its foundations.

I would suggest a commission should be set up, consisting mostly of young men with energetic and fertile brains, to study educational progress in other countries; that they may return to integrate their findings and improve on them in a synthetic plan for future education. Extreme care must be used in choosing these men, for they would hold the future education in their hands. They need to be not young in years but young in ideas, men of courageous vision who will realize the full importance of their task, its urgent call as a primary duty to their country.

Teaching by Films

Revolutionary methods of education both practical and psychological are already being practised. To take the practical first;—the most powerful new teaching tool is the use of films, and in future education films will play a major role. In America various states have taken up this new method of audiovisual instruction, which is the technical term for teaching by films.

According to the U.S. Office of Education, in 1935 there were only 485 sound projectors in American Public schools. Today there are 35,000 sixteen millimetre projectors in use. More than three fourths of the school system in cities of over 100,000 population and more than half in cities between 30,000 and 100,000 provide audiovisual instruction.

Before the last war educators did not take films seriously, but during the war this method of instruction established amazing results where vast numbers of factory workers, sailors, soldiers and airman had to be trained as highly skilled operatives in as short a time as possible: instruction was TOP PRIORITY, and without films it could not have been done. Film instruction is not a make-shift instruction for an emergency, as some pedagogic minds would have it—they are naturally suspicious because it speeds up education, but it also makes it richer and more enduring. There is greater retention and a more eager interest in the subjects. Children would benefit more than adults on the average, for the child's eye grasps at once what it takes the ear some time to catch and translate into a mental picture. A child's memory, where the ear is concerned, needs much repetition, but the eye receives a vivid and more lasting impression; and when the two are co-ordinated the establishment of an impression is achieved to a far greater degree. Subjects which were dull and uninteresting come to life, a purpose is given to a theory, errors are eliminated by students not forming their own wrong impressions. This is most important for young minds—striving, for instance, with the first principles of arithmetic; dead digits come to life, fractions lose that puzzling terror when they are turned into visible objects that divide and come together again.

The Encyclopaedia Britannica Films alone offer more than 500 titles of educational films for schools and universities. One, for example, on the Molecular Theory of Matter uses the animated cartoon to make the molecule credible, showing its fascinating action in gases, liquids and solids. In a few years extensive libraries containing a vast selection of subjects by the top ranking professors, lecturers and experts in the world will be available. India should be fully alive to this new tool of instruction. The government must realise the powerful possibilities held out to them in this great academic adventure. They must realise the urgent need to be among the first to put these new ideas into action.

With this aid it can now be possible for one teacher to conduct a class of hundreds of students, using microphone, loud speakers and "blackboards that come to life." The problem of discipline will become almost a thing of the past, and there will be a greater satisfaction in teaching.

The Psychological Aspect

Next is the psychological aspect to be studied. It is agreed by all the great educators that education is not merely the acquisition of a vast assortment of facts unrelated to one another. Facts have no

meaning until they are harmonised into the symphony of life, its ideals, achievements, possibilities and purpose. This is true education, to fit man for contemporary life, not a life of 20 or 50 years ago but a life facing the challenge of the future. Even today in the East as well as the West, our knowledge of human psychology is pitifully insufficient for us to grapple with young minds eager to learn. That is why our methods of education remain so antiquated. One of the first things to understand is that no one can be taught, all good teachers who sincerely study their subject realise this sooner or later through experience. They know that to be a task master imposing one's knowledge on a pupil gets no results. A good teacher has to be a helper and a guide, using his knowledge to show by example how the pupil's own instrument of knowledge can be used and perfected. The teacher does not impart knowledge but rather shows the pupil how to acquire knowledge for himself. If only young teachers who are sincere could understand the truth of this fundamental principle it would save them years of useless groping for an ideal method. It is here also that the secret of discipline overlaps the teaching. If a pupil is being led, guided, helped, he intuitively accepts the teacher as a friend and so submits to his guidance, obedience is freely given because of a mutual respect, and respect is the essential secret of discipline. Child psychology is a vast subject in itself and it is the duty of every teacher to study it at least to the extent of becoming aware of its possibilities. Its application is a constant experience of patience and tolerance borne on the wings of enlightenment. A child's mind has to flower in its own particular way, it cannot be fashioned into a pattern standardised by a board of educationists. It can only progress by the instrument of its own nature, and it is the teacher's job to find and encourage that which is best in the child, but it must have freedom of movement. A free and natural development must be the condition of future education. The pupil must be allowed free choice of a future career. On this same question let me quote from Sri Aurobindo's essays contained in his book, *A System of National Education*.

"There can be no greater error than for the parent to arrange beforehand that his son shall develop particular qualities, capacities, ideas, virtues, or be prepared for a pre-arranged career. To force the nature to abandon its own *dharma* is to do it permanent harm, mutilate its growth and deface its perfection. It is selfish tyranny over a human soul and a wound to the nation, which loses the benefit of the best that a man could have given it and is forced to accept instead something imperfect and artificial, second-rate, perfunctory and common. Every one has in him something divine, something his own, a chance of perfection and strength in however small a sphere which God offers him to take or refuse. The task is to find it, develop it and use it. The chief aim of education should be to help the growing soul to draw out that in itself which is best and make it perfect for a noble use."

Where will the new "tool", viz: audiovisual instruction, help the teacher in his psychological approach to his job? In the first place it will allow him more time to devote to individual help for his students, by releasing more teachers during

teaching hours. In the second place it will help tremendously to eliminate the prevalent error where book knowledge of a thing is made the object of study rather than the thing itself. By audiovisual instruction the mind will be able to observe how a thing works for itself so that the experience of reasoning will commit less errors in consequence. Both these new principles practical and psychological can be the basis of India's future education. This must be the Government's vision for the country's progress. Such a vision can only be brought into reality by revolutionary methods.

Difficulties and their Solution

It was not necessary for India to go through the gaslight age, she leaped from candles and oil lamps to electricity. It is also unnecessary for the rising generation to go through the old gamut of pedagogic groping. There are, no doubt, many difficulties in the way, and perhaps not the least of these would be the academic authorities in power—old men are usually well satisfied with old ideas without realizing they may be obstructing progress. These obstructionists must be made to realise that their duty lies in the future of their country. If they cannot offer a solution to the vast educational problem of India's millions, then they must make way for more progressive elements that have a plan. Another grave obstacle will be finance. The small amount delegated to education is quite inadequate. The Finance Department also has a grave duty to the country. It must seriously consider whether education should not be given the highest priority in these formative years of the country's growth. Education is no longer a luxury for the few, it is a vital necessity for the life of the country, a country which has to take place in the vanguard of world affairs. I can hear the Finance Department replying: "But where is the money to come from?—we cannot possibly cut down on other vital needs". True enough this seems on the face of things, but I would suggest that one-third of the Defence Programme could be cut. Modern war no longer depends on large armies and navies. A compact mobile army easily transported by air, a navy consisting of small fast ships and a more efficient airforce should serve the needs of this country. If a more formidable aggressor attempted to attack this country she would in any case have to rely on the help of other more powerful nations while she is yet not in possession of the atom bomb. In any case military training could easily be inculcated in all the school curriculums creating a huge potential reserve army which would serve much more satisfactorily than drafting half educated students into the services. Universities could have their flying clubs subsidised mainly by Government, secondary schools their drill and technical instruction. In fact all the elementary and even secondary theory of warfare could be organised in schools and universities. It has been done in wartime when it was an urgent necessity. Can it not be done in peace time when the necessity is an ideal even more urgent for the future safety of the nation? A nation's safety and progress lies in its people, and in its people lies the promise for the future.

The Mother calls to the integrity and character of her sons, to raise their eyes to the Dawn of the future, to see there the vision of India's destiny. India's education should be TOP PRIORITY.

LIGHTS ON LIFE-PROBLEMS

(18)

One of our chief aims will be to provide authentic guidance in regard to the many perplexing questions with which the common man is faced in his daily life. This cannot be better done than by considering these questions in the light of Sri Aurobindo's writings, because Sri Aurobindo is not merely a Master of Yoga in possession of the Eternal Spiritual Truths, but also a Guide and Helper of mankind in the many trying situations that arise in the course of its day-to-day existence. To bring home the light of this guidance and to make it directly applicable to the concrete problems of life, a series of questions of common interest along with precise answers taken from Sri Aurobindo's writings will regularly appear in these columns.

Q. 1: As in the seeking for moral good, so in the seeking for knowledge the modern mind has laid predominant stress on its practical or its utilitarian value. Can this be taken as its right motive and aim?

A. Mind in its first action pursues knowledge with a certain curiosity, but turns it mainly to practical experience, to a help that enables it to fulfil better and to increase more assuredly the first uses and purposes of life. Afterwards it evolves a freer use of intelligence, but there is still a dominant turn towards the vital purpose. But the higher mind of humanity is no more content with a utilitarian use of knowledge as its last word in the seeking of the intelligence than with a vitalistic and utilitarian turn and demand of the ethical being. As in the ethical, so in the intellectual being of man there emerges a necessity of knowledge which is no longer its utility for life, its need of knowing rightly in order to act rightly, to deal successfully and intelligently with the world around it, but a necessity of the soul, an imperative demand of the inner being.

Q. 2: What should be the true aim of the pursuit of knowledge?

A. The pursuit of knowledge for the sake of knowledge is the true, the intrinsic *dharma* of the intellect and not for the sake primarily or even necessarily at all for the securing or the enlargement of the means of life and success in action. The vital kinetic man tends indeed to regard this passion of the intellect as a respectable but still rather unpractical and often trivial curiosity: as he values ethics for its social effects or for its rewards in life, so he values knowledge for its external helpfulness; science is great in his eyes because of its inventions, its increase of comforts and means and appliances: his standard in all things is vital efficiency. But in fact Nature sees and stirs from the first to a larger and more inward Will and is moved with a greater purpose, and all seeking for knowledge springs from a necessity of the mind, a necessity of the soul that is here in nature. Its need to know is one with its need to grow, and from the eager curiosity of the child upward to the serious stress of mind of the thinker, scholar, scientist, philosopher the fundamental purpose of Nature, the constant in it, is the same. All the time that she seems busy only with the maintenance of her works, with life, with the outward, her secret underlying purpose is other,—it is the evolution of that which is hidden within her: for if her first dynamic word is life, her greater revealing word is consciousness and the evolution of life and action only the means of the evolution of the consciousness involved in life, the imprisoned soul, the Jiva. Action is a means, but knowledge is the sign and the growth of the conscious soul is the purpose. Man's use of the intelligence for the pursuit of knowledge is therefore that which distinguishes him most from other beings and gives him his high peculiar place in the scale of existence. His passion for knowledge, first world-knowledge, but afterwards self-knowledge and that in which both meet and find their common secret, God-knowledge, is the central drift of his ideal mind and a greater imperative of his being than that of action, though later in laying its complete hold on him, greater in the wideness of its reach and greater too in its effectiveness upon action, in the returns of the world energy to his power of the truth within him.

Q. 3: At what stage in man's evolution does this true aim become the ruling motive of his mind and the lower aim of utility fall away?

A. It is when his mind is preparing to disengage itself, its pure self of will and intelligence, the radiant head of its endeavour from subjection to the vital motive that this imperative of nature, this intrinsic need that creates in the mind of man the urge towards knowledge, becomes something much greater, becomes instead more and more plainly the ideal absolute imperative of the soul emerging from the husks and sheaths of ignorance and pushing towards the truth, towards the light as the condition of its fulfilment and the very call of the Divine upon its being. The lure of an external utility ceases to be at all needed as an incentive towards knowledge, just as the lure of a vital reward offered now or hereafter ceases on the same high level of our ascent to be needed as an incentive to virtue, and to attach importance to it under whatever specious colour is even felt to be a degradation of the disinterestedness, a fall from the high purity of the soul motive. Already even in the more outward forms of intellectual seeking something of this absoluteness begins to be felt and to reign. The scientist pursues his discoveries in order that he may know the law and truth of the process of the universe and their

practical results are only a secondary motive of the enquiring mind and no motive at all to the higher scientific intelligence. The philosopher is driven from within to search for the ultimate truth of things for the one sake of Truth only and all else but to see the very face of Truth becomes to him, to his absorbing mind and soul of knowledge, secondary or of no importance; nothing can be allowed to interfere with that one imperative. And there is the tendency to the same kind of exclusiveness in the interest and the process of this absolute. The thinker is concerned to seek out and enforce the truth on himself and the world regardless of any effect it may have in disturbing the established bases of life, religion, ethics, society, regardless of any other consideration whatsoever: he must express the word of the Truth whatever its dynamic results on life. And this absolute becomes most absolute, this imperative most imperative when the inner action surpasses the strong coldness of intellectual search and becomes a fiery striving for truth experience, a luminous inner truth living, a birth into a new truth consciousness. The enamoured of light, the sage, the Yogin of knowledge, the seer, the Rishi live for knowledge and in knowledge, because it is the absolute of light and truth that they seek after and its claim on them is single and absolute.

Q. 4: But though the real seeker of truth does not care for any material rewards there must be some return for the output of his mental energy in the economy of Nature. What is his benefit or gain from the pure pursuit of truth?

A. This also is a line of the world energy,—for the world Shakti is a Shakti of consciousness and knowledge and not only a Power of force and action,—and the output of the energy of knowledge brings its results as surely as the energy of the will seeking after success in action or after right ethical conduct. But the result that it brings on this higher plane of the seeking in mind is simply and purely the upward growth of the soul in light and truth; that and whatever happiness it brings is the one supreme reward demanded by the soul of knowledge and the darkening of the light within, the pain of the fall from truth, the pain of the imperfection of not living only by its law and wholly in the light is its one penalty of suffering. The outward rewards and the sufferings of life are small things to the higher soul of knowledge in man: even his high mind of knowledge will often face all that the world can do to afflict it, just as it is ready to make all manner of sacrifices in the pursuit and the affirmation of the truth it knows and lives for. Bruno burning in the Roman fire, the martyrs of all religions suffering and welcoming as witnesses to the light within them torture and persecution, Buddha leaving all to discover the dark cause of universal suffering in this world of the impermanence and the way of escape into the supreme Permanence, the ascetic casting away as an illusion life in the world and its activities, enjoyments, attractions with the one will to enter into the absolute truth and the supreme consciousness are witnesses to this imperative of knowledge, its extreme examples and exponents.

Q. 5: Is it not a fact that the pursuit of practical knowledge brings better returns in life than the pursuit of moral right?

A. As a power for the returns of life the world energy seems to attach a more direct importance and gives more tangible results to knowledge, to the right practical workings of the intelligence than it yields to moral right. In this material world it is at least doubtful how far moral good is repaid by vital good and moral evil punished by a recoil, but it is certain that we do pay very usually for our errors, for stupidity, for ignorance of the right way of action, for any ignoring or misapplication of the laws that govern our psychical, vital and physical being; it is certain that knowledge is a power for life efficiency and success. Intelligence pays its way in the material world, guards itself against vital and physical suffering, secures its vital rewards more surely than moral right and ethical purpose.

Q. 6: Through all the various motives for the pursuit of truth does not Nature work out some intention which is fulfilled in her highest working? What is that intention?

A. The intention of Nature, the spiritual justification of her ways appears at last in the final turn of her energies leading the conscious soul along the lines of truth and knowledge. At first she is physical Nature building her firm field according to a base of

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A HAPPY AUGURY

by DILIP KUMAR ROY

This is an address delivered on 18th September, 1949, at Shillong on the occasion of Sri Aurobindo's birthday celebrations held for three days presided over by Sri Prakash, the Governor of Assam, who also paid his deep homage to the Rishi of Pondicherry. Dilip Kumar Roy conveys not only a sense of the vital importance of his subject, but also the living thrill of his own conviction and enthusiasm.

I learnt once a Bengali song, a kirtan, in which there was an improvisation:

*"I could find time for all work, tirelessly
But leisure I never could find to worship thee."*

Who will deny the truth behind this deep dirge of the soul? The great thinker Pascal wrote, somewhat ironically, that we revelled in all sorts of work, including the most irksome, because work, like wine, helped us to forget how lonely and derelict we were within and we have not the courage to face up to the chronic misery of our soul-states. And that is precisely why the great saints and seers and apostles have to be born in every age to teach us the wisdom of the spirit, to heal the persistent darkness in our desolate selves by the light of Divine Bliss. That this alone can give us the redeeming vision which our longing soul craves from the cradle to the grave was borne home to me when I met Sri Aurobindo for the first time in 1924.

I felt that here was a man who could claim with our Rishis of the Vedas: *Vedahametat Purusham mahantam adityavarnam tamasah parastat*—"I have known the great Being who has the colour of the sun and lives beyond the ambit of darkness". No wonder he has inspired faith and instilled hope in the hearts of tens of thousands. For we can with our senses only appraise the sense-world; but not till we develop the inner vision (which we all have but few use, as said the great Greek mystic-philosopher, Plotinus) can we expect to have a glimpse of the supra-sensuous Reality even as (to quote Sri Ramkrishna's simile) the infant consciousness cannot be made to understand the delectation of married love. It is only in the measure of our inner growth that we imbibe the message of the Divine Being. That is why the more a man is evolved, psychically, the less trammelled he feels in his journey through life.

God's Light and Man's Choice

This does not mean, however, that one who is not sufficiently evolved must perforce sit idle, hopeless about the Kingdom of Heaven, on the plea that he has not the key to its palace. The key is, indeed, the inner light—the deeper consciousness—but this is almost our birthright (of the vast majority, anyway, even as sense-enjoyments are, except with a few born idiots or morons) from which none is debarred except by his own choice. This too I learned from Sri Aurobindo (for I had a different conception of the Divine's working and used to think that most if not all of our actions were irrevocably forced upon us by His ordaining omnipotence) for he wrote to me once explaining that the Divine is anything but a dictator by temperament so that He "can lead but does not drive." He does not, because He is the essence of love and love can only be voluntary. A slave cannot be truly said to have love for his master so long as his master exacts it and there is no alternative for him but to offer his adoration. The worship or obedience that is given by such bondsmen is not inspired by the authentic love. It cannot be. The Divine has endowed every one with the right of freedom even to deny Him if he feels so impelled by his mood or temperament or a conspiracy of adverse circumstances which promotes atheism.

But, when all is said and done, pain is a reality and not a make-believe. So do what we will, denial of the Divine must (sometime or other, through the inescapable law of karma) deliver us to such a blind darkness and irremediable shipwreck—individual as well as collective—that one simply has to face the ultimate question: "Why is one born and what is the deep purpose which informs this seemingly bewildering play of multitudinous life?"

Such questions can never be satisfactorily answered by human reason notwithstanding its sonorous claims to be the sole judge and pilot of life. So Sri Aurobindo writes with a calm irony in his epic poem *Savitri*:

*Our reason cannot sound life's mighty sea
But only count its waves and scan its foam."*

The modern man feels apt to give up when he is told thus not to rely too much on the prop he is used to lean on all along the line, namely, intellect with its plummet of mental reasoning. And that is precisely why the Seer, the God-intoxicated, the Saint, or the Prophet is sent down to us to fortify us with a faith, or, to be more accurate, to stimulate what lies dormant in us: that is, faith with its native way of knowing and feeling after the fundamental reality. Had they not been born this art would have been all but lost to us to-day, thanks to long disuse. The danger is real as we know to our bitter cost. For the world of faith demands that all who would be its citizens must start with accepting it as a living world. For only then, to quote from Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* again:

*Only when we have climbed above ourselves,
A line of the Transcendent meets our road
And joins us to the timeless and the true;
It brings to us the inevitable word,
The godlike act, the thoughts that never die.*

Sri Aurobindo's World-Mission

But that it is not easy to find the way to "climb above ourselves," will be conceded by all, with no exception. And that is why it is written that you cannot start by accepting as an axiom a dictum (which can be neither proved nor disproved by reason) unless and until you accept as valid the evidence in its favour given by the gifted few—the few that have been both called and chosen. The modern man has made a fetish of the so-called self-reliance of the commonalty. But the common man (as has been cogently pointed out by Aldous Huxley) has never been able to achieve civilisation by himself; he has, in every age and clime, had to follow the lead of the gifted few. These have helped him to find himself as the accumulated testimony of history has shown. And it is the interaction of the common with the uncommon that has, all along, kept alive the play of life in its most interesting aspects. It is the few who make the fire though all can and are entitled to enjoy its life-giving warmth, as said the great Sri Ramakrishna. This is what we see daily in our Ashram where our Guru lives for others, not only guiding them (with the help of the Mother) but inspiring them with faith and the joy of the arduous divine journey. This does not mean, though, that he exists or works only for the inmates of the Ashram he has founded and evolved. A great Yogi, a radiant personality—not to mention an epoch-maker of the class of Sri Aurobindo—can come to all, but to each will be given in the measure of his own receptivity and willingness to accept his lead and gospel.

It is not for me to underline the message of his gospel. I have come here not to preach to you. I am not a platform speaker either. What little I can convey I must do in my own way; and I propose to attempt that by singing of the Divine Values created and fostered by the Spirit, the Spirit we hear so little of, alas, in this world dominated by scientific materialism, the Spirit we have glimpsed in Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, the Spirit India has stood for through millenniums. All I can say with conviction is that the faith in this unseen Spirit which no mental reasoning can ever be sure of (far less measure through its intellectual "pointer readings", to quote a phrase of Eddington's) has been fortified in tens of thousands by Sri Aurobindo in a way that cannot be even adequately understood today with our far-too-limited mental comprehension. But then how do we know it? The answer: by the faith which the great pathfinders, the seers and mystics, have inspired from age to age. So I speak of him to you not as a preacher, far less a superior sermoniser, but simply as a humble seeker of Truth whose only advantage over those among you who have not seen him nor contacted his great love and deep wisdom "adventuring across enormous realms" is that he has had the supreme good fortune to have been blest with the great Rishi's personal contact. For I do not believe that without this contact with the incredible radiance of his luminous personality and the inspiring selflessness of his unheard-of *tapasya* I would have had the faith I have today in the soul of India, far less the certitude that she would be the leader of world-weary humanity. For no other man I know—howsoever great in his own field—has had the direct experience of the Divine from the abysmal depths up to the dizzy heights and to whom the Voice from up the heights has given a similar assurance about the future of the soul of India:

*All mights and greatnesses shall join in her;
Delight shall sleep in the cloud-net of her hair
And in her body as on a homing tree
Immortal love shall beat his glorious wings.
A music of griefless things shall weave her charm;
The harps of the perfect shall attune her voice,
The streams of Heaven shall murmur in her laugh,
Her lips shall be the honeycomb of God,
Her limbs his golden jar of ecstasy,
Her breasts the rapture flowers of Paradise.***

And last, though not least, the prophecy that the India of the Future shall be the spiritual leader of the world because

*She shall bear wisdom in her voiceless bosom,
Strength shall be with her like a conqueror's sword
And from her eyes the Eternal's bliss shall gaze.
A seed shall be sown in death's tremendous hour,
A branch of heaven transplant to human soil:
Nature shall overleap her mortal step;
Fate shall be changed by an unchanging will***

I am glad that India is waking up to this portentous fact that a Poet Rishi who can hear such a message directly from the Divine and transmit it like a mantra is in our midst to lead suffering India to the unrevealed bliss that lies today in her soul waiting to redeem our darkness by the light that she is to manifest through the greatest light-house that is his personality.

**Savitri, Part I, Book III, Canto IV.

ENERGY INEXHAUSTIBLE

By THE MOTHER

We reproduce this short article from the August Number of the quarterly Bulletin of Physical Education published by Sri Aurobindo's Ashram. Here the Mother, radiant and active guide and guardian of the Ashram, utters in simple, gripping, enlightening words some truths of immense value not only to those who participate in Sports such as encouraged in the Ashram but also to all who aspire to share in the Divine's conquest of our imperfect life that is thwarted by insufficient energy for inner self-development and for fighting against physical deterioration and death.

A MOST powerful help that yogic discipline can bring to the sportsman is to teach him how to renew his energies by drawing them from the undying source of universal energy.

Modern science has made great progress in the art of nourishment which is the most well-known means of recuperating one's energies. But the procedure is at best precarious and subject to all kinds of limitations. We do not deal with it here, since it has been a subject much talked about. It is understood, however, that so long as the world and men are what they are, food is an indispensable factor. Yogic science knows of other means for acquiring energies, we shall mention two among the most important.

The first is to put oneself in relation with the energies accumulated in the material and earthly world and to draw freely from this inexhaustible source. These material energies are obscure and half inconscient; they encourage animality in man, but at the same time, establish a kind of harmonious relation between the human body and material nature. Those who know how to receive and use these energies generally meet with success in life and achieve whatever they undertake. But still they depend largely upon the conditions of their life and the state of their bodily health. The harmony created in them is not safe from all attack, it generally vanishes when circumstances become adverse. The child spontaneously receives this energy from material Nature when it throws out all its forces without measuring, gladly and freely. But in most human beings, as they grow up this faculty is deadened because of the cares of life and the predominant place mental activities come to occupy in the consciousness.

Yet there is a source of energy which, once discovered, never dries up, whatever the circumstances and the physical conditions in life. It is the energy that can be described as spiritual, that which is

received not from below, from the depths of inconscience, but from above, from the supreme origin of men and the universe, from the all-powerful and eternal splendours of the superconscious. It is there, everywhere around us, penetrating everything and to enter into contact with it and to receive it, it is sufficient to sincerely aspire for it, to open oneself to it in faith and confidence, so as to enlarge one's consciousness for identifying it with the universal Consciousness.

At the outset it may appear difficult, if not impossible. Yet if one looks at the phenomenon a little more closely one can see that it is not so foreign, so distant for the normally developed human consciousness. Indeed, very few are there who have not felt, at least once in their life, as though uplifted beyond themselves, filled with an unexpected and uncommon force which made them for a time capable of doing anything and everything; at such moments nothing seems too difficult and the word "impossible" loses its meaning.

This experience, however fleeting it may be, gives a glimpse of the kind of contact with the higher energy that yogic discipline secures and maintains.

The method for obtaining this contact can hardly be given here. Besides it is an individual thing, to each one his own, which takes him where he stands, adapting itself to his personal needs and helping him to take a further step forward. The road is long and slow at times, but the result is worth the trouble one takes. We can easily imagine what would be the consequences of this power to draw at will and in all circumstances from the limitless source of an omnipotent energy in its luminous purity. Fatigue, exhaustion, illness, age and even death become mere obstacles on the way which a steady will is sure to surmount.

The Sword

Thou, whose mind is the spaces of the stars,
Thou, whose wide soul bears the crown
Of transcèd height's magnificence,
And fire-puissance of love divine
Nestles in thy immaculate timeless heart,
Lean from haloed imperious altitudes
Upon my vacant loneliness of night
Bearing the deep dumb burden of sleep;
And with thy light's unplumbèd grace
Touch the closed lids of supernal sight
Blind in dungeon abyss. Open unbarred
The vistas of incommunicable gold,
Bring to our dun mind's shadow-mood
Unhorizoned lustres of shadowless self-calm
And breathe to life's fugitive prayer
The divine passion of the limitless blue.
The body, a lyre of the eternal tune,
Vibrate with the celestial resonance
Revealing God-raptured splendour in the dust!
Make my soul awaken to thy mystic Sun—
A fire-swift lightning-seed of power
Risen from the ancient ashes of gloom—
A blazing sword of the Intangible
To smite the ageless dragon of the dark.

Romen

The Test

If I have loved thee, why must I still fail
To thrill in thee with my heart's full vibrancy?
When thou art music, why should my mind quail
To merge my discords in thine harmony?
Knows not my heart: if in humility
I offer at thine altar all I have,
My being's renegade inconstancy
Shall break to faith's rich flowers the angels crave?
Why then my time do I, Lord, fritter away
And the hour defer of my final plunge in thee?
Electing dalliance how can I play
At sighing: "Oh, how sad love's destiny!"
Hark, the Flute sings: "For those who have truly loved
The thorns will croon blooms' miracle lullabies,
And even if they forfeit all they approved
They never would claim it were a sacrifice."
Who woo thy deep shall hear its shoreless call
And then no more their anchors will they moan:
O blessed ones, who stake for thee their all!—
For what is love's revealed to them alone!

Dilip K. Roy

Translated from his own Bengali song.

LIGHTS ON LIFE-PROBLEMS—Continued from page 4

settled truth and law but determined by a sub-conscient knowledge she does not yet share with her creatures. Next she is Life growing slowly self-conscious, seeking out knowledge that she may move seeingly in them along her ways and increase at once the complexity and the efficacy of her movements, but developing slowly too the consciousness that knowledge must be pursued for a higher and purer end, for truth, for the satisfaction, as the life expression and as the spiritual self-finding of the soul of knowledge. But last, it is that soul itself growing in the truth and light, growing into the absolute truth of itself which is its perfection, that becomes the law and high end of her energies. And at each stage she gives returns according to the development of the aim and consciousness of the being. At first there is the return of

skill and effectual intelligence—and her own need explains sufficiently why she gives the rewards of life not, as the ethical mind in us would have it, to the just, not chiefly to moral good, but to the skilful and to the strong, to will and force and intelligence,—and then, more and more clearly disengaged, the return of enlightenment and the satisfaction of the mind and the soul in the conscious use and wise direction of its powers and capacities and, last of all, the one supreme return, the increase of the soul in light, the satisfaction of its perfection in knowledge, its birth into the highest consciousness and the pure fulfilment of its own innate imperative. It is that growth, a divine birth or spiritual self-exceeding its supreme reward, which for the eastern mind has been always the highest gain,—the growth out of human ignorance into divine self-knowledge.

K. G.

SRI AUROBINDO, THE LEADER OF THE EVOLUTION

PART II OF "THE WORLD CRISIS AND INDIA" BY "Synergist"

SECTION II: THE SPIRITUAL VIEW OF EXISTENCE

(b) The Spiritualisation of Life

If our ideal is "the resurgence of man out of the animal and economic life or the merely intellectual and aesthetic into the glories of the spiritual existence" leading ultimately to the divinisation of his whole nature and if through such a spiritual growth he has to realise his oneness with others and with the Divine Being, and if Spirit is going to be the leading motive, the governing principle and the formative power of his outer life also—his economic, political and social life—then it follows that India which has always considered the realisation of the Spirit the highest endeavour of man upon earth, should "insist much more finally and integrally than it has as yet done on its spiritual turn, on the greater and greater action of the spiritual motive in every sphere of her living."

But here a central difficulty arises in the minds of those who have come to the conclusion that there can never be any reconciliation between life and the Spirit, and that in order to attain the Spirit it is incumbent on one to renounce the world. Therefore they find it very difficult to understand how Spirit can be made the governing power of, say, art or politics. Sri Aurobindo, who is a social and political philosopher* besides being a seer and Master of Yoga, clears this difficulty and shows how man's outer activities can also be infused with the power of the Spirit and moulded by it, and how in ancient India attempts were made to spiritualise the whole of life.

Here we shall be well advised to take a glance backwards; such a procedure is always helpful when one wants to get one's right bearings, especially so when it is in the Time-movement. Before we try to envisage what the future will be like, it is necessary for us to have a right understanding of our relations with the past, examine the working of the cultural process, trace the main lines of man's psycho-social evolution, and attempt to possess an insight into that vast body of traditional knowledge or, rather, esoteric knowledge locked up in the Vedas and the Upanishads. Without an insight into this ancient knowledge it will not be possible to have an understanding of the cultural growth of India, the super-structure of whose civilisation is erected upon the foundation of spiritual experience. What we know of as past, present and future are the three terms which reveal stage by stage to a particular type of consciousness—the developing human consciousness—at a certain period of its psycho-biological growth, the deploying of a continuous evolutionary process which proceeds from inconscience to Truth-Consciousness. The present seems to arise from the past and advance towards the future, but the Igdrasil, as they used to say in the Norse legends, is a single integral reality having its roots in the remote past and its trunk and branches stretching out heavenwards into the future.

Viewing the Past in Correct Perspective

Once we are in possession of an accurate knowledge of the past and know exactly what is essential in it that we have to include in the present for our growth and progress, we can make an attempt to build a greater future. Sri Aurobindo gives the direction in this matter as follows: "We have to make three distinct and yet convergent comparisons in order to arrive at a fruitfully guiding judgment, a wholly helpful view of what we are and what we may be. We have to compare our past and our present, to distinguish in the first all that was great, essential, elevating, vitalising, illuminating, victorious, and in that again to separate what was of the permanent, essential spirit and the persistent law of our cultural being from what was temporary and formulative,—for all that was great in the past cannot be preserved as it was or repeated; there are new needs, there are other vistas before us. Secondly, we have to distinguish too what was in the past deficient, imperfect, ill-grasped, imperfectly formulated or only suited to limiting and unfavourable circumstances,—for it is quite idle to pretend that all in the past, even at its greatest, was entirely admirable and the highest consummate achievement of the human mind and spirit. Then in this comparison we have to understand the causes of our decline and seek the remedy, so that our sense of the greatness of the past may not be, as it is to some, a fatally hypnotising lure to inertia, but rather an inspiration to renewed and greater achievements." Then regarding the future he says that what we at present consider to be ideal, "will then be condemned as a self-satisfied imperfection; much that we call enlightenment will appear as a demi-light or a darkness. Not only will many forms claiming to be ancient or even eternal, *sanatana*, without beginning or end,—as if that could be said of any form of things,—have to disappear, but the subjective shapes given to our best principles in a new synthesis change perhaps beyond recognition. There is a permanent spirit to which we must cling, certain fundamental motives or essential idea-forces which cannot be thrown aside, because they are part of the vital principle

of our being and our aim of being, *swadharma*; but these motives and idea-forces are, whether for nation or for humanity, few, simple in their essence, capable of a varying and progressive application. The rest belongs to the less internal layers of our being and must undergo the changing pressure and satisfy the forward-moving demands of the Time-Spirit. There is the permanent spirit in things; there is the persistent *swadharma* or law of being; there is a less binding system of laws of successive formulation,—the last obeying the mutations of the ages, *yugadharma*. This double principle of persistence and mutation the race must obey or bear the penalty of decay and deterioration."

Now we shall try to assess the gains of the past in order to see how far and in what way we can assimilate them into the present, by making a rapid survey of the psycho-spiritual and social history of ancient India and seeing how the spiritual ideal of life influenced her civilisation.

But before we make this attempt, we shall first see what Sri Aurobindo means by the Spirit being the main governing principle of the whole of man's existence, because that will clear the difficulty regarding the reconciliation of life and the Spirit to which we have referred.

* * * * *

The All-Inclusiveness of True Spirituality

"... Thus we are sometimes asked what on earth we mean by spirituality in art and poetry or in political and social life,—a confession of ignorance strange enough in any Indian mouth at this stage of our national history,—or how art and poetry will be any the better when they have got into them what I have recently seen described as the "twang of spirituality", and how the practical problems either of society or of politics are going at all to profit by this element. We have here really an echo of the European idea, now of sufficiently long standing, that religion and spirituality on the one side and intellectual activity and practical life on the other are two entirely different things and have each to be pursued on its own entirely separate lines and in obedience to its own entirely separate principles. Again we may be met also by the suspicion that in holding up this ideal rule before India we are pointing her to the metaphysical and away from the dynamic and pragmatic or inculcating some obscurantist reactionary principle of mystical or irrational religiosity and diverting her from the paths of reason and modernity which she must follow if she is to be an efficient and a well-organized nation able to survive in the shocks of the modern world. We must therefore try to make clear what it is we mean by a renaissance governed by the principle of spirituality.

But first let us say what we do not mean by this ideal. Clearly it does not signify that we shall regard earthly life as a temporal vanity, try to become all of us as soon as possible monastic ascetics, frame our social life into a preparation for the monastery or cavern or mountain-top or make of it a static life without any great progressive ideals but only some aim which has nothing to do with earth or the collective advance of the human race. That may have been for some time a tendency of the Indian mind, but it was never the whole tendency. Nor does spirituality mean the moulding of the whole type of the national being to suit the limited dogmas, forms, tenets of a particular religion, as was often enough attempted by the old societies, an idea which still persists in many minds by the power of old mental habit and association; clearly such an attempt would be impossible, even if it were desirable, in a country full of the most diverse religious opinions and harbouring too three such distinct general forms as Hinduism, Islam and Christianity, to say nothing of the numerous special forms to which each of these has given birth. Spirituality is much wider than any particular religion, and in the larger ideas of it that are now coming on us even the greatest religion becomes no more than a broad sect or branch of the one universal religion; by which we shall understand in the future man's seeking for the eternal, the divine, the greater self, the source of unity and his attempt to arrive at some equation, some increasing approximation of the values of human life with the eternal and the divine values.

Nor do we mean the exclusion of anything whatsoever from our scope, of any of the great aims of human life, any of the great problems of our modern world, any form of human activity, any general or inherent impulse or characteristic means of the desire of the soul of man for development, expansion, increasing vigour and joy, light, power, perfection. Spirit without mind, spirit without body is not the type of man, therefore a human spirituality must not belittle the mind, life or body or hold them of small account: it will rather hold them of high account, of immense importance, precisely because they are the conditions and instruments of the life of the spirit in man. The ancient Indian culture attached quite as much value to the soundness, growth and strength of the mind, life and body as the old Hellenic or the modern scientific thought, although for a different end and a greater motive. Therefore to everything that serves and belongs to the

* Sri Aurobindo is the author of *The Human Cycle* (first published in the *Arya* under the title *The Psychology of Social Development*), and of *The Ideal of Human Unity*.

THE SPIRITUAL VIEW OF EXISTENCE—Continued from page 7

healthy fullness of these things, it gave free play, to the activity of the reason, to science and philosophy, to the satisfaction of the aesthetic being and to all the many arts great or small, to the health and strength of the body, to the physical and economical well-being, ease, opulence of the race,—there was never a national ideal of poverty in India as some would have us believe, nor was bareness or squalor the essential setting of her spirituality,—and to its general military, political and social strength and efficiency. Their aim was high, but firm and wide too was the base they sought to establish and great the care bestowed on these first instruments. Necessarily the new India will seek the same end in new ways under the vivid impulse of fresh and large ideas and by an instrumentality suited to more complex conditions; but the scope of her effort and action and the suppleness and variety of her mind will not be less, but greater than of old. Spirituality is not necessarily exclusive; it can be and in its fullness must be all-inclusive.

But still there is a great difference between the spiritual and the purely material and mental view of existence. The spiritual view holds that the mind, life, body are man's means and not his aims and even that they are not his last and highest means; it sees them as his outer instrumental self and not his whole being. It sees the infinite behind all things finite and its adjectives the value of the finite by higher infinite values of which they are the imperfect translation and towards which, to a truer expression of them, they are always trying to arrive. It sees a greater reality than the apparent not only behind man and the world, but within man and the world, and this soul, self, divine thing in man it holds to be that in him which is of the highest importance, that which everything else in him must try in whatever way to bring out and express, and this soul, self, divine presence in the world it holds to be that which man has ever to try to see and recognise through all appearances, to unite his thought and life with it and in it to find his unity with his fellows. This alters necessarily our whole normal view of things; even in preserving all the aims of human life, it will give them a different sense and direction.

We aim at the health and vigour of the body; but with what object? For its own sake, will be the ordinary reply, because it is worth having; or else that we may have long life and a sound basis for our intellectual, vital, emotional satisfactions. Yes, for its own sake, in a way, but in this sense that the physical too is an expression of the spirit and its perfection is worth having, is part of the dharma of the complete human living; but still more as a basis for all that higher activity which ends in the discovery and expression of the divine self in man. *Shariram khalu dharmasadhanam*, runs the old Sanskrit saying, the body too is our means for fulfilling the dharma, the Godward law of our being. The mental, the emotional, the aesthetic parts of us have to be developed, is the ordinary view, so that they may have a greater satisfaction or because that is man's finer nature, because so he feels himself more alive and fulfilled.* This, but not this only; rather because these things too are the expressions of the spirit, things which are seeking in him for their divine values and by their growth, subtlety, flexibility, power, intensity he is able to come nearer to the divine Reality in the world, to lay hold on it variously, to tune eventually his whole life into unity and conformity with it. Morality is in the ordinary view a well-regulated individual and social conduct which keeps society going and leads towards a better, a more rational, temperate, sympathetic, self-restrained dealing with our fellows. But ethics in the spiritual point of view is much more, it is a means of developing in our action and still more essentially in the character of our being the diviner self in us, a step of our growing into the nature of the Godhead.

So with all our aims and activities; spirituality takes them all and gives them a greater, diviner, more intimate sense. Philosophy is, in the western way of dealing with it, a dispassionate enquiry by the light of the reason into the first truths of existence, which we shall get at either by observing the facts science places at our disposal or by a careful dialectical scrutiny of the concepts of the reason or a mixture of the two methods. But from the spiritual view-point truth of existence is to be found by intuition and inner experience and not only by the reason and by scientific observation; the work of philosophy is to arrange the data given by the various means of knowledge, excluding none, and put them into their synthetic relation to the one Truth, the one supreme and universal reality. Eventually, its real value is to prepare a basis for spiritual realisation and the growing of the human being into his divine nature. Science itself becomes only a knowledge of the world which throws an added light on the spirit of the universe and its way in things. Nor will it confine itself to a physical knowledge and its practical fruits or to the knowledge of life and man and mind based upon the idea of matter or material energy as our starting-point; a spiritualised culture will make room for new fields of research, for new and old psychical sciences and results which start from spirit as the first truth and from the power of mind and of what is greater than mind to act upon life and matter. The primitive aim of art and poetry is to create images of man and Nature which shall satisfy the sense of beauty and embody artistically the ideas of the intelligence about life and the responses of the imagination to it; but in a spiritual culture they become too in their aim a revelation of greater things concealed in man and Nature and of the deepest spiritual and universal beauty. Politics, society, economy are in the first form of human life simply an arrangement by which men collectively can live, produce, satisfy their desires, enjoy, progress in bodily, vital and mental efficiency; but the spiritual aim makes them much more than this, first, a framework of life within which man can seek for and grow

into his real self and divinity, secondly, an increasing embodiment of the divine law of being in life, thirdly, a collective advance towards the light, power, peace, unity, harmony of the diviner nature of humanity which the race is trying to evolve. This and nothing more, but nothing less, this in all its potentialities, is what we mean by a spiritual culture and the application of spirituality to life.

The Right Lines for India's Future Development

Those who distrust this ideal or who cannot understand it, are still under the sway of the European conception of life which for a time threatened to swamp entirely the Indian spirit. But let us remember that Europe itself is labouring to outgrow the limitations of its own conceptions and precisely by a rapid infusion of the ideal of the East,—naturally, essential ideas and not the mere forms,—which have been first infiltrating and are now more freely streaming into Western thought, poetry, art, ideas of life, not to overturn its culture, but to transform, enlighten and aggrandise its best values and to add new elements which have too long been ignored or forgotten. It will be singular if while Europe is thus intelligently enlarging herself in the new light she has been able to seize and admitting the truths of the spirit and the aim at a divine change in man and his life, we in India are to take up the cast-off clothes of European thought and life and to straggle along in the old rut of her wheels, always taking up today what she had cast off yesterday. We should not allow our cultural independence to be paralysed by the accident that at the moment Europe came in upon us, we were in a state of ebb and weakness, such as comes some day upon all civilisations. That no more proves that our spirituality, our culture, our leading ideas were entirely mistaken and the best we can do is vigorously to Europeanise, rationalise, materialise ourselves in the practical parts of life,—keeping perhaps some spirituality, religion, Indianism as a graceful decoration in the background,—than the great catastrophe of the war proves that Europe's science, her democracy, her progress were all wrong and she should return to the Middle Ages or imitate the culture of China or Turkey or Tibet*. Such generalisations are the facile falsehoods of a hasty and unreflecting ignorance.

We have both made mistakes, faltered in the true application of our ideals, been misled into unhealthy exaggerations. Europe has understood the lesson, she is striving to correct herself; but she does not for this reason forswear science, democracy, progress, but purposes to complete and perfect them, to use them better, to give them a sounder direction. She is admitting the light of the East, but on the basis of her own way of thinking and living, opening herself to truth of the spirit, but not abandoning her own truth of life and science and social ideals. We should be as faithful, as free in our dealings with the Indian spirit and modern influences; correct what went wrong with us; apply our spirituality on broader and freer lines, be if possible not less but more spiritual than were our forefathers; admit Western science, reason, progressiveness, the essential modern ideas, but on the basis of our own way of life and assimilated to our spiritual aim and ideal; open ourselves to the throb of life, the pragmatic activity, the great modern endeavour, but not therefore abandon our fundamental view of God and man and Nature. There is no real quarrel between them; for rather these two things need each other to fill themselves in, to discover all their own implications, to awaken to their own richest and completest significances.

India can best develop herself and serve humanity by being herself and following the law of her own nature. This does not mean, as some narrowly and blindly suppose, the rejection of everything new that comes to us in the stream of Time or happens to have been first developed or powerfully expressed by the West. Such an attitude would be intellectually absurd, physically impossible, and above all unspiritual; true spirituality rejects no new light, no added means or materials of our human self-development. It means simply to keep our centre, our essential way of being, our inborn nature and assimilate to it all we receive, and evolve out of it all we do and create. Religion has been a central preoccupation of the Indian mind; some have told us that too much religion ruined India, precisely because we made the whole of life religion or religion the whole of life, we have failed in life and gone under. I will not answer, adopting the language used by the poet in a slightly different connection, that our fall does not matter and that the dust in which India lies is sacred. The fall, the failure does matter, and to lie in the dust is no sound position for man or nation. But the reason assigned is not the true one. If the majority of Indians had indeed made the whole of their lives religion in the true sense of the word, we should not be where we are now; it was because their public life became most irreligious, egoistic, self-seeking, materialistic that they fell. It is possible, that on one side we deviated too much into an excessive religiosity, that is to say, an excessive externalism of ceremony, rule, routine, mechanical worship, on the other into a too world-shunning asceticism which drew away the best minds who were thus lost to society instead of standing like the ancient Rishis as its spiritual support and its illuminating life-givers. But the root of the matter was the dwindling of the spiritual impulse in its generality and broadness, the decline of intellectual activity and freedom, the waning of great ideals, the loss of the gust of life.

Perhaps there was too much of religion in one sense; the word is English, smacks too much of things external such as creeds, rites, an

* This was written at a time when these cultures were stationary, with a conservative immovability.

VISION and REALISATION

Living and accurate expression of mystical and spiritual experience is rare. To convey the realities of this experience, in all their many-sidedness, and to show what the immense reaches of yogic evolution are, this series will present extracts from the writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

The entire consciousness immersed in divine contemplation, the whole being enjoyed a supreme and vast felicity.

Then was the physical body seized, first in its lower members and next the whole of it, by a sacred trembling which made little by little even in the most material sensation all personal limits fall away. The being progressively, methodically, grew in greatness, breaking down every barrier, shattering every obstacle, that it might contain and manifest a force and a power which increased ceaselessly in immensity and intensity. It was as if a progressive dilation of the cells until there was a complete identification with the earth: the body of the awakened consciousness was the terrestrial globe moving harmoniously in ethereal space. And the consciousness knew that its global body was thus moving in the arms of the universal Personality, and it gave itself, it abandoned itself to Her in an ecstasy of peaceful bliss. Then it felt that its body was absorbed in the body of the universe and one with it; the consciousness became the consciousness of the universe, in its totality immobile, in its internal complexity moving infinitely. The consciousness of the universe sprang towards the Divine in an ardent aspiration, a perfect surrender, and it saw in the splendour of the immaculate Light the radiant Being standing on a many-headed serpent whose body coiled infinitely around the universe. The Being in an eternal gesture of triumph mastered and created at one and the same time the serpent and the universe that issued from it; erect on the serpent, he dominated it with all his victorious might, and the same gesture that crushed the hydra, enveloping the universe, gave it eternal birth. Then the consciousness became this Being and perceived that its form was changing once more; it was absorbed into something which was no longer a form and yet contained all forms, something which, immutable, sees,—the Eye, the Witness. And what It sees, is. Then this last vestige of form disappeared and the consciousness itself was absorbed into the Unutterable, the Ineffable.

The return towards the consciousness of the individual body took place very slowly in a constant and invariable splendour of Light and Power and Felicity and Adoration, by successive gradations, but directly, without passing again through the universal and terrestrial forms. And it was as if the modest corporeal form had become the direct and immediate vesture, without any intermediary, of the supreme and eternal Witness.

November 26, 1915.

THE MOTHER
Prayers and Meditations.

* * * * *

TRANSFORMATION

My breath runs in a subtle rhythmic stream;
It fills my members with a might divine:
I have drunk the Infinite like a giant's wine.
Time is my drama or my pageant dream.
Now are my illumined cells joy's flaming scheme
And changed my thrilled and branching nerves to fine
Channels of rapture opal and hyaline
For the influx of the Unknown and the Supreme.

I am no more a vassal of the flesh,
A slave to Nature and her leaden rule;
I am caught no more in the senses' narrow mesh.
My soul unhorizoned widens to measureless sight,
My body is God's happy living tool,
My spirit a vast sun of deathless light.

SRI AUROBINDO
Collected Poems and Plays.

As one who sets his sail towards mystic shores
Driven through huge oceans by the breath of God,
The fathomless below, the unknown around,
His soul abandoned the blind star-field, Space.
Afar from all that makes the measured world,
Plunging to hidden eternities it withdrew
Back from mind's foaming surface to the Vasts
Voiceless within us in omniscient sleep.
Above the imperfect reach of word and thought,
Beyond the sight, the last support of form,
Lost in deep tracts of superconscious Light,
Or voyaging in blank featureless Nothingness,
Or sole in the trackless Incommensurable,
Exceeding self and not-self and selflessness,
He reached at last his sempiternal base.
On sorrowless heights no winging cry disturbs
Pure and untouched above the mortal play
Is spread the spirit's hushed immobile air.
There no beginning is and there no end;
There is the stable force of all that moves;
There the aeonic labourer is at rest.
There is no keyed creation to be watched
And there no fate-turned huge machinery;
The marriage of evil with good within one breast,
The clash of strife in the very clasp of love,
The dangerous pain of life's experiment
In the values of Inconsequence and Chance,
The peril of mind's gamble, throwing the soul
As stake, with the lights and shadows of the idea
And equal measures of the true and false
In that immobile and immutable realm
Find no approach, no cause, no claim to live:
There only reigns the Spirit's motionless power
And its omniscient and omnipotent peace.
There can no conflict rise of thought with thought,
Of truth with truth, of right with rival right;
No trouble comes from a half-seeing world,
No suffering of hearts compelled to beat
In bodies of the inert Inconscient's make.
Armed with the immune occult unsinking Fire
The guardians of Eternity keep its law
For ever fixed upon Truth's giant base
In her magnificent and termless home.
There Nature on her dumb spiritual couch
Immutably transcendent knows her source
And to the stir of multitudinous worlds
Assents unmoved in a perpetual calm.
All-causing, all-sustaining and aloof,
The Witness looks from his unshaken poise,
An Eye immense regarding all things done.
Apart, at peace above creation's stir,
Immersed in the eternal altitudes,
He abode defended in his shoreless self,
Companioned only by the all-seeing One.
A Mind too mighty to be bound by Thought,
A Life too boundless for the play in space,
A Soul without borders unconvinced of Time,
He felt the extinction of the world's long pain,
He became the unborn Self that never dies,
He joined the sessions of Infinity.

SRI AUROBINDO
Savitri: Bk. III, Canto 3.

THE SPIRITUAL VIEW OF EXISTENCE—Continued from page 8

external piety; there is no one Indian equivalent. But if we give rather to religion the sense of the following of the spiritual impulse in its fullness and define spirituality as the attempt to know and live in the highest self, the divine, the all-embracing unity and to raise life in all its parts to the divinest possible values, then it is evident that there was not too much of religion, but rather too little of it—and in what there was, a too one-sided and therefore insufficiently ample tendency. The right remedy is, not to belittle still farther the age-long ideal of India, but to return to its old amplitude and give it a still wider scope, to make in very truth all the life of the nation a religion in this high spiritual sense. This is the direction in which the philosophy, poetry, art of the West is, still more or less obscurely, but with an increasing light, beginning to turn, and, even some faint glints of the

truth are beginning now to fall across political and sociological ideals. India has the key to the knowledge and conscious application of the ideal; what was dark to her before in its application, she can now, with a new light, illumine; what was wrong and wry in her old methods she can now rectify; the fences which she created to protect the outer growth of the spiritual ideal and which afterwards became barriers to its expansion and farther application, she can now break down and give her spirit a freer field and an ampler flight: she can, if she will, give a new and decisive turn to the problems over which all mankind is labouring and stumbling, for the clue to their solutions is there in her ancient knowledge. Whether she will rise or not to the height of her opportunity in the renaissance which is coming upon her, is the question of her destiny."

NEW TRENDS IN WESTERN THOUGHT DEVELOPMENT OF EAST-WEST UNDERSTANDING

BY BARON ERIC PALMSTIERNA, G. C. V. O.

FORUM: Published by THE WORLD CONGRESS OF FAITHS

It is always useful to survey the sequence of events in order to arrive at an accurate understanding of matters occurring before our eyes. I would like to trace some of the steps in East-West intercourse which are of the highest significance in the religious field.

The strong Missionary Movement, with which some of our older members are doubtless familiar, causing a wide-spread growth of Christianity in all lands without parallel since the early centuries, gave the missionaries, University Graduates among them, the opportunity of studying the religious lives of people in non-Christian countries. Many of the missionaries thus gained a truer insight into the systems of thought of highly-developed cultures, than they would have achieved from the mere academic study at home of sacred documents. For a long time, however, both at home and abroad, those studies of Eastern thought were impregnated with the superiority complex that has marked Western civilisation. Institutional religions stressed the divergencies, the many advantages and more profound truth possessed by Christian theology when compared with Eastern metaphysics. Such opinions were often based on misinterpretations or voiced from sheer ignorance.

But the impact of East and West has produced repercussions which, in the end, have changed the whole attitude of the West towards Eastern religions. In the East, too, there has been a reaction led by eminent

men and partly inspired by a budding racial nationalism. From the East have come missionaries to acquaint us better with their religious conceptions. In fact, we have witnessed an awakening of religious awareness, based on the best of inherited beliefs and fostered by the great visionaries who have become known to us in the West.

A Great Bridge-Building

We now begin to see the fruits of this development. The missionaries and student-travellers have gained increasing knowledge of the wisdom and spiritual values embedded in the religions they went to conquer. Eastern devotees, some of whom were trained in Western Universities, have recognised the need for instructing members of their own faiths in the Christian truths.

A bridge-building has begun, not with the object of establishing a formulated universal creed, but to create tolerance and to emphasise the best in all religions to assist men in their conduct of life. Inter-religious congresses have taken place; our W.C.F. has been at work, and, of late, we have found groups of Western intellectuals dissatisfied

with doctrinal creeds and so deeply impressed by the Perennial Philosophy of the East that, conjointly with Eastern scholars, they have adopted the role of intermediary and teacher to testify to the light they have gained from Asia.

Remarkable Consequences

All this enlightenment, together with the official Comparative studies, has had consequences, which are truly remarkable for religion.

What strikes me most strongly is this: We have been brought to understand that a religion is *not a granite block* built upon dogmatic ground, but is an organic growth, showing both high and low degrees of evolution. The true fruit of a religion ought, therefore, to be studied where it displays its finest products and exerts moral influence on individual life. This trend of thought leads us to compare the lives and visions of the saints and mystics of the faiths—a rewarding and revealing study for every seeker of spiritual understanding.

The seeker will soon discover the

affinity of spirit revealed and the essential similarity of moral guidance which proves better than anything else the unity of the spiritual realm. For those who have their eyes open, a new and clear light shines upon earth.

I conclude with an excerpt from the recent Big Ben Silence Movement circular:—

“The present condition of the world’, wrote Soren Kierkegaard, ‘is diseased. If I were a doctor and was asked for my advice, I should answer: create Silence—bring men to Silence—the word of God cannot be heard in the world today. And if it is blazoned forth with all the panoply of noise so that it can be heard even in the midst of all other noise, then it is no longer the Word of God. Therefore create Silence’. This Silence must surely be attained within the mind through learning how to rise above and a deliberate turning away from the world of noise It is within the stillness of this interior Silence that we can become aware of that Reality which transcends both time and space.”

DR. AGARWAL'S EYE INSTITUTE AND SRI AUROBINDO MANDIR LIBRARY

DELHI, October 16.

On the occasion of the Sixteenth Anniversary of Dr. Agarwal's Eye Institute, (15, Daryaganj, Delhi) celebrated here this evening, Dr. R. S. Agarwal mentioned in his report that he had synthesised Allopathy, Ayurveda, Homoeopathy and Bates Nature Cure in the Institute and achieved a great success. He declared that he had been greatly inspired and guided by Sri Aurobindo to achieve efficiency and perfection in work. Dr. Patabhi Sitaramayya, who presided over the meeting, while praising the work of the Institute and the service it is doing to the nation, gave full exposition of the synthetic method that is being applied in the Institute for eye treatment. He further hoped that all branches of medicine would recognise the usefulness of synthesis in treatment. Shrimati Ambujamal, Chairman of the Reception Committee, told the audience that she had come here all the way from Madras for treatment and had improved her vision considerably. Prof. Humayun Kabir spoke of his personal experience of the methods in the prevention and cure of defective vision without glasses which, he said, had a great truth in them. He stated that the Ministry of Education would help the Institute all it could in further developing the system and making its approach to educational institutions so that children might benefit from it and avoid the use of glasses at an early age. The opening of the Sri Aurobindo Mandir Library, which was a part of the function, was performed by Sjt. Surendra Mohan Ghosh, M.C.A. Apropos of the addition of this Library to the Institute, Dr. Agarwal said: “I pray that our Institute may become of greater service to give vision both external and internal.”

Messages of good wishes for the function from the Governor-General Sri C. Rajagopalachari, the Governor of Bihar, Sri

M. S. Aney, the Central Minister of Rehabilitation, Sri Mohan Lal Saksena and many others were read.

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WHISPER-COLOURED POETRY

BY JOYCE CHADWICK

A society has been formed lately called "The British Poetry Association", its aim being "to encourage the appreciation, study and development of poetry" throughout Britain and "by liaison with other countries, special attention to be given to promotion of good relations with Europe, America, and the Commonwealth". It publishes a quarterly magazine called "Poetry", the first issue of which is the subject—or should one say "jumping-off place"?—of this article.

Such a society should plainly be useful. One feels, however, a certain qualm when confronted by the opening words of the editorial: "This is a cruel time for poetry." Is the implication that poetry is so sensitive a plant that it can only with difficulty maintain a stunted and painful existence in an age terrible and splendid with creative destruction? If so, I think we must ask the editor to reconsider its function. In Keats's view this was "to soothe the cares and lift the thoughts of man." The poet himself:

...passes forth into the charmed
air
With talisman to call up spirits rare
From plant, cave, rock and fountain.
To his sight
The hush of natural objects opens
quite
To the core: and every secret
essence there
Reveals the elements of good and
fair:
Making him see, where learning
hath no light.

There can seldom have been a time when it was more necessary to lift the thoughts of man, or, on finding the secret essences of plant, cave, rock and fountain, to reveal the elements of good and fair in them. And, indeed, a little further on, the Editor says so:—"There was never a time when the values represented by poetry were more desperately in need of strong and continued reaffirmation." But I do not think we need be "desperate" about it. At any rate, the poets most aware of the forces at work just now seem to say what they have to say in this opening number quite quietly.

Now I am not so near to death
As when, fresh come from school,
Thinking of friends, I caught my
breath
Above wept bones, Cocytus' pool.

First pledges: I with my own hand
Laid frost upon their names.
The shades' republic I had planned
Was cast by artists' flames.

Six magical verses end thus:—

Who has not died to find his breath?
Grief was grief then, nor did grief
seem.
It was the mayfly of my death
That raised me from that stream.

The writer is Mr. Vernon Watkins, who has shown already in his magnificent *The Lamp and the Veil* (Faber & Faber 1945) how sensitive he is to the passing ordeal by Fire and the constant ordeal by Water which is the way of our Evolution.

There brooding darkness, here a
pyre of flame,
The burning of an age.
Works of intricate desire,
The splendour and remorse, the
greed and shame
Of tottering Babylon
Flying out golden to the fount of
language.

If the readers of *Mother India* who are interested in poetry do not know *The Lamp and the Veil* I think they should try to get hold of a copy. There is much that is experi-

mental in it and much very fine and full achievement. The volume opens with a long poem recalling a conversation with the aged Yeats. This contains some of the most enchanting rhythms imaginable. The two poets discuss, amongst many other things, an early poem in which Yeats set himself:

The task to unite
The myths of all ages
In a single night,
To draw their tale, not on the wall
But in the tip of the light.

He describes his approach to the subject and is then asked:

'Did the idea come slowly,
I questioned, 'did it unfold
At once, or from the leaves
themselves
As from a sculptor's mould?
Was it your mind that saw the
words,
Or was your mind told?'

The placing of amphibrach and spondee in that last line to convey at once amused lightness and the underlying weight of that mind's supreme competence seems to me quite perfect. But the last line of every verse in this poem will reward any attention that may be given it as exemplifying in endless variety the theme struck out by Yeats in the last line of verse 8: "But all song should be gay."

Yeats in *Dublin* is followed by *Sea-Music for my Sister Travelling*: the vast heave, toss and power of the everlasting oceans of Possibility with which she is involved penetrated everywhere by an urgency of purifying flames in the burning city from which he writes. To quote from this poem is to murder it, it is so perfect a whole, and each line so much the child of all that has preceded it; and yet I think one must quote.

Dolphins involve you in their
unknown dark firmament,
Watch with their perfect eyes your
sleep
Of nightmare, steep,
Perceiving that live, falling town,
Imagining within
The cobra-hooded wave
Crumbling doors, and by that blast
London hung blinded in the dust...

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Rush, dolphins, in your wheel
Of blinding light, the illuminated
prayer
Of water, light and air;
Catch world-surrounding light and
music, reel,
Traffic with spun looms, all the
mysteries
Of the sped seas....

Plunging below the paths and deaths
of ships
To the first film of pearl,
Shell of the world unborn and of the
waking girl,
Treading time down through rhyme
and slime
To the first norm
Of self-engendering flame,
Slow miracle-bed of lightning and
coiled limbs,
Where no prolonged martyrs'
crucifix beats
Cobbles of a pilgrim's streets,
But the crust breaks in Christ's
original radium.

Mr. Watkins, you observe, is a very capable poet in the Keatsian sense, and it gives one a decided confidence in Poetry's capacity to do a good job well that a poem by him should open its first issue. This—*First Pledges*—is followed by a pleasant *Water-Poem* of Mr. Norman Nicholson's. The "hush of natural objects" has here not opened, he tells us, quite "to the core", but he at least realises in two melodious verses that there is a core to be opened and entered. "Man should not dispute or assert but whisper results to his neighbour." Miss Kathleen Raine has a very fine whisper-coloured poem in the magazine. I cannot think of any other verse which so completely conveys scrupulous intention to communicate nothing but what has actually been felt and tasted.

It was as if the ring had gone from
the horizon
And waves had overflowed the
edges of the world.
It was as if the eleven swans flew
over....

To say that the word was ever here
and now
Or even that I imagined such a
transit
Would be to bind a stone to the
current air....

But for the space of a thought, it
was as if it seemed.

I think this poet's whisper might well be louder. I think it should become song. So far, her work has been much engaged with sorrow—but the path seems to have been on the whole a way to discovery and not a cul de sac.

Sorrow is deep and vast—we travel
on
As far as pain can penetrate, to the
end
Of power and possibility; to find,
The contours of the world, with
heaven aligned
Upon infinity; the shape of man!

That comes from her volume of poems *Living in Time* (Editions Poetry London 1946) and is dated 1941. In this same volume there is a poem of much beauty (August 1945) beginning:—

What does the eye see?
A rose-bud on a paradise-tree.

What does hope say?
A rose shall fill time with eternity!

What is memory's refrain?
'I was that rose before the world
began.'

What does thought foretell?
Petal upon petal,
World within world, star within cell.

I think much gratitude is owing to an editor who by gathering the work of such writers into the first issue of his magazine assures us that, however uncomfortable this time may be for the poets, it is not "a cruel time for Poetry." Poetry is at work in its needed place. What else does the instrument ask?

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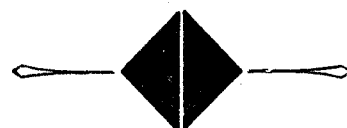
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THE KSHATRIYA IDEAL

BY SAMIR KANTA GUPTA

In this India, long charmed with the tame philosophy of inactivity, the ideal of the Kshatriya, the fighter, may come to many as a rude shock, as an ideal foreign to their nature. Is not a 'wise' passivity preferable to a hasty plunge into action when action has no meaning and humanity is fast approaching its doomsday? This pessimistic outlook, we believe, does not help a people to tide over crises, rise to the heights of achievement and become truly great. Whatever the situation, however adverse the circumstances, faith we must have: faith in ourselves, faith in the future, faith in God. We must also, like all practical men, accept life as it is. There is in fact no option but to face the world and men and things as they stand and not shrink from them either for a love of remote single-tracked reverie or because of a lack of vigorous outlook on life and a courageous handling of all its problems.

The ancients were wise when they considered man's life as a series of duties—duty to oneself and duty to others in the society. In order that these duties might be fully and efficiently performed it was thought proper to build the society as a hierarchy, the entire collective labour distributed evenly amongst its participating members, one particular function for each of the four varnas. Also simultaneously the sage architects of the past accepted this supreme fact that human life, like all other lives on this planet, is a constant struggle, or may we say, an infinite progression through constant struggle. Man thus appeared to them to be first and foremost a fighter: he fights for Good against Evil, for Truth against Falsehood, for light against darkness, for the preservation of the right law of living, *dharmā*, and what is just and noble in man and nature against all that is unjust and petty and ignoble, all that deviates from or denies the truthful law of progressive being and living, *adharmā*. The Kshatriya, the guardian of this law of life in the society, is a 'mighty man', so graphically described by Sri Aurobindo.* He is again the man of action, the relentless warrior on the path of forward journey. "Heroism, high spirit, resolution, ability, not fleeing in the battle, giving, lordship (*ishwara-bhava*, the temperament of the ruler and leader) are the natural work of the Kshatriya."

The Kshatriya in Ancient India

It was meet therefore that in the political life of ancient India the Kshatriya should play a prominent role. His was the task of protecting the country from foreign invasion. Within its borders, the supreme task of governing the country fell upon him. The preservation of law and order was, as a necessary corollary, one of his chief concerns. He was the champion of the weak and friend of the poor and the helpless. He was again the enemy of the oppressor. In short, he embodied both the spirit of soldiership and the knowledge of statecraft. At the same time, the Kshatriyas were no mere hereditary fighters or rulers of kingdoms but by virtue leaders of men, actually leading men through the thickest of battles. Coming to more modern times the idea of the State has very much changed and together with that the many conceptions of the rights and obligations of people towards it. An aspect of this change and its effects can be observed here.

"From the idea of the common military obligation (in the past it was the absolute monopoly of the Kshatriya) binding on every individual to defend and fight for the

* All quotations in this article are taken from Sri Aurobindo's *Essays on the Gita*, 1st Series.

community by which he lives and profits, has arisen the system by which the whole manhood of the nation is hurled into the bloody trench to slay and be slain, thinkers, artists, philosophers, priests, merchants, artisans, all torn from their natural functions, the whole life of the community disorganised, reason and conscience overridden, even the minister of religion who is salaried by the State for his function to preach the gospel of peace and love forced to deny his creed and become a butcher of his fellowmen! Not only are conscience and nature vitiated by the arbitrary fiat of the military state, but national defence carried to an insane extreme makes its best attempt to become a national suicide!" Indian wisdom was fully alive to this fact. It therefore sought to restrict this colossal waste of human material which a war inevitably brings in its train. The Kshatriyas willingly took the burden on their shoulders, thought it a proud privilege offered to them by providence and common consent of all to sacrifice their own peace and security and a little ease in order to be able to serve their kith and kin. Of course this specialising process of labour and function has its own defects and to some extent crippling limitations, it is by no means the most perfect ideal state of things, yet its other salutary aspects too can hardly be ignored or lightly brushed aside.

The Kshatriya and Self-Perfection

Surely the ideal of the Kshatriya is not the ultimate or supreme ideal of mankind. Still, this limited field, this circumscribed sphere of human action and living had in it a deeper motive than the apparent superficial one, a secret inspiration which could help the doer and the man of action to rise above their ordinary too human and earthly nature: the ideal provided for the means of self-mastery through action. The true Karmayogin cannot rest content with only a passive moral sanction on his part for the Right to triumph over Wrong, but actually he must take up arms and join the battle whenever needed. Arjuna refused to give fight and he was strongly admonished by Sri Krishna: "Whence has come to thee this dejection, this stain and darkness of the soul in the hour of difficulty and peril?" Under the circumstances what could be a greater virtue for Arjuna than to act and act heroically? For indeed "there is no greater good for the Kshatriya than righteous battle and when such a battle comes to them of itself like the open gate of heaven, happy are the Kshatriyas then. If thou dost not this battle for the right, then hast thou abandoned thy duty and virtue and thy glory, and sin shall be thy portion."

We have hinted at the ethical principle governing the actions of a Kshatriya. He does his duty as he

must do it, without hatred or mad violence, as the *kartavyam karma*. That attitude, that poise of the being, introduces a new element in the matter and changes the whole picture. "That war in the past has, when subjected to an ideal, helped in this elevation, as the development of knighthood and chivalry, the Indian ideal of the Kshatriya, the Japanese ideal of Samurai, can only be denied by the fanatics of pacifism." And unfortunately the world today is too full of such impotent pacifists. However, an echo of this grand Kshatriya ideal can be traced even at a later date in Indian history—in the practice of Rakhi among the Rajputs. Many moving tales centring round this practice form a magnificent chapter in the golden annals of Rajasthan.

Contribution to World-Development

Now coming back to the point, we find that the contribution of the ideal lay in two directions. In the larger sphere it demanded respect for the value of human life and at the same time paved the way for a collective progress by removing obstacles or forces of retrogression that stand in the way. As for the individual, it opened for him the way to a supreme self-exceeding: the life of *kinesis* or *rajas* (the Indian psychological term), controlled and uplifted by higher ethical virtues, virtues that have their roots in the greater principle of *sattwa* or balance and harmony. Yet that is not all. The ideal perfection of human life as we have already glimpsed is not to stop anywhere here, but travel far beyond. Not even the fullest flowering of the *guna* or quality of *sattwa* is our end in view. The perfect perfection of the human being, the completest and sublimest achievement for the

human life on earth, means the total transformation of this human material nature, to transcend even the *gunas*, to be suffused with the light of the divine consciousness, merge in It, live in the absolute freedom of the Spirit and the divine Law. But in the meanwhile, at a lower altitude of human development, and in given circumstances, the passage through the surging currents of life and a consequent mastery over them, even in the way of the Kshatriyas, has a considerable value and utility.

Finally, there are times for a nation when an ideal of courageous action such as that of the Kshatriya might be of immense usefulness. For, we should not forget the lesson which nature and history have taught us through the ages, we must remember that "the gospel of universal peace and good-will among men—for without a universal and entire mutual good-will there can be no real or abiding peace—has never succeeded for a moment in possessing itself of human life and the historic cycle of our Progress, because morally, socially, spiritually the race was not prepared for any such transcendence. Even now we have not actually progressed beyond the feasibility of a system of accommodation between conflicting interests which may minimise the recurrence of the worst forms of strife." Yes, the race must be spiritually prepared. Otherwise it will have no enduring peace or the perfect bliss of existence. But so long as we do not achieve this highest height we cannot allow ourselves to sink into *tamas*, into dullness and inactivity. Considering the present conditions with which life is beset we have perforce to be once again bold and tread the hero's path with unswerving steps.

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