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"GREAT IS TRUTH AND IT SHALL PREVAIL"

ALTERNATE SATURDAYS

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A DAY OF SUPRA-INTELLECTUAL LIGHT

Once again in the year came, on November 24, the day of *darshan* when people in their thousands gathered in Pondicherry to stand before Sri Aurobindo and before the Mother with whose radiant collaboration his world-work is done. February 21, April 24 and August 15 had been the other three days. Such occasions are most precious, for they serve periodically to rivet attention on the presence, in our midst, of a supra-intellectual light that can lead man to a divine fulfilment.

The typically modern mind is loth to admit any supra-intellectual light. Not that it has no sense of psychological mysteries and profundities. The subconscious, the "unconscious"—a domain beyond the intelligence and its neat patterns—a large mysterious region of strange urges and fantasies indicating some sort of racial commonalty—a basic more-than-individual wideness of desire and symbol and myth: this is the foundation of modern psychology. But there is little here of anything divine, anything perfect. An original or primitive chaos is this—crudely colourful and dynamic—out of which a precarious cosmos seems to emerge in our consciousness. But the fact that there is recognised a psychological "beyond" is of capital importance. Once we grant a secret storehouse whence the conscious mind is fed, we open up possibilities of finding not only the subconscious wideness but also some superconscious infinity. Already, side by side with the Freudian and Jungian explorations below the human mind's small focus of selfhood, there has arisen a study of what is called the para-conscious: extra-sensory powers like telepathy and clairvoyance and precognition. This study suggests an actual superhuman mind-world independent of physical space and time. The path, therefore, is laid open for a yet more profound search, and the moment seems prepared for a come-back of the ancient verities—Inmost Soul, Cosmic Consciousness, Transcendental Divinity.

The Modern Mind and Mysticism

Yes, the path is laid open, but the modern mind does not easily turn its eyes in the direction of mysticism. There are three reasons for this. First, the obsession of the nineteenth century's materialism still lingers subtly like an obstructive ghost, and is not sufficiently counter-acted by the new domain of the subconscious which keeps our look fixed downward on some dark fantastically peopled sea of being on whose surface the physical mentality floats. So long as the truly spiritual is not revealed, so long as only a bewildering Below is seen and no illuminating Above, the materialist tendency is likely to continue. The second reason is the fascination of the new discovery. Such amazing vistas are disclosed that there is a move to find there the explanation of all things—even those that seem the most idealistic and the least akin to the welter of the subconscious. Art, religion, morality—everything suggestive of some hidden flawlessness of beauty, truth and goodness is sought to be interpreted in terms of that welter. Art with its intimation of heavenly felicity becomes a camouflaged sexual desire, surviving from infancy, of returning to the warmth and security of the mother's womb, or else a development from the curious pleasure the child takes in producing the diverse forms of its own *faeces*. Religion becomes an imaginative compensation for thwarted instincts of sex and murder or a sublimated inability to outgrow the child's awed attitude towards its father or an escape-mechanism set up because of failure to face reality. Morality becomes merely a half-conscious half-unconscious fixation in us of the customs and regulations found by ancestral society to be convenient, a fixation coloured also by family "taboos" during our infancy leading to the "guilt" of hostility to the parents and of forbidden sexual love for the mother or the father. Every chance of reducing to the lowest possible terms the finest features of life is exploited. Of course, a vague uneasiness yet remains—

there is a sheer leap upwards, so to speak, in art, religion and morality, a feeling of the absolute and the perfect, a cry of something eternal within them which does not fit into the Freudian or even the Jungian scheme. But here comes the third reason why the modern mind is loth to be mystical in spite of several fresh signs of the para-conscious and the supra-intellectual, apart from the age-old idealism implicit in all art, religion and morality. These signs appear to be so much like changing cloud-shapes—uncertain, tenuous, remote. Nothing is there to lay hands on in a concrete manner. The brute manifestations or the subtle transmutations of the libido are evident. Where is the direct and convincing testimony to mysticism?

Here and there a man lives who has an intense ethical drive coupled with religious faith, and some of those who are struck by his passion for righteousness argue their way mentally to a Godhead by whose inspiration the drive towards moral absolutes appears to be born. The argument is sound enough, but the modern milieu does not allow it to reinforce sufficiently the inkling that has always been there of a divine Law sought through morality. So the argument stays ineffective. When we are confronted with the mystics in the old tradition, there are bound to be a few who, because of the overwhelming concreteness here of spiritual revelation with its spontaneous consequences of deep purity and vast pity, respond to them with a direct conviction that needs no argument. But these traditional mystics are other-worldly aspirants, travellers to some Nirvana or supra-terrestrial Heaven. They are, at best, looked upon by the typical modern mind as great but misguided visionaries, wonderful victims of holy hallucinations. A grievous error is this, and far more potentiality of even life-building is present in these mystics than in all our pseudo-scientific psychologists. But a certain truth also is wrapped up in the error, for the life-building itself that the traditional mystics effect is not for the sake of an absolute value inherent in life, not for a Godhead who will make earth the scene of His own plenary manifestation: it is done as a grand preparation for what is ever above earth and what has ultimately to be reached by casting away life. Lacking in the splendid message of the traditional mystics is a full justification of the labour of history, the travail of time: a grip is wanting on the final truth within "our proud and angry dust" as well as on all that colourful confusion of the subconscious below our intelligence's little perch. And the lacking justification, the wanting grip signify much more to the modern mind than it ever did in the past. The modern mind is heir to a century of extreme materialism: however it may outgrow or attenuate or transpose its legacy, a constant laying of weight upon this-worldliness, upon fulfilment here and now, cannot any longer be avoided. No mysticism that strains in the end to a supra-terrestrial consummation will go truly home today. Even if a master mystic is found with credentials enough to prove the existence of God and the possibility of realising the Infinite and the Eternal, he will not be followed whole-heartedly or considered satisfying for our needs, unless he can give earth a new force which will take up all our human endeavour and bring it sovereign fruition in terms of the Here and Now. Can the Heaven about which the Saints talk and which may even be unveiled to our inward gaze be brought down to create a luminous Kingdom of God amongst us? That is the crucial question.

Sri Aurobindo's Message and Mission

To this question Sri Aurobindo gives an affirmative answer. And his answer is even more affirmative than the modern mind expects. For, this mind insists only on a change of the centre of gravity, as it were,—a different orientation to the earth's problem than that of even the most practical

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INCREASING WORLD-INTEREST IN SRI AUROBINDO

Dr. S. R. Maitra, the President of the last Indian Philosophical Congress, who has returned from a world-tour has the following passage in his impressions of western life and culture, published recently in *Amrit Bazar Patrika*:

"I should not be doing justice to New York and its citizens if I did not mention something about their intellectual and spiritual interests. I found from my talks with many American professors in New York and also in other parts of the U.S.A., and not only professors but also men in other walks of life, that there was a keen drive to know about Sri Aurobindo's philosophy. This is, of course, partly due to the interest in Indian Philosophy which Swami Vivekananda had created in the American mind and which has since been kept up by the excellent work of the Ramakrishna Mission. But it is not entirely due to that.

"Apart from the interest in Indian philosophy, there was a special interest, I found, in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy, because many Americans had heard, though in a very vague way, that Sri Aurobindo's philosophy had some solution to offer of the hopeless mess into which international relations have fallen at the present moment. It was as the prophet of the Superman that Sri Aurobindo, I found, had captured the minds of many Americans in New York and also in other places in the U.S.A. Many of them asked me, 'When is the advent of the Superman going to take place? Will his advent mean perpetual peace on earth?'

"I also came to know that some of the American universities had begun to take interest in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy. For instance, I was told that Prof. Sorokin, Chairman of the Department of Sociology, Harvard University, was studying carefully the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo and had evinced a keen desire to introduce the thought of Sri Aurobindo to his pupils, but was feeling somewhat handicapped on account of the difficulty of getting Sri Aurobindo's books in America. This difficulty, I was glad to find, was going to be removed, thanks to the efforts of Mr. V. S. Tata, the energetic manager of Sri Aurobindo Library, an organisation recently started in New York for the publication of Sri Aurobindo's works.

"Since I returned to India after my world tour, things have moved very fast. Madame Gabriela Mistral, Nobel Laureate, has proposed Sri Aurobindo's name to the Swedish Academy for the award of the Nobel Prize in Literature. There was a grand meeting, held in New York on the 15th August last and presided over by Miss Pearl S. Buck, to celebrate the 77th Birthday of Sri Aurobindo. Not only that, but there was a simultaneous publication in New York and Toronto on this day of Sri Aurobindo's *Life Divine*, as well as *Essays on the Gita*. There can be no doubt that a real interest has now been created in America in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy, and this, in my opinion, should be followed up by the establishment of a Sri Aurobindo Centre, first in New York, and then slowly in other American cities."

Several reports have reached us from Canada that increasing interest is being taken there in Sri Aurobindo. Pandit Rishi Ram, a well-known

scholar of North India, was invited by numerous clubs and cultural institutions to speak on the Yoga-Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo during his recent tour of Canada. For a short while he sojourned at Vancouver where he was invited to conduct classes, organised by the interested groups, to explain the Master's system.

One of the reports from Canada says:

"It has been a very uplifting experience to come into contact with Sri Aurobindo's writings and with a follower of him. At last to have found in words the truth which we have long felt in our hearts is a great joy. We have sought for the truth, never finding it where we expected to, in religious organisations etc., but mostly in books written by thinkers.

"In looking back we can see a definite path in our seeking as if an unseen hand were guiding us. We read books about the ancient Indian Scriptures and endeavoured to follow the teachings of the Gita. We felt that we might find the answer in India.

"Then Pandit Rishi Ram came and brought the teachings of Sri Aurobindo. The best of India has come to us. Pandit Rishi Ram did more than lecture and gave us more than books. A new life is opening before us now. How can one be anything but grateful to the Divine Wisdom that leads so surely? The world may not yet know what Sri Aurobindo has been and is at present doing, but that Wisdom knows and all those who are attempting to follow the Master know it in their hearts."

Dr. Tan Yun-Shan, the Founder-Director of the Sino-Indian Cultural Society, Director of the Cheena-Bhavana of Visva-Bharati, and China's Cultural Representative in India, favours the move to award the Nobel Prize in Literature to Sri Aurobindo. In a communication to an inmate of Sri Aurobindo's Ashram, he writes from Santiniketan:

"None in India today deserves the Nobel Prize in Literature more than Sri Aurobindo. He is not only the greatest seer of the age but also the greatest poet of the world today. It is such a joy to know that people in India and abroad have begun to turn towards the Light that Sri Aurobindo is. During my recent sojourn in China I did my bit to acquaint my countrymen with the ideals of the Master."

Years ago Dr. Tan visited Sri Aurobindo Ashram and had *durshan* of the Mother and the Master. Recording his impressions in a Foreword to the book *Sri Aurobindo: A Homage* by Sisirkumar Mitra, Dr. Tan wrote: "From what I have seen and felt there, I am convinced that Sri Aurobindo has evolved a practical philosophy of life which is singular in the history of man's spiritual achievement, and which is sure to fulfil its purpose, the inner regeneration of man. The powerful personality of Sri Aurobindo and his vast wisdom are the greatest assets of humanity. It is my hope and prayer that he will keep on extending his inspiring influence till mankind awakens to the truth of his mission."

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of the old Saints and Yogis, so that man's outer being may suffer not the least neglect nor be balked of rich development. Sri Aurobindo does much more than put full emphasis on the outer being's possibilities and rights: he offers it a growth that will stagger the most this-worldly of progressives. In the special power of the Spirit, which he calls Supermind or Gnosis, he has discovered the creative and archetypal Truth-consciousness whose gradual and resisted manifestation in a world with a seemingly undivine or anti-divine starting-point constitutes evolutionary nature. The Truth-consciousness contains a divine mental, a divine vital, a divine physical: in short, a supreme original of every part of our complex being. The soul in us is a delegate of that Truth-consciousness, and when it awakens, aspires to its origin and comes forth to influence and permeate mind, life-force and body it renders possible not just a partial enlightenment and purification of them but a total transformation, an entire divinisation by the descent of their archetypes from the Supermind. The Aurobindonian Yoga has some affinity to the philosophical vision of Plato who spoke of a realm of perfect "ideas" whose broken reflexes are the phenomenal world; it has a yet greater affinity to the spiritual realisation, in Upanishadic India, of the three sheaths of our being—the outer gross, the inner subtle and the higher causal, the last-named a flawless and everlasting vehicle in which the functionings of the other two have their divine counterparts. But never before has philosopher or mystic spoken of the complete descent of the archetypal reality, the causal sheath, into the forms of gross as well as subtle nature and the consequent perfection of them in a manner beyond the rosiest dream of psychologist, biologist or physical-culturist. By a conscious possession of the Supermind, such as never was achieved in the past of mysticism, Sri Aurobindo found the integral intention and dynamic of the creative Infinite by which even our physical substance will in the

long run admit a radical change and grow into the light, the rapture, the potency, the immortality of the Divine.

For nearly forty years Sri Aurobindo has worked in Pondicherry, taking up into his widening experience all that traditional mysticism has to give and elaborating in his Ashram of disciples who now number six hundred his new Yoga that holds the prospect of man's utter fulfilment. When we say "utter" we mean the fulfilment not only of the individual man but also of man in his collectivity. Sri Aurobindo's aim is not the production of a few dazzling specimens of *homo supramentalis*. What he is doing is a rapid deliberate achievement of nature's own goal of evolution. Matter brings forth the Life involved in it; Life manifests the Mind that is latent; Mind is in travail of the secret supramental perfection that shall transform our whole existence as a race. Sri Aurobindo's Yoga is for the creation of a new species: it is the effectuation of the next collective step beyond man. Of course the entire human race cannot be supramentalised: in fact, no evolutionary step of nature's affects all the members of the preceding stage, an expanding nucleus is formed of the next stage and a general progressive influence exerted on the rest. This is the character of evolution, and Sri Aurobindo is most eminently evolutive. His effort, therefore, satisfies not only the demand of the modern mind for earth-life's utmost development: it satisfies also the demand, no less modern, for the advancement of society, for collective progress, for a perfected civic life, for an ideal State. By a commonalty of supramental fulfilment which removes the impression of all freakishness, however grandiose, attending on purely individual and isolated triumphs of the Spirit, the Aurobindonian mysticism "caps, crowns and clinches" the ultra-concreteness of that all-round power of it which can marry the Spirit's empyrean to the abyss of Matter.

INDIAN EDUCATION IN DANGER

NEGLECT OF THE LIBERAL ARTS AND HUMANITIES

By KEWAL MOTWANI

A great change is taking place in education all over the world. There is an increasing shift in emphasis from liberal arts and humanities to scientific and technological subjects. The situation was none too favourable for cultural and nation-building subjects even before the war and specialization in science had led to emasculation of subjects vitally essential in a wholesome system of education for preparation for citizenship and a fuller and richer development of human personality. The last war brought the serious consequences of this "lacuna" to the surface; the secularised, undeveloped social sciences were fitted into the framework of almost a totalitarian system of education in all parts of the world, including that of the democracies.

The situation, as it obtained in pre-war Britain, is described thus by a group of eminent educationists: "Typically, such a student devotes his whole time to science, pure and applied. He has usually little knowledge of world affairs, or of the Government of his own country and locality. If he lives at home, as majority of the students do in most of the modern universities, his entire education may, and often will, consist in attendance at some lectures and laboratories, with a break for lunch at the refectory. The rest of his 'student' life is spent at home, where he may not find stimulating discussions. Foreign scientists and students, residing in the United Kingdom, have been astonished that the future leaders of the country should know so little about the workings of democracy or its active achievements in social well-being."¹

Grim Post-war Situation

The post-war situation has positively deteriorated throughout the world. The democracies that were frightened out of their wits by the colossal preparations of the Axis powers have themselves been unable to "beat their swords into ploughshares." The Atlantic Charter, the Yalta Conference, the Dumbarton Oaks Conference, the San Francisco Peace Conference, the United Nations Organization, etc., have not put a stop to the irresistible crush of events precipitated by jet-propelled V-2's and the atom-bomb. War, like the allegorical English King, is officially dead, but, like him, it enjoys perpetuity as an institution. China and Burma are in the grip of civil war, with India keeping a close rear. The Indonesians have succeeded, after two years of gory sacrifices, in shaking off the yoke of a nation refusing to live up to the ideals for which Nazism was fought and to recognise the new spirit of resurgent Asia. French Indo-China and Malaya Settlements are still in ferment. On the west of India, Pakistan and Afghanistan are preparing to snarl at each other. Persia's fate is undecided. Turkey lives under the shadow of death spread over her by the power-politics of the Eastern bloc. Russia and Yugoslavia are exhibiting explosive tempers and one never knows when the Stalinist steam-roller will try to flatten out Titoism. Iraq, Transjordan, Israel, and Syria present highly inflammable material for a major crisis in the near future. Egypt has succeeded in getting rid of British rule. The political awakening among the masses of Cyrenica and Morocco is going forward rapidly. The dark races of Africa are astir and the dawning awareness of the source of their exploitation and

misery may plunge the whole of the African Continent into a sudden conflagration and put an abrupt end to the rule of the white man. The whole world sizzles with the spirit of war and what Julian Huxley, now Director of UNESCO, envisaged² a few years ago is literally coming to pass: "When the war is won", wrote Huxley, "the U.S.A. and the British Commonwealth can continue this co-operation for security. Instead of creating chaos by closing down armament factories wholesale, we can continue turning out stocks of weapons necessary for modern warfare: planes, tanks, heavy guns, submarines and large warships. That will be our distinctive contribution to the security problem. That of Germany will be a compulsory contribution, the giving up of the right to manufacture arms at all. That of the small nations of Europe will be the sacrifice of their sovereign rights to neutrality. They and we will join to form what may be called a Security Club, in which Britain and America, jointly would play the same role as regards the supply of arms that is played by Britain within the British Commonwealth."

The War-mentality Moulding Education

The small nations have lost their right to neutrality, but not in the way Huxley wanted them; Germany had to be fed to forfeit her right to manufacture arms. Britain is prepared to become the arsenal of the world, and America is not unwilling to co-operate along similar lines. With minor deviations, Huxley's prophecy has been fulfilled. Education is being planned all over the world to meet the challenge of the type of catastrophe from which the world has hardly emerged. It needs no crystal-gazing or very high intelligence to read the signs of the times. Education is being denuded of the cultural subjects. Those who have kept in touch with the ferment in educational system and philosophy in the U. S. A. in recent years are seriously apprehensive of the disastrous consequences that may follow if the whole system of education is geared up to the war-mentality typified in the statement a few years ago of Mr. Claude M. Fuess, the dynamic Principal of the Andover Academy, one of the leading secondary institutions of the U. S. Fuess wrote: "On the intellectual side, we are retaining our long-standing frame-work of English, history, foreign languages, mathematics, science and the fine arts, but with greatly shifted emphasis in many cases (italics mine, K. M.). Frequent and insistent questioning of higher authorities only confirms our judgment that the importance of mathematics can be hardly exaggerated as preparation for active service in a mechanised army. Accordingly, we propose to teach a large number of boys to know ele-

mentary mathematics really well, and we are instituting special courses, in the higher branches of those qualified to profit by them. For many graduates we shall reduce the amount of time spent on the so-called cultural subjects. Physics and Chemistry are being revised by our instructors to meet war needs, and we are offering simple but adequate courses in communication and radio. The internal combustion engine, hitherto rated under 'hobbies', is now being taken more seriously, as are photography and map-reading and interpretation. We are considering the possibility of work in ground aviation, for which we have ample space. All we require now is a suitable response from the Government. Several boys during this school year have been allowed, with their parents' approval, to take flying lessons at a nearby airport, under competent instructions, and their practice will undoubtedly be emulated next year by others who can meet the rigid requirements. In the modern foreign languages, we are altering our technique to place more emphasis on speaking and reading and less on formal grammar. Next year, we shall have groups in French, German, Spanish actually speaking the language together day after day at tables in the dining hall.

"While we should not ordinarily in peace-time have considered any such drastic modifications, I am not much concerned about the sanctity of the curriculum. Our immediate, indeed almost our only purpose in our schools today should be to make our contribution to an all-out effort as a people. Unless we win our victory, the cultural elements in our education may vanish altogether for many decades to come. Even if for a few years, direct preparation for war should absolutely control the curriculum, we should still recover, always provided we are victorious."³

Though this was written when the war with Germany and Japan was on, the militaristic mentality pervades the educational systems of all the nations of the world even today. India is part of the world and her educational system is being sucked into this universal maelstrom. She has taken the initial step towards this militarisation of education by plumping heavily for scientific and technological subjects at the expense of the liberal arts and humanities. An All-India Council of Scientific and Industrial Research has been organized and a separate Department of Scientific Development and Research started in the Government of India, with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in charge. Five National Laboratories, costing Rs. 144 lakhs, are in the course of construction. The Central Glass and Ceramic Research Institute, the Fuel Research Institute, the National Metallurgical Laboratory, the National Physical Laboratory and the National Chemical Laboratory, when completed, will be fitted with machinery costing many crores of rupees. Four institutions, each of which is to have 3,000 students at a time, are estimated to cost Rs. 12 crores non-recurring and about Rs. 5 crores recurring expenditure annually. These institutes will be replicas of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, located in

Boston, U. S. and they will be established in different parts of India: Kurla (Bombay), Hijli (West Bengal), Kanpur (U. P.), and one in the south.

According to a recent broadcast by Mr. Tara Chand, Secretary of the Ministry of Education, the Government of India, in the approved post-war plans of provincial governments for 1947-52, provision has been made for the establishment of 20 senior technical institutions, including 16 polytechnics, 140 junior technical institutes and 38 technical high schools. In addition, a fair number of the existing institutions are to be reorganized. A big project which the Central Government has sanctioned for specialized training is the establishment of the Power Engineering Department and a High Voltage Laboratory at the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. Construction of the Indian War Academy, estimated to cost Rs. 10 crores, has been sanctioned. The Ministry of Defence has started a Department of Research for the manufacture of armaments. Various Universities have been given special block-grants of many lakhs of rupees to push forward their scientific and technical course of instruction; thousands of young men, representing every branch of science and technology, have been sent abroad for training, costing the Government and the people enormous sums of money every year. A Scientific Man-Power Committee was appointed to prepare a roll of the scientific talent in the country. Our education, originally conceived and planned to produce corps of quill-driving clerks to serve the exigencies of an alien administration, is being quickly modified and we are in insensate hurry to cover the lag of two centuries of science in as short a time as possible.

In comparison with this tremendous fillip given to scientific and technological subjects, the story of the support extended to social sciences and social education makes dismal reading. According to the correspondent of the *Hindusthan Standard*, the Central Government have made a special provision for a sum of Rs. 1 crore in the Central Budget for the current year for social education. The Provincial Governments must launch their own schemes and apply to the Centre for grants. Also, the Central Government have sanctioned a grant of Rs. 9 lakhs for the Tata School of Social Work in Bombay to train labour probation officers. An Institution for training in Social Work has been promised by the Minister of Education at the Centre, but nothing has been heard of it since February, 1948, when he last spoke about it.

Dangers of Preponderance of Science and Technology

This step-motherly treatment of social sciences and subjects of social welfare can be traced to the westernized outlook of our politicians and those who are in charge of education of our country, and to the inadequate appreciation of all that is involved in an exclusively scientific education. Of course, our educators and leaders cannot be blamed for the education they received from our erstwhile alien rulers. We had to accept what was given to us. In fact, as we saw in the interim report of the educationists of Britain, quoted in the opening paragraphs of this

¹ Post War Education, interim report submitted to the Division of Social and International Relations of Science, of the British Association for Advancement of Science, *The Advancement of Science*, Vol. 2, No. 7, p. 258.

² Huxley, Julian, *Democracy Marches*, p. 102, 1941.

³ Fuess, Claude, M. "Andover at War," *Atlantic Monthly*, May 1942, pp. 508-581.

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article, the Britishers themselves were victims of this lop-sided, specialised education. In the planning of our education, we shall have to take special pains to guard against the errors committed by the western nations and introduce a judicious balance between the sciences of *livelihood* and *life*, between natural and exact sciences and social sciences and humanities, between the disciplines pertaining to *prakriti* and *purusha*, and in doing this, we shall find it necessary to be quite clear in our minds of what a purely scientific education, denuded of social and spiritual values, can mean, what shape it can give to the cultural contours of a country. We can do this by casting a rapid glance at the history of western civilization in the last two centuries, during which the impact of science on the West grew in intensity. The West witnessed an increasing ascendancy of science and the machine, and both the educational system and educational philosophy registered the impact of the philosophy of science, which was: mechanical interpretation of the universe, with emphasis on the substantiality of matter; mechanical interpretation of the evolutionary process, with emphasis on the form-side and a corresponding denial of the life-urge, the *elan vital*, that constitutes the meaning of this drama of Becoming; mechanical conception of man, who has been endowed with a few reflexes and complexes which can be manipulated, controlled, with push-button efficiency; sensate values that pander to the propensities of the physical, vital and lower mental nature of man; a religion of Darwinism, Marxism, rationalism and scientific humanism, void of all element of the spiritual and the occult. This was the philosophy of science that came to be woven into the fabric of western culture. Education was conceived in terms of controlling the child to serve the state; there was no conception of enabling the inner soul to gain a fuller grasp of his instruments and reveal the divinity within. Education came to be a hammer in the hands of the political power to serve its purpose; it degenerated into being a mechanism of propaganda. Economic and industrial institutions of this culture of the machine and of science were geared up for war with nature which they sought to conquer, exploit most ruthlessly and thus dislocate the web of ecological balance, of the hydrologic cycles, so finely maintained by nature. These institutions subordinated man, exploited him; to feed the gaping jaws of the machine, while the political institutions nullified the individual completely and reduced him into being a non-descript member of the inchoate mass, the nation. Science threw a challenge to the fundamental tenets of religion and gave rise to those monstrosities—concentration camps, gas chambers, obliteration bombings.

The point to be emphasised here is the interlocking of all aspects of life. Science does not function in a vacuum. Science creates a constant flux in the life of the group and unless that group or nation is dynamically aware of what is being done to it, it must go the way of the West. Most of the nations of Asia that have accepted this science-cum-machine culture of the West are in the grip of the chaos that convulsed Europe in the early era of industrialization. India is part of this world. She has accepted science and the machine on a colossal scale, as we have seen, but there is still time for her to save herself from being conquered by the philosophy which science and the machine represent. We must guard against

indiscriminate transplantation of this alien ideology into our mental and spiritual make-up, but before we can do so we must be clear in our own minds as to what we stand for. We must get to the core of Indian culture and bring it up for comparison and contrast with what the West has to offer in every phase of thought and activity.

India and the Major World-issues

I submit what seem to me to be the major issues facing mankind today and it is my firm conviction that the future of this nation, as of humanity, depends on the solutions that India can offer. First, we must define our attitude towards nature, *prakriti*. There is no such thing as dead matter. All matter is informed, suffused with the vital principle, LIFE, and ultimately the Supreme Spirit is "involved" in matter as in all other modes of being. Matter is a mode of manifestation of the Divine, it is its *guna*. Therefore, we cannot ruthlessly dominate and exploit nature. All war with nature gets us in the end. In his own being, man must aim at divinisation of matter; in the outer world, he must treat every object with reverence that is due to life and take care of the fine web of interrelationships of the various orders of life and aggregates of beings which nature has planned. If nature, *prakriti*, is divine in origin, then understanding of it with reverence, and not exploitation of it, not subordination of it to considerations of commerce, should be our aim. With this approach to the world of matter, the sciences of Physics and Chemistry and other subsidiary sciences will assume a different shape, a new vision and a new purpose will inspire them, and not what Principal Fuess had in mind.

We shall have to look at life anew. Evolution of a simple, homogenous organism into a heterogenous, complex creature is not the result of the blind urge of nature. The grand strategy of evolution is not exhausted by explanation in terms of mechanical operations. Even the latest Biology has come to realize that it is the principle of life in the universe, that fashions the forms and functions in them ceaselessly, making them malleable to reveal their hidden potentialities. Co-operation is one of the primary processes of progress, and the survival of the fittest by a struggle for existence is not all in all.

Race is one of the major problems facing mankind today. The world is waiting for revelation of a technique by means of which various ethnic groups, with their biological and cultural differences, can be welded together into one nation with common ideals and aspirations. The pace of biological mixture and its physical and cultural consequences have yet to be understood, and India, that has been the crucible of races and religions, has much to say on the subject. Human *mind* has yet to be properly studied and understood. Its mystery is not exhausted by study of its surface manifestations. Its instrumental character, its limitations and the method of transcending those limitations and contacting what lies beyond, of crossing "the phantom walls," are subjects engaging the serious minds of the West today, and India has a final word on this subject. One of the "missing links" of which the world of science is in hot pursuit is the principle of relationship between the inner and the outer worlds. This principle, as I understand it, is of *mathematical* nature. Science, has reduced matter to evanescence; matter is energy in a constant vibratory movement. Science makes

use of sound, which is also reducible to vibratory movement, for various purposes. As music, it is used to heal the sick in body and soul. Various surgical operations are now performed with sound waves in some of the American hospitals. Plants, fruits and flowers, transplanted to regions inhospitable to their growth, are made to thrive with the aid of sound-waves. When we have grasped this principle of relationship of mind and matter, we shall use mathematics for a purpose different from "obliteration bombing" from the stratosphere. It will be used in many ways for service of man and society. Various types of sickness of body and mind will be healed with its aid. Great varieties of foods, fruits, vegetables and flowers will be grown in different parts of the world. Mankind, which has come to be one vast ecological unit as a result of modern scientific inventions, will become one spiritual unit. India, the only nation that accomplished the impossible by giving a poetical garb to scientific and mathematical truths, has much to say on the esoteric significance of the creations of the Great Geometrician of the Universe.

Another great problem that is agitating humanity today is that of *values*. Values determine the mode of man's action. Enjoyment of the senses, expediency, mere usefulness of the purpose in hand, or the truth of Life, Light and Power going out to meet the God in the outer world: which of these is to be the pole-star of man's daily actions? Our answer to this question will shape our actions and our creations, such as literature, music, painting, sculpture, architecture, dancing. These shall be either true to the archetypes, articulate the cosmic urge, or they shall be creations of the disordered minds and brains of semi-insane beings. Finally, we must envisage, as individuals and a nation, the ultimate purpose of human existence, the ultimate goal of our efforts and aspirations. There is a sublime passion that has moved prophets and teachers of mankind, sages and seers, mystics and martyrs, and they have died as its high-priests, accepting their crucifixions, their cups of hemlock, their humiliations and betrayals. There is a world of the Divine that has eternal fascination for man, however far he may stray. Man is trying to come to terms with this world all the time.

Content and Purpose of Social Institutions

Now, if we, in India, can face these major issues of thought, the interplay of which determines the shape of the human drama, of that associated life of man that we call culture, we shall not find it difficult to envisage the content and purpose of the major social institutions. We shall see certain truths and their happy consequences. (1) The purpose of education cannot be mere sharpening of the mental faculties to keep man occupied with the mere business of eking out a livelihood but to evoke the hidden powers of the soul or the psyche to think, feel and act as a whole, as a holy being. (2) Marriage is not a mere mechanism for sense enjoyment. It is a spiritual comradeship in which transcendence of the demands of the body and attainment of unity of two comrades in the common task of self-fulfilment is the basic, inspiring impulse. Family will be seen to be the matrix of a social drama in which various members are engaged to play their respective roles, develop social and moral virtues

and dissolve their isolated personalities into a larger whole. (3) The state will assume its proper place as a mechanism of social welfare, of reconciling the claims of *prakriti* and *purusha*, of the individual and the group. It will not become the Leviathan that reduces him into a non-entity and demands sacrifice of his very life. (4) All arts and sciences, all creations of man will become vehicles for manifestation of the Divine in him and in the universe. They will become embodiments of the cosmic creative urge in this world of form. (5) Finally, the religious institutions, such as the temple, the mosque and the church will become houses of God and not places for "money changers". They will not emphasise isolationism, making arrogant and futile claims of offering exclusive pathways to God through their narrow dogmas and doctrines. They shall help man to base his search for the truth of his being and of the universe not on the world of the outer form but on the world of inner Reality, and connect the world of the many to the truth of the One, the realm of Becoming to that of Being.

This outline, I believe, indicates India's point of view with regard to the basic sciences concerned with man's life in this world, such as Physics and Chemistry, Biology, Ethnology, Psychology, Mathematics, Ethics-Aesthetics and Philosophy, and also with those of his social institutions, such as Education, Family-Marriage, State, Arts and Sciences and Religion. Throughout her millennial history, India has sought to come to terms with these baffling problems of life, and as Sri Aurobindo remarked many years ago, "India, if she chooses, can give a lead to the world in this direction" (quoted by Romain Rolland in his *Modern Prophets of India*). When our politicians talk of "India becoming the leader of the world," they may be credited with a vague realization of the leadership that Sri Aurobindo has in view. As a political power, India is nowhere; another war would reveal her real position on the chess-board of power-politics. This spiritual, intellectual and cultural leadership of India has been sensed by many outsiders, even though it may sound strange to our ears. India faced manfully every problem, scientific and philosophical, that baffles mankind today, and she still has the last word. But she must pay the price for the privilege of giving it to the world once again. That price, as I see it, is development of that capacity that can see all that is finest in the West and the East and synthesise both in a happy relationship. The West, with its marvellous mastery of the laws of the phenomenal universe through its science and machinery, with its superb techniques of organization and balancing of the forces and factors pertaining to the physical world, has much to teach us. We must make use of the experience of the West, but the life, the philosophy, the wisdom behind these methods and techniques should be our own.

The Problem of Religious Education

We can see how this can be done if we take an example. The problem of religious education is agitating the minds of our people today. The Indian-Constitution-makers in Delhi have included an article in the draft Constitution, and it reads thus: "No religious instruction shall be provided by the State in any educational institution wholly maintained out of State funds." I should have added the word "partially" also, as all religious denominations

Continued on page 5

A STAINLESS STEEL FRAME OF GOVERNMENT

By NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

Corruption is the order of the day. In all walks of life wherever we have to live and move we come across the monster; we cannot pass him by, we have to accost him (even in the Shakespearean sense, that is), welcome him, woo him. It is like one of the demons of the Greek legends that come out of the unknown, the sea or the sky, to prey upon a helpless land and its people until a deliverer comes.

Corruption appears today with a twofold face, Janus-like: violence and falsehood. In private life, in the political field, in the business world, in social dealings it is now an established practice, it has gained almost the force of a law of nature that success can be achieved only with these two comrades on your either side. A gentle, honest, peace-loving man is inevitably pushed back, he has to go to the wall; a straightforward truthful candid soul will get no hearing and make no living. From high diplomacy on the international level to village pettifoggery, from the blast of the atom bomb to the thrust of the dagger, we have all the degrees of the two cardinal "virtues" that make up the warp and woof of modern life.

Rusted and Worn Out from Inside

In the old world—not so old, however, for the landslide started in fact with the first world war—evil there was and abundantly in man and in man's society, but it was not accepted as virtue or even as an acceptable or inevitable thing. It was tolerated, suffered and generally with a heavy heart. Indeed the heart was sound, it was the flesh only that was weak. There was an idealism, an aspiration and although one could not always live up to it, yet one did not deny it or spurn it; one endeavoured as best one could, even though in leisure hours, in the inner mind and consciousness at least, to obey and follow its dictates. It is the Nazi theory of life that brought to the very forefront and installed in the consciousness of man Evil as Good, Falsehood as Truth. That is pragmatism with a vengeance. Whatever leads to success, to worldly success, that is to say, brings you wealth, prosperity, power to rule over men and things, enriches you in your possession—*vittana*, as the Upanishad terms it—that is Good, that is truth. All the

rest are mental conceptions, notions, abstractions, day-dreams meant to delude you, take you away from the road to your fulfilment and achievement. That is how we have listened to the voice of Mephistopheles and sold away our soul.

The government of a country is, as we know, the steel frame that holds together the life of its people: it is that that gives the primary stability and security, scope and free play to all its activities. In India it was the pride of the British that they built up such a frame; and although that frame sometimes seemed almost to throttle the nation in its firm and rigid grip, still today we are constrained to recognise that it was indeed a great achievement. Pax Britannia was in fact a very efficient reality. The withdrawal of the power that was behind has left the frame very shaky; and our national government is trying hard to set it up again, strengthening, reinforcing, rivetting wherever and however necessary. But the misfortune is that the steel has got rusted and worn out from inside.

In other words, a diminution of public morality and collective honesty has set in, an ebbing of the individual consciousness too that made for rectitude and justice and equity and fair dealing. Men who are limbs of that frame, who by their position ensure the strength of that frame—the bolts and nuts, screws and hinges—have, on a large scale, allowed themselves to be uncertain and loose in their moral make-up. Along with the outer check, the inner check too has given way; hence the colossal disintegration, the general debacle in the life of the body politic and the body social.

The One Anti-Corrosive

How to stop this rot that is gain-

ing ground every day, how to react against the inexorable chain reaction that is leading to a final explosion? It is not merely the laymen but the members of the very supporting frame itself, as I have said, that have fallen and gone over to the enemy. And the fact is true not only of the political frame, but the social frame too made up of the élite, the intelligentsia. The remedy that easily suggests itself and is being attempted and applied is something Catonian, that is to say, a greater stringency of external rules and regulations, enforcement of punishment, even of heavy punishment as a deterrent of crime.

The institution of punishment is no longer respected or appreciated in modern times to the same extent as in the past, even a century ago. Punishment, even of heavy punishment is of no avail. Punishment does not cure or redeem the criminal; it often hardens, fixes the trait that is sought to be eradicated. Fear of punishment does not always prevent one from doing wrong things. Often danger has an irresistible fascination for a certain type of temperament, especially danger of the wrong kind—indeed the greater the wrong the greater the danger and the greater the fascination. "To live dangerously" is the motto of the heroic soul, as well as that of the lost soul. A strong penal system, a rigorous policing is of help no doubt to maintain "peace and order" of some kind in a society: but that is an external pressure which cannot last very long or be effective in the end.

So the ideal proposed is that of moral regeneration. But what is the kind of moral regeneration and how is it to be effected? All depends upon that. If you issue some moral rules and regulations, inscribe them on pillars, print them in pamphlets, preach them from the platform and the pulpit,—these things have been done in the past and for ages,—the result is not assured and the world goes its way as ever. Something more than mental and moral rules has to be discovered: some dynamic and irresistible ele-

ment in man has to be touched, evoked and brought out, something that challenges the whole world and maintains its truth and the fiat of its truth. That is the inmost soul in man, the real being behind all the apparent forms of his personality, the divine element, the very Divine in him. It is the outer man, the marginal man, man in his inferior nature that lives and moves in normal circumstances; instead, the central man, man in his higher and highest nature has to come out and take his place in the world.

Forgers of the New Steel Frame

What is needed then is an army of souls: individuals, either separately or in groups, who have contacted their inmost reality, their divinity, in some way or other—men with a new consciousness and aspiration, a new life and realisation. They will live in the midst of the general degeneration and disintegration, not aloof and immured in their privacy of purity; they will take part in the normal activities of everyday life, but still acting from the height and depth of the pure consciousness prove by their very living that one can be in the world and yet not of it, doing what is necessary for the maintenance and enhancement of life and yet not stooping to the questionable ways and means that are supposed to be necessary and inevitable. In other words they will disprove that safety and success and prosperity in life can be had only if one follows the lead of Evil, if only one sells one's soul. On the contrary, by living out one's divine essence one will have conquered the world—*ihava tair jitam*. At every moment, in all circumstances one follows the voice of the Highest in oneself. If it is that and no other inferior echo, then one becomes fearless and immortal and all-conquering.

Such souls living and moving among men with little faith and in circumstances adverse and obscure will forge precisely the new steel frame, the stainless steel frame upon which the new society will be securely based.

IND AN EDUCATION IN DANGER —Continued from page 4.

receiving Government grants create conflicting allegiances in the mind of the rising generation, leading to murderous communal conflicts on a nation-wide scale. Religious education of the type that is imparted today can be easily dispensed with, without much damage to the spiritual integrity of the student. Usually, the so-called "religious education" consists of recitations from some sacred book of the faith to which the institution belongs at the school assembly in the morning, participation in religious service in the school or college, church or mosque, a lecture or two on a religious topic by a divine to the student-body at the week-end. It has been supposed that by such a simple procedure, we shall succeed in stemming the tide of secularism and the anti-religious character of the modern, western education. To suppose that the disintegrating effects of contact with the western education and western approach to life, lasting for many hours every day, can be neutralised

by recitations for a few minutes or singing of a few songs, or listening to a controversial discourse on a religious topic, is a delusion and a snare. The only way we can fight back this unspiritual ideology is by "religionising" education, if such a term may be permitted. Every subject, be it scientific or social, can be religionised, spiritualised, as I have tried to indicate in the foregoing paragraphs. Thus, the study of Biology, instead of being the study of mere form-side of nature, can be made a study of the movement of LIFE through various forms and instruments, ascending not in a pre-determined series but by jumps, with a volition entirely its own, with its own hierarchies of powers, functions, values adjusted to each level of its ascent, to each order of its being. Further, Life itself can be understood in terms of a divine Spirit involved in it, so that Life's movement is seen as a mode of evolution from the "inconscience" of matter towards the Spirit's super-

conscience. This is the view that India developed and the modern western science is now confirming India's spiritual intuitions and her scientific researches which go back to the time of the Vedas and the Code of Manu! Indian teachers can assimilate the contributions of modern science to the age-old point of view that is typically Indian and thus help to side-track the whole issue of "religious education", which is an artificial problem born of a secularised science and of the science-cum-machine cultural pattern of the West.

This, as I see it, is the problem set to India: to give all branches of knowledge and all modes of study, of sciences and humanities, a secure spiritual basis and to achieve a proper balance between the disciplines of *prakriti* and of *purusha*. Adequate treatment of each subject, from this point of view, must involve a considerable amount of hard thinking and labour in re-writing textbooks for use in our schools and

colleges. It must mean a new type of teacher who is conversant with both the Indian and the western approaches to his subject, who is capable of seeing the social and educational implications of the conclusions of the two approaches and the impact they make on the formation of the contours of the cultural ethos of the nation, and whose literary production, be it intended for use in the kindergarten or in the post-graduate school of the university, shall bear the authenticity of his own personal conviction and realization. The task is indeed arduous, but nothing good and great will be accomplished unless we are prepared to pay the price. These are the implications of social and religious education for a free India: to plant the feet of the student on the rock of eternal verities from where he shall see life as a whole, where the dividing wall between religion and science will have faded away and from where there will no more be any "shadow of turning".

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.

O SWEET harmony dwelling in all things, sweet harmony filling my heart, manifest thyself in the most outward forms of life, in every feeling, in every thought, in every act.

All appears to me beautiful, harmonious, silent, in spite of the din outside. And in this silence, it is Thou, O Lord, whom I see; and I so perceive Thee that I can only express this perception as that of a constant smile. In truth, the essence of the impression that is felt in the presence of the most sweet, the most calm, the most compassionate smile has a feeble analogy with what I feel when I so perceive Thee.

May Thy Peace be with all.

THE MOTHER

Prayers and Meditations.

August 8, 1913.

* * *

In this falling dusk, Thy Peace becomes more deep and intimate and Thy Voice more clearly perceived in the silence which fills my being.

O Divine Master, for Thee is our life, our thought, our love, all our being. Take back possession of Thy own; for Thou art ourselves in our real being.

THE MOTHER

Prayers and Meditations.

August 15, 1913.

* * *

FLAME-WIND

A flame-wind ran from the gold of the east.
Leaped on my soul with the breath of a sevenfold noon.
Wings of the angel, gallop of the beast!
Mind and body on fire, but the heart in swoon.

O flame, thou bringest the strength of the noon,
But where are the voices of morn and the stillness of eve?
Where the pale-blue wine of the moon?
Mind and life are in flower, but the heart must grieve.

Gold in the mind and the life-flame's red
Make of the heavens a splendour, the earth a blaze,
But the white and rose of the heart are dead.
Flame-wind, pass! I will wait for Love in the silent ways.

SRI AUROBINDO:

Collected Poems and Plays.

Ever his consciousness and vision grew;
They took an ampler sweep, a loftier flight;
He passed the border marked for Matter's rule
And passed the zone where thought replaces life.
Out of this world of signs suddenly he came
Into a silent self where world was not
And looked beyond into a nameless vast.
These symbol figures lost their right to live,
All tokens dropped our sense can recognise;
There the heart beat no more at body's touch,
There the eyes gazed no more on beauty's shape.
In rare and lucent intervals of hush
Into a signless region he could soar
Packed with the deep contents of formlessness
Where world was into a single being rapt
And all was known by the light of identity
And spirit was its own self-evidence.
The Supreme's gaze looked out through human eyes
And saw all things and creatures as itself
And knew all thought and word as its own voice.
There unity is too close for search and clasp
And love is a yearning of the One for the One,
And beauty is a sweet difference of the Same

And oneness is the soul of multitude.
There all the truths unite in a single truth,
And all ideas rejoin Reality.
There knowing herself by her own termless self,
Wisdom supernal, wordless, absolute
Sat unaccompanied in the eternal Calm,
All-seeing, motionless, sovereign and alone.
There knowledge needs not words to embody Idea;
Idea seeking a house in a boundlessness,
Weary of its homeless immortality,
Asks not in thought's carved brilliant cell to rest
Whose single window's clipped outlook on things
Sees only a little arc of God's vast sky.
The boundless with the boundless there consorts;
While there, one can be wider than the world;
While there, one is one's own infinity.
His centre was no more in earthly mind,
A power of seeing silence filled his limbs:
Caught by a voiceless white epiphany
Into a vision that surpasses forms,
Into a living that surpasses life,
He neared the still consciousness sustaining all.

SRI AUROBINDO

Savitri: Bk: I, Canto 3.

* * *

His soul stood free, a witness and a king.
Absorbed no more in the moment-ridden flux
Where mind incessantly drifts as on a raft
Hurried from phenomenon to phenomenon,
He abode at rest in indivisible Time.
As if a story long written but acted now,
In his present he held his future and his past,
Felt in the seconds the uncounted years
And saw the hours like dots upon a page.
An aspect of the unknown Reality
Altered the meaning of the cosmic scene.
This huge material universe became
A small result of a stupendous force:
Overtaking the moment the eternal Ray
Illumined that which never yet was made.
Thought lay down in a mighty voicelessness;
The toiling thinker widened and grew still,
His soul could sail beyond thought's luminous bar;
Mind screened no more the shoreless infinite.
Across a void retreating sky he glimpsed
Through a last glimmer and drift of vanishing stars
The superconscient realms of motionless peace
Where judgment ceases and the word is mute
And the Unconceived lies pathless and alone.
There came not form or any mounting voice;
There only were Silence and the Absolute.
Out of that stillness mind new-born arose
And woke to truths once inexpressible,
And forms appeared, dumbly significant,
A seeing thought, a self-revealing voice.
He knew the source from which his spirit came:
Movement was married to the immobile Vast;
He plunged his roots into the Infinite,
He based his life upon Eternity.

SRI AUROBINDO

Savitri: Bk: I, Canto 3.

SRI AUROBINDO, THE LEADER OF THE EVOLUTION

PART II OF "THE WORLD CRISIS AND INDIA"

BY "Synergist"

SECTION II: THE SPIRITUAL VIEW OF EXISTENCE

(c) THE THREE STAGES OF INDIA'S ANCIENT CIVILISATION: THE VEDIC, THE POST-VEDIC AND THE PURANO-TANTRIC.

This Section: *The Spiritual View of Existence*, will not be complete without a brief examination of the three main stages of the cultural development of ancient India, for such a procedure will give us an opportunity to see not only the spiritual motive at work in the organisation of the whole of life, but also how metaphysical conceptions based on spiritual realisations can become the foundation of a culture, or rather, how a spiritual metaphysic can become the central unifying and cohesive force of the cultural unity. That the importance of the underlying metaphysic of a given culture cannot be underrated, is being realised by social philosophers today, especially by those who are concerned with examining the causes of the ideological differences between nations and arriving at a solution which will provide a set of philosophical principles serving as the basis of a common cultural outlook. It is believed by them that a recognition of a common set of metaphysical ideas with their attendant ethical and social values by the peoples of the world will result in bringing them closer and in creating a better understanding between them. Both the metaphysical and ideative elements in the growth of civilisations which were being neglected by sociologists, anthropologists and social psychologists owing to their one-sided sociological and functional or genetic and psycho-analytical approaches are being once again recognised as the basic ones, as elements which form the very ground of the culture pattern of a nation.

In the following abridgement of two essays by Sri Aurobindo, we see India's ancient past in a correct historico-cultural perspective and learn how ontological concepts, based on the spiritual realisations of her Rishis, influenced the cultural process of the Vedic, Post-Vedic and Purano-Tantric phases of her civilisation.

* * * * *

" The spirit of Indian religion and spiritual culture has been the same throughout the long time of its vigour, but its form has undergone remarkable changes, which when we look rightly into them appear as the results of a logical and inevitable evolution. In its earliest form, that of the Vedic system, it took its outward foundation,—the means by which it sought to mediate between the spirit and the normal human mentality,—on the mind of the physical man whose natural faith is in things physical, the material objects, presences, representations, the external pursuits and aims of life, and whose idea of the Divine can only come through his vision of external Nature and the sense of a superior Power or Powers in its phenomena, in the heaven and earth, father and mother of our being, the sun and moon and stars, its lights and regulators, in dawn and day and night and rain and wind and storm, the oceans and rivers and the forests, all the circumstances and forces of its scene of action, all that vast and mysterious surrounding life of which we are a part and in which the natural heart and mind of the human being feel instinctively through whatever bright or dark or confused figures that there is here some mighty Infinite, one, manifold and mysterious, which takes these forms and manifests itself in these motions. The Vedic religion took this natural sense and feeling of the physical man and the conceptions to which they gave birth, and it sought to lead him through them to the psychical and spiritual truths of his own being and the being of the cosmos. It recognised that he was right in seeing behind the manifestations of Nature powers and godheads, even though he knew not the inner truth of them, and in offering to them worship and propitiation; for that is the initial way in which his active physical, vital and mental nature approaches the Godhead, as something greater than his own natural self which guides, sustains and directs his life and for help and support in the desires, difficulties, distresses, struggles of his human existence.* It accepted also the form in which early man everywhere expressed his sense of the relation between himself and the godheads of Nature,—the act and ritual of a physical sacrifice. However crude the notions attached to it, this idea of the necessity of sacrifice did express obscurely a first law of being, the interchange between the individual being and the universal powers of the cosmos which supports all the process of life and action of Nature.

But the external or exoteric side of the Vedic religion did not limit itself to this acceptance and regulation of the first religious notions of the natural physical mind. The Vedic Rishis gave a psychical function also to the Godheads worshipped by the people; they spoke to them of a higher Truth, Right, Law of which the gods were the guardians, of the necessity of a knowledge and a living according to this Truth and Right and of a home of Immortality to which the soul of man could ascend by the power

* The Gita recognises four kinds of worshippers and God-seekers, the *arthārthi* and *ārta*, those who seek him for the fulfilment of desire and for divine help in the sorrow and suffering of existence, the *jijnāsu*, who is moved to seek the Divine in his truth and in that to meet him, and the *jñāni* who has already the truth and endeavours to live in unity with the Spirit.

of Truth and right doing. The people no doubt took these ideas in their most external sense, but they were trained by them to develop their ethical nature, to turn towards some initial development of their psychical being, to conceive the idea of a knowledge and truth other than that of the physical life and to receive a first conception of some greater spiritual reality which was the highest reach of human aspiration. The deeper truth of these things was reserved for the initiates, for those who were ready to understand and practise the inner sense, the esoteric meaning hidden in the Vedic scripture,—for the Veda is full of words which, as the Rishis themselves express it, are secret words that give their inner meaning only to the seer, *kavaye nivachanāni ninyāni vachāmsi*. This is a feature of the ancient sacred hymns which grew obscure to later ages, became a dead tradition and has been entirely ignored by modern scholarship in its laborious attempt to read the hieroglyph of the Vedic symbols. Yet its recognition is essential to a right understanding of almost all the ancient religions; in all or most there was a religion for the common physical man who was held yet unfit for the psychical and spiritual life and a secret of the Mysteries disguised by symbols which was open only to the initiates But it was the inner meaning, the higher psychical and spiritual truths they contained, which gave to these hymns the name by which they are known, the Veda, the Book of Knowledge. Only by penetrating into the esoteric sense of this worship can we understand the full flowering of the Vedic religion in the Upanishads and in the later evolution of Indian spirituality.

This inner Vedic religion started by an extension of the psychical conception of the godheads of the Cosmos. Its primary notion was that there are different worlds or planes of being in the universe, a mounting scale of the physical, psychical and spiritual, corresponding to a similar mounting scale of planes or degrees or levels of conscious being in the nature of man. There is a Truth, Right and Law which sustains and governs all these levels of being, but it takes in them different but cognate forms,—as for instance the outer physical light, a higher and inner light which is the vehicle of the mental and physical consciousness and the highest inmost light of spiritual illumination, so that Surya, the Sun-God, is at once the lord of the physical Sun, the giver of the rays of knowledge which illumine the mind, and the soul and power and body of the spiritual illumination, a luminous form of the one and infinite Godhead. All the Vedic godheads, in their external character powers of physical Nature, have in their inner meaning a psychical function and psychological ascriptions and they are all various powers of some one highest Reality, one infinite Existence, *ekam sat*, called often in the Veda "That Truth" or "That One", *tat satyam*, *tat ekam*. This truth of the Vedic godheads assumes forms which have been wholly misunderstood by those who ascribe to them only their outward physical significance. These gods, who are complete cosmic personalities of the one Existence, form in their combination of powers a universal power of godhead, *vaisvadevyam*, and each apart from his special function is one with the others and holds in himself the universal divinity; each god is all the other gods,—an aspect of the Vedic teaching and worship to which a European scholar has given the sounding misnomer, henotheism,—while beyond in the triple Infinite they put on their highest nature and are names of the one nameless Being.

But the power of the Vedic teaching lay in its application to the inner life of man. Man lives in the physical cosmos subject to death and the "much falsehood" of the mortal existence; in order to rise beyond the death he has to turn from the falsehood to the Truth, to battle with and to conquer the powers of the Darkness, and this he does by communion with the divine Powers and their aid,—the symbols of the outer sacrifice are for this purpose given in the way of the Mysteries all over the world an inner meaning and represent an inner calling of the gods into the human being, a sacrifice, an intimate interchange, a mutual aid, a communion,—and by a building of the godheads within him, a formation of the universality of the divine nature; for the gods are the guardians and increasers of the Truth, the powers of the Immortal, the sons of the infinite Mother, and the way to immortality is the way of Truth, a journey, an ascent by which there is a growth into the law of the Truth, *ritasya pantha*. Man arrives at immortality by breaking beyond the limitations not only of the physical, but of the mental and psychical being into the highest native plane of the Truth which is the foundation of immortality and infinity. On these ideas the Vedic sages built up a psychological and psychic discipline which led beyond itself to the highest spirituality and which contains the whole seed of later Indian Yoga. And they open into and already contain the most characteristic ideas of Indian spirituality, the one Existence who manifests the individual and the universal from his supra-cosmic being,—so that all these are in their essence of being one and the individual can attain to universality and to a transcendental state,

THE SPIRITUAL VIEW OF EXISTENCE —Continued from page 7.

—the one God who presents to us his many forms, names, powers, personalities of Godhead, the distinction between the Knowledge and the Ignorance,* the greater truth of immortal, the comparative falsehood or mixed truth and falsehood of mortal existence, the inward growth of man from the physical through the psychical to the spiritual existence, the conquest of death, the realisable divinity of man, the secret of immortality. This, in an age which we are accustomed to look back to as the childhood of humanity and a period of rigorous barbarism, was the profound psychical and spiritual teaching by which the ancient fathers, *purve pitarah*, founded Indian civilisation.

This great beginning was secured in its results by a greater efflorescence. The Upanishads have always been recognised in India as the crown and end of Veda,—Vedanta, and in fact they are so; they are the large crowning outcome of the Vedic discipline and experience. . . .

. . . . The Upanishads are at once profound religious scriptures,—for they are a record of the deepest spiritual experiences—the documents of revelatory and intuitive philosophy of an inexhaustible light, power and largeness and, whether written in verse or cadenced prose, spiritual poems of an absolute, an unflinching inspiration inevitable in phrase, wonderful in rhythm and expression. It is the expression of a mind in which philosophy and religion and poetry are made one, because this religion does not end with a cult nor is limited to a religio-ethical aspiration, but rises to an infinite discovery of God, of Self, of our highest and whole reality of spirit and being and speaks out of an ecstasy of luminous knowledge and an ecstasy of moved and fulfilled experience. . . .

This character of the Upanishads needs to be insisted upon with a strong emphasis, because it is ignored by foreign translators who seek to bring out the intellectual sense without feeling the life of thought vision and the ecstasy of spiritual experience which made the ancient verses appear then and still make them to those who can enter into the element in which these utterances move, a revelation not to the intellect alone, but to the soul and the whole being, make of them in the old expressive word not intellectual thought and phrase, but *Sruti*, spiritual audience, an inspired Scripture. The philosophical substance of the Upanishads demands at this day no farther stress of appreciation of its value; for even if the amplest acknowledgement by the greatest minds were wanting, the whole history of philosophy would be there to offer its evidence. The Upanishads have been the acknowledged source of numerous profound philosophies and religions that flowed from it in India like her great rivers from their Himalayan cradle fertilising the mind and life of the people and kept its soul alive through the long procession of the centuries, constantly returned to for light, never failing to give fresh illumination, a fountain of inexhaustible life-giving waters. Buddhism with all its developments was only a restatement, although from a new standpoint and with fresh terms of intellectual definition and reasoning, of one side of its experience and it carried it thus changed in form but hardly in substance over all Asia and westward towards Europe. The ideas of the Upanishads can be rediscovered in much of the thought of Pythagoras and Plato and form the profoundest part of Neo-Platonism and Gnosticism with all their considerable consequences to the philosophical thinking of the west, and Sufism only repeats them in another religious language. The larger part of German metaphysics is little more in substance than an intellectual development of great realities more spiritually seen in this ancient teaching, and modern thought is rapidly absorbing them with a closer, more living and intense

receptiveness which promises a revolution both in philosophical and religious thinking; here they are filtering in through many indirect influences, there slowly pouring through direct and open channels. . . . And even the larger generalisations of Science are constantly found to apply to the truth of physical Nature formulas already discovered by the Indian sages in their original, their largest meaning in the deeper truth of the spirit. . . .

The Upanishads are Vedanta, a book of knowledge in a higher degree even than the Vedas, but knowledge in the profounder Indian sense of the word, *Jnana*. Not a mere thinking and considering by the intelligence, the pursuit and grasping of a mental form of truth by the intellectual mind, but a seeing of it with the soul and a total living in it with the power of the inner being, a spiritual seizing by a kind of identification with the object of knowledge is *Jnana*. And because it is only by an integral knowing of the self that this kind of direct knowledge can be made complete, it was the self that the Vedantic sages sought to know, to live in and to be one with it by identity. And through this endeavour they came easily to see that the self in us is one with the universal self of all things and that this self again is the same as God and Brahman, a transcendent Being or Existence, and they beheld, felt, lived in the inmost truth of all things in the universe and the inmost truth of man's inner and outer existence by the light of this one and unifying vision. The Upanishads are epic hymns of self-knowledge and world-knowledge and God-knowledge. . . .

The imagery of the Upanishads is in large part developed from the type of imagery of the Veda and though very ordinarily it prefers an unveiled clarity of directly illuminative image, not unoften also it used the same symbols in a way that is closely akin to the spirit and to the less technical part of the method of the older symbolism. It is to a great extent this element no longer seizeable by our way of thinking that has baffled certain western scholars and made them cry out that these scriptures are a mixture of the sublimest philosophical speculations with the first awkward stammerings of the child mind of humanity. The Upanishads are not a revolutionary departure from the Vedic mind and its temperament and fundamental ideas, but a continuation and development and to a certain extent an enlarging transformation in the sense of bringing out into open expression all that was held covered in the symbolic Vedic speech as a mystery and a secret. It begins by taking up the imagery and the ritual symbols of the Veda and the Brahmanas and turning them in such a way as to bring out an inner and a mystic sense which will serve as a sort of psychical starting-point for its own more highly evolved and more purely spiritual philosophy. . . .

The Vedas and Upanishads are not only the sufficient fountainhead of Indian Philosophy and religion, but of all Indian art, poetry and literature. It was the soul, the temperament, the ideal mind formed and expressed in them which later carved out the great philosophies, built the structure of the Dharma, recorded its heroic youth in the Mahabharata and Ramayana, intellectualised indefatigably in the classical times of the ripeness of its manhood, threw out so many original intuitions in science, created so rich a glow of aesthetic and vital and sensuous experience, renewed its spiritual and psychic experience in Tantra and Purana, flung itself into grandeur and beauty of line and colour, hewed and cast its thought and vision in stone and bronze, poured itself into new channels of self-expression in the later tongues and now after an eclipse re-emerges always the same in difference and ready for a new life and a new creation. . . ."

(To be continued in the next issue)

* The distinction is already made expressly in the Veda, *citti acitti*.

Reliance

With outstretched arms of prayer I cling to thee
Like a helpless child, so long is the way I tread!
Earth-memories like a shadow follow me,
Even of things irrevocably dead.

But thy Power circles with a vigilant fire;
It carries me like a wave upon a sea
Or a delicate tune out of the heart of a lyre
Borne by the magic air of eternity.

Nothing I fear, for cradled in thy peace
My journey seems like an ecstatic sleep
Where world-disharmony begins to cease
In the wide silence of the Spirit's deep.

My life is filled with thy immortal wine;
Its little movements flow towards thy light,
A rhythm of endless beauty made divine
And drunk with the vision of the Infinite.

NIRODBARAN.

Across

This is the English rendering of a "bhajan" very popular in Gujarat. The author of the original is Nanalal, one of the best lyricists of this province, with a strain of mysticism that has gone straight to the hearts of all Gujaratis. The translator tells us that "Across" with its emotional yearning and lyrical torrent defied all strict prosody in the course of translation. He hopes that at least something of its beauty of feeling and imagination is conveyed.

O sailor delay not: Sail thy boat!
I long to go across!
Mathura stands on the left-hand bank,
On the right is Gokul town;
Here on the bank my body rests,
Lingers there my soul!
Waters overflow the aerial sea,
Float therein Sun and Moon;
On this bank are the rocks so dead,
There the land of Light!
Smoothly roll the waves of life,
Slow are the blowing winds;
Here on the bank are my groves of hope,
The temple of love beyond!
Ah, I crave to go across!
O sailor delay not: Sail thy boat!

Translation: RAMESH DAVE.

NINE PICTURES

A PERSONAL EVALUATION

BY "LIBRA"

Several years ago I attended an exhibit on of paintings done by artists of Sri Aurobindo's Ashram. The experience was unforgettable. There were pictures bold with a massive mystery or subtle with a beauty born as of sylphlike smoke. When I opened the collection of "Nine Pictures" published by Sri Aurobindo Karyalaya of Anand I expected to meet a deliberate selection of some of the high lights of that exhibition. But the pictures here are those which, for one reason or another, happened to be reproduced in the various publications brought out by the Ashram or the Sri Aurobindo centres at regular intervals. This is not to say that there are no striking pieces. At least seven out of the nine have each in its different way and degree, a memorableness of both vision and technique. They are a precious bargain for Rs. 6. The sole regret I feel is when I think that the remaining two could have been as remarkable and there could have been more specimens of original creativity than just nine if the aim had been to give the best instead of what was conveniently to hand.

"Pondicherry Seaside"

Possibly I ask too much of art, but it is my opinion that the work reproduced within these covers of François Sammer, the Czech painter and architect who was in the Ashram for some years, does not always go beyond being a well-coloured exercise. His "Pondicherry Seaside" is described by the introductory comment in the Collection thus: "And here is the seaside. It is the east coast of India. It is a peaceful afternoon, the bullocks by the carts and the sea beyond. The sky above the sea lifts us imperceptibly to the limitless space, the Infinity where the Spirit broods for ever on its creation, above and yet in it." I think the comment is rather imaginative in this instance. The first half is correct, but the second half is poetic exaggeration. The sky here has no quality of colour or of comparative proportion that could lift us imperceptibly or with a mighty sweep to the Spirit's Infinity. It is an indifferent negative sky with a weak wash of thin mauve cloud-scape and occupies less room than the earth-scenery: there is little of any broad brooding presence in it, nor anything of the bright transparent firmament à la Claude stretching into boundless azure; and the bullocks, the carts and the sea behind them so much absorb the attention that only with an effort one makes the transition to the open spaces above. A pleasant competent impressionistic picture, no doubt. Not by any chance a striking display of either spiritual or secular art.

"A Street in Pondicherry"

"A Street in Pondicherry" by Sammer is a much better piece. It conveys faithfully the hot baked brilliant South, and the catching up of the street's rust-red glare into the house-face is especially effective, setting as it does the house aglow with a life which, in combination with the screened and shut appearance of it, throws upon us a sort of keen drowsiness through which we begin to see the picture as if it were a strangely clear dream. Sammer certainly does not yet transmit to us an eye like El Greco's turned on Pondicherry instead of on Toledo. But there is some quiver of creativeness from within, just saving the picture from being the product of an extremely efficient art-student rather than of a dynamic artist under the influence of Yoga. A gifted colourist is Sammer, playing harmoniously with sharp variations of shades. A fine disposer, too, he is of masses and motifs. But one technical flaw remains despite his cunning, a flaw which cannot be excused by the term Impressionism. At the remote end of the verandah of the main house a small patch of

sky is painted a blue quite different from the rest of the sky-colour. It offends by its artificial meaningless peculiarity. The artist has evidently forgotten to wash down this daub.

"The Mother's Apartment"

The depiction by Jayantilal of "The Mother's Apartment" is done with meticulous skill and a very sensitive aesthetic appreciation of line and pattern and plane and atmosphere. The colouring is faultless within its own small and subdued yet clear and well-balanced compass, and a living presence of coolness combined with intensity is suggested: a warm love that soothes the soul to a smiling confidence pervades the picture. But there is here also one slightly dissonant note: the human figure seated on a stool at the extreme right. The uninitiated might take it to be the Mother herself; then a kind of anti-climax would be felt, for there is nothing in the painting of the figure to indicate the radiantly refined personality that one expects the Mother to be from the delicate strength and flower-tinted calm and recitent brightness of her chamber. Even if one understands that this is not the Mother, there is a certain jar, a lowering of the exquisite key in which the rest of the composition is pitched. Apart from this one defect, all is admirable, even to the extent of rendering the defect negligible in a whole view. I like in particular the disposition of the tall oblong mirror at the farther end, with a light green lamp on either side, the mirror reflecting part of the room and placing this sense of the foreground's depth against the faintly blue and white and pink sky which through an open upper window behind the mirror provides the ultimate background. The effect is not only beautiful; it is also symbolic, as if the lovely spirit of the room were caught up in an offering to the magical sky and the lamps were lifted vigils of the dedicated consciousness, forming a symmetry of steady, sleepless, integral aspiration. Something of the quietly luminous art of Vermeer's interiors is at play, mixed with the skyward sense of windows one comes across in certain Italian masters and subtly transfigured by a typically Indian insight.

"The Mother's Window"

A different mode yet a kindred temper is in Krishnalal's many-rhythmed presentation of "The Mother's Window." It is a view from outside, the artist is standing somewhere in the courtyard and looking up from the depths of his wondering soul. Both the scheme and the execution are at once bold and suave, incisive and richly luxuriant. If I may be excused my penchant

for comparisons, here is the art of some Raphael taking to landscape after he has absorbed the influence of Leonardo and Michelangelo. A romantic elegance is perceived all through—but without a trace of the effeminately sentimental which sometimes pervades the early Raphael. Mark how vigorously the tree-trunk starts from the base of the picture, it is like an athlete's sinew, and the bend a little further up is effective with concentrated strength, and when the gradual thinning of the trunk is shown as it lifts higher and higher, there is still a confident poise—a fine muscularity, as it were. The direction of the tree's climb is so handled as to suggest a kind of swift leap away after the first turn, and the angle of the initial strokes below is reflected by it only at a distance and very subtly and by brief touches, so that a spontaneity and freshness and originality in the midst of balance is infused into the carefully patterned anatomy of bole and branch and twig. What is most delightful is the division of the tree's growth into two parts like a pair of arms just under the window: the window seems to be enclaspd, embraced and a rich burst of leaves lovingly smothers it from below as a child might its mother, while, from above, a leaf-bunch hangs and quivers on one side of the casement as if in the very *elan* upward the tree remembered that the casement is all-important and that everything that can be gained by going beyond has to be offered to this marvellous opening in the house of clay and made to minister to its sweet mission. The brush-work is notable for its smooth precise power, its moulded mobility. The window has venetian shutters in the lower half, while the upper half is open, as in Jayantilal's picture. A mystery is suggested, but no remoteness—the Dweller in the Inmost is felt to be fused with the essentially human. An extremely sensitive idea of the painter's is the glimpse afforded of a densely blue sky at the top of the picture, making a horizontally elongated triangle. It is a significant peep, conferring a special spirituality on the window, as though hinting that the window adored by the tree and letting our eye slip inward to the room holds something akin to the sky caught above the roof-line, the sky towards which the tree is mounting.

"The Ashram Interior"

Krishnalal has three other pictures in the Collection. One is "The Ashram Interior", a study in cool hues touched in parts by brown and yellow warmth and green tenderness. It shows the entrance, from the courtyard, to the Ashram hall in which joint meditation takes place and whose staircase leads up to Sri Aurobindo's room. The staircase is all the more stimulating to the imagination by being shown just a little. The significance of it, however, is very magically brought out in an indirect manner by the framing of a palm-tree in the entrance which gives us a view of the courtyard. Here is a symbol of earth-life, rising from the clay straight upward, yet with a generous foliage suspended in bell-like formations as if in an act of blessing all that may stand beneath it. The essential heavenward and still earth-affectionate movement of the true spiritual Master comes vividly to us. The

painting, not only of the palm-tree but also of the walls with their purple-grey shadows and the floor with its mellow-gold reflection of the light from outside, bespeaks a great sensitiveness to colour-values and to the play of light and shade. Krishnalal's eye is indeed remarkable for picking out a composition and a chiaroscuro that are at the same time keenly pleasure-giving and poetically expressive of subtle significance.

"From Darkness to Light"

This artist's most meaningful efforts are, however, the two paintings entitled "From Darkness to Light" and "The Golden Purusha". The former is a rendering of a famous Vedic prayer. Here the late-Raphael effect which I have read in Krishnalal is manifest both in the moulding of the Goddess Figure and its general attitude and expression. A softness, a gentleness is felt, blended with a power of constructive technique, such as we see in the Italian artist's celebrated *School of Athens*. But, of course, the whole mind of the picture is Indian through and through and akin to the form-creative spirit of the Ajanta frescoes and its modern revival in the Neo-Bengal School. The line-work achieves a twofold balance and harmony. The slightly downward slant of the face is continued and prolonged in the slant of the right arm, and even the assuring palm raised to bless has a slant supporting them. One of the legs brings the movement to completion at the base of the picture. The other movement is up-going, it is started by one leg's resting across the thigh of its companion in a line a little lifted beyond the vertical. The movement is taken to its consummation in the raised left arm with a skyward-pointing finger. The two movements are harmonised by the inspired device of making the left leg match the direction of the right arm and *vice versa* and the skyward-pointing finger match a similar pointing done by the hair-arrangement of the downward slanted face. The colour-scheme is as fine as the line-work: the floating lotus-leaves of subdued green, the two small pink lotus-blossoms bowing with entwined stalks to the Divine Figure, the large brown-red dully glowing lotus-flower on which the Figure is seated, the Figure's own delicate pink which etherealises that flower's hue, the dim red-brown surrounding space almost imperceptibly specked with powdery yellow, the concentration of the faint dispersed yellow motif into the bright drapery of the Figure, and above the Goddess's head a vague semi-circle of gold haze looming within the dense russet atmosphere. A particular effect, both of line and colour, which calls for notice is the holding high of one end of the yellow drapery in the uplifted hand: the cloth curves and rises to a sort of intense flame-shape, hinting that the drapery is a tissue of light, made, as it were, from the aura of the body of the beautiful Mediatrix Spirit who is showing the dark submerged earth-nature the Godlike goal of evolution and assuring it of ultimate achievement.

"The Golden Purusha"

Excellent indeed as is "From Darkness to Light", Krishnalal's power of artistic vision and realisa-

NINE PICTURES

—Continued from page 9.

tion cannot be said to reach its climax in it. It has its own perfection of a high order, but the creative consciousness which it embodies is not the sublimest range of art-inspiration. There is a hierarchy or ladder of inner intensity, and though on every step, rung or plane we can have living perfection, it is not everywhere we can have the largest substance and the loftiest rhythm holding this substance alive and expressed before us. A plane there is where art, which is always superhuman in origin, brings forth its superhumanity in an absolute directness instead of letting it shine out through mind-made vestures. Take a line like Shelley's:

The Light whose smile kindles the universe.

It has a lovely conception evoking happy profundities of our being by means of a felicitously forceful music. Krishnalal's picture of the Divine Mediatrice has these Shelleian qualities. But consider now that line from Milton:

Those thoughts that wander through Eternity.

We are at once face to face with an unfathomable grandeur and a music that seems to be a snatch of some basic vibration out of which all the worlds are born and which vanishes into some timeless transcendence. It is perhaps not more beautiful poetry, not superior from the standpoint of pure aesthetics, but the beauty is of a tremendous greatness of conscious life, the beauty of a God undraped of all our mortal surmise. Krishnalal's "Golden Purusha" has this sense of the directly deific.

A huge face enveloped in a creative trance, solidifying out of some vastitude yet keeping a constant flow, as it were, from itself into the immense circumambience—the features perceptible but with a distance of mood about them hazing the contours so that the drooping moustache and the beard start from a grading-off of the skin—all around the face a faint blue-green violet-brown cumulus of hair, broadening about the shoulders and mingling with the beard—along the top-edge of the cumulus a light yellow shine and within the flowing cloudy beard a delicate but sustained glow of gold—the forehead a smooth sweep of the same dreamy colour, the eyes thin streaks of vague white with softly-deep brown irises lifted up into the unmoving half-lowered lids, the rest of the face in a wash of russet-mauve shadow, the lips slightly protruding because of the in-drawn body-relaxing consciousness—and all this massive meditating mystery set against a background of dun and orange, opaque above and bright below and penetrating with a demi-tone of themselves the splendid secrecy—the whole impression as of a mountainous cloudscape opening into a vision of some mighty inhabitant of the infinite spaces, an eternalised moment of mystical insight in which is caught the Universal Self, the Hiranmaya Purusha of the Upanishads, the Being of deathless and limitless Light who is spread everywhere, who constitutes and becomes all but is himself more than all and carries within his calm cosmic impersonality a power of personal Godhead outlasting the manifested world and pervading time with an absolute presence for which there is no measure in the movement of world-history. Hardly any deliberate technique seems to have worked out this picture, it is as though self-emergent, simple and bare without wanting in an endless richness, with depth behind depth that can only be conveyed by a

supreme spontaneous act of artistic genius. In the whole range of modern India's figuration of the Divine I know only of the face of Nandalal Bose's snowy Shiva to equal this quiet and absorbed but overwhelming apocalypse.

"Ascent to the Truth"

There are two more pictures to consider—both by the Mother whose artist hand is striving to make Sri Aurobindo's Ashram a picture of perfection. The Mother is an expert in several styles, her work is abundant and these reproductions may not be of her very best, but they have, none the less, outstanding qualities and are apt to her role as the Ashram's guide to the divine truth and beauty. "Ascent to the Truth" is done in Chinese ink with a brush touched with far-eastern technique, some master of China or Japan lives again in its line-work and composition, but there is a certain strength of execution and a sheer sweep of conception which are not native to the far-eastern mind. An Aryan absolutism and audacity of mystical vision and *elan* is here. The soaring precipitous rock-face emerging high above the clouds and poised in some everlasting immensity of calm, in some "intense inane", reveals at the same time the ultimately transcendental nature of the Truth of things, the packed solid concentration of this Truth, its undefeatable and all-outtopping potency, the inviolable uprightness and uncompromising integrity of it, the difficulty of scaling its exalted aloofness, the necessity of leaving behind and outgrowing all weakness if we are to reach the summit. And yet there is, in the small delicately drawn top or head of the great stone-figure, the suggestion of something that is not wholly removed from or alien to our human being. The Divine, for all His power and supra-cosmicity, is present throughout the universe and touches with His base the common earth, He is our own highest and ideal Self, He stands as the Beloved of all creation, one who is our own existence consummated and fulfilled—the essential man in us, when all degradations are cut away, finds in the Divine the supreme humanity. Not by breaking with all that we are, but by seeking the perfection of all our parts we rise into the towering Truth. A connection there is between the human and the Divine, as this picture shows by means of a well-formed path that runs along the edge of the enormous rock and finally enters right into the secret of the sheer top. Not only this, but there are, as exemplified by the little hut-like structure on the right side, halting places where the tired pilgrim may rest awhile and lessen the arduousness of the journey. The graciously curving and modulating line of the highest plateau is indicative, too, of the warmth and richness that are ever within God's sublimity and puissance. This gradually lifting horizontal sky-line contrasts very felicitously with the straight vertical ascension cleaving through space. The contrast and its resolution in the small gently strong top or head already spoken of are part of an extraordinary technical inspiration of line-work. The line-strokes everywhere are clear and confident without being obvious, a simple yet never superficial art is employed in the grouping of the masses, a varied progression is suggested in the side-rocks without marring or minimising the utter spring upward of the central block of God-granite. Even the utter spring is sensitively delineated: the vertical is not without skilful relief

saving it from dead stiffness. Then there are the different shades playing with or against one another: the very light grey nearest us, the dull grey in the distance, the deep grey in the middle, and within all of them two or three tones of black. Perhaps the most exquisitely inspired touch of both line and shade is the slight erasure, at one point, of the line tracing the deep-grey top or head: this has the effect of making the grey seem softer as if it were passing off into the sky and the entire mass of the top seem a little airy and thereby complete the impression of comparative delicacy intended by the artist.

"Apparition"

The Mother's painting entitled "Apparition", the only one here in oils, is as worthy of praise. It seems to be a quickly done, vigorously hurried picture, but just this strong celerity suggests with great success the rare and brief marvel of a superhuman being's appearance to our mortal sight. There is little working out of detail: an impressionism of the moment's disclosure, catching the basic import and presenting it free of distracting elaboration, endows the subject with at once an immediacy, a spiritual strangeness, a poised universality. A closeness that precludes inspection of *minutiae* is felt; a subtlety that emerges with power without sacrificing its origin in the Unknown is intuited; a pure and large essence unrestricted to this or that particular existence and still a living concreteness comes home to our vision. And how concrete the essence is can be gauged from the fact that the form which the Mother has painted is as if in animate marble. There is a statuesque solidity in the apparition: however, sudden and momentary to us, the being who is revealed belongs to an imperishable order, has an eternal duration. In this marble character of its divinity it stands in significant relation to its stone-surrounding. It is in the midst of a pillared fastness, in the heart of a carved mountain-cave, but this stone-surrounding is beige-coloured, while the solid apparition is blue-white. The concretely divine is present within the concretely earthy—competing with it, as it were, and awakening it into the luminous arch-reality from

which the dim earth-substance has derived. The means of awakening it is a crescent moon held aloft in the right hand. A softly dense glow is shed by the crescent—a peace that is strength, a happiness one with force.

Turning to the technique I may remark that the absence of distinguishable features in the face is not only a result of impressionism: it is also a natural consequence of the light falling full upon them and erasing all shadow and flooding every hollow. The general colouring of the picture as a whole is done with a simplicity, almost a naiveté, but it is in perfect keeping with the elemental directness of the artist's vision and the Goddess's manifestation. Some critics may be inclined to dwell on what may seem slight anatomical abnormalities in the down-stretched left arm and the flexed right knee. But such observations would miss the mark, just as much as a close architectural inspection of the base of the main stone-pillar. The Mother is a trained artist, she can be absolutely precise and realistic whenever necessary. There is no occasion here to be quite meticulous. The picture is painted so as to be properly appreciated by a certain attitude of eye and mind. If we come with a different attitude we shall diminish the effect upon ourselves of its highly suggestive art as well as its profoundly entrancing theme. Personally I feel drawn intensely inward to a sense of some beautifully soul-saving Supernature whose impact on the eye of reverie is made with an effective economy of composition and a plainly executed yet skilful and semi-paradoxical play of cool hues depicting luminous life within a framework of warm tones depicting obscure materiality.

I congratulate the Sri Aurobindo Karyalaya of Anand on its venture, and wish it would make public more and more the flowering of art in the Pondicherry Ashram. This Ashram promises to be the centre of a new consciousness and culture springing from a broad spiritual experience: one of the most fruitful ways of spreading into the world at large an impulse of that re-creation of human living is to set increasingly in circulation the pictures no less than the poems inspired by the Aurobindonian Yoga.

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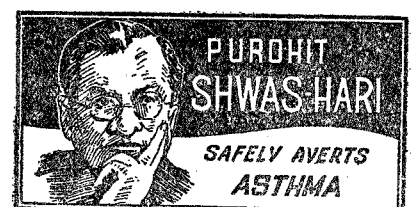
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NEW TRENDS IN WESTERN THOUGHT

DREAMS AND THE MYSTERY OF TIME

BY HARVEY DAY

Dreams are telling us more about time, which is one of the most baffling things in the world. Within the past ten years considerable research has been done in the subject and many of our preconceived ideas are shattered. A streak of lightning is a unit of time. So is a mountain. One has no greater permanence than the other; though the mountain may be of slightly greater duration than lightning in terms of the creation of the universe. There was a period when the mountain did not exist and there will come a time when the rocks which comprise it will be washed under the seas. A mountain is merely a fleeting incident and must be regarded as such in universe-time.

Time resembles a road which crawls to the summit of a rise and then unwinds itself on the other side. Events are taking place even now, on the other slope, though we cannot see them, or rather, most of us cannot. A few rare souls, gifted in some strange way, however, can. Why? We do not know, but science may fathom the secret in the near future. Dr. Soal, Lecturer in Mathematics at Queen Mary College, London University, has conducted experiments to show that some can see events two seconds before they take place. If two seconds, why not ten? And if ten, why not a hundred; and if a hundred, why not a million? Why a limit?

The Future in Dreams

We know that many events have been foretold with amazing accuracy in the course of dreams. What if science can divulge the secret that will lay open the future in front of us? Shall we then be able to avoid mistakes? That is, if the future is already laid down and immutable.

There are millions who feel that such is the case. There is evidence in the shape of dreams to prove that events are foretold in detail. It remains now for us to find a way in which we can dream truly.

Consider existence as a four-dimensional carpet which is unrolling gradually and relentlessly—the fourth dimension being time. The patterns of the carpet which we cannot see exist as certainly as the future exists, but we cannot see them unless we have X-ray eyes. Some are gifted and can in their dreams see the patterns before the carpet unrolls. An ant, for instance, can crawl inside the roll and obtain a preview. During sleep some of us become ants and take a peep into the future.

The curious part about dreams is that when they are taking place they often seem far more real and intense than reality. The fear, for instance, that one experiences in dreams, seems to outweigh by far that which is experienced during waking moments.

Dream-life is infinitely more vivid. Immediately after waking, even the most fantastic dreams seem credible. An hour later they become much less so and in the cold light of morning the most vivid visions dissolve into arrant nonsense.

The mechanism of dreams is something which eludes us. And yet, can we dismiss the dream-state, as being of no value whatsoever? Scientists and writers like J. W. Dunne, Stuart-Young and Mégroz have conducted a vast volume of research in the subject and feel certain that dreams can be useful to mankind. It will never be possible for all of us to dream in such a way that we can foretell the future, but if even a minute fraction of the population is able to dream accurately and truly, then we may be warned of catastrophic events and so save life and avoid misery.

Will it be accomplished in our time?

Cases of Accurate Dreaming

There are several authenticated cases of true dreaming, none more remarkable than that described by the celebrated psychiatrist, Professor Meyer, of the University of Jena, who recalls that on June 8, 1937, he was sent for by a student who was seriously ill. The student entrusted a box to his care, instructing him to open it if he died.

He died on the 13th and Meyer opened the box to find a letter in which the young man described a dream he had had on the 6th.

He stated that he had wandered into a cemetery where he saw a tombstone with his name and date of birth. The day of death was obscured by moss, which when scraped off, read "June 13, 1937". He then awoke—horrified.

The student who died on the day prophesied was buried in the grave he had seen in his dream.

But an isolated case is not enough to prove that dreaming one's future is possible. Again and again men have seen the pattern of time before it is due to be unrolled. I propose to recall some very good examples of dreams which can only be interpreted as foreglimpses into the future.

One of the best known is that of Spencer Perceval, Prime Minister of England in 1812. On May 11 that year he came to breakfast and confided to the Earl of Harrowby, with whom he was staying, that he had been greatly disturbed by a vivid dream that night. He said that as he was walking through the lobby of the House of Commons a man clad in a green coat adorned with brass buttons fired a pistol at him, and he fell dead.

Lord Harrowby did his utmost to dissuade him from attending Parliament that day, but he refused to be guided and history relates that Bellingham, the maniac who fired the pistol, was dressed in a green jacket with brass buttons!

This was clearly an instance of a warning sent in dream form. Why was it ignored?

If the future is immutable and not subject to change, what is the purpose of showing a slice of the future in dreams?

There are many instances of similar dreams, though what their purpose is, we cannot even guess, for the warnings are seldom heeded, and all that is shown in these dreams comes to pass.

A few days before his assassination, Abraham Lincoln confided to his wife and a friend, Ward Hill Lamon, that in a dream he wandered from room to room of the White House. The place was empty, but in every room he heard the sound of sobbing.

In the East Room he beheld a catafalque on which lay a corpse clothed in funeral vestments. Surrounding the soldiers who stood

guarding it was a throng of weeping mourners.

"Who lies dead in the White House?" Lincoln asked.

"The President," they told him. "He was assassinated."

Lincoln confessed that though it was "only a dream" the impression was so vivid that he did not sleep for the rest of the night and could not cast aside an oppressive sense of impending doom.

Spencer Perceval and Lincoln dreamed of their own deaths, but there are instances of people dreaming of the deaths of others.

Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain) was one. While working as a helmsman on the steamer *Pennsylvania* he slept at the house of his sister, where he had a most disturbing dream.

He saw his young brother, Henry, stretched in a metal burial case in the sitting room. Adorning his breast was a bouquet of white flowers surrounding a single crimson bloom.

Mark Twain was a man of considerable sensitivity. The dream impressed him so strongly that he dressed and walked down the street to see his brother, but not till he had walked a quarter of a mile or so did he realize that it was only a dream—and he turned back. He related the experience to his sister the following morning—then thrust it from his mind.

A few days later he and Henry made a trip to New Orleans on the *Pennsylvania*. Then the *T. A. Lacey* left on the return journey two days

before the *Pennsylvania*—with Henry on board. It blew up on the way. Henry was fatally injured and died six nights after the accident.

Samuel was taken to see the body of his brother, which lay, with those of other victims, in a large room.

All the bodies lay in coffins of unstained wood, except Henry's, which was placed in a metal case. His youth and striking appearance had so affected the ladies of Memphis that they had bought the metal case by subscription and placed a bouquet of flowers on his chest.

Mark Twain stood in the doorway comparing the scene with his dream and thinking how alike they were—except for the red flower—when a lady brushed past and going straight to the body of his brother, placed a single red bloom in the middle of the bouquet, to complete the picture.

What was the significance of the dream? Why was it sent to Mark Twain if he could possibly have helped his brother to avoid a sudden death? And, if he had taken the warning and so saved his life, the dream would not have been an accurate slice of the future. It is not enough to say he was psychic or that he possessed second sight. Why did his dream mechanism function when the dream mechanism of others lay dormant? Is there any way of developing this extraordinary power? These questions prove that the interpretation of dreams requires occult as well as psychological investigation.

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THE WESTERN MIND'S CONCEPTION OF YOGA

BY NORMAN C. DOWSETT

"Yoga", says the Gita, "is skill in works". With this simple interpretation of the word Yoga most western minds would think themselves defrauded, that is to say, if they accepted such an interpretation as true, which they most probably would not. Leaving aside for a moment the professor, the student, the thinker, let us concern ourselves mostly with what is thought by the average man, or shall we say, the mass which make up the "average" reading public of the west. What do they think Yoga means? That they have a very wrong impression is obvious—one only has to read "Punch" to see the reflected impression of the mass. Then let us see why.

Tangled and Paltry Associations

One is apt to interpret a word, however presented, into a mental imagery of one's preconceived idea about it, and the average western mind has very decided ideas about Yoga, born of associations which are entirely false; attracting the mind into conceptions which border on the childish. "How", they would say "does one reconcile skill in works with a fakir sitting on a bed of nails or an ascetic doing penance in some Himalayan retreat?" They would feel defrauded because they have always associated Yoga with the mysterious, the occult, the unknown magic of the east—such tangled and paltry associations in fact have been there that—if only subconsciously—they cannot discriminate between yoga and that illusive mystery "the Indian rope trick"—and who knows perhaps fire eaters, sword swallows, conjurers, Japanese acrobats, spiritualism, black magic, or any other trickery attributed to the mysterious east. Ideas as aged as Father Time with a long beard of false impressions created by Victorian novelists and propagated by the second-rate writers of today!

Man is a thinking animal and his own particular kind of thinking can only be learnt by himself. He has to evolve his own method of thinking, which method becomes something more than a habit, it becomes a veritable part of his personality and, if he is to change, then it means a part of himself has to change. This is one of the fundamental difficulties and the reason why the reading public of the west fail to understand the true meaning of the word Yoga.

Causes of Misunderstanding

The student of the orient may make the objection that many booksellers in the west display books on yoga. This is true; but if one takes the trouble to see in what proportion they represent yoga, one will notice that ninety-five per cent are on Hatha-Yoga, the type which is commonly called breathing and posture (*Asan*) exercises,—one rarely finds a book on Karma-Yoga, Jnana-Yoga or Bhakti-Yoga, all of which are only parts of that which is given in the Gita as "skill in works".

To the major section of the reading public the word Yoga means the occult, or an occult science which is best left alone; something one should not dabble in, like witchcraft of the middle ages or the attempts of spiritism of our present age. This section of the reading public may certainly have had an intuitive glimpse, for the occult is certainly a part of yoga, as it is also certainly a part of life, and the occult side of yoga is most decidedly not a thing to dabble in, especially on one's own without a Guru, or teacher, who is qualified, or even to treat as an intellectual study as some have been foolish enough to do.

Some philosophers of the west have certainly tried to intellectualize Yoga at various times, as they have also intellectualized the teachings of Christ and the Old Testament—this is perhaps one of the reasons why there is such an appalling

lack of understanding of the spiritual truths contained in the Bible—but even the greatest of these philosophers have only succeeded in being students of the Vedas, the Upanishads or the Gita. They may have made an admirable intellectual study of the sacred literature of the Hindus but they have completely failed to unravel the Truths contained in the symbolism of the Riks, or to bring the various branches of Yoga together to form an integral truth, and in failing to find the answer to the symbolism of the Vedas they disclaim that these scriptures have any higher meaning than either mythological poetry or poetry of a pastoral people addressed to the Powers of Nature. They would also disclaim that the ancient Rishis were mystagogues, "they were not teachers at all, for a teacher must be able to impart his knowledge to the pupil", they would say. The obvious fact that seems to have escaped these "students" is that the symbolism of the Rishis was the only form in which they could express their knowledge; it was the age of symbolism and intuition. Mind had not evolved to a state of intellect, therefore symbolism was the means by which they expressed their higher knowledge. It was certain that the knowledge preserved in the Vedas was derived from a plane of consciousness higher than the mental, but it was not obvious to our intellectual philosophers that such knowledge was untranslatable on a mental level.

Only one has been able to do that and that one is the living Rishi of Rishis—Sri Aurobindo, and even to follow his intellectual reasoning, in his magnum opus *The Life Divine*, one has to have a sincere attitude of approach or an intuitive insight to aid one to mentalize with him. The Rishis were Seers of a super-intellectual Reality, they were teachers but it was to an esoteric few that they were able to teach. Mankind had not then travelled far enough on the road of spiritual evolution to produce many souls of the purity and prescience to receive such knowledge or to maintain a mental grasp of the knowledge imparted, let alone sustain it by an organized method of intelligence. When one practises Yoga—for that is the only way to understand it—one soon learns that the Mind is more often a hindrance than a help, and this is one thing of which the westerner finds comprehension difficult, he has long since established his intellect on a pedestal of worship, and it would take something *really serious* to shake his faith in it. He never has taken Yoga at all seriously—even the *spirituality* of his own religion has never been seriously practised, in fact one might say that the majority of Christians know very little about it; with them Christianity has been turned into Churchianity and, one suspects, more to their ideal of comfort.

Need of True Interpretation

Nevertheless, there is a large section of the public today—which was very apparent during the war years and immediately after—that wants

to know more about the true purpose of man's existence. They feel that man was created for a higher purpose, yet think he may possibly be the result of some biological accident. It would be useless to tell a pragmatical scientist that yoga will answer his questions on "The Purpose of Life", for he would only think it another false axiom to lead him up another blind alley, yet there are those who sincerely seek enlightenment. There is a universal consciousness felt in the world today which reaches out to an Unknown—aspiring for one bright ray of Truth in a world of puzzling darkness. Let us at least then attempt to throw some light on the meaning of the word Yoga with the hope that those, who will, may look upon the teaching of the east with an open mind, free from the trammels of childish associations and false impressions created by second-rate novelists, and, what is more difficult for the western mind to accept, the intellectualized theories of professors of philosophy, who in their seeking have remained mentalists seeing no farther than their intellectual capacities.

The Right Approach

It is not our aim to disparage intellect, but rather to balance it with a spiritual awareness. No scripture or sacred writings containing spiritual truths can be held only valid on intellectual grounds; if it were so the millions of illiterate followers in all religions—and they make up the majority—could not be accounted for, they mostly seek and know the divine through Love and Devotion (Bhakti). The poet's aspiration for the Divine is not dependant upon intellect, it is first a spiritual experience, after which he may use his intellect as a means to express it. Speaking of intellect. Sri Aurobindo says in a letter to a disciple: "... it makes constructions of words and ideas which have no application to the Truth, babbles foolish things in its ignorance and makes its constructions a wall which refuses to let in the Truth that surpasses its own capacities and scope." And in another letter he asks: "... one simple question of those who would

make the intellectual mind the standard and judge of spiritual experience. Is the Divine something less than mind or is it something greater? Is mental consciousness with its groping enquiry, endless argument, unquenchable doubt, stiff and unplastic logic something superior or even equal to the Divine Consciousness or is it something inferior in its action and status? If it is greater, then there is no reason to seek after the Divine. If it is equal, then spiritual experience is quite superfluous. But if it is inferior, how can it challenge, judge, make the Divine stand as an accused or a witness before its tribunal, summon it to appear as a candidate for admission before a Board of Examiners or pin it like an insect under its examining microscope?"

Intellect has a place in yoga but it cannot be the instrument by whose authority we judge the Divine. It is not surprising that the west judges yoga by intellectual standards, for intellect is its *métier* as spirituality is the *métier* of India, yet they are both divine attributes which only attain to their highest purpose when in union with each other.

Yoga is "skill in works"—divine works, where the universalized soul becomes *svarāt samvāt*, self-ruler and emperor—this is the Karmayoga of the Gita, where the attainment becomes a spiritual perfection and a union with the Divine, and yoga is the discipline by which one enters, through an awakening, into an inner and higher consciousness; an awakening that is likened to that of the poet when he writes a poem that transcends the ordinary consciousness. In yoga the difference would be in degree, intensity, and the power to stabilize it in the being.

The Purpose of Life is for the evolving human being to strive for that awakening which brings about a union with the Divine and to so purify and perfect himself as to be able to stabilize it in his nature, even unto the roots of his being, that he may live a Divine Life and bring about the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. This is also the meaning and purpose of Yoga.

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