

# MOTHER INDIA

Managing Editor:  
K. R. PODDAR

FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW

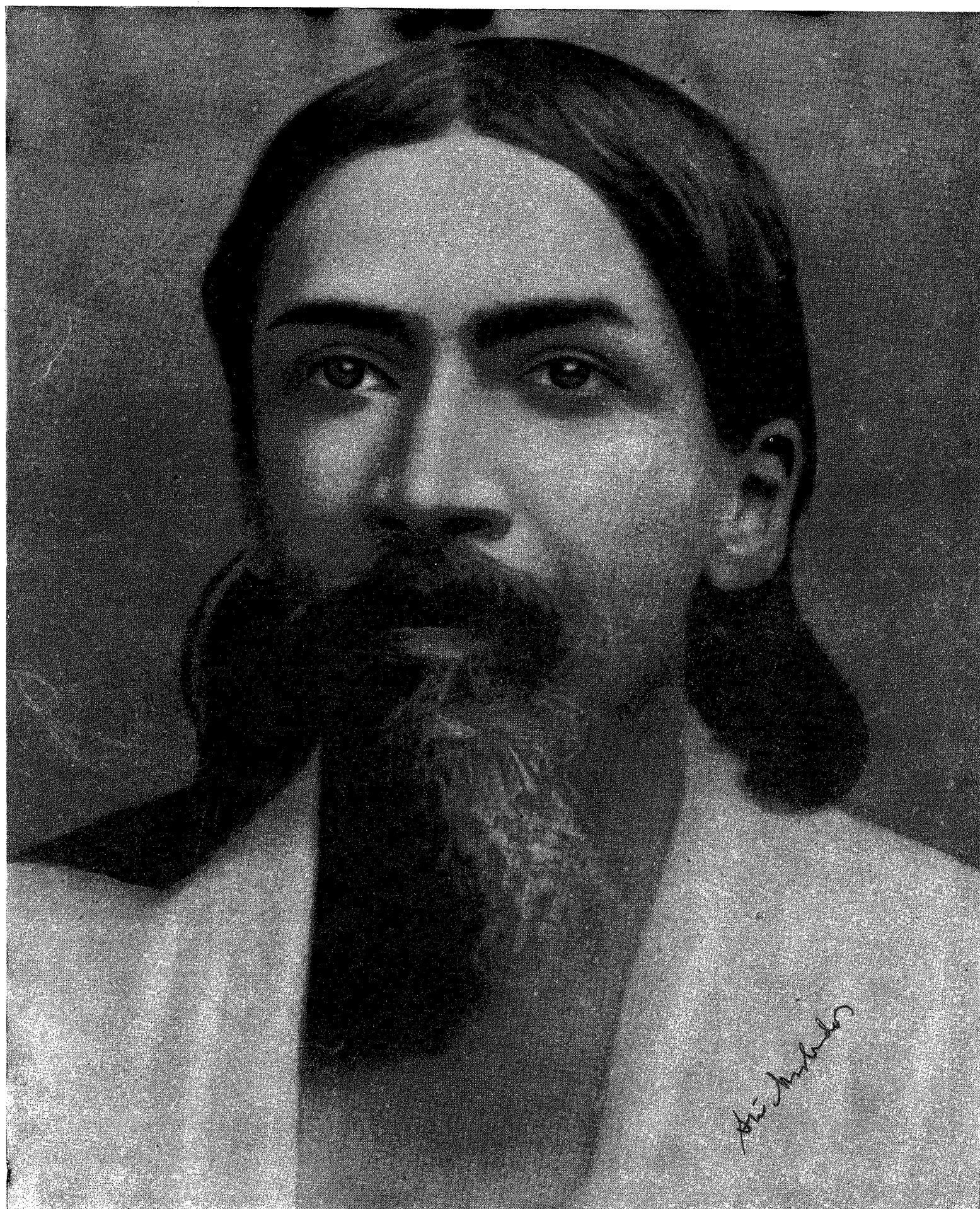
Editor:  
K. D. SETHNA

"GREAT IS TRUTH AND IT SHALL PREVAIL"

VOL. II. NO. 13

*Special Number : August 15, 1950*

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SRI AUROBINDO

BORN AUGUST 15, 1872

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## AUGUST 15: ITS WORLD-SIGNIFICANCE

### Pointers in Modern History

August 15, India's Independence Day, has in modern history associations both spectacular and profound. We may say that this date marks the very birth of the power by which international politics was gigantically rocked into the manifold commotion that gave shape to our modern world. For, though it is the French Revolution that brought modern history into being, the forces that exploded in 1789 could never have found a firm organised life if there had not arisen the military colossus we call Napoleon Bonaparte, gathering up the new France into a scourge of God and lashing out at the Europe united to crush her and shattering the entire balance of the old world to the sound of the mighty mantra plucked from the heart of the Revolution—*La Marseillaise*. Through the personality of Napoleon revolutionary France let loose the spirit of modern times—Napoleon who was born on August 15 in 1769.

It is a far cry from this great Corsican to Hitler. But though Hitler cannot compare with him in stature and though he differs also in being an instrument of the dark forces of racialism and totalitarian tyranny rather than a medium, however flawed and self-willed, of liberty, equality and fraternity, he too precipitated a continent-wide clash of arms and was intensely influenced by the Napoleonic fury. Not only did he start in 1941 his campaign against Russia in the name of Napoleon and on the very day Napoleon had marched against Tsar Alexander I; he also fixed in 1940 the 15th of August as the day on which he would complete his conquest of Western Europe by broadcasting from Buckingham Palace the collapse of Britain. The fall of Britain would have signed the death-warrant of the whole world outside America. August 15 was meant to be the end of World War II, with a decisive victory of the forces intent on putting the clock back and establishing on earth the reign of the *Asura*, the Titan, over the evolving God in humanity. But instead of a resounding triumph, August 15 found Britain still full of fight and on that day the largest toll so far was taken of the *Luftwaffe*—180 German planes shot down in British skies! We might indeed designate it as the turning-point in the Battle for Britain.

August 15 can also be considered the beginning of peace after World War II, though not the peace Hitler had intended to initiate on that day; for Japan surrendered on August 14, 1945. Now that the peace has at last been broken by North Korea's invasion of the South and what is in appearance a civil war but is really the first violent stroke by Communism in its plan of world-conquest has burst on us and America undaunted by terrible disadvantages has rushed into the carnage in order to save civilisation, we are led to ask whether again this date has a meaning. To get the answer we do not have to search long. The present hostilities were preluded in early June by a propaganda campaign by the North Korean radio, relayed by Moscow, demanding the unification of Korea on the Communists' terms. The word "peaceful" was thrown about, but the suggestion was everywhere that peace hung on unconditional kowtowing by the Southern Government to the *dictat* of Communism. On June 21 the same radio station spoke further of unification, ostensibly peaceful yet proceeding according to such a plan that within a certain fixed period the goal would inevitably be attained. There was an ominous ring here—and four days later the Communists were on the march across the 38th Parallel. As usual, Communism had talked peace while intending war. But what attaches a peculiarly significant interest to the talk is the time-limit announced for the disappear-

ance of the America-sponsored South Korean regime which, for all its imperfection, was yet democratic in essence. The exact words of the broadcast were: "All measures connected with the peaceful unification of our country shall be completely carried out by August 15 of this year." Yes, once more the day expected to be the beginning of the end of the democratic spirit on earth by armed might was August 15!

### The Democratic Ideals and Our Independence Day

Surely a date of momentous implications for the values of civilisation has been chosen by India to celebrate her independence. Why did she select this particular date? There seems to have been no conscious assessment of whatever import it bore by the year 1947 in which the last British soldier left Indian soil. But behind the conscious thought of individuals there is the working of that invisible yet potent being which is the national soul or genius. Every country has such a soul and every true patriot feels directly or indirectly its presence. In terms of the wide yet demarcated body of land in which one takes birth and grows and dies, in terms of the large mass of people who are bound together by geographical limits, in terms of a long history behind that mass, in terms of a culture subtly single in the midst of all variety of province and language—in diverse terms separate or combined is felt the national soul. And always a personification is made of it, a great presiding spirit is envisaged, a Mother-being that is the true secret life of the country's collectivity as well as physical expanse. No matter how rationalistic we may be, the moment we are patriots the heart in us intuits this Mother-being and with the dream of its more-than-human loveliness and on the supporting breath of its super-animation we move to the exertions and the heroisms that ordinarily lie far beyond our powers. When a country's collectivity is disposed to occult insight the national soul is most clearly grasped by the patriot heart: thus in Ireland and in India we find the intensest response to the superhuman presence constituting the nation. Especially in India with her endless history of rishi and yogi and bhakta and avatar, patriotism is at its roots a religious fervour, and the most creative of its many forms has been the one with which it started on its career of revolt against British rule—the one which found its most puissant expression in the upsurge of Bengal during the partition of this province by Lord Curzon and which went to its fiery work with that open acknowledgment of the national soul, the worshipping cry of *Vande Mataram*, "I bow to you, O Mother". This cry rang throughout the many decades of the country's toil for freedom and even now when superficial purposes have sought officially to replace Bankim Chandra's inspired anthem, replete with the very essence of Indianness, by the more deliberate more cosmopolitan composition, *Jana Gana Mana*, the outleaping apostrophe to the Goddess that is India has not lost its appeal—still in a myriad bosoms the flame of occult recognition burns—through the officially secular mind itself of those in charge of the government the Mother, though often obstructed, works secretly her will. In the instance of a country like India the outwardly unconscious choice of a date like August 15 for the Independence Day must be traced to no fortuitous concurrence of atoms in the brains of her Ministers but to the deep design of her national soul.

How shall we state this design? On the data already mentioned, we should say that India is meant to be the arch-representative of the ideals with which the modern age broke on the world. Liberty, equality, fraternity—these are intended to be embodied most vividly by India. They have



## AUGUST 15: ITS WORLD-SIGNIFICANCE—Continued from previous page.

never been materialised in the full sense because either their true order has not quite been understood or else, if it has been understood, the ultimate connotation of them has been elusive. The French Revolution and its Napoleonic consolidation laid the stress on liberty. Indeed this was not unnatural, for it was liberty that was most denied in the days before the taking of the Bastille. The fall of the Bastille, the throwing open of the doors of the State prison symbolised the animating principle of the whole terrific movement which swept away the "divine right" of kings and the shackles of feudalism. That is why up to now the Revolution is celebrated on July 14. But, in the sphere of social life, liberty, though precious and indispensable, does not always make for either equality or fraternity. The only equality and fraternity it automatically goes with are a common status in the eyes of the law—at least in general. For the rest, it may bring in an immense latitude for competition and a chance for the best-placed, the strongest, the most skilful, the least scrupulous to get the upper hand. The remedy sought for this latitude is economic equality, and democracy which is government based on the individual's freedom of action as well as of thought has been opposed by collectivism which is government founded on equal association in labour and a common profit-sharing. Collectivism may not be altogether reprehensible in theory but in practice it becomes a rule by force, an iron levelling-down, a rigid regimentation: liberty suffers enormously and a dictatorship is created steam-rolling both social and intellectual life. Fraternity suffers too, for where liberty is not guaranteed there is always the Secret Police and no man can trust his neighbour and all live in fear and suspicion. If choice is to be made between the dangers of democracy and those of collectivism, the former are far preferable, since the mind is left free by them and the mind's freedom is a greater progressive force than the artificially secured welfare of the body. Besides, as we observe strikingly in America, such welfare is not impossible to democracy, what is needed is planned economy and not necessarily collectivism. Also, a degree of fraternity can be and often is brought about, for the principle of liberty is not in itself averse to but, if properly developed, consonant with the principle of "live and let live"—tolerance, kindness, mutual respect, diversified harmony. Again, by its allowing the mind of man to go unfettered, it gives *lebensraum* not only to the cult of altruistic humanism and to idealistic art and philosophy but also to the religious, the spiritual, the mystical drive towards realising a single Selfhood of the cosmos or a single Fatherhood of the world and, as a result, a spontaneous compassion that takes all universe into its embrace and establishes a natural link of love, as if the entire creation were one family of brothers. It is because democracy is not exclusive, as a collectivist dictatorship is, of such possibilities of inner and outer growth that the formula of the French Revolution, for all its shortcomings, is a valuable step in human history and those countries that have erected their political and social order on some form or other of its teachings are the true friends of India and, despite their remnants of colonialism, their fight today against Communist tyranny is her fight as well. Her hitting upon August 15 as her Independence Day is a sign from beyond the outer surface of her life, a pointer from her national soul, that her place is in the vanguard of democracy and that her mission is to fulfil what the democratic peoples of the West are still fumbling after.

### Our Independence and Sri Aurobindo

The way to fulfilment is by stressing neither liberty nor equality but fraternity. Given genuine fraternity, liberty and equality follow. More than any other country India is equipped for building the democratic order on a fraternal basis. For, above all countries it is she who has lived for the only fraternal basis which can last and carry a superstructure of authentic freedom and justice: God-realisation. And as soon as we speak of God-realisation being India's master quest no less than being the one means of fulfilling the ideals of democracy we come to be on the look-out for a yet profounder reason for our national soul's predilection for August 15. What we expect to find is the identity of this date with some occasion closely linked to not only our own struggle for independence and for the triumph of the democratic ideals but also the sense of a presiding Goddess with which our nationalism is so powerfully charged and the direct concrete experience of the one yet multiple Divine Reality that has been the lodestar of the Indian consciousness down the centuries. If we could discover the identity we should know with redoubled certitude that the date of our Independence Day was due to no accident nor dictated by mere convenience but decided by the national soul. And by exploring the precise historical circumstances of the identity we should be able to learn where to seek correct guidance for the future and how to rise to the height of our destiny.

There is no traditional festival from the past on this date. With none of our political leaders in the forefront at present is it particularly connected. But on August 15 falls the birthday of Sri Aurobindo. Our Cabinet had not noticed it at all when they fixed the Day of Independence. Though to celebrate it people in their hundreds from all parts of India had been gathering together in Pondicherry for several years before the end of British rule, there was no thought in the minds of our Ministers to give it importance by making the Independence Day coincide with it. This is sad proof of the imbalance of values in contemporary India, the dearth of vision in our leaders. All the more remarkable, therefore, is their striking upon just this date for the happiest and most meaningful political event for us in modern times. And all the more clinching as well as heartening is the

evidence that the national soul, the great Mother with whose dear and majestic name we launched the struggle for freedom, was not slumbering but from the forgotten depths of our being was still pointing a luminous finger. For Sri Aurobindo answers to all the expectations we have enumerated: his life singles him out for association with the coming into its own by a country like India.

It was as a leader of Nationalism that Sri Aurobindo first caught the public eye. Although educated in England and bringing a rich assimilation of all European culture, he stood out as an incarnation of the true Indian genius. In him the culture of this hoary land sprang vibrantly to life and when he plunged into the political arena at the time of Bengal's partition by Lord Curzon and took up the leadership of the fight against foreign rule, he brought something more than patriotic vehemence, something more than democratic idealism. He came burning with the consciousness of India as the mighty Mother—the occult insight into the superhuman being that is the national soul was like a fire in his breast and every word he spoke carried the same incandescence home to his hearers. The old milk-and-water psychology of prayer, protest and petition he transformed almost overnight into the dynamic of a will intoxicated with the vast wine of the national soul's super-vitality. A Presence greater than human individuals was felt by all who followed Sri Aurobindo in those dangerous days. And it was because this Presence was made a reality in the land that the Swaraj movement took on the aspect of Fate: the Shakti who had sustained Indian culture through millenniums and endowed it with a living continuity from a past beyond that of Egypt or Greece or Rome to a present in which Memphis is but a wonderful memory, Periclean Athens no more than a mass of magnificent ruins and the Rome of the Caesars only the wind-swept and grass-covered Coliseum—the perpetual Shakti tore the veil between the inner and the outer and with her fiat gave the struggle for independence an inevitability of success. Under Her inspiration Sri Aurobindo, in eight effective years, laid down the broad lines of the whole future of Swarajism, lines from which, in spite of all changes of personnel and programme, India never essentially deviated.

Nor is this all that Sri Aurobindo the politician did. Through the quick-shifting drama of his political career—the countless constructive ventures in journalism, the innumerable practical acts of patriotic policy, the agitations, the arrests, the house-searchings, the legal attacks and counter-attacks, the sensational climax in the year-long detention as under-trial prisoner in Alipore Jail and the subsequent court-scenes with Eardley Norton the most brilliant criminal lawyer in India as Crown Prosecutor, Chittaranjan Das shielding Sri Aurobindo by a case for defence worked out through feverish months at the cost of his own health and the loss of a lucrative practice, Mr. Beachcroft sitting in judgment over a man who had been with him at Cambridge and had beaten him there to second place in Greek and Latin—through all the dramatic vicissitudes of those eight years there ran not only the occult insight of genuine patriotism but also the mystical vision of the aspiring Yogi. Sri Aurobindo brought to his work the full reality of the Being hailed by Bankim Chandra in *Vande Mataram*. The national soul felt by historical India is not merely the presiding genius of the human collectivity in the land bounded by the Himalayas and by rivers and seas. The distinguishing mark of the Indian consciousness is the realisation, from age to age, of the Eternal, the Infinite, the Absolute. Essential India is the long procession of seers and saints from Vedic antiquity up to our own day. Hence the national soul, the Mother of these myriad knowers and lovers of God, must be herself a face and form of the Divine and wrapped in the atmosphere of the Supreme Being must she be envisaged and invoked. That was the message of Bankim Chandra's song and of Sri Aurobindo the politician, that was the core of the Aurobindonian Nationalism which made this song the throbbing life-blood of Bengal and, through Bengal, the entire sub-continent.

None, in the political field, before or after Sri Aurobindo can be put on a par with him in fusion of spiritual energy with patriotic fervour. Is it not, therefore, in the fitness of things that the Independence Day of a country whose chief glory has been God-realisation should coincide, in spite of all the predominantly political character of this day, with the occasion of Sri Aurobindo's birth? And would it not be purblind on our part to miss a signal so pregnant with meaning and fail to see our future bound up with his presence in our midst—our future of true self-growth political as well as cultural and of leadership among the nations on the path of human evolution towards Godhead?

We cannot yet declare that the scales have been shed from our eyes. But increasingly the darkness thins and more and more there are openings and through them the country is yearning to come into contact with the Wisdom and Power round which an Ashram of spiritual aspirants has grown to many-sided creative activity in Pondicherry. Every year the many hundreds who from all quarters of India and even from abroad join the seven hundred residents of the Ashram to have *durshan* of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother congregate in greater numbers. The name of the Master is on the lips of seekers in Europe and America no less than India and the time is not far off when the whole modern mind will gravitate to the Aurobindonian philosophy of Superhumanhood.

### Sri Aurobindo and the Modern Mind

All the more eagerly will the gravitation occur because of three factors. Sri Aurobindo brings a philosophy not in the sterile intellectual man-

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ner that has been traditional in the West heretofore. His philosophy is not an abstract logic-spinning from a few principles of thought mixed with a few data of ordinary observation. It is only the intellectual elucidation and systematisation of concrete and direct experience of realities lying beyond the mere mind: it is but a mental picture of what is realised by the inmost consciousness in its Yogic penetration of the subliminal and the supraliminal. Modern man is rather impatient with the old purposes and methods of philosophising: when he wants to go further than physical science he is more a psychologist than a metaphysician, and this turn—enlightened increasingly by research in what is termed extra-sensory perception—is likely to be attracted by a metaphysics based totally on Yoga which is after all a super-psychology seeking to grip fundamental truth by breaking out from our present narrow limits of consciousness and widening forth to be one with the inmost stuff of existence. Of course, there are many obstructions in the modern mind, especially the incubus of nineteenth-century scientific materialism which, though theoretically neutralised by the new physics, could still be in actual life a haunting influence opposed to Yogic philosophy. But the general trend of the present age, as it develops further, will approach such philosophy more and more gratefully.

Parallel to the line towards super-psychology is the drive initiated in the last century by Nietzsche with the formula: "Man is something to be surpassed. Lo, I teach you the Superman!" Nietzsche's idea of the Superman was much coloured by the science of his day and it was at best a titanic heroism aggrandising man's physical nature by means of an iron will laughing at natural obstacles and subduing both the ordinary self and the common world in order to intensify the life-gusto and fit it for extraordinary exertions. Now that the general climate of thought has changed considerably and we have beheld with startled gaze the Nietzschean dream come almost true in the *Herrenvolk* of Hitler and are facing another version of it in the aggressive challenge of Stalinist totalitarianism, the idea of the Superman cast deep into the modern mind by Nietzsche is showing signs of becoming subtler and purer and less egoistic, more inclined to values like "sublimation" and "integration of personality." In short, it is getting orientated, however slowly and stumblingly, in the direction of the Aurobindonian *weltanschauung*.

The Superman, for Sri Aurobindo, is man surpassing himself by a triple change of consciousness. The human being has to discover his own true soul. Usually we take the life-force to be the genuine psyche or else we discern the mind-energy as master of both life-force and body and label it as soul. Sri Aurobindo says that even what we know as body, life-force and mind are not all that works physically, vitally and mentally as the individual. There are occult realms of physicality, vitality and mentality through which the individual can put himself into contact with universal reality. Our hidden statuses in these realms are more deserving of the name "soul" if by that name we mean nothing beyond the mind-life-body combination. But in fact there is in the profundities of our being a distinct psychic individual, a spark of divinity whose ordinary manifestations in us are disinterested search for truth, selfless leaping of ethical idealism, pure desire to create beauty and whose clearest expression is the aspiration towards the Eternal, the Deific. This Immortal within the mortal, this inmost Initiate of God-communion whose channels are mind and life-force and body and who passes from birth to birth in an evolving universe has to be realised in full constant experience. The second change of consciousness is the realisation of the single Spirit of all existence, the one Being who has become all things—an infinite Self that is everlasting peace, an infinite Nature that is everlasting power. And this Spirit is to be experienced not only as a cosmic splendour but also as a supra-cosmic trinity of Existence, Consciousness and Delight. The third change of consciousness is what Sri Aurobindo defines as the realisation of the Supermind. The Supermind is the Spirit in its creative poise, the Spirit massing together its inexhaustible reality of oneness and manyness into a harmony of archetypes, as it were, and emanating from that harmony a gradation of world on world and relating itself to its emanations as their Lord and Lover. It is when the Supermind which holds the divine original of the world not only in essence but also in formulation is realised, with the transcendental Existence, Consciousness and Delight as its base, the Universal Self and Nature as its one instrument and the inmost soul as its other medium that man reaches a Superhumanhood most dynamic for world-uses.

And because Sri Aurobindo's Yoga puts so much emphasis on such dynamism, modern man in quest of his soul will be drawn the quicker towards the Aurobindonian *weltanschauung*. Whatever we may outgrow of Nietzsche's gospel, whatever Titanism of it we may reject, the note he struck of energy, of the Will to Power is in its root-significance an inalienable part of modernism's this-worldly formula of "Here and Now." In this connection the last of the factors making for gravitation of the modern mind to Sri Aurobindo comes most aptly for comment. The quest for the soul today, *via* the concept of the Superman, is not out of rapport with important elements of the Christian or any other religious ideal of the past, but it is yet a cry for some new perfection. In the first place, that ideal split existence into two irreconcilable or at least disparate orders—the natural and the supernatural—and world-life was seen as only a transition from the one to the other: world-life had no justification in its own rights and the more the supernatural was admitted into it the more was the natural relinquished and effaced. Secondly, man was regarded as a fixed being, a creature set for ever in form and function, with horrible lower reaches

and splendid higher ranges between which he could move but beyond which he could never go to an entirely new pattern of world-life. There was, in the old religious ideal, no sense of evolution. With the advent of the evolutionary concept into science the supernatural, if believed in, promises to be deemed no contradiction of the natural but rather its concealed reality, a perfection to be grown into and flowered forth, a greatness which need not demand the effacement of our present smallness but should organically adapt it. And a possibility is grasped of evolving a new species as much other than man as man is other than the animal, a different and better poise of the whole organic entity with an intenser level of general consciousness. A half-serious half-fantastic play on the notion of this possibility is the neo-vitalism of Bernard Shaw, the development of the Nietzschean *nisus* into the hopes and dreams of what Shaw has termed Creative Evolution. The evolutionary concept also underlines the value of the outer instrument of the inner vitality: if the natural is not to be effaced by the supernatural and if a new species may be evolved, then surely the external basis and vehicle of the greater and intenser consciousness calls for extreme attention, since without its keeping pace with the inner progress there will be no secure establishment of the fruits of that progress and a decline will sooner or later set in.

All these ideas floating in the mind of modern man are rarely quite definite and are often ineffective or misdirected. But when the light of Sri Aurobindo's Yogic philosophy will fall upon them, they will get definition and quicken to their true objectives. They will reveal themselves as vague approximations to what Sri Aurobindo brings and offers. We might even say that to a considerable extent they are the responses created by the Aurobindonian vision itself—faint echoes of his inspiration in the mental spaces of the contemporary world. On the whole they and this inspiration are both the presence of the Divine Word of the *Zeitgeist*—the former the tenuous peripheral vibration, the latter the dense central note of the mantra of the Godhead ascending from His concealment below in the darkness and descending from His mystery above in Eternity's gold and Infinity's blue. In a luminously positive and comprehensive form, with a flexible yet undeviating technique of integral development, Sri Aurobindo's Yogic philosophy catches up the truth of evolution. His Yoga is not just a soar into the Spirit's sky, with a connecting line kept between that amplitude and the individual existence here until the hour of the body's death. He declares that evolution lacks its total sense if there is not a descent of the higher consciousness together with an ascent of the lower. Those evolutionary terms, mind and life-force and matter—what is their fulfilment if the Divine Being from whom they have been emanated carries only a sojourning soul through them and never grants them through that soul a deific destiny of their own—a mind not fumbling for knowledge but seizing it with a lightning flash, a life-force not enslaved by petty desire and incapable of coping with the challenge of circumstance but large and blissful and sovereign in its steps, a body not subject to disease and age and accident but full of radiant health, possessed of automatic immunity? This question has never been answered in the past. Perhaps it was never even precisely put. But there has been a dream of some *elixir vitae*, a cry for the kingdom of heaven on earth, a vision of the perfect human form pre-existing as a *kârana sharira* or causal body in the empyrean of the Supreme Consciousness. What has not been there is the intuition that if all has come from the Divine into an evolutionary universe all must have an inevitable divine consummation and that in the Supermind, where the original truths and archetypes glow for ever, dwell both the plan and the power of transforming integrally the whole being and nature of man. In world-work the Supermind is Sri Aurobindo's speciality: possessing it in full, bringing it down for embodiment, organising its multi-creative energy on earth, he labours at the beginnings of a completely new pattern of world-life, a new species with no more the mind in charge, no more the mind permeating what is below it, but with the Supermind as the head and front and converting into its own terms of truth-consciousness the entire rhythm of man's existence. The *kârana sharira*, the causal body whose stuff is God's infallible and incorruptible light, is sought to be made one with the *sukshma sharira*, the subtle body of our psychological activity and finally with the *sthula sharira*, the gross body that is our physical life. This oneness is the authentic next step of evolution fulfilling the urge towards perfection which is the distinguishing sign of man who is "something to be surpassed", the urge so long broken up by his ignorance into conflicting ideals, so long foiled of earthly satisfaction and therefore diverted to losing its visionary acuteness in some ineffable Beyond. By the oneness here and now of the three instrumental formulations of the Spirit Sri Aurobindo promises a different earth inhabited by a growing number of men made both inwardly and outwardly perfect and effecting ever-novel discoveries of the infinite Divine in art, philosophy, science, politics, society-structure and industry.

When the procession of disciples and pilgrims will offer garlands to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on August 15, it is to the vision and power of supramental creation at work amidst us that the offering will be done and in that gesture will lie the seed of man's birth into integral Godhead. Hence the birthday of Sri Aurobindo is the supreme festival of progressive humanity, the portent which the *Asura* dreads most and would strive most to nullify. It gives to the occasion of India's celebration of her Independence and to the strange occurrence of this date at more than one critical juncture of modern history their ultimate world-significance.



# THE DIVINE TRUTH-CONSCIOUSNESS

By SRI AUROBINDO

We are happy to be able to republish for the first time, from the pages of Sri Aurobindo's philosophical journal, "Arya", which ran from 1914 to 1921, the following three essays out of "The Synthesis of Yoga", throwing into luminous relief with clues from the past and from his own experience the main characteristics of the dynamic Supramental Consciousness that is in his Yoga the basis of integral transformation of man's self and nature.

## VIJNANA OR GNOSIS

For the perfect self-transcendence we have to draw up, the Upanishad has said, our mental conscious-being into the knowledge-self and to dwell in the divine knowledge by change into the knowledge-soul, the *vijnana-maya* Purusha. Seated on that level of the Vedic hill of ascent we shall be in quite a different plane of being from this material, this vital, this mental soul and nature of things which is our present view and experience of our soul-life and of the world. We shall be born into a new soul-status and put on a new nature; for according to the status of the soul is the status of the Prakriti. As the conscious-soul rises to a higher level of being, the nature also is elevated into a superior working, a wider consciousness, a vaster force, an intenser and purer joy of existence; but the transition from the mind-self to the knowledge-self is the great and the decisive transition in the Vedic Yoga. It is the shaking off of the last hold of the cosmic ignorance on our nature and its firm foundation in the infinite Truth of things. So long as we are in the triple formula of mind, life and body, our nature works upon the basis of the ignorance even when the soul reflects the knowledge in consciousness, it is unable to mobilise it rightly in force of action. The truth in its action may greatly increase, but it is pursued by a limitation, condemned to a divisibility which prevents it from working integrally in the power and knowledge of the infinite; its power may be immense compared with ordinary powers, but it is still subject to incapacity and there is no perfect correspondence between the force of the effective will and the light of the idea which inspires it; the light of the infinite Presence may be there in status, but the dynamis of the operations of our nature still belongs to the lower Prakriti and its triple modes of working. But the *vijnana* or gnosis is the very working of the infinite and divine nature; it is the divine knowledge one with the divine will in the delight of spontaneous and luminous self-fulfilment. By the gnosis, then, we change our human into a divine nature.

What then is this gnosis and how can we describe it? There are in the ordinary philosophical notions of the term *vijnana* two opposite errors which disfigure two opposite sides of the truth with regard to the gnosis. In one *vijnana* is used as synonymous with the *buddhi* and the Indian term *buddhi* as synonymous with the reason or discerning intellect. The classifications which accept this significance pass at once from a plane of pure intellect to a plane of pure spirit; they recognise no intermediate power, no diviner action of knowledge than the pure reason. In the other error it is supposed that *vijnana* is the consciousness which gives us the knowledge of the Infinite free from all ideation or with the ideation packed into one essence of thought, lost in the single and invariable idea of the One, the *chaitanyaghana* of the Upanishad. But the gnosis, the *vijnana* is not only this concentrated consciousness of the infinite Being, it is also the infinite knowledge of the play of the Infinite; it contains all ideation in itself though it is not limited by ideation. This ideation, however, is not in its character intellectual ideation, not what we call the reason; for that is mental in its methods, mental in its basis, mental in its acquisitions, but the ideation of the gnosis is supramental in its methods, its basis, its yield of thought-light. There is a relation, even a sort of broken identity between the two forms of thought, one indeed proceeds from the other; but they act on different planes and reverse each other's process. Even the purest reason, the most luminous rational intellectuality is not the gnosis.

Reason or intellect is only the lower *buddhi*, dependent for its action on the percepts of the sense-mind and the concepts of the mental intelligence. There is, indeed, a higher form of the *buddhi*, often called the intuitive mind or intuitive reason, which by its intuitions, inspirations, swift revelatory vision, luminous insight and discrimination seems to do the work of the reason with a higher power, a swifter action, a self-light of the truth which does not depend upon the sense-mind or its percepts and proceeds not by intelligent, but by visional concepts. This real intuition must be distinguished from another power of the reason which is sometimes confused with it, its power of reaching its conclusion by a bound and not by the ordinary steps of the logical mind. The logical reason proceeds step by step trying the sureness of each step like a man walking over unsure ground and testing by the touch of his foot each pace of soil that he perceives with his eye. This other process of the reason is a process of rapid insight or swift discernment which proceeds by a stride or leap, like a man leaping from one sure spot to another point of sure footing; he sees the space he covers in one compact and flashing view, but he does not distinguish or measure either by eye or touch its successions, features and circumstances.

This process has something of the sense of power of the intuition, something of its velocity, some appearance of its light and certainty, and we are apt to mistake it for the intuition. It is often thought that the intuition is nothing more than this rapid process in which the whole action of the logical mind is swiftly done or done half-consciously or subconsciously, but not at first deliberately worked out in its reasoned method. In its nature, however, this proceeding is quite different from the intuition; the power of its leap may end in a stumble, its swiftness may betray, its certainty is often an error. The validity of its conclusion must always depend on a subsequent verification by the evidence of the sense-perceptions or a rational linking of intelligent conceptions. But the intuition carries in itself its own guarantee of truth; it is sure and infallible within its limits, so long as it is pure intuition and does not admit into itself any mixture of sense-error or intellectual ideation; it may be verified by the reason or the sense-perception afterwards, but its truth does not depend on that verification. If the reason depending on its inferences contradicts it, it will be found in the end on ampler knowledge that the intuitional conclusion was correct and the rational and inferential conclusion mistaken. For the real intuition proceeds from the self-existent truth of beings and by that self-existent truth and not by any indirect, derivatory or dependent method of arriving at knowledge.

But even the intuitive reason is not the gnosis; it is only the light of the gnosis finding its way by flashes of illumination into the mentality. Its inspirations, revelations, intuitions, self-luminous discernings are messages from a higher knowledge-plane that make their way into our level of consciousness. This character of the intuitive mind sets a great difference between its action and the action of the self-contained gnosis. In the first place it acts by separate and limited illuminations and its truth is restricted to the often narrow reach or the one brief spot of knowledge lit up by that one lightning-flash. We see the action of the instinct in animals,—an automatic intuition in that sense-mind which is all that the animal has to rely on, since it does not possess the human light of the reason,—and we can observe that the marvellous truth of this instinct which seems so much surer than the reason, is limited to some particular and restricted utility it is intended to serve. When the mind of the animal tries to act beyond that restricted limit, it blunders in a much blinder way than the reason of man and has to learn with difficulty by a succession of sense-experiences. The mental intuition of the human being is a visional, not a sense intuition; it illumines the intelligence and not the sense-mind; it is self-conscious and luminous, not a half subconscious blind light; it is self-acting, but not mechanically automatic. But still it is restricted like the instinct, restricted to a particular purpose of will or knowledge, as is the instinct to a particular purpose of the life utility. When the intelligence tries to make use of it, to apply it, to add to it, it builds round it in its own characteristic fashion a mass of mixed truth and error; it may even, by foisting an element of sense-error and conceptual error into the substance of the intuition or coating it up in error, not merely deflect but deform its truth and convert it into a falsehood. At the best therefore the intuition gives us only a limited, though an intense light; at the worst, by our misuse of it, it may lead us into perplexities and confusions which the less ambitious intellectual reason avoids by remaining satisfied with its own safe and plodding method,—safe for the inferior purposes of the reason, though never a guide to the inner truth of things.

It is possible to cultivate and extend the use of the intuitive mind in proportion as we rely less predominantly upon the intellectual reason. We may train our mentality not, as it does now, to seize upon every separate flash of intuitive illumination and then precipitate our thought at once into a crystallising intellectual action around it, but to think in a stream of successive and connected intuitions. We shall be successful in proportion as we purify the intelligence itself and reduce in it the element of the material thought enslaved to the external appearances of things, of vital thought enslaved to wishes, desires, impulses of being, and of intellectual thought enslaved to our preferred, already settled or congenial ideas, conceptions, opinions, operations of intelligence and replace them by an intuitive sense or insight into appearances, an intuitive will, an intuitive ideation. This is difficult enough for our consciousness which is naturally bound by the triple cord of mentality, vitality corporeality,—the upper, middle and lower cord in the Vedic parable of the soul's bondage to the mixed truth and falsehood of appearances by which Çunahçepa was bound to the post of sacrifice.

But even if it were perfectly accomplished, still the intuitive mentality would not be the gnosis; it would only be its reflection. The difference, difficult enough to define except by symbols, may be expressed by taking the Vedic image in which the Sun represents the gnosis and the sky, mid-air\* and earth the mentality, vitality, corporeality of man. Living on the earth, climbing into the mid-air or even winging in the sky, the mental being, the *manomaya* Purusha, would still live in the rays of the sun and not in its bodily light; and he would see things as reflected in his organ of vision, deformed by its faults or limited in their truth by its restrictions. But the *vijnanamaya* Purusha lives in the Sun itself, in the very body and blaze of the light;\* he would know it self-luminously as his own being and he would see besides all that dwells in the rays of the sun, see the whole truth of the lower triplicity and each thing that is in it. He would see it not by reflection in a mental organ of vision, but with the Sun of gnosis itself as his eye,—the Sun, says the Veda, is the eye of the gods. The mental being, even in the intuitive mind, can perceive the truth only by reflection and subject to the restrictions and inferior capacity of the mental vision; the *vijnanamaya* would see it by the gnosis itself, from the very centre and outwelling fount of the truth, in its very form and by its own spontaneous and self-illuminating process. For the *vijnana* is the direct and divine as opposed to the indirect and human knowledge.

The nature of the gnosis can only be indicated intellectually by contrasting it with the nature of the intellectual mentality, and even then in phrases which do not illuminate unless aided by some amount of actual experience,—for what language forged by the reason can really express the suprarational? The mental reason proceeds from ignorance to truth, the gnosis has in itself the direct and immediate vision of the truth. The reason starts with appearances and labours, never or seldom losing at least a partial dependence on appearances, to arrive at the truth behind them; the gnosis starts from the truth and shows the appearances in the light of the truth. The reason proceeds by inference, it concludes; the gnosis proceeds by vision,—it sees and knows. As the physical eye sees and grasps the appearance of objects, so the gnosis sees and grasps the truth of things; and where the physical sense gets into relation with objects by contact, the gnosis gets into identity with things by oneness. Thus it is able to know all things as a man knows his own existence, directly. To the reason only what the senses give is direct knowledge, *pratyaksha*, the rest of truth is arrived at indirectly; to the gnosis all its truth is direct knowledge, *pratyaksha*. Therefore the truth gained by the intellect is an acquisition over which there hangs always a certain shadow of doubt, an incompleteness, a surrounding penumbra of night and ignorance or half-knowledge, a possibility of alteration or annulment by farther knowledge. The truth of the gnosis is free from doubt, self-evident, self-existent.

The reason has as its first instrument observation general, analytical, synthetic; it aids itself by comparison, contrast and analogy; it proceeds from experience to indirect knowledge by logical processes of inference, by deduction, by induction; it rests upon memory, reaches out beyond itself by imagination, secures itself by judgment; all is a process of groping and seeking. The gnosis does not seek, it possesses; or if it has to enlighten, it does not even then seek but reveals. In a consciousness rising from intelligence towards gnosis, imagination would be progressively replaced by truth-inspiration, judgment by a self-luminous discerning, the logical process from reasoning to conclusion by a swift intuitive proceeding which sees the conclusion or fact at once and all the evidence by which we arrive at it not as its evidence, but as its circumstances and relations seen in one comprehensive view; observation would be replaced by vision not merely of the thing, but its truth, and our uncertain memory by luminous possession of knowledge not as a store of acquisition, but as a thing always contained in one's own consciousness.

For while the reason proceeds from moment to moment of time losing and acquiring and losing again and acquiring again, the gnosis possesses time in one view and links past, present and future in their indivisible connections. The gnosis starts from the totality and sees parts, groups and details only in relation to the totality, while the mental reason cannot really see the totality at all and does not know fully any whole except by starting from analysis and synthesis of its parts, masses and details; otherwise its whole-view is always a vague or imperfect or a confused view. The reason

deals with processes and properties and tries in vain to form by them an idea of the thing in itself; the gnosis sees the thing in itself, its original and eternal nature and its processes and properties only as a self-expression of its nature. The reason dwells in the diversity and deals with things separately and treats each as a separate existence, as it deals with sections of Time and divisions of Space; it sees unity only in a sum or by elimination of diversity or as a general conception: the gnosis dwells in the unity and starts from the unity and it sees diversities only of a unity, it does not recognise any real division nor treat things separately as if they were independent of their real and original unity. The reason deals with the finite and is helpless before the infinite which it can conceive of readily only as an indefinite extension in which the finite acts; it can with difficulty conceive and cannot at all grasp the infinite in itself; but the gnosis lives in the infinite, starts always from the infinite and knows finite things only in their relation to the infinite and in the sense of the infinite.

If we would describe the gnosis, not thus imperfectly as it is in contrast with the reason, but as it is in itself, we can hardly speak of it except in figures and symbols. We must remember that the *vijnanamaya* level is not the supreme plane of our consciousness, but a middle or link plane interposed between the triune glory of the utter Spirit, the infinite existence, consciousness and bliss, and our lower triple being. Sachchidananda gathers up the light of his existence into the gnosis and pours it out as the divine knowledge, will and joy of being upon the soul, as if infinite light were gathered up into the compact orb of the sun and poured upon all that depends upon the sun. The gnosis is not only light but force, it is creative knowledge, self-effective truth of the divine Idea. This idea is not creative imagination, not something that creates in a void, but truth-light full of truth-force; it brings out what is latent in its being, it does not create a fiction that never was in being. As is the Idea, so is its ideation; the ideation of the gnosis is radiating light-stuff of the consciousness of being, each ray a truth; its will is a conscious force throwing the consciousness and substance of being into the infallible forms which embody the idea and work it out spontaneously and rightly according to its nature. Because of this creative force of the divine Idea, the Sun, the lord and symbol of the gnosis, is described in the Veda as the Light which is the father of all things, Surya Savitri, the Wisdom-Luminous who is the bringer-out into being. Its creation is inspired by the Ananda, the divine delight,—it is full of the joy of its own truth and power in the creating; therefore the world of the gnosis is the *ritam* and the *bhadrām*, the true and the happy creation, since all in it shares in its perfect joy. Divine knowledge, divine bliss received, concentrated, thrown out in action of knowledge, will and delight is the nature of Prakriti of the soul in *vijnana*.

Thus there are three powers of the *vijnana*. It knows and receives the infinite being, consciousness and bliss into itself and in its highest height it is the knowledge of infinite Sachchidananda; it concentrates all into the dense luminous consciousness, *chaitanayaghana* or *chidghana*, the seed-state of the divine consciousness in which all the principles of the divine being, all the truths of the divine conscious-idea and nature are contained; it brings or looses it out by effective ideation of the divine knowledge, will-force and delight into a universal harmony or rhythm of being. The mental Purusha rising into the *vijnanamaya* will therefore ascend into these three powers, turning by conversion into the powers of the gnosis its mental ideation into that of the divine knowledge, will-force and delight, turning its conscious stuff of mental nature and being into the *chidghana* or dense self-luminous consciousness from which the ideation proceeds, turning its conscious self into a *vijnana* self or Truth-self of infinite Sachchidananda; from that the whole *vijnanamaya* nature and activity proceed. These three movements are described in the Isha Upanishad as *vyūha*, the marshalling of the rays of the Sun of gnosis in the order of the Truth-consciousness, *samūha*, the gathering together of the rays into the body of the Sun of gnosis, and the vision of that Sun's fairest form of all in which the soul possesses its infinite oneness with the supreme Purusha,\* crying *So Aham*. God above and the soul dwelling in and one with the Divine,—the infinite power and truth of the Divine concentrated in the luminous nature of the soul's being,—the radiating activity of the divine knowledge, will and joy perfect in the natural action of its Prakriti,—this is the experience of the soul in gnosis.

## THE CONDITIONS OF GNOSIS

Knowledge is the first principle of the *Vijnana*, but knowledge is not its only power; like every other plane of being it founds itself upon that particular principle which is naturally the key of all its motions, but it also takes up all the powers of being and moulds and modifies their nature and working into conformity with its own original and dominant law. In the mental being, for example, mind-sense or intelligence is the original and dominant principle. The mental being is in his central and determining nature intelligence; a centre of intelligence, a massed movement of intelligence, a receptive and radiating action of intelligence. He has the intelligent sense of his own being, the intelligent sense of other existence than his own, the intelligent sense of his own nature and activities and the activities

of others, the intelligent sense of the nature of things and persons and their relations with himself and each other. That makes up his experience of existence. He has no other knowledge of existence, no knowledge of life and matter except as they make themselves sensible to him and capable of being seized by his intelligence; what he does not sense and conceive, is to him practically non-existent. Man is a mental being, but one cased in Matter and so has to start with the action of the physical senses which

\*Surya racmin vyūha samūha tejo yat te kalyanatamam rupam tat te pacyami yo'sau asau purushah so'ham asmi. The Veda describes the *vijnana* plane as *ritam satyam brīhat*, the Right, Truth, Vast, the same triple idea differently expressed. *Ritam* is the action of the divine knowledge, will and joy in the order of the truth, *satyam* the truth of being which so acts, *brīhat* the infinity of Sachchidananda out of which they proceed and in which they are founded.

\*So the Sun is called in the Veda, *ritam jyotih*.



are all channels of material contact, he does not start with the mind-sense; but even so he does not and cannot make use of anything conveyed by these physical organs until and unless they are taken hold of by the mind-sense and turned into stuff and value of his intelligent being. What in the lower world is a pranic, a nervous, a dynamic action and reaction, becomes in him sense of force, sense of desire, sense of will, sense of intelligent will-action or mentally conscious sense of force-action. His delight of being translates itself into sense of pleasure and its perversion pain, feeling-sensation of liking and disliking, intelligence of delight and failure of delight,—all phenomena of the mind-sense. That which is above him and around him, that in which he lives,—God, the universal being,—are non-existent and unreal to him until he gets the mental sense of the Infinite and an intelligent consciousness of the superself.

So the *vijnānamaya* being is in its nature truth-consciousness, a centre and circumference of the truth-vision of things, a massed movement or subtle body of gnosis, a receptive and radiating action of the truth-power of things according to the inner law of their being. This truth of things at which we arrive in the gnosis,—for from that it itself originally starts,—is a truth of unity, of oneness, unity originating diversity, unity in multiplicity, but still unity always, an indefeasible oneness. Therefore state of gnosis, the condition of *vijnānamaya* being, implies a self-identification of ourselves with all existence and with all existences, a universal pervasiveness, a universal comprehension. The *vijnānamaya* Purusha has normally the consciousness of being infinite, normally also the consciousness of containing the world in itself; it is not like the mental being normally bound to the consciousness of being contained in the world. Therefore the deliverance from ego is the first elementary step towards the being of the gnosis; so long as we live at all in the ego, it is idle to hope for this reality. The least reversion to ego-thought, ego-action, ego-will brings back the consciousness tumbling out of such gnostic Truth as it has attained into the falsehoods of the divided mind. A secure universality of being is the very basis of this higher consciousness; we have to feel ourselves one with all things and beings, to identify ourselves with them, to become aware of them as ourselves, their being as our own, their consciousness as our own, their energy as our own. We have to learn how to be one self with all.

This universality is impossible to achieve in its completeness so long as we feel ourselves to be a consciousness lodged in this individual mind, life and body. There has to be a certain elevation of the Purusha out of the physical and even the mental into the *vijnānamaya* body. Neither the brain or its corresponding mental "lotus" can remain the centre of our thinking, nor the heart or its corresponding 'lotus' can remain the centre of our sensational being. The conscious centre of being, thought and action rises out of the body and mind and takes its free station above them. We have no longer the sensation of living in the body, but of being above it as its lord, possessor or Ishwara and of encompassing it with a wider than the physical consciousness. We come to realise with a very living force of reality, normal and continuous, what the sages meant when they spoke of the soul carrying the body and said too that the soul is not in the body, but the body in the soul. From above and not from the brain we ideate, we will, the brain-action being only a response and movement of the physical machinery to the shock of the thought-force and will-force from above; from above all is originated; above, all that corresponds in gnosis to our present mental activity, takes place.

But this centre, this action is free, not bound, especially not involved in body or shut up in separate individuality. For we have a consciousness as it were diffused and extending everywhere and the centre is a mere convenience for individual action. The real nature of our conscious activities is universal, one with those of the universal being, proceeding from universality to a supple and variable individualisation. It is the awareness of an infinite being acting universally though with emphasis on an individual formation of its energies; it is not what we now understand by individuality. This state of consciousness is so abnormal to our present mode of being that to the rational man it may seem impossible or even a state of alienation; but even for the mental intelligence it vindicates itself by its greater calm, freedom, light, power, effectivity of will, verifiable truth of ideation. For it begins even on the higher levels of liberated mind, but rises to perfect self-possession only in the gnosis.

The infinite has to become to us the primal, the actual reality, it has to become impossible for us to think of or realise the finite apart from our fundamental sense of the infinite, in which alone the finite can live, can form itself, can have any reality. So long as the finite is to our consciousness the first fact, the foundation of all our thinking, feeling and willing, the normal reality from which we can rise occasionally or frequently to an idea and sense of the infinite, we are very far from the gnosis. The infinite on the contrary has to be our normal consciousness of being, its first fact, the foundation from which everything finite forms itself, the origination of all our thought, will and delight. But this infinite is not only an infinite of pervasion or extension in which everything forms and happens; behind that the *vijnānamaya* is always aware of a spaceless infinite, the essential being of Sachchidananda and the highest self of our being. This infinite we may first feel as an infinity above us to which we attempt to rise and an infinity around us into which we strive to dissolve our separate existence; afterwards we must rise into it, break out of the ego into its largeness, and then that also can take increasing possession of our lower being

until it refashions even our lowest and perversest activities into the truth of the Vijnana.

This is the basis and when it is achieved, then only can we progress to the normality of the supramental ideation; for that is the play of the supreme light and, though we may receive or reflect it even before we rise into the gnosis, we cannot command or wholly possess it until we become the being of the supreme light, until our consciousness is transformed into that consciousness; for according to the nature of our consciousness will be the normal strain of our ideation. This ideation of the gnosis has already been described; but it has to be emphasised that it is not confined to a higher thought or the action of a sort of divine reason. It takes up all our present means of knowledge immensely extended, active and effective where they are now debarred, blind, infructuous, and turns them into a high and intense perceptive activity of the Vijnana. Thus it takes up our sense action and illumines it even in its ordinary field so that we get a true sense of things; but it also enables the mind-sense to have a direct perception of the inner as well as the outer phenomenon, to feel and receive or perceive, for instance, the thoughts, feelings, sensations, the nervous reactions of the object on which it is turned.\* It uses also the subtle senses as well as the physical and saves them from their errors; it gives us the knowledge, the experience of planes of existence other than the material to which our ordinary mentality is ignorantly attached and it enlarges the world for us. It transforms similarly the sensations and gives them their full intensity as well as their full holding-power; for in our normal mentality the full intensity is impossible because the power to hold and sustain vibrations beyond a certain point is denied to it, mind and body would both break under the shock or the prolonged strain. It takes up too the element of knowledge in our feelings and emotions,—for our feelings too contain a power of knowledge and a power of effectuation which we do not recognise and do not properly develop,—and delivers them at the same time from their limitations and from their errors and perversions. For in all things the gnosis is the Truth, the Right, the highest Law, *devānām adabdhāni vratāni*.

Knowledge and Force or Will—for all conscious force is will, are the twin sides of the action of consciousness. In our mentality they are divided. The idea comes first, the will comes stumbling after it or rebels against it or is used as its imperfect tool with imperfect results; or else the will starts up first with a blind or half-seeing idea in it and works out something in confusion of which we get the right understanding afterwards. There is no oneness, no full understanding between them; or else there is no perfect correspondence of initiation with effectuation. Nor is the individual will in harmony with the universal; it tries to reach beyond it or falls short of it or deviates from and strives against it. It knows not the times and seasons of the Truth, nor its degrees and measures. The Vijnana takes up the will and puts it first into harmony and then into oneness with the truth of the supramental knowledge. In this knowledge the idea in the individual is one with the idea in the universal, because both are brought back to the truth of the supreme knowledge-will. The gnosis takes up not only our intelligent will, but our wishes, desires, even what we call the lower desires, the instincts, the impulses, the reachings out of sense and sensation and it transforms them. They cease to be wishes and desires, because they cease first to be personal and then cease to be that struggling after the ungrasped which we mean by craving and desire; they are no longer blind or half-blind reachings out of the instinctive or intelligent mentality, but are transformed into a various action of the Truth-will; and that will acts with an inherent knowledge of the right measures of its decreed action and therefore with an effectivity unknown to our mental willing. Therefore too in the action of the *vijnānamaya* will there is no place for sin; for all sin is an error of the will, a desire and act of the Ignorance.

When desire ceases entirely, grief and all inner suffering also cease. The Vijnana takes up not only our parts of knowledge and will, but our parts of affection and delight and changes them into action of the divine Ananda. For if knowledge and force are the twin sides of the action of consciousness, delight, Ananda,—which is something higher than what we call pleasure,—is the stuff of consciousness and the natural result of the interaction of knowledge and will, force and self-awareness. Both pleasure and pain, both joy and grief are deformations caused by the disturbance of harmony between our consciousness and the force it applies, between our knowledge and will, a breaking up of their oneness by a descent to a lower plane in which they are limited, divided in themselves, restrained from their full and proper action, at odds with other-force, other-consciousness, other-knowledge, other-will. The Vijnana sets this to rights by the power of its truth and wholesale restoration to oneness and harmony, to the Right and highest Law. It takes up all our emotions and turns them into various form of love and delight, even our hatreds, repulsions, causes of suffering. It finds out or reveals the meaning they missed and by missing which they became the perversions they are, and it restores our whole nature to the eternal Good. It deals similarly with our perceptions and sensations and reveals all the delight that they seek, but in its truth, not in any perversion and wrong seeking and wrong reception; it teaches even our lower impulses to lay hold on the Divine and Infinite in the appearances after which they run. All this is done not in the values of the lower being, but by a lifting up of the mental, vital, material into the inalienable purity as well as the natural intensity, in a word the continual ecstasy, one yet

manifold, of the divine Ananda.

Thus the being of Vijnana is in all its activities a play of perfected knowledge-power, will-power, delight-power, raised to a higher than the mental, vital and bodily level, all-pervasive, universalised, freed from egoistic personality and individuality. For it is the play of a higher Self, a higher consciousness and therefore a higher force and higher delight of being, in the purity, in the right, in the truth of the superior or divine being.

Its powers may often seem to be what are called in ordinary Yogic parlance siddhis, by the Europeans occult powers, shunned and dreaded by devotees and by many Yogins as snares, stumbling blocks, diversions from the true seeking after the Divine. But that is because they are sought in the lower being, abnormally, by the ego for an egoistic satisfaction. In the Vijnana they are neither occult nor siddhis, but the open, unforced and normal play of its nature. The Vijnana is the power and action of the divine Being in its divine nature, and when this acts through the individual lifted to that plane, it fulfils itself unperverted, without fault

## GNOSIS AND ANANDA

The ascent to the gnosis and the possession of the gnostic consciousness raise both the soul of man and his life in the world to a glory of light and power and bliss and infinity which seems in comparison with the lame action and limited realisations of the mental being the very status and dynamic of an absolute perfection. And it is perfection, which nothing before it has been,—for even the highest spiritual realisation on the plane of mentality has in it something top-heavy, one-sided and exclusive, and the widest is marred by its imperfect power of self-expression in life,—but in comparison with what is beyond it, it is only a relative perfection. Or, it is the last step from which we can securely ascend into the absolute infinities which are the origin and the goal of the incarnating spirit.

For the Upanishad tells us that after the knowledge-self is possessed and all the lower selves have been drawn up into it, the last step of all—though one might ask, is it eternally the last or only the last practically conceivable or at all necessary for us now?—is to take up that also into the Bliss-self and there complete the spiritual ascension. Ananda, the Bliss, is the essential nature of the spirit; there it finds its true self, its essential consciousness, the absolute power of its being. Therefore the soul's entry into the absolute, unlimited, unconditional bliss of the spirit is the infinite perfection and the infinite liberation. This bliss can be enjoyed indeed even on the lower planes where the Purusha plays with his modified and qualified Nature, on the plane of matter, on the plane of life, on the plane of mind as well as on or above the gnostic truth-plane of knowledge. For each of these principles contains in itself the whole potentiality of all the other six notes of our being and each plane of Nature can have its own perfection of these notes under its own conditions. Even the physical soul in man, the *annamaya purusha*, can reflect and enter into the self of Sachchidananda either by a reflection of the Soul in physical Nature, its bliss, power and infinity, or by losing itself in the Self within; the result is either a glorified sleep of the physical mind in which the physical being forgets itself or else moves about like a thing inert in the hands of Nature, *jadavat*, like a leaf in the wind, or otherwise a state of pure and free irresponsibility of action, *bālavat*, a divine childhood. But this comes without the higher glories of knowledge and delight which belong to the same status upon a more exalted level; it is an inert realisation of Sachchidananda in which there is no mastery of the Prakriti by the Purusha. So too the life soul in man, *prānamaya purusha*, can reflect and enter into the self of Sachchidananda by a reflection of the Soul in universal Life or by losing itself in the Self within. Here again the result is either a state of sheer self-oblivion or else an action driven irresponsibly by the life nature, the great world-energy in its vitalistic dance, so that the outer being acts either in a God-possessed frenzy careless of itself and the world, *unmattavat*, or with an entire disregard of the conventions and proprieties of fitting human action, *pisachavat*,—the divine maniac or else the divine demoniac. Here too there is no mastery of nature, but only a joyful static possession by the Self within and an unregulated dynamic possession by the physical or the vital Nature without.

So too again the mind-soul in man, *manomaya purusha*, reflects and enters into the self of Sachchidananda by a reflection of the Soul as it mirrors itself in the nature of pure universal mind or by absorption in the Self within. Here there is either the cessation of mind and action or a desire-free unbound action, that of the soul alone in the world and careless of all human ties, the eremite soul, or that of the soul which lives in relations of pure love and ecstasy with all, the saint-soul. The mental being, may however, realise the Self in all three planes together, and then he is all these things at once or alternately or successively; or he may transform the lower forms into manifestations of the higher state, the childlikeness, the inert irresponsibility, the divine madness and carelessness of all rules and proprieties of the ecstatic saint or the wandering eremite. Here too there is no mastery of its world-Nature by the soul, but a double possession, by the freedom and delight of the infinite soul within and without by the happy, natural and unregulated play of the mind-Nature. But since the mental being is capable of receiving the gnosis in a way in which the life soul and physical soul cannot receive it, with knowledge though only the limited knowledge of a mental response, he may to a certain extent govern by it

or egoistic reaction or diversion from the possession of the Divine. For there the individual is no longer the ego, but the Jiva in the higher divine nature, *para prakritir jivabhuta*, the supreme and universal Self seen in the play of multiple individuality but with self-knowledge and in the truth of its divine Shakti.

In the Vijnana the right relation and action of Purusha and Prakriti are found, because there they become unified and the Divine is no longer veiled. All is his action. The Jiva no longer says "I think, I act, I desire, I feel," he does not even say like the sadhaka striving after unity but before he has reached it, "As appointed by Thee seated in my heart, I act." For the heart, the centre of the mental consciousness is no longer the centre of origination but only a channel; he is rather aware of the Divine seated above, lord of all, *adhithita*, as well as acting within, and seated himself in that higher being, *parārdhe, paramasyām parvati*, he can say truly and boldly, "God himself by his Prakriti knows, acts, loves, takes delight by my apparent individuality and fulfils there in its higher and divine measure the multiple *lila* which the Infinite plays in the universality of its being."

his outer action. But the mind can arrive only at a compromise between the infinite within and the finite nature without; it cannot pour the infinity of its inner being, power and bliss with any sense of fullness into its always inadequate external action: still it is content and free because it is the Lord within who takes up the responsibility of the action, the guidance and the consequence.

The gnostic soul, the *vijnānamaya purusha*, has the fullness, the sense of plenitude of the Godhead in its action, the free, splendid and royal march of the Infinite transforming all life into a symbol of the eternal Light and the eternal Fire and the eternal Wine of the nectar,—knowledge, power, bliss. It possesses the infinite of the Self and the infinite of Nature. It does not so much lose as find its nature self in the Self of being; for while the other planes of the mental being are those of man finding God in himself and himself in God, the gnosis is rather God self-possessed in the human symbol. Therefore the gnostic soul does not so much reflect as identify itself with and possess the soul in the truth-Nature. In the gnosis the dualism of Purusha and Prakriti as two separate powers complementary to each other,—the great truth of the Sankhya philosophy which is also the practical truth of our present natural being,—disappears in their biune entity. The Truth-being realises the Hara-Gauri\* of the Indian symbolistic iconology. The truth-soul does not arrive at self-oblivion in the Infinite, but at eternal self-possession in the Infinite. Its action is not irregular, but a perfect self-control in an infinite freedom. For in the lower planes the soul is naturally subject to Nature and the regulating principle is found in the lower nature, so that all regulation depends on the acceptance of a strict subjection to the law of the finite. If the soul there simply withdraws into the infinite, it loses its natural centre from which all its external being was till then regulated and finds no other; the Nature dances in the gusts and falls of the universal energy, acting on the individual system rather than in that system, or strays in the wild steps of an irresponsible ecstasy. If on the other hand it moves towards the discovery of a divine centre of control through which the Infinite can consciously govern its action in the individual, it is moving towards the gnosis where that centre pre-exists. It is when it arrives in the gnosis that the Purusha becomes the master of the Nature, because force or will there is the exact counterpart, the perfect dynamis of the divine knowledge, and that knowledge is not merely the eye of the witness but the immanent gaze of the Ishwara dwelling as the governing power, a power not to be hedged in or denied, in every impulsion and every action.

The gnosis does not indeed reject the realisation on the lower planes, but it possesses them under its own conditions. The gnostic soul is the child, but the king-child;\*\* for here is the royal and eternal childhood whose toys are the worlds and all universal Nature the garden of the playing. It takes up the condition of divine inertia, not that of the subject soul driven by Nature as the breath of the Lord, but of the Nature-Soul driven by the bliss of the mastering Purusha, so that in its biune being of Purusha-Prakriti it is as if a flaming Sun and body of divine light self-carried in its orbit by its own inner consciousness and power at one with the universal. Its madness is the ecstasy of a supreme consciousness and power vibrating with an infinite sense of freedom and intensity in its divine life-movements, its action supra-rational and therefore to the rational mind, which has not the key, a colossal madness; but yet this madness is the very method of the Lord of the worlds which no intellectual interpretation can fathom,—a dance this also, a whirl of mighty energies, but with the Master of the dance holding the hands of His energies and keeping them to the circles of the Rasa-lila. Nor is the gnostic soul bound any more than the divine demoniac by conventions and proprieties of the normal human life, the rules through which it makes some shift to accommodate itself with the dualities of the lower nature, guide itself among its contractions, avoid its stumbling blocks, foot with gingerly care around its

\* The biune body of the Lord and his Spouse, Ishwara and Shakti, the right half male, the left half female.

\*\* So Heraclitus, "The Kingdom of the Child."



pitfalls. Its life is abnormal, free to all the hardships of a soul dealing fearlessly and even violently with Nature, but yet is all governed by the law of the Truth, by the law therefore of the self-possessed Knowledge, Love, Delight, Unity. It seems abnormal only because its rhythm is not measurable by the faltering feats of the mind.

If it is so, what then is the necessity of a still higher step and what difference is there between the soul in gnosis and the soul in the Bliss? None essentially, but still a difference, almost a reversal in position. On all planes the Ananda can be found, because everywhere it exists and is the same; but when found in the lower planes, it is by a sort of dissolution into it of the pure mind or the life-sense or the physical consciousness; and it is, as it were, itself diluted by the dissolved form and held in the dilution. The gnosis has on the contrary a dense light of essential consciousness\* in which the fullness of the Ananda can be possessed. When its form is dissolved into the Ananda itself, it undergoes a change by which the soul is carried up into its last and absolute freedom; for it casts itself into the absolute being of the spirit and its entirely self-existent bliss. The gnosis has that indeed as the conscious source of all its activities, possesses it as the base of its being, but in its action it stands forth from it as its operation, the rhythmical working of its activities. Gnosis is the divine Knowledge-Will of the divine Consciousness-Force, Prakriti-Purusha, full of the delight of the divine being; but in the Ananda the knowledge goes back into pure self-consciousness, the will dissolves into pure transcendent force, both are taken up into pure delight of being. What was the basis of the gnostic being, is the self-field of the Ananda.

This takes place because there is here completed the transition to the absolute unity of which the gnosis is the decisive step, but not the final resting-place. In the gnosis the soul is aware of its infinity and lives in it, yet it lives also in a working centre for the individual play of the Infinite. It realises its unity with all beings, but it keeps a distinction without difference by which it can have also the contact with them,—that distinction for the joy of contact which in the mind becomes not only difference, but in its self-experience division from our other selves, in its spiritual being a loss of self one with us in others and a reaching after that, in life a compromise between egoistic self-absorption and a blind seeking out for the lost unity. Even in its infinite-consciousness, the gnostic soul creates a sort of voluntary limitation; it has even its particular luminous aura of being, though beyond that it identifies itself with all being. But in the Ananda all is reversed. The centre disappears; in the bliss nature there is no centre, nor any voluntary or imposed circumference, but all is one equal being. The bliss soul finds and feels itself everywhere; it has no mansion, is *aniketa*, or has the all for its mansion, or, if it likes, it has all things for its many mansions. All other selves are entirely its own selves, in action as well as in being; the joy of contact in oneness become altogether the joy of absolute identity. Existence is no longer formulated in the terms of the Knowledge, because the known and knowledge and the knower are wholly one self and there is no need of what we call knowledge. All the consciousness is of bliss of being, all power is the power of bliss, all forms and activities are forms and activities of bliss. In this absolute truth of its being the soul lives, here deformed by contrary phenomena, there brought back and transfigured into their reality.

The soul lives, it is not abolished. For on every plane of our being the same principle holds; the soul may fall asleep in a trance of self-absorption, may live in the highest glory of its own plane,—for the Ananda it is the Anandaloka, Brahmaloaka, Vaikuntha, Goloka of various Indian systems,—or may turn upon the lower worlds to fill them with its own light and power. The Divine on the Ananda plane is not incapable of the world-play or self-debarred from it. On the contrary, as the Upanishad insists, the Ananda is the true creative principle; from this divine Bliss all takes birth, \*\*in it all is pre-existent as absolute truth of being which the Vijnana brings out and subjects to voluntary limitation by the Idea and the law of the Idea. But in the Ananda all law ceases and there is an absolute freedom. It is above all principles and the enjoyer of all principles in one and the same motion, above all gunas and the enjoyer of infinite gunas, above all forms and the enjoyer of all forms. That is what the spirit transcendent and universal is, and to be one in bliss with the transcendent and universal spirit is for the soul to be that and nothing less. Necessarily, since there is here the absolute and the play of absolute, it is ineffable by any of the conceptions of our mind or signs of the phenomenal or ideal realities of which mind-conceptions are the figures in our intelligence; for these realities are themselves only relative symbols of those absolutes. The symbol may give an idea of the thing itself, but when we get beyond to the thing which it symbolises, we transcend ideas and transcend even the ideal realities.

Our first absorbing impulse when we become aware of something entirely beyond what we are and know and are powerfully attracted by it, is to get away from the present actuality into that higher reality. The extreme form of this attraction is the condemnation of the lower as an illusion and the aspiration to *laya* or *nirvana* in the beyond,—the passion for dissolution, immersion, extinction. But the real *laya* or *nirvana* is the

\* Chidghana.

\*\* Therefore the world of the Ananda is called the Janaloka, in the double sense of birth and delight.

release of all that is bindingly characteristic of the lower into the larger being of the higher reality. We find in the end that not only is the higher reality the cause of all the rest, but that it embraces and exists in all the rest; only, by possessing it, all is transformed in our soul-experience into the superior value. Finally, we get to the absolute and its supreme values which are the absolutes of all. We then lose the passion for release, *mumukshutwa*, which till then actuated us, because we have got to that which is ever free and is neither attracted into attachment by what binds us now nor afraid of what to us seems to be bondage. Without the loss of this passion there is no absolute liberation. The Divine attracts the soul by various lures which are all of them its relative conceptions of bliss; all are the soul's way of seeking for the Ananda. First it is the lure of an earthly reward of material, intellectual, ethical or other joy in the terrestrial mind and body; secondly, there is the hope of a heavenly bliss, much greater than these earthly rewards, but the conception of heaven rises in altitude and purity till it reaches the pure idea of the eternal presence of God or delightful union with Him; thirdly, we get the subtlest of all lures, escape from worldly or heavenly joys and sorrows and from all phenomenal things, a Nirvana, a self-dissolution in the Absolute, the Ananda of cessation and peace. But in the end all these toys of the mind have to be transcended, the fear of birth and the desire of escape from birth have entirely to fall away from us. For, as the Upanishad declares, the soul realising oneness has no sorrow or shrinking and the soul realising the bliss of the Brahman, has nothing to fear from anything whatsoever. Fear and desire and sorrow are diseases of the mind born of its sense of division and limitation. But the Ananda is free from all these maladies.

The bliss soul is not bound by birth or by non-birth, by desire of the Knowledge or fear of the Ignorance. It has already had and transcended the Knowledge; it can play with the Ignorance without being imbued with it; it can descend into birth without being chained to the revolutions of the wheel of Nature. It knows besides the purpose and law of the birth-series. That law is for the soul to rise from plane to plane and substitute always the rule of the higher for the rule of the lower play even down to the material field. The bliss-soul does not disdain either to help that ascent from above or to descend down the stairs of God into the material birth and there contribute the power of its own bliss nature to the upward pull of the divine forces. Man, generally, cannot indeed ascend yet to the bliss nature; he has still to secure himself on the higher mental altitudes, to ascend from them to the gnosis; but he can receive its power into his soul in greater or less degree. In that lie his highest capacities.

And what would be the bliss nature in man? First, to be one with all beings in bliss of being; and since love is the human symbol of bliss-unity, to approach this oneness by the way of universal love, a human love at first, a divine love afterwards. Secondly, to be one in bliss with all the world-play and banish from the soul the sorrow and fear, the hunger and pain of the darkened mental being. Thirdly, to get that power of the bliss-freedom in which all the conflicting principles of our being shall be unified in their absolute values; so that all evil shall perforce become good, the universal beauty of the all-beautiful take possession, every darkness be converted into a pregnant glory of the light and the discords which the mind creates between Truth and Good and Beauty, Power and Love and Knowledge disappear on their eternal summit of unity.

The Purusha in mind, life and body is divided from Nature and subject to her dualities; in the gnosis he is biune with her and finds as master their reconciliation and harmony by their essential unity; in the Ananda he is one with the Prakriti and no longer only biune with her. There is no longer the play of Nature with the soul; but all is the play of the soul with itself in its own nature of bliss. This is the supreme mystery, the highest secret, simple to itself, however difficult and complex to our mental conceptions. It is the free infinity of the self-delight of Sachchidananda. The play of the divine child, the *ras lila* of the Lover are its mystic soul-symbols.

## Spirit's Harvest

In the far dark of being, ere the flame  
Burst through time-rocks and leaped  
To immortality and the conscious sun, there came  
To the fallow field of my earth, God's winds that reaped  
The spirit's harvest in the seed unsown:  
All the wild night's unstarred, unknown  
Gold seedlings swept into furrows of light,  
Planted anew in pure gold clay, and the raining suns and moons  
and stars

Fed their delight....

And now the flames burst through to meet  
The gold of the conscious sun:

O Wheat

Of fire and gold, when this new harvest's done,  
The stubble and chaff shall also be  
Golden unto eternity.

TEHMI

# STEPS TOWARDS TRANSFORMATION

SOME TALKS BY THE MOTHER, AS I REMEMBER THEM—EDITOR

People are so unwilling to recognise anything that expresses the Divine that they are ever on the alert to pick faults, discover apparent defects and so reduce what is high to their own level. They are simply furious at being surpassed and when they do succeed in finding superficial "shortcomings" they are mightily pleased. But they forget that if they confront even the Divine, when Its presence is on the earth, with their crude physical mind they are bound to meet only what is crude. They cannot hope to see what they are themselves incapable of seeing or unwilling to see. They are sure to misjudge the Divine if they consider the surface-aspect of Its actions, for they will never understand that what seems similar to human activity is yet altogether dissimilar and proceeds from a source which is non-human.

The Divine, manifesting Itself for earth-work, appears to act as men do but really does not. It is not possible to evaluate It by such standards of the obvious and the apparent. But men are utterly in love with their own inferiority and cannot bear to submit to or admit a higher reality. This desire to find fault, this malicious passion to criticise and doubt what something in oneself tells one to be a higher reality is the very stamp of humanity—it marks out the merely human. Wherever, on the other hand, there is a spontaneous admiration for the true, the beautiful, the noble, there is something divine expressed. You should know it for certain that it is the psychic being, the soul in you which is being contacted by your physical consciousness when your heart leaps out to worship and admire what you feel to be of a divine origin.

The moment you are in front of what you feel to be such, you should be moved to tears of joy. It is the mean creature who stops to reflect: "Yes, it is something great but it would be worth admiring if it fell to my lot, if I were the happy possessor of this quality, the instrument of this superior manifestation." Why should you bother about your ego when the main concern is that the Divine should reveal Itself in whatever manner and wherever possible? You should feel fulfilled when It is thus expressed, you should be able to burst the narrow bonds of your miserable personality, and soar up in unselfish joy. This joy is the true sign that your soul has awakened and has sensed the truth. It is only then that you can open to the influence of the descending truth and be shaped by it. I remember occasions when I used to be reduced to tears on seeing even children, even babies do something that was most divinely beautiful and simple. Feel that joy and you will be able to profit by the Divine's presence amongst you.

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Here is the flower we have called "Aspiration from the Physical for the Divine's Love." By the Physical I mean the physical consciousness, the most ordinary outward-going consciousness, the normal consciousness of most human beings, which sets such great store by comfort, good food, good clothes, happy relationships etc., instead of aspiring for the higher things. Aspiration from the physical for the Divine's love implies that the physical asks for nothing else save that it should feel how the Divine loves it. It realises that all its usual satisfactions are utterly insufficient. But there cannot be a compromise: if the physical wants the Divine's Love it must want that alone and not say, "I shall also have the Divine's Love while I keep myself attached to my other needs and enjoyments..."

The fundamental seat of aspiration whence it radiates or manifests in one part of the being or another is the psychic centre. When I speak of aspiration from the physical I mean that the very consciousness in you which hankers after material comfort and well-being should of itself, without being compelled by the higher parts of your nature, ask exclusively for the Divine's Love. Usually you have to show it the Light by means of your higher parts; surely this has to be done persistently, else the physical would never learn and it would take Nature's common round of ages before it learns by itself. Indeed the round of Nature is intended to show it all possible sorts of satisfactions and by exhausting them convince it that none of them can really satisfy it and that what it is at bottom seeking is a divine satisfaction. In Yoga we hasten this slow process of Nature and insist on the physical consciousness seeing the truth and learning to recognise and want it. But how to show it the truth? Well, just as you bring a light into a dark room. Illumine the darkness of your physical consciousness with the intuition and aspiration of your more refined parts and keep on doing so till it realises how futile and unsatisfactory is its hunger for the low ordinary things and turns spontaneously towards the truth. When it does turn, your whole life will be changed—the experience is unmistakable.

When I as a child used to complain to my mother about food or any such small matter she would always tell me to go and do my work or pursue my studies instead of bothering about trifles. She would ask me if I had the complacent idea that I was born for comfort. "You are born to realise the highest Ideal," she would say and send me packing. She was quite right, though of course her notion of the highest Ideal was rather poor by our standards. We are all born for the highest Ideal: therefore, whenever in our Ashram some petty request for more comfort and material happiness is refused, it is for your own good and for making you fulfil what you are here for. The refusal is actually a favour inasmuch as you are thereby considered worthy to stand before the highest Ideal and be shaped according to

As I have often been questioned about it, I shall touch briefly on the meaning of true humility, supramental plasticity and spiritual rebirth. Humility is that state of consciousness in which, whatever is the realisation, you know the infinite is still in front of you. The rare quality of selfless admiration about which I have spoken to you is but another face of true humility; for it is sheer arrogance that refuses to admire and is complacent with its own petty achievements, forgetting the infinite which is always ahead of it. However, you need to be humble not only when you have not anything substantial or divine in you but even when you are on the path of transformation. Paradoxical though it may sound, the Divine who is absolutely perfect is at the same time absolutely humble—humble as none else can ever be. He is not occupied in admiring Himself: though He is the All He ever seeks to find Himself in what is not-Himself—that is why He has created in His own being what seems to be a colossal not-Himself, this phenomenal world. He has passed into a form in which He has to discover endlessly in time the infinite contents of that which He possesses entirely in the eternal consciousness.

One of the greatest victories of this ineffable humility of God will be the transformation of Matter which is apparently the most undivine. Supramental plasticity is an attribute of finally transformed Matter. The Supramental body which has to be brought here has four main attributes: lightness, adaptability, plasticity and luminosity. When the physical body is thoroughly divinised, it will feel as if it were always walking on air, there will be no heaviness or *tamas* or unconsciousness in it. There will also be no end to its power of adaptability: in whatever condition it is placed it will immediately prove equal to the demands made on it because its full consciousness will drive out all that inertia and incapacity which usually makes Matter a drag on the Spirit. Supramental plasticity will enable it to stand the attack of every hostile force which strives to pierce it: it will present no dull resistance to the attack but on the contrary be so pliant as to nullify the force by giving way to it to pass off. Thus it will suffer no harmful consequences and the most deadly attacks will leave it unscathed. Lastly, it will be turned into the stuff of light, each cell will radiate the supramental glory. Not only those who are developed enough to have their subtle sight open but the ordinary man too will be able to perceive this luminosity. It will be an evident fact to each and all, a permanent proof of the transformation to convince even the most sceptical.

The bodily transformation will be the supreme spiritual rebirth—an utter casting away of all the ordinary past. For spiritual rebirth means the constant throwing away of our previous associations and circumstances and proceeding to live as if at each virgin moment we started life anew. It is to be free of what is called Karma, the stream of our past actions: in other words, a liberation from the bondage of Nature's common activity of cause and effect. When this cutting away of the past is triumphantly accomplished in the consciousness, all those mistakes, blunders, errors, follies which, still vivid in our recollection, cling to us like leeches sucking our life-blood, drop away, leaving us most joyfully free. It is not a mere matter of thought, this freedom: it is the most solid, practical, material fact. We really are free, nothing binds us, nothing affects us, there is no obsession of responsibility. If we want to counteract, annul or outgrow our past, we cannot do it by mere repentance or suchlike things, we must forget that the untransformed past has ever been and enter into an enlightened state of consciousness which breaks loose from all moorings. To be reborn means to enter, first of all, into our psychic consciousness where we are one with the Divine and eternally free from the reactions of Karma. Without becoming aware of the psychic, it is not possible to do so; but once we are securely conscious of the true soul in us which is always surrendered to the Divine, all bondage ceases. Then incessantly life begins afresh, then the past no longer cleaves to us. To give you an idea of the final height of spiritual rebirth I may say that there can be a constant experience that actually the whole universe disappears at every instant and is at every instant newly created!

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The Imagination is really the power of mental formation. When this power is put at the service of the Divine, it is not only formative but also creative. There is, however, nothing like an unreal formation, because every image is a reality on the mental plane. The plot of a novel, for instance, is all there on the mental plane—existing independently of the physical. Each of us is a novelist to a certain extent and possesses the capacity to make forms on that plane; and in fact a good deal of our life embodies the products of our imagination. Every time you indulge your imagination in an unhealthy way, giving a form to your fears and anticipating accidents and misfortunes, you are undermining your own future. On the other hand, the more optimistic your imagination, the greater the chance of your realising your aim. Monsieur Coué got hold of this potent truth and cured hundreds of people by simply teaching them to imagine themselves out of misery. He once related the case of a lady whose hair was falling off. She began to suggest to herself that she was improving every day and that her hair was surely growing. By constantly imagining it her hair really began to grow and even reached an enviable length owing to still further auto-suggestion. The power of mental formation is most

*Continued on page after next*



# THE MOTHER ON BEAUTY

By RISHABHCHAND

"In the world of forms a lack of Beauty is a fault as great as a lack of Truth in the world of ideas. For Beauty is the homage which Nature renders to the supreme Master of the universe; Beauty is the divine language in the form. A consciousness of the Divine which is not externally translated by an understanding and an expression of Beauty would be an incomplete consciousness.

"But true Beauty is as difficult to discover, to understand and, above all, to live as any other expression of the Divine; this discovery and this expression demand as much impersonality and abdication of egoism as the discovery of Truth or Bliss. Pure Beauty is universal, and one must be universal in order to see and recognise it.

"O Lord of Beauty, how many faults I have committed against Thee, how many faults I still commit!... Give me a perfect understanding of Thy Law, so that I may no longer fall short of it. Love would be incomplete without Thee; Thou art one of its most perfect ornaments, Thou art one of its most harmonious smiles. Sometimes I have misunderstood Thy role, but in the depth of my heart I have always loved Thee. And even the most arbitrary, the most radical doctrines have not been able to extinguish the fire of the cult which, since my childhood, I have vowed to Thee.

"Thou art not what a vain people think of Thee; Thou are not exclusively attached to any particular form of life; it is possible to awaken Thee, to make Thee shine in every form; but for this one must have discovered Thy secret.

"O Lord of Beauty, give me a perfect understanding of Thy Law that I may not fail in it and that Thou mayst become in me the harmonious crown of the Lord of Love."

January 29, 1917

(Prayers & Meditations of the Mother)

Here we have a most comprehensive and revealing gospel of beauty. It destroys the facile delusions of aesthetic dilettantism, exposes the hollowness of the theory of art for art's sake, makes short work of the tall claims of Realism to hold a mirror to life and Nature, and points to an ecstatic fullness of enjoyment and expression of beauty, such as only the rare Gods command. It is a gospel which accords with the highest concepts of aesthetic idealism and yet goes beyond them in its integralising sweep and firm hold of the essentials of a perfected, divinised existence.

"In the world of forms a lack of Beauty is a fault as great as a lack of Truth in the world of ideas." Ideas, as we know them, are at once approaches to and reflections of the various aspects of Truth as envisaged by the intelligence of man. Truth is their sap and essence, light and leaven. If we abstract Truth from ideas, they become a mere jumble of cobwebs. Their patterns and gloss may fascinate us, but they are unsubstantial, almost illusory. They inspire nothing, create nothing, and lead their votaries nowhere. Similarly, forms are a channel or an expressive medium of beauty. The very reason of their existence is revelation. Beauty is the radiating core of forms. What truth is in the world of ideas, what Love is in the world of the psychic, what Power is in the world of the vital, beauty is in the world of forms. A form is a lifeless figure or a dead shell, if it is devoid of beauty; it had better not have been.

## The Nature of Beauty

But what is beauty? Is it the attraction or charm of a person or a landscape or an object? Is it what dazzles and magnetises our senses, enraptures our emotions or impresses and delights our mind? Here there seems to be no stable standard or criterion to go by. Our senses are ravished by contrary things at any two given moments—sometimes even at the same moment; what allures them to-day may repel them to-morrow. Does the beauty that attracts to-day become ugliness to-morrow? The heart dotes on a person or a thing, feeling itself an enraptured victim of beauty, but the feeling wanes and fades away in course of time, though the form continues apparently the same.

If we watch carefully, we shall see that our appreciation and enjoyment of beauty usually depend on two factors which act either conjointly or separately: (1) the predisposition of our nature and (2) the sudden, overpowering spell of the moment. Sometimes the latter is seen even to subvert the former by the very precipitancy of its action. Predisposition is a result of heredity, education, environment and, above all, the persistent and never consistent activity of the sub-conscious from below the threshold. We love and hate according to the direction and dictates of our predisposition. The moment's assault is, on the contrary, an accidental factor which may or may not chime with the predisposition, but can override every condition and consideration. In neither of these two factors is there any reliable principle or criterion. A Tolstoy finding no beauty in Shakespeare or an Aldous Huxley in the Taj Mahal is not an exception, but the general rule which only proves our contention that neither in the senses nor in our mind and heart is there any possibility of having pure and secure enjoyment of beauty. It is not sympathy, but something deeper and wider than that, something which pertains not to our fettered and fugitive personality, but to that in us which is undying and free, that makes us perceive and enjoy beauty. It is called intuitive union or identity.

We have now touched the hem of our question: it is identity that makes the perception and enjoyment of beauty possible. The percipient is, therefore, one with the perceived, for I cannot identify myself with something which is foreign to me; I can be one only with what is already within me, a part of myself, or more precisely, of my Self. And what I am eternally one with in my underlying essence, I love; and what I love, I know. There can be no perfect knowledge without love, and no love without a basic, if concealed, identity.

What, then, is beauty which can love and know and enjoy by identity? The Mother says, "Beauty is the homage which Nature renders to the supreme Master of the universe." The aeonic travail of Nature, through constant and countless experiments, is to offer, in a spirit of active adoration, closer and closer approximations in form to the infinite and eternal Beauty of the Universal Being. "Beauty is the divine language in the form". It is that in the form which speaks, communicates its divine secret and radiates and reveals its inherent love and joy. A form without beauty is mute and blind, it has no meaning or message to deliver. A spiritual consciousness which is not outwardly translated by an appreciation and expression of beauty is a consciousness incomplete and obstructed.

But still our original question, "What is beauty?", has not been answered. The Mother says that "Beauty is one of the most harmonious smiles of Love, one of its most perfect ornaments". Let us see what it means. We know that Delight is the source and sustenance of the universe, its primal creative principle. When Delight creates, that is to say, when it looses forth, *visarga*, the infinite multiplicity inherently potential in its immobile unitarian eternity, Love comes out, a blazing image of concentrated Delight, as the magnet and unifying force in the teeming throngs of emergent names and forms. "It is nothing else than the tie which unites and holds together all the flowers of Thy divine bouquet. "And the rapturous beaming of this Love is Beauty, or, as Sri Aurobindo puts it in his poem, *Who?*, "Beauty the smile of His passionate bliss." It is an expression of beatific harmony, of an inner ecstasy and equilibrium. We must remember that Delight, Love, Light and Beauty are inseparable, being aspects and attributes of the eternal One, and when we say that beauty is the soul of a form, its informing spirit, we mean Light (Consciousness) and Delight also, for, they inhere in each other.

Beauty, being the harmonious smile of Love, is universal, and "one must be universal in order to see and recognise it". An egoistic consciousness, living in the prison of its preferences and swayed by momentary attractions and repulsions, can never perceive Beauty, but is captivated by the superficial charm of forms. It is only by becoming impersonal and egoless that one can get behind the glitter of appearances and discover the Beauty which is explicit or implicit in all the forms of the universe. "Impersonality and abdication of egoism" are the cardinal condition of perceiving the immanent Beauty, "the harmonious smile of Love".

Indian Aesthetics postulates the unegoistic impersonality of consciousness as an indispensable pre-condition to an appreciation or enjoyment of beauty. The nine *rasas*, including even the terrible, the grotesque and the hideous reveal beauty and give genuine aesthetic emotion to one who can rise superior to his mental conceptions and surface reactions. A genuine aesthetic delight is independent of the likes and dislikes of the outer personality and its dual reactions of pleasure and pain, love and hatred. The capacity for perceiving the underlying beauty of forms is a rare gift, and it can be maintained in a freely functioning order by inner purification, by a cleansing of the "doors of perception, as Blake puts it. "If the doors of perception were cleansed," says he, "everything would appear to man as it is, infinite." Again,

"How do you know but ev'ry bird that cuts the airy way,

Is an immense world of Delight closed by your senses five?"

This supersensuous and super-emotional perception of beauty is the spiritual, the true perception, a source of infinite delight.

The Mother says that it is difficult to discover this Beauty, though it is spread "in widest commonalty" everywhere. It is difficult, again, to understand it, once it is discovered. But the most difficult thing is to live it—it is like living the Bliss or the Power of the Divine. For this living what is needed is "a perfect understanding of the Law of Beauty". "The perfect rhythm of the Spirit" revealed in the lineaments and gestures of the living form as well as in all its moods and inner movements is what the Mother seems to mean by living the universal Beauty. It means a constant and clear perception of the essential and all-pervading Beauty and an undistorted reflection of it in one's whole nature and life, comprising a "harmony and beauty of the mind and soul, harmony and beauty of the thoughts and feelings, harmony and beauty in every outward act and movement, harmony and beauty of the life and surroundings." The Mother prays to the Lord of Beauty that He may give her a perfect understanding of His Law so that she may not fail in it and that He may become in her the harmonious crown of the Lord of Love.

## Essential Beauty and Manifested Beauty

One question may arise in our minds: Is there then nothing ugly in the

*Continued on opposite page*

## The Discovery

Oh who stole softly into  
 The temple of my heart  
 And woke me from my slumber  
 With all his tender art?  
 A riot of wind then wafted  
 The rumour of some far shore.....  
 I heard a deep-toned flutelet  
 And it opened in me a door.....  
 An auspice Gleam then entered  
 And kindled my twin thrilled eyes.....  
 And my life acclaimed the Stranger,  
 Augur of a new sunrise.  
 But the herald was a visitant  
 Disturbing to my peace  
 Even as the moon to the ocean,  
 Yet a weaver of harmonies!  
 As I mused, the alien-intimate  
 In a mystic smile broke out....  
 When, lo, a curtain lifted  
 And I spied an angel rout!  
 A sunken world revived then  
 With the flow of time reversed  
 And I saw: we ran to the *Rasa*  
 Where for Him we nightly rehearsed  
 The parts for us predestined  
 By our souls' one Lord again  
 Who was born to us as Beauty  
 In this our sphere of pain.  
 In Him we discovered our Guru:  
 The drop revealed the deep,  
 When merged Mira's restless heart in  
 His love's heart of song and sleep.

(Translated by DILIP KUMAR ROY from INDIRA'S  
 Hindi song inspired by a vision of Mirabai.)

## Earth's Tree and the Sun-Eagle

Titan tree, rooted in the aeon-hearted sleep,  
 Stands, a cathedral of gloom and of light,  
 Locked in the bosom of abysmal mire.  
 A majestic symbol of the earth's cry  
 To the unknowable distances of gold—  
 Like a fountain of ever-leaping quest  
 Athirst for the remote spheres of dawn,  
 Chained to the granite spaces of the abyss.  
 With glowing arms of insatiable flower-flame  
 And a dense body of grey twilight-leaves  
 And a trunk of giant untremored drowse  
 And deep roots of coiling midnight-trance  
 The earth's voiceless sentinel stands alone,  
 Yearning for the deathless blaze to outpour  
 And release its soul from the clutch of the void....

Then out of the unhorizoned vastitude  
 Sweeps down a white burning eagle of the peaks  
 Like a wonder-blue lightning with wings of might—  
 A magic breath from the heights of power  
 To illumine its mass of green oblivion  
 And bring to its limbs the touch of god-delight  
 And unbar the hidden stream of effulgence  
 Flowing in the eyeless caverns of night,  
 Making the serpent-roots of the mindless base  
 Awake and channel through its veins of drouth  
 The luminous river of the ageless fire;  
 Its myriad quivering branches now bloom  
 With splendour-souled blossoms of the unseen;  
 Its crown of blazing emerald houses now  
 The vast sun-bird of illimitable grace!

ROMEN

## THE MOTHER ON BEAUTY

Continued from opposite page

universe, no absence or deficiency of beauty in the forms? Are all forms to be taken indiscriminately as beautiful? Does not this view result in a *reductio ad absurdum*?

We must remember that there is nothing in the universe which is not a delight-norm of the essential Consciousness-Force of the Divine. All forms, therefore, ensoul Delight and Beauty; but in manifestation there is diversity, degree of excellence, distinctions and differences. To ignore diversity would be to ignore the basic purpose of creation. The spiritual aesthesis perceives the essential ambience of Beauty in the world—the All-Beautiful shining through every form, the one, indivisible Loveliness and Glory, the impersonal Person inhabiting and irradiating all things and living beings. This is the essential perception, the perception of the unity of universal Beauty, voiced in some of the most exquisite verses of the Vedas and the Upanishads. But playing upon this fundamental perception, moving out of it and returning to it as a constant background and point of reference, is the detailed, penetrating vision of the multiple self-expression of that Beauty in the shapes and forms of the world. The degree of this expression is the measure of the beauty achieved in a form. Working against the stark resistance of obscuring Matter, Beauty is at labour to express itself through mortal forms, and this evolutionary self-expression grades itself into classes and categories, types and patterns, here veiled, there revealed, denoting varying degrees of its achievement. In the last analysis, this self-expression of beauty resolves itself into various degrees of correspondence between content and form. Where the form has a close correspondence with its content, is a mirror or a transparent channel of it, we have an outshining of the inner beauty; but where the form is yet dense or crude, that is to say, where the manifesting medium offers resistance, beauty remains involved and implicit, perceived by the spiritual aesthesis, but outwardly masked as ugliness. We understand, therefore, that it is possible to see beauty even in the ugliest of forms and yet not be blind to their phenomenal ugliness.

But it is impossible for the finite human mind, proceeding always by analysis and aggregation, to conceive of a universal, impersonal Beauty labouring to manifest itself through a multiplicity of forms which are not at all separate, self-sufficient units, but facts or aspects of the one, indivisible All-Beautiful. That is why the Mother says that it is as difficult to discover Beauty as any other expression of the Divine; for, this discovery is a revelation, a sudden bursting of the velamen of the sense-perception and a thrilled emergence of the soul-perception, the inner, mystic vision. Released from the phenomenal individuality and restored to unity and infinity, one revels in the vision of Beauty everywhere. The phenomenal personality persists, but as a conscious point or focus of the solar rays flooding out from the depths and the heights of the being. This constant perception of the essential and eternal Beauty in the fleeting, but evolving, forms of Time

gives a firm conviction of its ultimate emergence in all its glory and is a safeguard against any discouragement or despair even in the face of the most chaotic and confusing appearances.

Beauty, the smile of Love, is an impeccable harmony. So long as there is any disharmony in any part of our being—the normal human being is a triumph of disharmony—Beauty cannot manifest itself in its fullness, its expression is maimed or marred. This disharmony or lack of harmony in a form is, according to the Mother, as great a fault as a lack of Truth in the world of ideas. Disharmony argues impurity and constitutes ugliness. In fact, ugliness is nothing but disharmony and disproportion, an anarchy or disorder in some part of the form, betokening a corresponding anarchy in its inner mechanism. It is a fault, a serious blemish, almost a sin. From the aesthetic standpoint, at least, if from no other, man should strive to acquire beauty, that is, a smiling harmony, in his life and nature. But a spiritual perfection demands the establishment of a perfect harmony, in the midst of the manifold complexity of the being. This perfection can be attained only by a single-minded pursuit of the Law of Beauty, making this Law prevail over all the forces of disorder and chaos in oneself. A strenuous pursuit, indeed, but one that inevitably leads to the perfect revelation of Beauty in the human form, Beauty that is the highest Good and the highest Truth—*Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram*.

## STEPS TOWARDS TRANSFORMATION

Continued from page before last

useful in Yoga also; when the mind is put in communication with the Divine Will, the supramental Truth begins to descend through the layers intervening between the mind and the highest Light and if on reaching the mind finds there the power of making forms it easily becomes embodied and stays as a creative force in you. Therefore I say to you never to get dejected and disappointed but to let your imagination be always hopeful and joyously plastic to the stress of the higher Truth, so that the latter may find you full of the necessary formations to hold its creative Light.

The imagination is like a knife which may be used for good or evil purposes. If you always dwell in the idea and feeling that you are going to be transformed, then you will help the process of the Yoga. If, on the contrary, you give in to dejection and bewail that you are not fit or that you are incapable of realisation, you poison your own being. It is just on account of this very important truth that I am so tirelessly insistent in telling you to let anything happen but, for heaven's sake, not to get depressed. Live rather in the constant hope and conviction that what we are doing will prove a success. In other words, let your imagination be moulded by your faith in Sri Aurobindo; for, is not such faith the very hope and conviction that the will of Sri Aurobindo is bound to be done, that his work of transformation cannot but end in a supreme victory and that what he calls the supramental world will be brought down on earth and realised by us here and now?



# SRI AUROBINDO, THE LEADER OF THE EVOLUTION

## PART II OF "THE WORLD CRISIS AND INDIA"

By "Synergist"

### SECTION III : THE NEW WORLD-VIEW

#### (a) THE SPIRITUAL METAPHYSIC

#### (ii) KNOWLEDGE OF THE DIVINE REALITY

Continued from previous issue

#### BEING AND KNOWLEDGE

From the preceding essays on the knowledge of Reality, as well as the earlier ones on the need of a new world-view based on spiritual knowledge, one thing has emerged—the close relation between the problems of Being and the problems of Knowledge, between Ontology and Epistemology in the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo.

It has all along been stressed that the knowledge a man has of God, universe and himself depends on the type, range and level of his being and consciousness—the higher the level of his being and the wider the range of his consciousness, the greater his knowledge of the Ultimate Reality and its relation to man and the universe. His mental knowledge is, as we have seen, incomplete, for it cannot answer the eternal questions. Only if it becomes part of a whole-knowledge attained through an integral vision of Reality, can it find its right place in a complete philosophical schema; and the way to attain this greater knowledge is spiritual development—growth of consciousness and enlargement of being. Such an attainment is not impossible for man, because in his essence he is not something other than the Reality which is the Source of all creation. Matter, Life, Soul and Mind are subordinate powers of Sat (Existence), Chit-Tapas (Consciousness-Force), Ananda (Bliss) and Mahas (Supermind) respectively. Man is in his outer reality a mental-vital-material nature organism created out of elements of Universal Mental, Vital and Material Nature; this is his frontal instrumental personality that he calls "I", his ego. In his inner reality he is, as we have seen, a soul-being, a direct emanation of the Transcendent Divine. It is because man is made of the very stuff of divinity, and is identified with the Divine on the heights of his self, that he can, by ascending the ladder of Being know himself and God. He can not only know his transcendental self and his individual self, but by widening out into the universal consciousness can know his universal self as well, his cosmic status. Such an enlargement of being can enable him to acquire self-knowledge, world-knowledge, God-knowledge—knowledge of truths of existence apprehended in immediate self-experience.

Sri Aurobindo classifies knowledge into two categories: the lower knowledge and the higher knowledge. The first is the indirect mental knowledge—knowledge of apparent phenomena of existence. Its approach is external; it examines the surfaces of things. The other is knowledge gained through spiritual means, through direct experience and realisation; it seeks to understand truths of existence from within, in their source and reality. Man at first has his gaze turned outwards, and seeks knowledge through his external life; when his mind develops and turns back upon itself and he learns to gaze inwards, he is ready for the higher knowledge.

Those who support an Illusionistic or Nihilistic interpretation of existence contend that once the higher knowledge is attained the lower is worthless, but those who accept the world as a manifestation of God and recognise all human efforts towards perfection to be imperfect gropings towards the Light, should understand that these are two sides of the same seeking. All knowledge through whatever way it is pursued, is ultimately the knowledge of the Divine Being, either attained directly through union with Him or gained indirectly through Nature and its workings—*natura naturans* as well as *natura naturata*.

Sri Aurobindo states that science, art, philosophy, ethics, psychology, the knowledge of man and his past, action itself, are means by which man attains knowledge of the works of God through Nature and through life. At first he concerns himself with the externalities of life and the forms of Nature, and tries to fathom their secrets through scientific means; but when he learns to go deeper within himself and awakens to the inner reality of his being, and begins to correlate it with God, he understands that all his previous efforts were imperfect gropings which ultimately led to God, in whose Being alone can the absolutes of knowledge, beauty and goodness have their existence. Science begins to perceive in the end the workings of a Divine Will and Intelligence in the universe; as Eddington writes: "The idea of a universal Mind or Logos would be, I think, a fairly plausible inference from the present state of scientific theory; at least it is in harmony with it." This is even more true of the psychic sciences, which deal with supraphysical phenomena and attempt to contact subtler planes of being; for it is finally perceived that on the summits of these occult planes, which are horizontal to the terrestrial, are the spiritual planes of fundamental manifestation, Sat Chit and Ananda. Art leads ultimately to the perception of the highest beauty and delight which reside on the plane of Ananda in the Being of the Supreme whose nature is Satchidananda. When the aesthetic emotion of the human being is sublimated and uplifted into spiritual emotion, he perceives the Beauty Everlasting that dwells in celestial regions and gazes on the One who is the All-Beautiful and the All-Blissful. Philosophy, attempting to fathom the principles of things and the workings of the cosmic process, the

destiny of man in the universe and his relation to God, begins to see the One Supreme Principle, which governs all that is, the Divine Source from which flows the cosmic manifestation, the hidden Reality behind man's existence that secretly sustains and pervades his being. Trying to find absolutes behind all relatives, it finally begins to perceive that these can only have their existence on the heights of the Spirit in the One Supreme Absolute, by which all relatives exist. Ethics has to come to the inevitable conclusion that it can only have an ultimate sanction in the Divine Truth, in which resides also the Supreme Good, and that the highest law of Good must be the Law of God. Psychology, if it is really a science that tries to probe into the *abyssus humanae conscientiae*, to use a phrase of St. Augustine's, and investigates the nature of mind and soul and explores all the levels of being and ranges of consciousness from the subconscious and the subliminal to the cosmic and the superconscious, will be led to the perception of the One Being who has become the Many, the One Soul that has emanated myriads of individual souls from Itself and sustains them. Action itself, which at first is egoistic, later finds its fulfilment when the Divine Power uses it for its own purpose. As the intellect gets purified and turns itself to the light of the Gnosis, it recognises the Supreme Truth; as the emotions pass through a process of Katharsis, they learn to revere, worship and love the One who dwells in the inmost heart of all creatures; and the will, as it shakes itself free of its egoistic fetters, begins to recognise a higher Power and a Will greater than its own with which it can co-operate. All these ultimately lead to the Divine, in whom all things work, and move and exist, and by attaining the knowledge of whom alone can man realise his highest possibilities and find fulfilment.

It is when the lower knowledge ends and the higher begins that the need for a psychospiritual discipline is felt, the necessity to practise yoga. For yoga is nothing but a deliberate and conscious seeking for an integral union with the Divine, and this can be achieved only through an enlargement of being, and a heightening, widening and ascension of consciousness. Whilst the lower knowledge seeks the Divine Being from the outside, through His works, or through the intellect, and becomes aware of His existence through a veil, yoga seeks Him directly through realisation. Sri Aurobindo explains this: "The whole method of Yoga is psychological; it might almost be termed the consummate practice of a perfect psychological knowledge. The data of philosophy are the supports from which it begins in the realisation of God through the principles of his being; only it carries the intelligent understanding which is all philosophy gives, into an intensity which carries it beyond thought into vision and beyond understanding into realisation and possession; what philosophy leaves abstract and remote, it brings into a living nearness and spiritual concreteness."—"First, the end of Yoga Knowledge is God-possession, it is to possess God and be possessed by him through consciousness, through identification, through reflection of the divine Reality. But not merely in some abstraction away from our present existence, but here also; therefore to possess the Divine in himself, the Divine in the world, the Divine within, the Divine in all things and in all beings, it is to possess oneness with God and through that to possess also oneness with the universal, with the cosmos and all existences; therefore to possess the infinite diversity also in the oneness, but on the basis of oneness and not on the basis of division. It is to possess God in his personality and in his impersonality; in his purity free from qualities and in his infinite qualities; in time and beyond time; in his action and in his silence; in the finite and in the infinite. It is to possess him not only in his pure self; but in all self; not only in self, but in nature; not only in spirit, but in supermind, mind, life and body...." Finally he speaks of the yogi who possesses both the higher and the lower knowledge: "In all he sees God, sees the supreme reality.... He sees God through the data of science, God through the conclusions of philosophy, God through the forms of Beauty and the forms of Good, God in all the activities of life, God in the past of the world and its effects in the present, and its tendencies in the future and its great progression. Into any or all of these he can bring his illumined vision and his liberated power of the spirit. The lower knowledge has been the step from which he has risen to the higher; the higher illumines for him the lower and makes it part of itself, even if only its lower fringe and most external radiation."

This then is the integral knowledge of Reality—reality in its essential as well as manifested aspects; it takes up the lower knowledge within itself and illumines it. Rational knowledge by itself is incomplete; only if it becomes part of a suprarational knowledge will it fulfil itself, for this knowledge is the real higher knowledge, apprehended through an ascent to the Truth-Consciousness of the Divine Reality—its gnostic light and creative dynamism, the Supermind.

To be continued in the next issue.

# THE SCIENTIFIC AGE

By KENNETH WALKER

Most of us pass through a difficult age when we are thrown into confusion and distress. It is at that time of disillusionment at which the new knowledge we have acquired comes into collision with the religious upbringing received from our parents. Dazzled by our new scientific knowledge, we cast aside the simple ideas of our childhood and at first are proud of our freedom and our enlightenment. But later we become conscious of a deep-seated sense of loss. We have rid ourselves successfully of the old but we have nothing to put in its place. What has happened to so many of us as individuals is now happening on the vaster scale of nations. The traditional Christianity on which our Western culture rests has been discarded and nothing has been found to replace it. "Where there is no vision the people perish," or as Moffat has translated it, "the people are thrown into confusion." This old Bible text has suddenly acquired meaning for the Western world.

It is sometimes said that the confusion into which Western thought has been thrown is a purely temporary discomfiture due to our living in a period of transition. But when we examine it this term "transition" really means very little. Thought is always in a state of transition, for ever changing its direction. For two thousand years philosophy has traced an erratic course between the two opposite poles of materialism and idealism, first seeking to explain everything in terms of matter, and then reacting against its own excesses and veering in the opposite direction. But although thought is so fluid that it may at any moment be said to be in a state of transition, it is possible to discuss the main direction of its current, and it is by such means that the history of thought has been divided into a number of different epochs. We recognize, for example, the Classical age of ancient Greece, the Scholastic age in which the Church was paramount and the period of the Renaissance. It is by means of their distinctive features that we orientate ourselves when we consider the changing cultural background of mankind. There can be little doubt that the present age in which we live will be known to the historian of the future as the Scientific age and that he will look upon it as being of far greater importance in the history of thought than the age which preceded it, the age of the Renaissance.

## The Old Materialism and the Reaction Today

It will be of interest to examine its features and to guess what the historian of the future is likely to say about it. He will probably say that Francis Bacon inaugurated the Scientific age by calling attention to the great value of the experimental method of research. He will then describe the rapid advance of science in the seventeenth century by the application of this method. He will refer to the researches of such scientific geniuses as Galileo, Newton, Lavoisier and Boyle and to the overwhelming success of the fundamental concept on which these researches were based, namely, that everything could be explained in terms of matter and motion. Scientific materialism, indeed, receives so much support from dynamics, physics and chemistry that a nineteenth century president of the British Association confidently declared that the day would surely come when the scientist would be able to explain everything in terms of the movement of atoms, "everything from the evolution of worlds to the proceedings of the British Association."

Having described the spectacular progress of science, he may then give an account of its influence on popular thought. He will say that the people were so dazzled by the brilliant achievements of science that they came to the conclusion that the scientists were the only exponents of the truth and that real knowledge was synonymous with scientific knowledge. He may point out that although the influence of religion had begun to weaken previously, the discoveries of the scientists accelerated its decline. He might then state that history often repeated herself and that as an all-powerful and tyrannous Church had formerly repudiated the discoveries of the scientists, so now did the latter on attaining power deny the discoveries of the saints and theologians, declaring that there was no evidence that any of their findings were true. He might then draw attention to a very interesting period in which the first signs of reaction against the autocracy of science could be noted, in the early part of the twentieth century. Two events were responsible for this new current of thought running in the opposite direction to the spate of science. The first was the rapid decline in public morality following the first two World Wars. This was so marked that another President of the British Association stated that man's knowledge and his powers had outstripped his capacity to use them wisely. Nor was it only the more highly educated person who realized that men were not fit to use the immense powers they had wrung from Nature. There were many commonplace men and women who were so alarmed by what they had learnt of the capacity of the atom bomb to destroy human life that they declared that scientists, and particularly the physicists, should be forcibly prevented from making any new discoveries. The second set-back to the claim that the scientific method could supply all man's needs occurred at the beginning of the third decade of the twentieth century, when it was discovered that, whilst the machine picture which the scientists had used as a model of the universe, could explain many phenomena, it could not explain all. The disturbance of old ideas caused by the new discoveries in physics at that time was so great that many of the physicists abandoned the vocabulary of the materialists and began to talk in the language of the idealist philosophers. They thereby became unpopular not only with their scienti-

fic colleagues, but also with the philosophers into whose domain they had trespassed.

## The Scientific Diehards

It is in some such way as this that the future historian of thought will describe the happenings. That there is a comparatively new current of thought running counter to the main current of science is, I think, obvious. The extravagant claims made by nineteenth century scientists that science could satisfy all man's needs are no longer heard. Instead many books are being written by scientists on the subject of the precise place of science in human life. But science, like religion, has her fanatics, and some of her more ardent devotees refuse to have any dealings with such a heretical doctrine as this. The late H. G. Wells was one of these scientific diehards and I well recall a talk with him on the subject of the limitation of science in the year 1936. I told him that I had long ago got rid of the illusion that mankind was marching down a broad macadamized road of science to one of the hygienic and nickel-plated Utopias he had described in his novels. The Victorian notion of a guaranteed mechanical evolution had been exploded, I said, and in view of all that had happened, the Divine Intelligence controlling everything might well deem man to be an unsuccessful experiment and wipe him off the surface of the earth. He smiled and then hastened to reassure me. It was true, he said, that there had been temporary setbacks to man's progress, but in the vast scale of time required for evolution, such momentary disappointments as world wars and the failure of nations to reach an understanding counted for nothing. Poor H. G. Wells, with his pathetic faith in science! Within a comparatively few years his faith in mankind was to crumble and he was to give voice to his disappointment in his final book, *Mind at the End of Its Tether*. But even in this last cry of despair he made it clear that it was not his beloved science that had failed, but it was man himself that was at fault. If only men had listened to the wise counsels of the scientists, all would have been well with the world.

There are many besides Wells who believe that man is a rational being and that if only he can be made to see what is the right course for him to pursue, he will do what is required of him. This is the Apollonian view of men but the Dionysian view is now gaining ground. According to this, man is swayed more by his emotions than by his intellect. It is true that he gives reasons for what he has done but his reasons are only his justifications and it is his emotions that have been responsible for his actions. "Man is not a reasonable being," wrote Whitehead, "he is subject to attacks of rationality," and with this verdict all who have studied themselves as well as other people will fully agree. Science is a product of logical thought and as such it can have no effect on man's emotional life and his morals. Consequently it can never act as a substitute for the religion man has lost.

## The Right Attitude to Science

There are three different attitudes to science at the present time. The first view is that science, in spite of its limitations, can supply what man needs; the second that although it cannot answer the questions that are of most importance to mankind, nothing else is able to do this, so that we must contrive to make the best of it; the third that both science and religion have a place in man's life and that neither of them can replace the other. With the first attitude to science I have already dealt. The second is the attitude of the positivist school of philosophy which is formulated by Lord Russell as follows: "They (the Logical Positivists) confess that the human intellect is unable to find conclusive answers to many questions of profound importance to mankind but they refuse to believe that there is some 'higher' way of knowing, by which we can discover truths hidden from science and the intellect." In other words, the Logical Positivists deny the validity of the doctrines propounded by the world's great religious teachers and discount the testimony of all the seers and saints. For them the world's sacred books are imaginative literature and nothing more. It is a bold claim that these philosophers make, this claim to dismiss as of no real account the teachings of Christ, Buddha, Krishna and Mohammed. But as Leibnitz long ago remarked: "Philosophers are more likely to be right in what they assert than in what they deny."

The third attitude that both science and religion are needed by man is one that more and more people are now adopting and it is becoming increasingly popular amongst the scientists themselves. The following passage is taken from E. F. Caldin's book, *The Power and the Limits of Science*. "It follows from our account of the method of science that it is not the sole source of truth; nor is it a sufficient source, since it cannot deal with the metaphysical and moral topics that are of the greatest importance to man. We cannot base metaphysics or ethics on the scientific method, nor on particular conclusions of science, though some have tried to do so. We cannot settle the nature and destiny of man by reference to natural science, though some have thought it possible."

And what of the future? He would be a bold man who dared to prophesy the future drift of human thought. There are those who, like H. G. Wells, believe that the human mind is at the end of its tether; there are some who hope for a great spiritual renaissance; there are some who foretell the advent of a new Messiah; every man thinks and predicts according to his type. All that can be said with any certainty is that there is a growing realization that man cannot live by science alone and that man's efforts to use it as a substitute for religion have failed.



# INCREDIBLE

## A SHORT STORY

BY DILIP KUMAR ROY

(The drama related here happened years ago in Cambridge and London—in 1919, to be more precise—but the two friends, Kampan and Nayan, who discuss it now meet in a Yogasram, presided over by Kampan's Gurudev, where Nayan has come on a day's visit to his old friend. The time is evening. The two friends are sitting in a verandah; Nayan intends to catch the train the same night.)

"But I—I—can't possibly yield your point," Nayan countered stiffly. "Mind you, I like your Gurudev... I would even concede that had he not set up as a Guru he would have been an ideal man from my point of view. He's so...so unassuming...almost humble I should say—even though Guruhood and humility do seem somewhat incompatible—but there again, I have lost my thread."

"Well, you were trying to prove something which simply cannot be proved," Kampan helped him out, "namely that no Guru could tell you what was best for yourself: you had to find that out for yourself and by yourself all along the line. The Buddhist position, you know. So you are not original, anyhow."

"Original or not, that's *my* view and I am ready to stand or fall by it...although he did unsettle me a bit, I must own, when I met him in the temple this morning. It's his eyes, I dare say. But," he went on with a challenge in his voice, "catch me, at this late day, reverting to medieval faith! I simply decline to accept that somebody else can tell me like a prophet what is good for me. Only I can find that, by trial and error. There's no other way."

"Let me tell you something then," said Kampan; then, after a split second: "but no, perhaps I had better not...Who knows...You may not believe my evidence."

"But that's unfair, I say!" Nayan protested in an injured tone. I may indeed enjoy nagging at you for your vacillations. I may even have said that your Godfather who had named you must have been a prophet and an oracle rolled into one;\* but when did I ever doubt your sincerity or question your truthfulness? No, you shan't fob me off with a polite apology. Out with what you were going to say just now: the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. You owe it to me."

Kampan smiled quizzically. "But the *whole* truth does often hurt, mind you!"

"Nonsense! Why should it?"

"Because...well, your grandfather wasn't a prophet, far less an oracle."\*

Nayan flushed. "You insinuate I am blind, do you?"

"There, you see you are nettled, in spite of yourself," answered Kampan assuagingly, "though you still enjoy laughing at me and calling me vacillating. But I'll overlook it if only you will be fair. Yes, Nayan, one should be at least fair even if one can't agree. Just think, since you claim the right to stand or fall by your own conviction that nobody can awaken you to your true Self, you must concede to your friend the right to stand or fall by his: namely that none—save one in a crore—can do without the help of a real Guru, an authentic Pathfinder, if one wants to be led safely and quickly to one's divine destination."

"Help is admissible... I draw the line at what you call guidance."

"But isn't this splitting a hair?" Kampan smiled. "But no, perhaps you are right. For I was at fault: I used the lesser word, help, when I had the deeper one, guidance, in mind. But then," he added in a tone of irony, "we, moderns—haven't we grown a little too self-reliant even in India, the land of faith?" He smiled and then went on: "No wonder we balk at the mere mention of such words as guidance or surrender, forgetting that even the great Arjun had to be piloted at every turn by the Divine Charioteer! And that is why even I, who have nothing to lose, feel shy to own that I have been saved from a shipwreck to be directed into a harbour of which I had no conception before."

"I am sorry I got a little riled, Kampan," apologised Nayan. "But I trust you will pardon me if I remain still unconvinced. But you can only educate me by something more dependable than emotion. For mere emotional fervour, without concrete personal experience, cuts no ice with me."

Kampan looked at him abstractedly for a while, bit his lips and then, abolishing a flicker of a smile, answered: "All right, my friend, I accept your challenge. Only don't blame me later on, since it's you invited it."

\* \* \*

"I must apologise at the very start," resumed Kampan as he stirred his tea already getting cold. "For I feel a sense of guilt for having kept it from you so long. But you see," he added lowering his eyes, "I was promise-bound to Dorothy whose confidant I had become, willy-nilly—although—"

"D-Dorothy?"

Kampan nodded. "I'm really sorry to cause you pain, Nayan, but you see, she changed you overnight into my rival though you never suspected it, at the time."

"You mean... D-Dorothy... loved you? You?"

"Yes, Nayan, though, being a born actress, she made it look as if it was Jolyon who was the happy man."

"And you really give me to understand that she told you then that I—"

"Had been smitten by her ladyship? Yes, that was precisely what she confided to me—though many others did talk—"

"Blast the many. Do you think I care a hoot for the rabble? What I want to make sure is whether it was—she who told you or Jolyon?"

"No, I learnt it first from her confiding self. But if it should hurt you still—"

"Oh, don't, Kampan! Thirty years have passed since. So go ahead without a qualm. Only one thing: please be so good as to conceal nothing—nothing: I simply won't be spared. But no, wait. Why didn't you tell me in Cambridge?"

"Can't you imagine why? You loved her desperately, and she—well, she seemed to have returned your passion; then I heard it from her own lips, mind you, that she admired you but couldn't love you. Well, don't you understand that when, after having told me all this, she asked my advice I could hardly go to you blabbing and let her down? Wouldn't that have been acting like a cad? And then," he pleaded, "you must allow for my vanity also. To think that I—a living bundle of vacillations—could be thus preferred by a captivating woman to *you*, a model of brilliance, balance and self-reliance—oh, I almost strutted like a peacock thrilled into a new awareness of my irresistible glamour. But don't look so glum, dear Nayan!" He dropped his voice: "For you may be sure I had to pay dearly for my every single thrill subsequently. For, she got me nearly enmeshed through her native ruse of making a confidant of me, indeed almost a mentor."

Nayan's lips curled in bitterness. "The flirt!" he muttered.

"Agreed," commented Kampan with a faint smile. "Only remember that none of us—not even the clear-sighted Jolyon, mind you—was put wise to it till after the event, assuming of course that he attained the revealing wisdom afterwards."

"But why talk of him, poor fellow?" answered Nayan bitterly. "He must have been punished enough forced to run in harness with her all these years." He lifted his eyes to Kampan's. "I only wonder," he went on, after a slight pause, "why, she hadn't hinted even once to me that she was...er...meeting you on friendly terms! No, don't mistake me: I don't agree with your naive assumption that a woman must always prefer sobriety to vacillation, especially when the incarnation of vacillation happens to be as handsome as your delightful self. No, this time at least I am not laughing at you. For I know that in the club of women I would be the unlikeliest racer to be favoured. A sprinter like you would be able to beat me with a long handicap every time. No, what baffles me is not your being the winner but her easy success in making it appear as if I stayed the prime favourite with her. But then I was gulled so signally because I never even dreamed that it was not Jolyon but you who were my rival—to use your own epithet against you."

"Against!" Kampan laughed. "Do you think there has ever been an ambitious fellow, since the dawn of time, who felt more flattered to be dubbed a rival of a man like your brilliant self, so contemptuous of folks like us who depend on mediaeval Gurus for guidance! But incidentally, your surprise reminds me of mine since she didn't tell me either that Jolyon was my rival too, on top of being yours."

"I miss your point. Surely you don't mean to tell me that you could have been unaware that Jolyon worshipped the very sod she walked on?"

"By rival I mean one whose worship is appreciated. She never made me feel that Jolyon's hymns ever meant more to her than ovation to a platform speaker: not so very thrilling after all when it comes—only missed when it doesn't. It was *your* worship she referred to—and always in a moved tremolo, especially when she showed me your ecstatic letters."

Nayan winced but mastered himself with an effort. "And doubtless," he rallied, "this made you thrill as ecstatically to her worship as she thrilled to mine?"

"You are cruelly unfair," Kampan remonstrated. "For I may have been vain and vacillating and shortsighted, but surely I am not quite such a sentimental half-wit as to believe that a siren like her with a host of suitors to pick and choose from would be dying to spread her faery heart beneath my feet for the joy of imploring me to 'tread softly'. No, all I plead guilty to is my having been swayed by her clinging to me, not to mention her preferring my society to that of her other far more distinguished victims. But you may rest assured of one thing: that I was not long in discovering that my flawless Rose did not go on merely ravishing me with her fragrance; she caused me many a bruise too which counted—even apart from the remorse I suffered for having been betrayed by her into a sort of pact against you—a friend who never suspected what was actually going on almost under his very nose. But then she effectively lulled my misgivings with her irrefutable logic—and I was also longing to be persuaded—that what happened between two free individuals was no business of a third party, that it was a modern world with a rich free morality and I don't know what else. And she managed it so cleverly that before long I became an adept in rebuking my conscience into submission and making my perspec-

\* "Kampan" means trembling & quivering. "Nayan"—the eye.

# INCREDIBLE

—Continued from previous page

tive tally entirely with hers. Add to it my sense of obligation as it were and you will not find it so difficult to understand how I came to dismiss you altogether from my calculations." Kampan gave him a quick glance and added: "But it was an obligation, my friend, for I almost felt like a debtor to her for having preferred me to you, yes, even you, Nayan, whose stature I had grown to admire as much greater than my own." He paused and then went on banteringly: "One couldn't possibly let such a lovely elector down especially in those days when we were still looked down upon by the English. No wonder the smile of an English maiden was hailed then by the best among us as manna from the blue."

"Don't be flippant, Kampan!"

"But I am not being flippant. I am only telling you the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. For remember all this had happened before the non-cooperation movement really got going—when we, Indians, still suffered from an inferiority complex so hard to cure as you too know to your cost. In short she caught both you and me at a disadvantage: for we were certainly gullible, if not quite green. And that was why you never suspected that she could possibly drown, by her soft cadences, the robust voice of conscience which you had roused in me as an echo to your own. To cut a long story short, I got quite intoxicated in the end till I congratulated myself in ecstasy—to quote Tagore—that something eminently worth happening was happening to me, at long last."

"And I in my turn congratulate you also. For I take it that it did happen?"

"Who's being flippant now, pray?" Kampan retorted.

"I apologise," answered Nayan dropping his voice, "the more so, knowing you as I do, I know it could never have happened, for you may be vacillating and miscalculating but I can't see you as ingratiating."

"Handsome is that handsome does: I thank you. For whatever my fault at least I never wanted to gain favours under false pretences. For instance, I had told her straight, at the very outset, that I had taken a vow never to marry."

"Bravo, my boy!" Nayan clapped his hands. Then with a smile: "But tell me: didn't she ask you why?"

"Didn't she?" Kampan laughed. "And shall I ever forget the steely glint in her eyes when she put the question?"

"And then?"

"Well, I told her the truth: that from my boyhood days I wanted to become a Sannyasi, a Yogi and that I had been looking for a Guru ever since."

"Lord of thunder and lightning! You don't say so?" Nayan laughed and added: "But it's just like you. And now that you tell me, I come to recall—she did ask me once some question about Yoga, and I told her—but never mind, tell me what happened next and be quick about it as I've got to catch the train tonight, you know."

"Well, I must tell you this that though many of the thrills as well as disappointments that I experienced vis-à-vis Dorothy must have been served up by known factors such as our individual personalities, preconceived notions about love and what not, an element of surprise, delightful or otherwise, was never absent thanks to sudden eruptions of all sorts of strange expectations and unforeseen upheavals, if I may exploit such a purple word. To give an instance: she wanted to argue for all she was worth, believing that it paid. I didn't, persuaded that it was waste of time. So when she argued I got listless while when I didn't she was riled. Of course in the domain of attachment our basic experience was more or less identical. But we reacted to this experience differently. For example, even when I rejoiced in her beauty I wouldn't let myself go. I felt that an attachment should not be all-absorbing. But she resented my attitude and said vehemently that mutual attachment was a gift from the world of archangels. I demurred that attachment entailed no end of expectations till they tended to swallow up the crystal clarity of love. She only curled her lovely lips in contempt: what tosh!—was not expectation the very stuff all love was made of? I disapproved of desires. She stared at me: how on earth could any circuit of human give-and-take be completed without the electricity of desire? Jealousy? But wasn't it one's holy duty to guard jealously what one cherished with one's whole being? And so on. In short, though we did agree in our top layer reactions, as we reached for each other's contact in the deeper strata we grasped only at emptiness. For instance, I felt an almost instinctive respect for the impulse to renunciation in love. She simply laughed it out of court. To her eminently practical feminine mind love without its laurels and stimulants loomed like something fantastic, a skyborn bloom, an aerial shimmer with no basis of earth-experience. That was why she saw nothing wrong at all in a lover's wanting to possess the beloved—lock, stock and barrel; she asserted unflinchingly that the more one loved the more one must crave to possess: 'yes, crave, crave, crave—no spineless verb like plead for me, if you please!' And curiously, when she talked on in this strain I felt a strange sympathy too although I knew that it was more for her power of expression than for the truth of her contentions. But whatever the reason, she never failed to sway me and so her grip never relaxed. Add to it that she was a poetess as well. I still remember," went on Kampan, reminiscing, "how beautifully she used to recite a poem of hers, or rather a quatrain which said:

The wind sang as she kissed the tree:  
Who loves me shall stay ever free.  
Only I ask—when I come at dusk,  
Thy murmur of love sing back to me.'

"But she never could see that an expectation could not cease to be an expectation just because it delighted poetically. Not that the boughs may not murmur but that the wind must not pose it as a condition under which it could come to the tree at dusk. But it was no use trying to make her see the beloved's point of view as against the suitor's. For she would then start at once on her favourite theme: the 'voluntary subservience' of the other party. But it had to be always of the other party!"

Kampan drew a deep sigh and went on:

"But I was getting restive under all this glitter that looked so dangerously like gold till, at long last, I felt almost suffocated in the gilded cage. Not that I didn't ache to possess her, mind you," he added quickly looking straight at Nayan, "only I wanted to possess without being possessed by. But as soon as I saw this I felt conscience-stricken because I realised that what I was wanting was impossible on top of being unfair; and here it was she who scored in that if she longed to demand all she was at least ready to give all in return. I only scored on one count, because I stuck to my own *swadharma* as man: I could not barter my ultimate liberation—*mukti*—for an earthly bliss however delectable. In other words, there could be no love of the human brand which I was prepared to buy with the price of my personal liberty which I could only surrender for something divine even though I never could define what I implied by the word divine. But she was, as you know, of that faultlessly rational and overpraised loyal type of woman who had no nonsense about herself and yet would swallow any sentimental nonsense about the summit fulfilment of love through total possession. In one word, it was an *impasse*."

The cloud had nearly passed from Nayan's face. "I can imagine your predicament, you dear scared soul," he said almost with an amused smile, "though I'll bet she couldn't."

"But how could she when it wasn't even a problem to her conservative soul? And that was why I was 'scared'. Yes, and the fear swelled like a mounting flood. But she went on for ever opening the floodgates, retailing to me day after day everything that passed between her and Jolyon—which I devoured. No, Nayan, she had jettisoned you clean overboard: it was only Jolyon I was up against, at this time. Of course I guessed why she harped on Jolyon in season and out; she only wanted to induce me to leave off sitting on the fence and declare my 'voluntary subservience' to her once and for all. Only, the more she went on sermonising in this strain the more I recoiled in dismay even though I felt a strong impulse to tell Jolyon to mind his own business."

"But why?" asked Nayan. "Didn't you want to back out of it, really?"

"Of course I did. But then I have never been a consistent pillar of society, like you or Jolyon or Professor Stability. Only," he added by way of an afterthought, "Mr. Inconsistency the vagrant has his compensations too, sometimes—unexpectedly. For look, you were jilted while I got off scotfree!"

"That's a good one," laughed Nayan. "Go on."

"Well, the drama would have gone on for a few months more possibly, had she not forced the issue by playing her trump card a little too soon. For one fine morning, in she sailed, her lips trembling, and told me acidly that Indians were less than men. I was hurt but only said that I had told her frankly, at the very beginning of our unfortunate intimacy, that I had been vowed to a religious celibacy. She retorted—but surely you can imagine what sort of scene she must have made. The long and short of it was that I was told that Jolyon was going away to South Africa in a month or two where he had secured a prize post, so would I now, please, tell her finally what answer she was to give Jolyon who implored her to go with him there as his 'adored' wife?"

"When she had attacked our Indian mentality I was within an ace of walking out of the room. But when the next moment she talked about going away with Jolyon to South Africa as his 'adored' wife, I felt as though she had slapped me in the face. I suddenly felt weak as a reed and didn't feel myself equal to letting her be carried off in this summary fashion. After a few minutes, during which I could hardly think at all, I asked her to give me a little time: I vacillated. 'Give me six months, for mercy's sake!' 'Impossible!' 'Four months then?' 'Too long.' 'Two months at least?—you must', I appealed. She yielded at long last and I sailed for Calcutta by the next available boat, in a week's time, perhaps the wisest thing I have ever done in my blundering life, chivied by the relentless Imp of indecision. I was bent now, at all costs, on finding my Guru who was to tell me from his vision's tower—he must—what was my *swadharma*: married life or Yoga?"

"I had indeed heard," Kampan resumed after a pause, "that one could never meet one's Guru till the hour struck. I had read too in the *Mahabharata*: *Paryagayogena labhate manushyah*: one could not skip things and wrest a boon from Destiny before one's time. But I felt fairly frantic at the time and simply could not afford to wait any longer. I prayed as never before for the Guru I had been waiting for all these barren years—the Guru who was to and had to tell me what was my destiny at this dread hour."

Kampan paused once more and then went on in a low voice: "My prayer was heard—at last, and I met him, the pilot of my boat. I need not tell you how it came about for it has nothing to do with my story; suffice it that he came just when I had touched the lowest depth of despair, my darkest hour of irresolution—when I was on the point, really, of wiring to Dorothy to come to me."

"What did your Gurudev say when you met him?"



# A PILGRIM IN PONDICHERY

By GURDIAL MALLICK

## THE PROPHET AND THE PILGRIM

Within sight of the ever-whispering sea, under the shadow of the ever-silent sky, in an ever illumined apartment, all the windows of which are open day and night, year in and year out, to all the eight quarters of Heaven, there lives the Prophet. His face and figure have the golden hue of the Primordial Person, his eyes are a perpetual fountain of light.

On an auspicious afternoon, seated on a sofa, in a posture in which Power and Peace were harmoniously blended, the pilgrim just had a fleeting glimpse of the Prophet. But in that glimpse was the golden glow of the sacrificial fire of the Eternal, in which the pilgrim's petty and pugnacious self was well-nigh reduced to cinders. He felt at the time like the phoenix, indeed, rising again from its ashes.

But when the pilgrim walked forth from the august presence of the Prophet, something of the cinders of his burnt-out self still clung to his forehead. And the people in the street, noticing this ashy spot between his eyebrows, sneered at him, saying, "A gift, indeed, from the World's Greatest Prophet!"

But the pilgrim did not heed them nor did he make an answer, but he continued his journey towards the sea-shore.

Evening came. The sea-shore was carpeted over with frivolity and fun, as the sky was with the serene stars.

Soon Night flung her dark mantle over the earth and the sea-shore assumed the aspect of a cemetery. Not a soul seemed to breathe anywhere.

At midnight a shining spray from the sea struck the ashy spot between the eyebrows of the pilgrim. And, lo! it glowed like the sun's ray, rising from behind tall cliffs.

The morning bird sang. Dawn brushed aside the dark Mantle of Night. The sun rose and, eyeing the shining ashy mark on the pilgrim's forehead, said, "Greetings to the new-born son of our Solar Family."

And the pilgrim bowed in deep reverence and humility and responded, "All glory to the Prophet, the sun of our ignorance-enveloped earth."

## THE MOTHER

6-35 a.m. A street in Pondicherry, quite a crowd has collected there, and men, women and children of various ages and spiritual allegiances are looking towards a balcony and waiting in eager expectation for the blessed moment when SHE will appear on the horizon of their hearts' love and longing. A halo of happiness hovers over their heads, while the silence of rapturous realization fills the atmosphere.

"The Mother!" presently exclaims a child with the ecstasy of "eureka." For, has he not found in HER the fulfilment of his soul's truest demands and desires? And so have so many others.

Indeed, the Mother, clad in silk and soul sympathy, is Compassion Incarnate as she casts her gracious glance from one corner of the crowd to the other, taking in every one, in the sweep of her luminous gaze and taking all, in spirit, to her bosom, saying, "My dear children!"

But she disappears after a minute or two, leaving behind her a trail of tears. Tears shed because she stayed with them only for such a short time? Yes, for they would have liked to bathe longer in the river of her radiance, streaming from the sun of all suns. But they are also tears of joy inasmuch as they have had the unique privilege in their present life of seeing with their own eyes a replica and representative of the Divine Mother of the universe. And yet in these tears is treasured the pain of ages of separation from her, during which they wore their hearts out in anticipation of the hour when she would call them her very own.

Today, however, at long last, they had a signet-ring from her to assure them that she has been always with them, though submerged in the sleep of self-consciousness they did not ere now feel her perpetual nearness to them.

The Mother's glance is, indeed, a precious ring of recognition and fortunate is the person who has once received it.

## INCREDIBLE —Continued from previous page

"He simply smiled and said that he could only take charge of my destiny if I surrendered my total will to him." Kampan paused for a split second as he saw Nayan lower his eyes. Then he went on: "I agreed eagerly even though, curiously again, I had to take my mind off Dorothy with a wrench. But I need not go into that, nor try to describe the rapture I felt when I pictured to myself that I might ignore him and invite Dorothy still to join her life with mine. What is stranger still was that just when I had finally decided to cable to her I vacillated again and so had to temporise once more. It was the last stand of the routed rebel but a rebel who still had plenty of kick left in him. All sorts of suggestions kept besieging me the most powerful among which being what I chose to call 'honest doubt': was it wise after all to take a leap blindfolded like this; what proof had I that it was not an abyss which I was plunging in... and so on. In the end I told him frankly that I wanted some concrete proof of Gurushakti, that Yoga gave real power although, I told him, it was not an ultimatum, only an appeal. He gave me an amused smile and then asked if I had her photograph. I showed it to him. He instantly asked whether she had had another Bengali suitor who had attempted two days ago to commit suicide."

"What?" exclaimed Nayan. "You mean to say you heard about it first from him?"

Kampan nodded silently. For a few seconds none spoke... Kampan was gazing at a coloured photograph of Dorothy hanging against the wall to the left. Nayan followed his gaze and looked, then, his eyes glistening, he heaved a deep sigh and, as Kampan turned quickly, wiped his eyes hastily. "Please go on," he said, trying to force a smile to his lips. "It's really nothing, I assure you. But wait a moment. I take it you didn't know about my attempted suicide, did you?"

"But how could I? I instantly cabled to Dorothy enquiring after you and received the reply, a week later, that you had been saved almost by the skin of your teeth."

"Sorry for the interruption. Please go on. Only don't spare me any more, a fool that I was to have been vain of my blindness!"

Kampan placed a restraining hand on his shoulder.

"Oh, don't say that—a man of your intellect—"

"Oh!" He covered his face with both his hands. Then he looked up at Kampan and added bitterly: "Do you know what my intellect pooh-poohed most, cocksure of its folly?—That saying of Christ after the Resurrection, remember?—when he said to a disciple: 'You believed because you have seen, but blessed are they who have not seen and yet believed.'—"

No, no, don't try to console me. Leave me to chew my bitter cud. Tell me rather, what happened next."

"Oh, I have come to the end of my story since you know what happened after that and how. Only one thing you may not have guessed: why she made and then broke off her engagement with you in such hot haste." He hesitated for a split second, then added: "Well, it can't do any harm now, anyhow. You see, she went back to you, number one, because I had cabled to her about Gurudev and my Yoga. Then, number two: you sent me a long cable, in your ecstasy, telling me all about your angel having saved your life, that she was so enthusiastic about India that she insisted on marrying you on Indian soil and so on. And then, number three, she sent me a cable in which she told me 'confidentially' that she was coming to India for me alone to join the Ashram, assuring me that she would never marry another because—"

"What?" Nayan cried. "You mean when she was still engaged to me?"

"But the engagement, she knew, she was going to break off directly she set foot in India—don't you see? She got engaged to you only to use you as a cat's paw to be got rid of directly you outlasted your use. For she couldn't possibly have come just then, remember, since she didn't have the money nor the dare to come to India without a second string to her bow. At least that's what Gurudev told me."

Nayan sat still for a while. Then he stammered out: "I... understand. I...I...but never mind..." He paused, then mastered himself and asked: "And then?...I mean...what was your reply?"

Kampan held one of his hands in his and said: "Need you ask still? I wired back that no one was accepted in the Ashram who felt no real call to the Divine and added, to drive it home, that I would be in cloistered seclusion indefinitely, goodbye. Yes, one last point: I asked Gurudev what he would advise me to do supposing she came still? He answered, with that mysterious smile of his, that she was destined not for India but for South Africa. Yes, and he added: 'And I am glad—for your friend's sake.'

Nayan got up and paced the verandah restlessly.

"I say," said Kampan, "your train leaves—"

"Oh hang the train... But... do tell me, will he consent to see one who... er... has been blind so long because he d-dreaded to open his eyes?"

Kampan was going to reply when a servant entered the room with an envelope. He opened it and cried out: "It's from him, Nayan. He writes: 'I would like to see your friend once more before he leaves'."

# of MICE AND MEN By "Cynic"

## WALPURGIS NIGHT

When I showed my last month's notes to Dr. Freud he was very pleased, but looked a little puzzled.

"What's the matter, doctor," I asked, "you look puzzled. I thought you knew everything about human nature. Any of your pet theories upset?"

"Oh, no, no; my theories never get upset. I always find some explanation. I am astonished to see so much coherence in your dreams. The dreams of all my other patients are positively incoherent; their subconscious is chaotic, whereas yours seems to have some sort of cynical wisdom in it, which leaves me baffled. Your subconscious self actually seems to be wiser than you are."

"Thanks, doctor," I replied, "I am glad to know that I am not really as asinine as I look."

"I don't think you look asinine; you look quite intelligent. Only sometimes, when you talk, people may be led to believe that you are a little touched in the head."

"Yes, I have also noticed that, especially when I tell them that I consult you every week."

He removed the cigar from his mouth and laughed heartily. "You must come oftener; we shall have long chats."

"On the contrary, I was thinking of making my visits less frequent. My friends advise me to consult the parapsychologists. They say that your theories are a little archaic, and point out that you have not been able to say anything definite about my dream experiences."

"Oh, is that so?" he said sharply. I could see that he was getting a little hot under the collar. "If you have no confidence in me why do you come here at all?"

"Now doctor, don't misunderstand me. I have implicit confidence in you, but my friends haven't. I know how difficult it is to make definite pronouncements on psychological phenomena. Psychologists are after all human beings with human limitations. One cannot expect them to work miracles. One must be tolerant when they invent a new term every time they come across something which they do not understand and cannot explain. Perhaps Goethe was thinking of the psychologists when he wrote:

'For just where fails the comprehension,  
A word steps promptly in as deputy'."

"Since you quote Goethe, allow me to do the same," he replied: "'Art is long, life is short, judgment difficult.' So how can you blame us?"

"Yes, doctor, I'll grant you that," I replied.

"Come on now, let us get down to business, Mr. Pottycroft. My other patients are waiting." I went and sat near him on the patient's chair. "Dream fantasy usually has its limits," he began, "but yours seems to know no bounds. That is because in your dream experiences something does not function at all—what I have called the Censor. You seem to be a man without what is commonly known as 'conscience'. That is the reason why you seem to have no respect for persons; in your dreams, I mean."

"Oh, how terrible," I murmured.

"Let me see your note-book; I want to know what you dreamt last night."

"Here you are, doctor."

I am giving below an account of the dream for the benefit of my readers who I am told are also expert dreamers.

I dreamt that I went to a theatre to see *Faust*. The curtain fell on Part I, and Part II commenced, and soon we had the famous scene in the Laboratory, with Wagner at the furnace conducting his great experiment; Mephistopheles was standing beside him watching intently; Faust was in the next room sleeping. Wagner at last succeeded, and Homunculus came to life in the glass phial. Wagner and Mephistopheles took him to Faust, who was lying upon a couch.

*Mephist:* (to *Homunculus*): "Thy talents here employ."

Homunculus looked at Faust and read aloud his dreams.

*Mephist:* "How much has thou to tell,—what stories merry!  
So small thou art, so great a visionary!  
Nothing see I!—"

*Homun:* "Just now—there breaks on me a light—  
'Tis Classical Walpurgis-Night!..."

Then suddenly strange things started happening; Homunculus, Faust and Mephistopheles went through the window and began to fly. They flew over the Pharsalian Fields and over the Peneus.

Meanwhile a queer change was taking place in me—I was beginning to identify myself with Faust; this identification finally grew so intense that I found myself in the skies with Homunculus and Mephistopheles. Faust had disappeared and I had taken his place. The other two had not noticed the change, for they kept on addressing me as Faust.

*Homun:* "You were seeking knowledge, were you not, Dr. Faust? Now you will set your eyes on things which earthly creatures cannot see—things which happen in regions below them and above them. Your apprehension of Time and Space will change now. Different extensions of Space here intersect on this beam of light, and different instants of Time co-exist and coalesce. Men of one country or one generation can meet here men of other countries and other generations. This beam of light

stretches out endlessly through Cosmic Space which is boundless, and then passes away into the Transcendent Infinite Radiant Space from which it emanates. It divides this particular hemisphere into two divisions; that, down below you is the region of Darkness, and there right above you is the region of Light. Jump lightly on the beam and you will see what I mean."

I jumped. I could see both the regions now. Then seeing that Mephistopheles was not jumping, I asked, "What about him?"

*Homun:* "Oh, he cannot come; he will be reduced to ashes if he tries to. He is the Prince of Darkness; he reigns over there only—though not as supremely as he used to. He is losing his touch; he may soon have to go out of business."

*Myself:* "All this is really wonderful."

I started flying on the beam of light, with Homunculus on my right and Mephistopheles on my left following a little distance away. I kept on looking rapidly above and below me, from Light to Darkness, and wondered at the strange contrast. Voices, voices, everywhere, and swiftly changing scenes. I felt as if a million wireless sets had been started all at once, and as if a medley of scenes were televised kaleidoscopically, each scene mingling with others and suddenly changing.

*Homun:* (seeing my perplexed state). "You must learn to concentrate on a particular voice or scene, and all the others will automatically get subdued. You are connected, like all other beings, with these scenes by a net-work of subtle energies; the whole of Creation is connected that way. With a little practice you will also learn to co-ordinate the upper and the lower regions; you will then understand the cosmic movement of the play of opposites."

*Myself:* "Alright. I shall try."

I concentrated on a spot in the upper region, and lo! there was a blaze of light that nearly blinded me.

*Homun:* "You have contacted something great."

We heard a voice.

*The Voice:* "For many will come in my name, saying: I am Christ, I am Christ; heed them not."

From below us came shouts:

*Shouts:* "You listen to me....."

"Nothing but this can bring happiness into the world....."

"This is the only remedy, I tell you....."

I again looked above.

*The Voice:* "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are; for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet—the inner chamber of thy soul, and when thou hast shut thy door—the door of thy senses, pray to thy Father which is in secret."

*A voice from the darkness below:* "I hope we have a good audience this evening at the prayer meeting, and they adjust the loud-speakers properly. Yesterday people could not hear my voice clearly."

*Homun:* "How are you getting on?"

*Myself:* "Oh, fine, fine."

*Homun:* "Look there; that's London."

I concentrated. A man was holding a meeting.

*Homun:* "That is the President of the T. C. Society—the Thomas Carlyle Society. He is reading out the next year's programme."

*The President:* (reading in a loud voice) "It is proposed to have a series of essays written by well-known authors in continuation of Carlyle's *Heroes, Hero-worship and the Heroic in History*. A great need has been felt for some time past for adding a new section to the original work. It will be entitled *The Heroes of the Twentieth Century*. In accordance with our cosmopolitan outlook, it has been decided to include in it heroes of all nations. Maotze's China will be recognised, as our Government has recognised it; but we sincerely hope that we do not have to repent like it. India will be represented, as a new India has been born and deserves recognition; but it will be recognised as a single entity—its suburbs, like Pakistan, will not receive separate recognition.

"Carlyle began with *The Hero as Divinity* and ended with *The Hero as King*; we shall continue the good work and have *The Hero as Film Star*, *The Hero as Communist Pamphleteer*, *The Hero as Psychoanalyst*, *The Hero as Agrarian Opium-eater*, and lastly, *The Hero as Peacemaker*—both invited as well as uninvited. In case we are forced to recognise Pakistan, we shall have an extra essay entitled *The Hero as Butcher*.

"We expect co-operation from all our members in compiling this Series. Thank you."

The President sat down amid loud cheers.

*Homun:* "Very interesting, wasn't it? Now look there. That is the Prime Minister of France Monsieur Reynaud quoting Lenin's letter to the 'United Europe' Rally."

*Monsieur Reynaud:* "Gentlemen, this is what Lenin wrote: 'The shortest way from Moscow to Paris leads through Peking, Tokyo and Calcutta'."



## of MICE AND MEN—Continued from previous page

*Homun*: "That's enough; let us contact America now. (pause) There you are. Now observe the antics of that bearded man."

It was indeed a funny sight. A swarthy bearded man was jabbering away at a terrific rate before a microphone. A number of children had collected round him and were having a good laugh. The man had a large hat in his hand and was holding it between himself and the microphone.

*Myself*: "Who in heaven's name is this fellow?"

*Homun*: "Don't you recognise him? That is Zafrullah Khan talking through his hat as usual. He is very popular with the American children; since he has come, they have stopped going to the comics."

My attention was distracted by a loud voice. Two bearded men were arguing. The tall thin one was obviously having the better of his stout companion, who looked like a rat caught in a trap.

*The Tall Man*: "'Art thou nothing other than a Vulture, then, that fliest through the Universe seeking after somewhat to eat; and shrieking dolefully because carrion enough is not given thee?' 'I tell thee, block-head, it all comes of thy vanity. Fancy that thou deservest to be hanged (as is most likely), thou wilt feel it happiness to be only shot....' Economic Production! Dost thou really think that every man's consciousness is centred in his stomach? Dost thou really believe that man is only a food-getting animal who will consent to have his mind regimented for bread and vodka twice a day, and that he will barter his soul for a piece of meat? Now listen: 'The ideal is in thyself, the impediment too is in thyself: thy condition is but the stuff thou art to shape the same ideal out of—O thou, that pinest in the imprisonment of the Actual, and criest bitterly to the gods for a kingdom wherein to rule and create, know this of a truth: the thing which thou seekest is already with thee, here or nowhere canst thou only see.'"

"But that is just the trouble with him, my dear Carlyle, he cannot see," interposed Emerson who had entered the room. "To do that, something more than mere brain-power is needed. It is no use trying to convince him."

*Carlyle*: "If I cannot convince him, I shall convict him."

*Emerson*: (laughing) But that you already have done successfully. Let us go; Mrs. Carlyle is waiting for us."

"Very interesting—this flying on the Space-Time Equator," I said, as soon as the scene had shifted.

*Homun*: "Yes; but wait till you fly over the Himalayan belt. That is a sight for the gods."

*Myself*: "Come on then, what are we waiting for? Let us get there."

*Homun*: "Alright, concentrate."

We concentrated above, and were immediately flooded with light. A man was kneeling down before a figure who was standing in the centre of a blaze of blue light. This figure was speaking to the kneeling man in a voice the like of which I had never heard before.

*The Voice*: "Whenever dharma subsides and adharma prevails, whenever the forces of falsehood, evil and God-denial seem to triumph over the forces of Truth, I loose myself forth into birth in order to crush them, and make the progressive evolutionary forces triumph, for they work out My Purpose in this world.

"Then if I choose thee, O Arjun, as my instrument to fight for Me, how canst thou refuse?—What cowardice is this that maketh thou say: I shall not fight.

"Be free from desire and egoism, do not be attached to the work or its results, have *samata*, equality, be one with Me in thy heart and consciousness, see the Truth clearly, and then—fight. If thou art one with Me in thy heart, thou shalt know that it is I who guide thee and support thee, O Partha.

"Therefore abandon all dharmas, all rules of conduct made by un-enlightened minds, and take refuge in Me alone. I shall be thy Light and Guide."

I at once looked below.

*Another Voice*: "Take a letter.

Dear Mr. Churchill,

I hope you are doing well. Why don't you practise non-violence against Hitler? I tell you, this is the only way to everlasting peace in this world. I am very sorry to hear about Dunkirk, but if you had consented to stage another Munich in Poland, there would have been no Dunkirk, see?

With best wishes,

Yours....."

"And that, my dear Alcibiades, is the difference between wisdom and sophistry, between spirituality and religiosity:" came another voice from above.

The speaker got up and was preparing to leave when Alcibiades shouted: "Sit down, Socrates, sit down; what is the hurry?"

*Socrates*: "I am sorry I cannot wait. I have still to give that cock to Asclepius: Crito forgot to give it."

(a short pause)

"Who was that fellow dictating to Churchill?" I asked Homunculus, as soon as we had moved further.

*Homun*: "I cannot say definitely. It was either the ghost of Tolstoy, or his fourth carbon-copy. I could not properly make out in the darkness."

*Myself*: "Why is Mephistopheles so quiet today? He seems to be sulking."

*Homun*: "That is because General MacArthur has recaptured Yongdok. Just wait till Truman orders the Hydrogen Bomb; his face will be worth watching then."

*Myself*: "I see what you mean. (Turning to Mephistopheles). Where are your headquarters?"

*Mephist*: "Over there, beyond the Ural Mountains."

*Myself*: "Are you in charge of the Soviet Forced Labour Camps?"

*Mephist*: "Well, in a way yes. You can call me the inspiration behind it. Actually Simon Legree is in charge."

*Homun*: (suddenly) "Look there. They are fighting hard."

*Myself*: "Who are fighting?"

*Homun*: "The Communists."

*Myself*: "Why, has war been declared?"

*Homun*: "Don't be silly; it was declared long ago. As soon as the last war was over the Communists declared the Third World War against the free peoples of the world."

*Myself*: "And who is that prophetic-looking figure?"

*Homun*: "That is Walpole shouting to the multitude."

We could hear his voice distinctly.

*Walpole*: "They may ring their bells now, but soon they will be wringing their hands."

"Not so fast, Mr. Walpole", shouted back Mephistopheles (whose face had turned red with anger). "You forget the factor of human stupidity."

"And my dear fellow, you forget the other factor—the divinity in man that can shine even through this stupidity" I retorted.

*Mephist*: "We will see about that. The trouble with you is, Dr. Faust, that you are an idealist and an optimist like others who have gone before you. Like them you seem to believe the fairy tale that this divinity will ultimately triumph over me."

*Myself*: "And the trouble with you is, Mephistopheles, that you like many of your henchmen, are a megalomaniac. You want to be the emperor of all existence. You cannot understand the elementary truth that the divinity in man is a part of the Infinite, and can therefore triumph over anything that is finite, however powerful it may seem. You are very powerful, but you are a finite creature, you cannot partake of the Infinite as man can. He cannot triumph over you yet, because he has not manifested his secret godhead; but when he does it he will."

*Mephist*: "I shall prevent it."

*Myself*: "You might as well try to prevent the night from following the day. Your power is great but limited, Mephistopheles, remember that."

*Mephist*: (angrily) "And you remember our pact, Dr. Faust. You are in no position to talk about triumphing over me."

I suddenly remembered that I was supposed to be Faust. The fellow obviously did not know that I was not Faust.

*Myself*: "And you are in no position to talk about long term pacts. You will soon become a nervous wreck, and gradually fade away into oblivion."

*Mephist*: (with a shout) "What, me! The mighty Mephistopheles! You don't seem to have grasped the fact that I am immortal. First you try to show that my power is limited, and now you doubt my immortality."

*Myself*: "And you don't seem to have understood the difference between 'perpetuity in time' and 'immortality.' You are a very bad metaphysician; you should go to India to study metaphysics, not to Russia. You are allowed to exist because you have a function to perform, a purpose to serve; as soon as your use is over you will be dissolved."

*Mephist*: (turning pale, but still defiantly) "And how am I going to be dissolved?"

*Myself*: "You see this beam of light? You know that if you step on it you will be reduced to ashes."

*Mephist*: "Yes".

*Myself*: "Now suppose this beam spreads out and covers the whole of Darkness with its Light, where will you hide, for there will be then no Darkness, but only the Light? With all your cunning, Mephistopheles, you are as stupid as that mad Moloch, who got annihilated some time back. He was a good marksman, though; his bombing of cathedrals and hospitals was pretty accurate.....But do not be sad, Mephistopheles. You will attain immortality in stone. They are sure to erect your statue at Stalin-grad. There you will live forever—unless of course Truman crushes you even there. He will not leave you in peace, now that he knows your game. See, he has made all preparations; the stage is set—Heifetz on the right, Kreisler on the left, Truman himself in the middle with the baton. The guest of the evening, Saint-Saens, has arrived. They are all waiting for you now, Mephistopheles, all gods and men, in Heaven and on earth, to come and do the Swan Dance....."

\* \* \*

The dream faded away. When I got up it was six thirty. I picked up my note-book and wrote all that had happened in the dream, and went to Dr. Freud's Institute, greatly satisfied; after all, it is not a small thing to have a free show every night.

# WHITHER INDIA? BY B. C. SEN (Secretary, The Unity Party)

The turn of events in Korea has proved beyond a shadow of doubt that the aggression by North Korea was very well planned and that the Russians had been training the Koreans for this brutal aggression for the last three years. It has come as a sort of Pearl Harbour to the Americans, because it is really aimed at eliminating American influence from that region, and the Americans were not at all prepared for such a move at this time. Indeed this is the beginning of the Soviet thrust for world conquest. President Truman spoke only plain and obvious truth when he said, "the attack upon Korea makes it plain that Communism has passed beyond the use of subversion to conquer independent nations, and will now use armed invasion and war. It has defied the orders of the Security Council of the United Nations, issued to preserve international peace and security." So it is surprising to find that a large section of Indian opinion has failed to see and admit the truth. Many are actually putting more trust in the words of the Soviet propagandists that the Korean war is the beginning of open aggression by America. It is but natural that the Communists in India should propagate this view though one wonders why the Governments of provinces which have banned the Communist party allow free circulation of rabidly Communist propaganda in journals hailing from provinces where the party is still not under a ban. But it is surprising that papers that are not Communist should come out with open or subtle charges against America of doing the very things the Communists have done. Communists or fellow-travellers seem to have managed to enter into the editorial staff of many non-Communist papers and are insidiously carrying on their propaganda through those papers. Thus we find that in giving news of the Korean war, many papers are printing with big headlines, the comments published in the central Communist papers like *Pravda* and *Izvestia*. The result is that the general consensus of opinion in India is that America is at least as much aggressive and imperialistic as Soviet Russia. That is undermining the will of the people to resist Soviet aggression by definitely supporting the American bloc, and this is very dangerous, as unless the non-Communist nations combine and resist wholeheartedly, Soviet domination of the world cannot be prevented.

The first charge that is brought against America is that it is a capitalist country and that it is the big business firms of America who really determine the policy of the Government there and they are driving the world into a third world war so that they may make huge profits by producing and supplying war materials. It really beats one how such ridiculous charges are widely believed by the Indian people. There was recently a big bold-lettered proclamation in one of the Bombay Journals: "The rulers of America have out-hitlered Hitler." By the rulers is meant the capitalists. But what about the labour class in America? If they are exploited by the capitalists why does not Communism or Socialism flourish in America? Certainly the working class there is far more advanced politically than the dumb driven masses in Soviet Russia and they very well know how to further their own interests. It is because they have found that a system of free enterprise is most conducive to the welfare of the workers that they stick to the American way of life. It is absolutely false that the Korean war is the creation of a handful of capitalists in America; President Truman's action in Korea has been wholeheartedly supported by almost all Americans except a handful of Communists and some others who have pacifist leanings. Indeed the American public, especially American labour, had been fully alive to the Communist danger even before the brutal and naked aggression began in Korea. The journal of the American Federation of Labour wrote in last April: "No longer can two oceans and four or five thousand miles of space make us secure against totalitarian Communism". They oppose Communism because it means "the end of freedom, under it workers cannot choose or change their jobs, no union can raise wages, anyone may be imprisoned for years without trial for such minor offences as lateness and absence from work, or through false accusations. And the people, deprived of all voice in choosing their government, cannot remedy such evils." And the workers of the United States, who have attained the highest standards of living in the world by utilising the opportunities which democracy gives to organised labour in a free enterprise country, are determined to fight Communism, whatever the cost. Capitalism against which Marx fought is dead, what we find in America is free private enterprise with so much state control that the capitalists cannot exploit the workers and cannot go against the general interests of the country, and as such it is not much different from democratic socialism as we find practised in Britain. America has no quarrel even with Communist Yugoslavia, it holds that different economic system can function side by side in a free world; but that is an ideal which Soviet Russia cannot brook. As regards imperialism, the charge against America is baseless. After giving freedom to Cuba and the Philippines, America has freed herself from all trace of imperialism. And what about the Soviet Union? In 1939, before the start of World War II, it had a population of 170,467,000 and an area comprising 8,173,550 square miles. By the end of the war, Russia had annexed Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, Bessarabia and Ruthenia, parts of Finland, Poland and East Prussia, the Kurelies and the Southern Sakhalin island. By February, 1948, Communists had taken control of Czechoslovakia, Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary, Albania, Rumania, Yugoslavia, East Germany, North Korea. By January, 1950, the Communists had taken over Manchuria and China (except Formosa). Thus in

1950 Russia and her satellites control in Asia and Europe a population of 830,428,000 and an area of 10,005,763 Square miles. Yugoslavia is not listed among the Communist countries because, since leaving the Cominform in 1948, she has her own anti-Russian Communism. In the face of these facts and figures, it is most surprising that people in India should accuse America of imperialism while regarding Russia as the champion of freedom.

The policy of Pandit Nehru, the Prime Minister of India, not to join what he calls the rival Power blocs, shows his distrust of the Western powers and has given encouragement to the anti-American feeling in India, and the Americans have not failed to notice it. He constantly refers to Colonialism as the real danger to the people of Asia. Even President Truman's Four Point programme to help the people of S. E. Asia to raise their standard of life has been declared to be ridiculous by no less a personality than India's ambassador to America, Mrs. Pandit. This deplorable remark has had a most disastrous effect on the morale of the Indian people. Thus the *Nation* of Calcutta has recently reproduced an article from the only Communist paper in Britain, the *Daily Worker* with the following editorial note: "The other day, Mrs. Vijaya Laxmi Pandit described President Truman's Point-4 programme as 'ridiculous'. Here John Gollan, writing in the *Daily Worker* states that Point Four is another name for colonial exploitation. He makes special mention of the exploitation of Iranian oil and the drain of riches to London and New York leaving the people of Iran poor and starving." But how can the exploitation of Iranian oil be called Colonialism? Iran is an independent country and not a colony of Britain or America. Without technical and capital help from these countries the oil fields, which are the chief source of national income to Iran, could not have been developed. Britain and America have not coerced Iran by demonstration of military force as Soviet Russia is trying to do now, and the *Daily Worker* is supporting that move of Russia by such baseless propaganda. Under the Point Four programme the American Government will provide funds to pay for American technical experts in the Near East, Africa and South-East Asia to improve health, education, sanitation and agriculture. Speaking at the Copenhagen Socialist Conference, Mr. Morgan Philipps hailed the Point Four Programme as "practical Socialism on an international scale." In that article in the *Daily Worker* the author ridicules this by saying: "A glance at the preamble of the Truman Bill shows that it really is Wall Street's new profit Magna Charta." These words have been reproduced in bold types in the *Nation*. But what is the ground for making such a remark? The preamble quoted in that article says that the investors should have the assurance of the safety of their capital and personnel and that they should have reasonable profit and no discriminatory treatment. As the readers will see for themselves, there is nothing wrong in these conditions, still they are put forward as proof of the colonialism of America. Colonialism is a misnomer here; none of the countries to which the aid is to be given is a colony of America. Compare with this what Communism is doing in the countries where it has got its grip; to give only one example, food is being exported from famine-stricken China to Soviet Russia. A secret agreement between Russia and Communist China, recently revealed, commits the Chinese to increase their army to 4,000,000 and to reduce the population of China by 100,000,000 because of "lack of existing resources". It also committed them to help establish "a People's Government by the different races of the people in Inner Mongolia, Sinkiang, and Tibet, through both sides' assumption of responsibility in helping their independence," and accorded the Soviet Government the right to station troops in China "to protect world peace."

Indeed, Colonialism is naturally decaying in Asia, and the real danger there today is Red Communism. Thus Sri Aurobindo writes in his recently published book, *The Ideal of Human Unity*, about what Nehru calls the two rival power blocs: "Here again, as elsewhere, the actual danger presents itself rather as a clash between two opposing ideologies, one led by Russia and Red China and trying to impose the Communist extreme partly by military and partly by forceful political means on a reluctant or at least an infected but not altogether willing Asia and Europe, and on the other side a combination of peoples partly capitalist, partly moderate socialist who still cling with some attachment to the idea of liberty,—to freedom of thought and some remnant of the free life of the individual." I have italicised this passage as there cannot be a more clear, precise and forceful evaluation of the present most dangerous world crisis.

Addressing a meeting of students and professors at Benares, Nehru thus clinched the main question facing humanity today: "Can we equate individual democratic freedom with full-blooded social justice?" The Socialism he supports is essentially social justice, the urge for which is evident in Europe and Asia today. He said: "I am a great believer in social justice, but I am convinced that any State or structure of society in which individual liberties are crushed and are not allowed to grow will decline and ultimately perish. I am not therefore prepared to give up the idea of individual liberty." We wonder why Nehru cannot boldly stick in practice to this ideal which he has expressed so admirably. If he had done that he would not have the least hesitation today to align himself openly with the combination of peoples led by America, instead of following a policy of neutrality which makes everybody lose trust in India. Nehru



## A Letter To A Student

...I have never said that one ought not to desire to pass one's examinations. Passing them and that too with credit is desirable and important. But there are other things which have an equal importance. For example, bearing the result of the examination with equanimity. Also, developing the habit of reading, the power of concentration while reading, the capacity of quick understanding, the knack of answering questions with accuracy and depth, the art of perseverance and several other matters are just as important, if not more. Studies coupled with examinations should be regarded as a field of growth of consciousness, of experience. Merely passing examinations without the growth of consciousness would defeat the very purpose of education.

I do not mean that one should become perfect at once or that, if one fails to develop all these qualities or any one of them, one should not pass examinations. As a matter of fact, all these things are difficult to achieve and our educational system makes it even more difficult. But what I mean is that, in spite of all obstacles, one should make an attempt in this direction and try to achieve whatever is possible. It may not be much; but even a little achieved or even the burning will to achieve, if developed under the most trying conditions, is not a mean gain. This I say because I find that passing examinations has overshadowed everything else; and if the will is there to do something it is very feeble, at least in most cases if not in all. We have to aspire after perfection—perfect perfection—or at least to get the attracting dream of it; and the aspiration and the will have to be developed to such an extent that no amount of adverse circumstances would be able to extinguish that flame. And the initiative for all this can best come from those who are comparatively well placed in life and not from others. Indeed achievement of perfect perfection is the goal and consummation of human life's endeavour. So there is nothing wrong in desiring to pass examinations or in desiring a good and decent life; only, it should take its due place and not overshadow everything else.

One thing more I would like to add. Results themselves, though important, have also their due place. Columbus who set out to discover India by a western route could not do so, but instead found America. On the surface, he failed. He himself must have thought so. But did he really? Supposing Columbus were living now—when India, in the person of our Prime Minister, went to discover America—would he not have been glad and would he not have thanked Providence for his failure? Though Columbus is not there, yet the lesson is there for all those who wish to learn. We do not realise that even apparent failure also achieves something and that our lack of realisation is caused by our ignorance and impatience and our limited vision. And that is one of the reasons why the Gita lays stress on action and not on the fruits thereof.

Yogendra.

### WHITHER INDIA? —Continued from previous page

is trying to mediate between the two blocs but that is certainly not the way to real peace. For any arrangement which will leave Soviet Communistic Russia as a great power will prolong the world crisis, and the ideal of a world government which Nehru cherishes will not be fulfilled. The Korean situation has awakened the world to a true sense of the problem facing humanity.

As Sri Aurobindo said about the last War, the present conflict is "not a fight between nations and governments but between two forces, the Divine and the Asuric." The same Asuric forces that made Hitler their instrument and ultimately failed have found a better and more effective instrument in Stalin. Those who are trying to come to a settlement with Stalin are blind to the actual forces that are behind him. "What we have to see is on which side men and nations put themselves; if they put themselves on the right side they at once make themselves instruments of the Divine purpose in spite of all defects, errors, wrong movements and actions which are common to human nature and all human collectivities. The victory of one side (the Allies, America, Britain, France) would keep the path open to the evolutionary forces; the victory of the other side would drag back humanity, degrade it horribly and might lead even, at the worst, to its eventual failure as a race, as others in the past evolution failed and perished."

Behind Communism is the mighty Russian armed power. The Communists, after their victory in China, are massing troops against Tibet, threatening Persia, seeking to overawe Yugoslavia and causing deep fear in Finland and Sweden. The Communist menace and aggression continues to spread throughout the world. Referring to the war in Korea, Mr. Churchill, Britain's war-time Prime Minister, remarked: "The United States is bearing with courage and resolution, in a noble way, the burden of this clash, which is in all essentials, a renewal of our fight for human Freedom against Hitler." The famous letters which Sri Aurobindo wrote during the last war, explaining to his disciples the true import of the world crisis, are equally applicable to the present situation, Stalin and his Communism being even more dangerous than Hitler and his Nazism. We quote here some extracts from those letters of Sri Aurobindo so that people may not be misled by false lights at this most critical juncture in the history of mankind:

"What we say is not that the Allies have not done wrong things, but that they stand on the side of the evolutionary forces. I have not said that

## The Sky-rocket and the Lightning Rod

I would rather be a lightning rod,  
Tall, still, straight,  
Planted in the mortal sod  
To watch and calmly wait  
To ground the spark of God....

A prime conductor, nude, hard,  
Engine-cured, cold,  
A hollow tube, a boulevard  
Of steel, my fate foretold,  
A shining shaft on guard.

The gipsy rocket zooms! From the land  
It weaves a thread of light,  
A glittering golden moment's strand  
Across the loom of night,  
A hissing saraband

That bows, unfurls a brilliant shower  
Of scintillating fire,  
Then turns into a blackened flower:  
What wizened fruit to bear....  
Corruption to empower?

The while the quiet lightning rod,  
Slender staff of storms,  
Looking to heaven with never a nod  
At angry shadowforms  
Invites the Hand of God.

ELEANOR A. MONTGOMERY

at random, but on what to me are clear grounds of fact. What you speak of is the dark side. All nations and governments have been that in their dealings with each other,—at least all who had the strength and got the chance. I hope you are not expecting me to believe that there are or have been virtuous governments and unselfish and sinless peoples? But there is the other side also. You are condemning the Allies on grounds that people in the past would have stared at, on the basis of modern ideals of international conduct; looked at like that all have black records. But who created these ideals or did most to create them (liberty, democracy, equality, international justice and the rest?) Well, America, France, England—the present Allied nations. They have all been imperialistic and still bear the burden of their past, but they have also deliberately spread these ideals and spread too the institutions which try to embody them. Whatever the relative worth of these things—they have been a stage, even if a still imperfect stage of the forward evolution. England has helped certain nations to be free without seeking any personal gain; she has also conceded independence to Egypt and Eire after a struggle, to Iraq without a struggle. She has been moving away steadily, if slowly, from imperialism towards co-operation; the British commonwealth of England and the Dominions is something unique and unprecedented, a beginning of new things in that direction; she is moving in idea towards a world-union of some kind in which aggression is to be made impossible; her new generation has no longer the old firm belief in mission and empire; she has offered India Dominion independence or even sheer isolated independence, if she wants that,—after the war, with an agreed free constitution to be chosen by Indians themselves.....

"All that is what I call evolution in the right direction—however slow and imperfect and hesitating it may still be. As for America, she has fore-sworn her past imperialistic policies in regard to Central and South America, she conceded independence to Cuba and the Philippines.... Is there a similar trend on the side of the Axis? One has to look at things on all sides, to see them steadily and whole. Once again it is the forces working behind that I have to look at, I don't want to go blind among surface details. The future has to be safeguarded; only then the present troubles and contradictions have a chance to be solved and eliminated.

"The Divine takes men as they are and uses men as His instruments even if they are not flawless in virtue, angelic, holy and pure. If they are of good will, if, to use the Biblical phrase, they are on the Lord's side, that is enough for the work to be done. Even if I knew that the Allies would misuse their victory or bungle the peace or partially at least spoil the opportunities open to the human world by that victory, I would still put my force behind them. At any rate things could not be one-hundredth part as bad as they would be under Hitler. The ways of the Lord would still be open—to keep them open is what matters. Let us stick to the real, the central fact, the need to remove the peril of black servitude and revived barbarism threatening India and the world, and leave for a later time all side-issues and minor issues or hypothetical problems that would cloud the one all-important tragic issue before us."

# SRI AUROBINDO AS I KNEW HIM

## SOME REMINISCENCES OF HIS POLITICAL DAYS

By SURESH CHANDRA DEB

"Mother India" has great pleasure in publishing this specially written article—the interesting result of a request to the author to put together his reminiscences of Sri Aurobindo as he came personally to know him during the years when Bengal was making history in and for India.

### Silent Watcher

My eyes first set themselves on Sri Aurobindo—known at that time as Aurobindo Ghose—on a November evening on the eve of the Benares Congress held during the last days of December, 1905. The place of the meeting was a room at the Field and Academy Club in the Sib Narayan Das Lane just north east of the present Vidyasagar College Hostel on Cornwallis Street. The Club had been organised by the young men of the Bengalee higher classes headed by the then Maharaj-Kumar of Cooch-Bihar. Many of them had completed their education in Britain and the time-spirit had caught them and been influencing them to think of things other than personal pleasures and the diversions of intellectualism. Leaders of thought and society had been discussing the *pros* and *cons* of the then methods of political activity that were confined to petition, prayer and protest to the alien Authority which held India under subjection. Bankim Chandra had characterised these as "dog politics"—waiting for crumbs and bones from the master's plate; Rabindranath Tagore had directed at them his shafts of ridicule in his essays read before the Calcutta learned societies and in articles in the papers edited by him; Sri Aurobindo had held up the example of Parnellism\* with a view to discredit this "mendicant policy" in a series of articles in the *Indu-Prakash*, the *Bombay Weekly*, during the later part of the last decade of the 19th century. Bipin Chandra Pal in his *New India* (Weekly), started in 1901, began challenging the postulates of the Congress politics.

It was in this climate of opinion that we had grown up and naturally were drawn towards principles and policies that suggested activities that were dynamic and "dangerous", to use a word very popular amongst us in those days. To young Bengalees in those days Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Rabindranath Tagore, Bipin Chandra Pal and Upadhyaya Brahmabandhav and those who came to be associated with them were objects of admiration and no little curiosity. On the November evening referred to above, there were gathered Bipin Chandra Pal, Chittaranjan Das, Surendranath Halder, and Sarat Chandra Sen—all familiar faces; the only exception was a retiring figure sitting quietly in a chair, whose name I later came to know was Aurobindo Ghose. The discussion that ensued referred to the resolutions of the forthcoming session of the Congress. The Boycott resolution had been passed at a meeting held at the Calcutta Town Hall on the 7th of August, 1905; it had angered and harmed Anglo-India—the finance-capital interests of British merchants and manufacturers. And the State in India whose only reason for existence was the service of these interests naturally attempted to stamp out the rising temper of the subject population symbolised by the Boycott resolution.

This repression helped to disrupt the front of the politically-minded India; the seeds of two party alignments were sown, the "Moderates" and "Extremists" had their birth, the former desiring to tone down the "Extremist" resolution on the Boycott, the latter desiring to have it and other items of a defiant policy endorsed by the Congress. Though the control of the Congress was in the hands of the "Moderates" they dared not resile from the position taken up at the Calcutta meeting. Advanced opinion in Maharashtra and the Punjab, represented by Balwant Gangadhar Tilak and Lala Lajpat Rai, pressed home this advantage, and the Benares Congress endorsed the resolution under pressure of that militant group of Indian politicians. All the possibilities of the situation were discussed at this meeting. Sri Aurobindo remained a silent listener. It appeared that he was a watcher of the sky over Bengal and was satisfied with the signs on the weather-chart; he could wait.

Another topic that had been discussed at this "gathering of the clan", was the need for a daily English-language paper to propagate the principles and policies of the New Party waiting to be born, as the *New India Weekly* was felt to be unequal to the task of interpreting the ever-evolving revolutionary changes in the country and of giving a lead that would bring to fruition the dreams and aspirations of the people. No decision could be arrived at as finance stood as a stumbling block. On this topic also Sri Aurobindo appeared to be watching developments.

The next occasion on which I saw Sri Aurobindo was during the days when the Bengal Provincial Conference was scheduled to meet at Barisal in April, 1906, during the Easter holidays. I accompanied Brahmabandhav Upadhyaya to Barisal as a delegate to this Conference. Chittaranjan Das, Bipin Chandra Pal, Surendra Nath Halder and Sarat Chandra Sen were guests of the Lakutia House, a famous zamindar family of the district. I found Sri Aurobindo there, studying the situation. The Conference

\*EDITOR'S NOTE: It may be remarked that, though the example of Parnellism might be salutary, Sri Aurobindo's own policy in India was not based on Parnellism. It had more resemblance to Sinn Fein, but was conceived before the Sinn Fein movement and was therefore not inspired by it.

was dispersed by the bureaucracy at the point of the bayonet and the "regulation lathi". This outrage inflamed even the leaders of the "Moderate" party, one of whom, Bhupendranath Basu, declared: "This is the end, the beginning of the end of the British Rule in India". The feeling all over India was electric; the Barisal episode laid the foundation of terrorism in Bengal. I recall that while all the others were excited, Sri Aurobindo was unperturbed; and interpreting the past in the light of later events, I can say that he was satisfied with the evolution of thought and activity precipitated at Barisal.

Delegates from East Bengal clustered round the leaders of the New Party for light and lead. And they arranged that some of the latter should tour their areas and help preach the new message. Three of them—Bipin Chandra Pal, Sri Aurobindo and Subodh Chandra Mullick agreed to this proposal. I had the privilege of accompanying them as one of the "volunteer" workers. Thus was I thrown into intimate relation with these leaders, and during about 45 days had occasion to observe matters and unconsciously imbibe the lessons of a new *Sadhana*, devoted work, in politics. Thousands had their initiation during these days, each receiving the gift of understanding and dedication according to the law of his being. Since then life has been different to them through good report and evil, through success and failure. The sacrifices made, the risks taken with the happiness of dear and near ones involved in this refusal to follow the ordinary path, have been worth-while. For, millions felt that "bliss was it in that age to be alive, to be young was very heaven". We had glimpses of the future, dreamt dreams, saw visions. Thousands of our fellow-workers left the field of their mundane activities; those of us who have lived to see their dreams realised, their visions taking concrete shape, have reasons to feel themselves blessed. Personally speaking I have remained a worshipper at the gate; so it was decreed.

Writing after about 45 years of those days of high exaltations and self-forgetfulness, the impressions of these 45 days of April-May, 1906, as these related to Sri Aurobindo, were those of a silent distant figure lost in his own thoughts, speaking the fewest of words, observing the effect of the language in which Bipin Chandra Pal clothed the present degradation and the future ennobling of his people. For he was the orator of the party; neither Sri Aurobindo nor Subodh Chandra would open their lips at public meetings. They had their closed-door discussions with active politicians, with young men burning to wipe out with their blood the insult implicit in foreign rule.

We, "Volunteers", sensed that something was afoot, some "new departure" from the lines of the then current politics. Hints were thrown at us, suggestions made that told us of days big with brave deeds and sacrifices in the service of the Mother, as Sri Aurobindo used to call the land of his birth. Thousands chose and trod the path indicated by the new prophets of a new life. This tour with its flaming words and silences created the history which reached its end on August, 15, 1947.

### Master Journalist of Nationalism

On return from this tour, I had few occasions to meet Sri Aurobindo for about two months. He was busy as Principal of the institutions started by the National Council of Education. Then something happened that threw me into his company—a privilege undreamt of. I have spoken before of a project for an English-language daily to propagate the principles and policies of the New Party. Since November, 1905, it had been receiving fitful attention. The visit of Balwant Gangadhar Tilak to Calcutta on the occasion of the Sivaji Utsav of 1906 imparted an urgency to it. But in June and July, it appeared to halt. And in desperation Bipin Chandra Pal took the plunge almost unknown to the fellow-members of the Party. His weekly was being published from the Classic Press on Corporation Street, now known as Ranee Rashmoni Road; its proprietor Biharilal Chakravarty agreed to take the risk of publishing the daily on the assurance that the daily sale proceeds of the paper would be his. Bipin Chandra could procure from Haridas Halder and Kshetra Mohan Singh Rs. 450 for the initial stock of paper and certain other incidental expenses. The name chosen for the paper was *Bande Materam*—Salutation to the Mother—the refrain of Bankim Chandra's famous song; the day fixed for the first issue was the 7th of August, 1906, the anniversary of the "Boycott Day". It had to be changed to the 6th owing to Bipin Chandra's absence from Calcutta on that day—a last minute change occasioned by the Political Conference in his own home district of Sylhet.

As editor of the paper Bipin Chandra had to think of a leader-writer who in his absence would play the part. In this extremity he went to Sri Aurobindo on the evening of the 5th; the latter had been residing at the Wellington Square Mansion of Subodh Chandra Mullick. He appeared to be taken by surprise at this novel development but readily agreed to Bipin



## SRI AUROBINDO AS I KNEW HIM —Continued from previous page.

Chandra's request. Relieved of anxiety on this point, the editor started for Sylhet on the 6th August morning with the *Bande Mataram* hot and wet from the press in his hand. Sri Aurobindo started his contributions from the 2nd or 3rd issue, his first article was entitled; "John Morley—3 Phases". It fell to me to come to him every evening at about 5 p.m. and receive from him the article promised. I found it ready; I did not have to wait for it on any single day.

The *Bande Mataram* was an instantaneous success, and the soreness felt by certain leaders of the New Party for the way in which Bipin Chandra Pal had sprung a surprise on them soon wore away and was replaced by pride at the adventurousness of it. The Classic Press could not cope with the demand for the paper. And there was again a gathering of the clan. On the guarantee of Rs. 6,000 by certain members of the party, Upadhyaya Brahmabandhav undertook to have the *Bande Mataram* published from Sandhya Press on Cornwallis Street from which his own Bengali-language daily, the *Sandhya*, used to be published. Till the end of August, the Classic Press printed the *Bande Mataram* and it was my privilege to put in daily appearance at Sri Aurobindo's residence. Now and then he used to ask me questions with regard to how the rest of the paper got the materials for publication, with regard to Bipin Chandra's tour programme and whether articles from him came regularly. These were rare occasions.

Now and then I found him with friends—Subodh Chandra Mullick, Charu Chandra Dutt, Surendranath Halder, Bijoy Chandra Chatterjee, Rajatnath Roy, Hemendra Prasad Ghosh, Jogendra Krishna Basu—when he opened out; and still do I appear to hear the tinkling laughter that expressed the joy of his heart at the temporary release from the burden of thought and responsibility generally felt by him. Now and then politics cropped up in these discussions and their handling in the daily Press, in his own articles. He generally spoke in English, but when he used his mother tongue, Bengali, the foreign accent and a lisp sound made it pleasant to the ear. Even during these pleasantries, a book was always by his side into which he would dip and lose himself. And there were silences eloquent of the prevailing mood of all present. Now and then there was small talk, and Sri Aurobindo extracted the utmost pleasure from it. It is not easy to recall at this distance the nature of the discussions held on these occasions. But one stands out prominently where he and N. N. Ghosh, editor of the weekly *Indian Nation* and Principal of the Metropolitan College, now known as the Vidyasagar College, were engaged in a controversy over the principles and practices of the New Party. N. N. Ghosh had a reputation for crisp, nervous English and Sri Aurobindo was Sri Aurobindo and the controversy between these two giants attained the character of an epic, neither giving quarter. This controversy and the words and phrases used in it became the talk of the politically-minded people of the day.

But this was later in 1907. In August-September, 1906, Sri Aurobindo's writings showed the quality of a master that was an inspiration to thousands. And almost daily Reuter and correspondents of the foreign Press used to cable the news and views published in the *Bande Mataram* as reflecting the authentic feelings of the Indian people in their struggle for national self-respect, which is *Swaraj*. By the end of September, 1906, Bipin Chandra Pal returned from his East Bengal tour and took editorial control of the paper. Sri Aurobindo fell ill and repaired to Deoghar for recuperation. The problem of *Bande Mataram's* finances came up again and Subodh Chandra Mullick offered to take up the whole responsibility of this concern, and from Cornwallis Street had it transferred to Creek Row in a building owned by himself. This change was symptomatic of a minor change in the internal affairs of the New Party. Balwant Gangadhar Tilak tried to bring about a reconciliation during the Congress Sessions at Calcutta over which Dadabhai Naoroji was to preside. But he failed as the younger people were for a more outright support to the tactics of Parnellism—a combination of constitutional and unconstitutional activities directed against the alien State in India. Bipin Chandra Pal retired from the editorial charge of the paper and in a letter handed it over to Sri Aurobindo—a letter which I carried to the addressee's Mott's Lane residence.

And since this letter afterwards gained importance as evidence against Sri Aurobindo as Editor of the *Bande Mataram* in a sedition case, the episode should be related. "The charges concern the articles entitled 'Politics for Indians' which appeared in the Town Edition of the 27th June and the Dak edition of the 28th June and the republication on the 26th July of certain seditious articles which had originally appeared in the *Jugantar* newspaper", to quote from the judgment delivered on September 28, 1907, by Mr. Kingsford, first Chief Presidency Magistrate of Calcutta. Sri Aurobindo was acquitted, as the prosecution failed to bring home to him the charge that he was the editor of the *Bande Mataram* on those days in spite of the letter of Bipin Chandra Pal found in a course of police search of his house at Mott's Lane. And as Bipin Chandra refused to swear in the witness box when called upon to do so by the Magistrate, the latter drew up proceedings against him for contempt of Court and sent him to his subordinate Magistrate, Mr. Ram Anugraha Narain Singh, for trial. Mr. Kingsford had not allowed Bipin Chandra to put in his plea for refusal to cooperate in the discharge of justice by the State. But in Mr. Singh's court he fully explained his stand. His was not a case for total non-cooperation with British Administration as was evolved in the "open conspiracy" during the twenties of this century under Gandhiji's

inspiration and guidance. But he stood on his right as a citizen to withhold co-operation from the State in a particular case in which the policy followed would be creating greater confusion in the country by suppressing the liberty of the people to express their opinion on particular matters of State or the basic principles of its being. He was sentenced to six month's simple imprisonment on the 10th September, 1907. The Press of India hailed the action of Bipin Chandra's as confirming the opinion of Srinivas Shastri that Bengal was introducing an element of "grimness" into Indian politics which had become more than ever necessary.

With the transfer of *Bande Mataram* from Cornwallis Street to Creek Row my connection with it ceased. But in March, 1908, I was called in by Sri Aurobindo to serve as a sub-editor. Here I found as my colleague Krishna Chandra Ghosh who has died this year on the 8th of May. We "edited" the telegrams, and Sri Aurobindo passing through our room would ask of us of the day's news on which to comment. He generally finished his articles by 3 p.m., and when handing these over to us would inquire whether they would be sufficient. If we replied in the negative, he would stand by our table, look over the telegram sheets, and write a "para" or two, as the mood was on. Other denizens of the editorial sanctum were Syam Sundar Chakraverty and Hemendra Prasad Ghosh, the latter still happily with us, a witness to the "high audacity" of those days, Sri Aurobindo's favourite words. The "Chief", the title by which he was known in the *Bande Mataram* Office, showed an instinct for journalism that was remarkable for one of his retiring and recluse habits.

During 1907, I had been a fitful visitor to Sri Aurobindo. On the eve of the Surat Congress, December, 1907, the organisation of the New Party delegation to it took me more often to the Wellington Square mansion of Subodh Chandra Mullick where Sri Aurobindo generally resided or passed the evenings when he had his own house at Calcutta. One day I found him absorbed in "automatic writing", and certain of the indications about the Surat developments were fulfilled; the insult to Surendra Nath Banerjee, for instance, which was compared to death. I was one of the Bengal delegates who accompanied Sri Aurobindo and Syam Sundar Chakravarty to Surat. All of us travelled "3rd" Class. On reaching Surat we were housed in a Dharamasala; we spread our beddings over carpets. Sri Aurobindo and Syam Sundar had cots to distinguish their position. We took the same vegetarian food arranged on behalf of the New Party's conference, and Bengal delegates were recipients of marked public notice as having done something significant in the evolution of Indian Nationalism during the British period.

### Guide and Deliverer of the Indian People

Sri Aurobindo presided over this Conference. He was no orator. But the Conference hung on his words limpid and flowing, instinct with a new meaning, though the words had been familiar enough. Even during this Conference Sri Aurobindo appeared as a soul that dwelt apart from the tumult and shouting of politics of an awakened people newly roused to the degradation of its subjection and grown conscious of its high destiny in the world recalling and fulfilling the achievements and promises of our storied past. Sri Aurobindo had been chosen to help in transforming the thoughts and activities of his people, and it was enthralling to watch the evolution of this drama involving individuals who left home and family, and dared and did deeds that awed millions and thrilled them to a new realisation of their weaknesses and a new determination to rid their social polity of these. As the guiding spirit of the *Bande Mataram* he had been a distant figure; the Surat Congress ended that recluse life and pushed him before hundreds of thousands as the tribune of their rights, as the long looked-for guide and deliverer.

From Surat he went to Bombay: the conduct of the *Bande Mataram* devolved on Syam Sundar Chakravarty and Hemendra Prasad Ghosh who had deputised for them all during the Congress session; and it was he who put in the *Bande Mataram* a banner head-line describing Dr. Rash Behary Ghosh's speech as "The undelivered Masterpiece". We resumed our normal life at the *Bande Mataram* office. The "Chief" returned after about 30 days. I do not remember anything particularly noticeable to be recalled except that newspaper controversy between the "Moderates" and "Extremists" with regard to the responsibility for the abortive Surat Congress showed no signs of abatement. During those tumultuous days at Surat, he had been his own self, unaffected by them, in-drawn generally to a world of which we know little. And, therefore, we could not imagine that the days were hastening towards a crisis in the affairs of his own life, in the fortunes of the *Bande Mataram*. Financial difficulties had always been dogging this paper. Except in an extremity, the management generally did not pester him with them. And the majority of us were taught to treat them as part of the day's work, the "Chief" preferring to forego any "salary" that he now and then drew; the others followed the example. For, in those days journalists regarded journalism as part of a mission, not a profession to be carried on under Trade-Union rules. Those of us who linger on the scene still follow something of the old-world practice.

Sri Aurobindo during the three months that he remained free was in requisition as a speaker at public meetings, he having got over his resolve not to address his people in English, and the latter refusing to accept any refusal now that reports of meetings addressed by him in Western India had carried eloquent head-lines. His articles in the *Bande Mataram* gained a new reality from this closer touch with the people imparting to his thoughts a this-worldly colour of their daily struggles with wants and

other deficiencies in their material existence. The alien bureaucracy having failed to capture him with laws of sedition were ever on the watch, and their "spies" were on the prowl, even planting themselves in the *Bande Mataram* office. We members of its staff were careful of our words and avoided "loose" talk before less known people such as generally crowd into newspaper offices. We felt the tension in the air. But we were not prepared for what happened on April 30, at Muzaffarpore in Bihar then under a common Lieutenant-Governor. A bomb burst at about 9 p.m. shattering the carriages in which Mr. Kingsford was supposed to be returning home. In reality the victims turned out to be Mrs. Kennedy and Miss Kennedy, wife and daughter of one of the leaders of the Bar and a Congressman, Mr. Pringle Kennedy. Rumours floated over Calcutta of this event on the 1st of May, 1908. The next day-break found Sri Aurobindo in police custody. Days of confusion followed. The *Bande Mataram* struggled heroically to ride the storm. It was in vain. The bureaucracy itself inflicted the death-blow by confiscating the press which printed the paper.

Life became a victim to rumours. The "Chief" was withdrawn behind the jail lock-up; the Manicktala Bomb Conspiracy case was lengthening its weary days; the assassination inside the jail of the approver Narendra Nath Goswami by Kanai Lal Dutta and Satyendra Nath Basu introduced an element of exaltation that upheld public morale. The blackest day, however, has to come to an end. The Conspiracy case before Mr. Beachcroft, a fellow entrant of the year into the Indian Civil Service with Sri Aurobindo, resulted in his acquittal. The judge accepting the verdict of the two assessors on the 13th of April, 1909, Sri Aurobindo was let out of the jail lock-up about 30 days after. He came to a world where a "hush" and a "silence" had set in, the national mind waiting for a new lead. I was then teacher in the National School of Sylhet, the headquarter station of the farthest east Bengalee-speaking district. During the next Puja recess two or three of us hastened to Calcutta to meet the "Chief"; he was putting up at the College Square house of Krishna Kumar Mitra, husband of his maternal aunt. We had our *darshan*, a winsome smile welcoming us. We felt ourselves as on a pilgrimage, believing that he was engaged in a new *Sadhana* that would give him supernatural powers which would make an end of the hated foreign rule. My companions were more receptive of the new psycho-physical discipline that the "Chief" was prepared to impart; the *Karma-Yogin* (English) and *Dharma* (Bengali), the two weeklies preaching a new Nationalism, were more in my line. We interpreted the truths inculcated through these two papers in the light of our own experience, in consonance with our individual capacities. These brought to our thoughts and activities some sort of a coherence out of the confusion created by the repression by the Government and the safe policy of our elder politicians. He showed us the way out of bewilderment; we learnt to understand what Indian Nationalism stood for and the ideal of the "Karma-Yogin."

"It (Indian Nationalism) must be on its guard against any tendency to cling to every detail that has been India. This has not been the spirit of Hinduism in the past . . . In all life there are three elements, the fixed and permanent spirit, the developing and constant soul, and the brittle changeable body. The spirit we cannot change, we can obscure or lose; the soul must not be rashly meddled with, must neither be tortured into a shape alien to itself, nor obstructed in its free expression, and the body must be used as a means, not over-cherished as a thing valuable for its own sake . . ."

The return of self-respect to a people is characterized by a sort of revivalism that leads men and women to "cling to every detail" that is in practice in every-day life. Indian nationalism of the times I have been trying to indicate was not free from this defect. And it was in the fitness

of things that Sri Aurobindo, the "prophet of Nationalism" as Chittaranjan Das called him, during the peroration of his address to Mr. Beachcroft and the assessors, should take the earliest opportunity to warn his people of this aberration of their life. Many of us who had been carried away by this spirit of revivalism needed this warning so that we could devote ourselves to the service of our people with a becoming spirit of humanity, with a new awareness that the alien values introduced into their life by Britain had made contributions towards its enrichment, winnowing the chaff from the grain. Thus would we be able to take part in rebuilding the life of humanity on a new basis in the construction of which East and West would cooperate out of mutual knowledge. Sri Aurobindo, a graft of the East put on a Western trunk, was best suited to work out this synthesis. The *Karmayogin* and the *Dharma* were chosen as the instruments fit to be placed in his hands for the evolution of the Master Plan of a saner humanity rooted in honest labour, disdaining to exploit the labour of others, and bearing love for all created things. This was an earnest of the "divine life on earth" of which Sri Aurobindo speaks with certitude in his 76th Birthday Message. The *Karmayogin* and the *Dharma* gave us intimations, faint and obscure, of the "human dream of perfectability", of "aspiration to a heaven on earth common to several religious and spiritual seers and thinkers."

The weakening of political fervour turned the minds of many of us inwards. But the presence of External Authority in our country had had such a disturbing effect on our minds that, except the chosen few, none could settle down to this new *Sadhana*. The majority of us looked to the *Karma-Yogin* and the *Dharma* to give us a new lead in our political bewilderment. Sri Aurobindo's "Open Letter to My Countrymen" that appeared in the *Karma-Yogin* on July 31, 1909, was regarded by us in this light. And we who lived in the countryside could not know that this letter would prove to be his "Last Political Will and Testament" to his people. So, when in August, 1909, rumours reached us that he had vanished from Calcutta, we thought that it was part of political tactics—a refusal to be caught and put behind prison bars; we fondly hoped that he would come back to his accustomed place in the political leadership of his people, refreshed and renovated by the new *Sadhana* he had undertaken. We of the generation that grew up under his specious eyes, caught fire from his flaming words, the few of us who have had no inspiration other than the ending of alien rule, the few of us who still linger on the scene have been awaiting for 40 years for the arrival amidst us of one of the builders of our youth whom the Creator has yet spared to us. We have waited in vain. So it has been decreed. Sri Aurobindo is a distant figure to us beyond our comprehension. The realisation of this disability in us has not been a pleasurable experience. But we have learnt to accept it as a decree from on high.

These reminiscences cover a period of about 45 years. They are coloured by growth and retrogression in thought and life that are part of human evolution. I am conscious that they do not throw much light on the development of the personality from a political thinker and activist into a seer. They are here for what they are worth. I am thankful to *Mother India* for according me an opportunity to recall the age when Sri Aurobindo was the centre of a people's hope, a path-finder to them over stretches of life littered with lost opportunities, it may be with failures and weaknesses, but now and then shot through and through with exaltations of spirit, acts of high audacity, silent dedication to a far-off divine event that dawned on the 15th of August, 1947, coincident with the anniversary of Sri Aurobindo's birthday. This attempt to recollect has been a healing experience. It has confirmed my faith in the people. Saint Augustine's mother had been consoled with the words—"the child of so many tears can never go wrong for long"; the people among whom Sri Aurobindo was born can never go wrong for long. This thought upholds many of us.

## Sleepless Light

O sleepless Light on a calm snow-white shore,  
Open its vacant heart to thy profundity  
And make the empty solitudes more and more  
A golden vision of thy prophecy.

In my dim house thy glimmering shadow falls  
And on ceilings painted with a timeless brush,  
Transparent figures and invisible walls  
Rise carved from the rocks of a mysterious hush.

O Singer of the Vasts, thy voice is heard  
Revealing to my spirit's mute abode  
The secrecies of the immortal word  
In the occult stanzas of thy seraph ode.

The bright ethereal voice the deathless hear  
To the flame-notes of a supernal lyre;  
Its accents break upon my listening ear  
In rhythmic waves of magical moon-rose fire.

My slumbering moments like slow stars arise  
In the firmament of thy infinity,  
A breath, a symbol of thy paradise  
And burdened with a luminous mystery.

NIRODBARAN

## Green Tiger

There is no going to the Gold,  
Save on four feet  
Of the Green Tiger in whose heart's hold  
Is the ineffable heat.

Raw with a burning body  
Ruled by no thought—  
Hero of the huge head roaring  
Ever to be caught!

Backward and forward he struggles,  
Till Sun and Moon tame  
By cutting his neck asunder:  
Then the heart's flame

Is free and the blind gap brings  
A new life's beat—  
Red Dragon with eagle-wings  
Yet tiger-feet!

Time's blood is sap between  
God's flower, God's root—  
Infinity waits but to crown  
This Super-brute . . .

K. D. SETHNA



# LIGHTS ON LIFE-PROBLEMS

( 35 )

One of our chief aims will be to provide authentic guidance in regard to the many important questions which arise in the minds of thoughtful persons all over the world. This cannot be better done than by considering these questions in the light of Sri Aurobindo's writings, because Sri Aurobindo is not only a Master of Yoga in possession of the Eternal Spiritual Truths, but also a Guide and Helper of mankind in various spheres of life and thought. To bring home the light of this guidance and to make it directly applicable to the problems that present themselves to an observing intelligence, a series of questions of common interest along with precise answers directly taken from Sri Aurobindo's writings will regularly appear in these columns.

Q. 1: To what extent is the work of a poet or an artist determined by the culture and the traditions of the nation to which he belongs?

A: "The work of the poet depends not only on himself and his age, but on the mentality of the nation to which he belongs and the spiritual, intellectual, aesthetic tradition and environment which it creates for him. It is not to be understood by this that he is or need be entirely limited by this condition or that he is to consider himself as only a voice of the national mind or bound by the past national tradition and debarred from striking out a road of his own. In nations returning under difficulties to a strong self-consciousness, like the Irish or the Indian some time back, this nationalism may be a living idea and a powerful motive. And in others which have had a vivid collective life exercising a common and intimate influence on all its individuals or in those which have cherished an acute sense of a great national culture and tradition, the more stable elements of that tradition may exert a very conscious influence on the mind of the poets at once helping and limiting the weaker spirits, but giving to genius an exceptional power for sustained beauty of form and a satisfying perfection. But this is no essential condition for the birth of great poetry. The poet, we must always remember, creates out of himself and has the indefeasible right to follow freely the breath of the spirit within him, provided he satisfies in his work the law of poetic beauty. The external forms of his age and his nation only give him his starting-point and some of his materials and determine to some extent the room he finds for the free play of his poetic spirit."

"Generally, every nation or people has or develops a spirit in its being, a special soul-form of the human all-soul and a law of its nature which determines the lines and turns of its evolution. All that it takes from its environment it naturally attempts to assimilate to this spirit, transmute into stuff of this soul-form, make apt to and governable by this law of its nature. All its self-expression is in conformity with them. And its poetry, art and thought are the expression of this self and of the greater possibilities of its self to which it moves. The individual poet and his poetry are part of its movement. Not that they are limited by the present temperament and outward forms of the national mind; they may exceed them. The soul of the poet may be like a star and dwell apart; even, his work may seem not merely a variation from but a revolt against the limitations of the national mind. But still the roots of his personality are there in its spirit and even his variation and revolt are an attempt to bring out something that is latent and suppressed or at least something which is trying to surge up, from the secret all-soul into the soul-form of the nation."

Q. 2: The historical school of literary criticism maintains that a poet's work is the product of his past and present circumstances and influences and that it is impossible to have a proper appreciation of his work without a study of these circumstances and influences. Is this true?

A: One cannot subscribe to this "dogma of the historical school of criticism which asks of us to study all the precedents, circumstances, influences, surroundings, all that created the man and his work,—as if there were not something in him apart from all these which made all the difference,—and supposes that out of this the right estimate of his poetry will arise. But not even the right historical or psychological understanding of him need arise out of this method, since we may very easily read into him and his work things which may perhaps have been there before and around him, but never really got into him. But the right poetical estimate we certainly shall not form if we bring in so much that is accidental and unessential to cloud our free and direct impression. Rather the very opposite is the true method of appreciation, to come straight to the poet and his poem for all we need essentially to know about them,—we shall get there all that we really want for any true aesthetic or poetic purpose,—and afterwards go elsewhere for any minor elucidation or else to satisfy our scientific and historical curiosity; things accidental are then much more likely to fall into their right place and the freshness of poetic appreciation to remain unobscured. But quite apart from its external and therefore unreal method, there is a truth in the historical theory of criticism which is of real help towards grasping something that is important and even essential, if not for our poetic appreciation, yet for our intellectual judgment of a poet and his work."

Q. 3: What is the essential factor by which we should determine our response to or appreciation of an artist's or a poet's work?

A: "In poetry, as in everything else that aims at perfection, there are always two elements, the eternal and the time element. The first is what really and always matters, it is that which must determine our definitive appreciation, our absolute verdict, or rather our essential response to poetry. A soul expressing the eternal spirit of Truth and Beauty through some of the infinite variations of beauty, with the word for its instrument, that is, after all, what the poet is, and it is to a similar soul in us seeking the same spirit and responding to it that he makes his appeal. It is when we can get this response at its purest and in its most direct and heightened awakening that our faculty of poetic appreciation becomes at once surest and most intense. It is, we may say, the impersonal enjoyer of creative beauty in us responding to the impersonal creator and interpreter of beauty in the poet; for it is the impersonal spirit of Truth and Beauty that is seeking to express itself through his personality, and it is that which finds its own word and seems itself to create in his highest moments of inspiration. And this Impersonal is concerned with the creative idea and the motive of beauty which is seeking expression and with the attempt to find the perfect expression, the inevitable word and the rhythm that reveals. All else is subordinate, accidental, the crude material and the conditioning medium of this essential endeavour."

Q. 4: What then is the relative importance of the time-element, which often considerably moulds a poet's personality, in evaluating his work?

A: "There is also the personality of the poet and the personality of the hearer, the one giving the pitch and the form of the success arrived at, while the other determines the characteristic intellectual and aesthetic judgment to which its appeal arrives. The correspondence or the dissonance between the two decides the relation between the poet and his reader, and out of that arises what is personal in our appreciation and judgment of his poetry. In this personal or time element there is always much that is merely accidental and often rather limits and deflects our judgment than helps usefully to form it. How much that interferes can be seen when we try to value contemporary poetry. It is a matter of continual experience that even critics of considerable insight and sureness of taste are yet capable of the most extraordinarily wrong judgments, whether on the side of appreciation or of depreciation, when they have to pass a verdict on their contemporaries. And this is because a crowd of accidental influences belonging to the effect of the time and the mental environment upon our mentality exercise an exaggerated domination and distort or colour the view of our mental eyes upon its object."

Q. 5: Is the personal element then only a hindrance in our appreciation of poetry and art? Is there nothing essential in our present personality which has a right to be heard in this field?

A: "We are all of us souls developing in a constant endeavour to get into unity with the spirit in life through its many forms of manifestation and on many different lines. And as there is in Indian Yoga a principle of *adhikara*, something in the immediate power of a man's nature that determines by its characteristics his right to this or that way of Yoga, of union, which, whatever its merits or its limitations, is his right way because it is most helpful to him personally, so in all our activities of life and mind there is this principle of *adhikara*. That which we can appreciate in poetry and still more the way in which we appreciate it, is that in it and us which is most helpful to us and therefore, for the time being at least, right for us in our attempt to get into union with the universal or the transcendent beauty through the revealing ideas and motives and revealing forms of poetic creation.

"This is the individual aspect of the personal or time element. But there is also a larger movement to which we belong, both ourselves and the poet and his poetry; or rather it is the same movement of the general soul of mankind in the same endeavour towards the same objective. In poetry this shows itself in a sort of evolution from the objective to the inward, from the inward to the spiritual, an evolution which has many curves and turns and cycles, many returns upon past motives and imperfect anticipations of future motives, a general labour of self-enlargement and self-finding. It is a clear idea of this evolution which may most helpfully inform the historical or evolutionary element in our judgment and appreciation of poetry."

K.G.

# D. H. LAWRENCE : THE APOSTLE OF THE LIFE-SPIRIT

By NATHANIEL PEARSON

Looking back upon those four or five years which immediately followed on D. H. Lawrence's death, it is difficult to realise that it is now a little over twenty years since that "savage Messiah" passed from the contemporary scene. But now that both the wild storm of castigation and the exuberant froth of praise, which then issued from his many critics and close associates, have long since died down, we can begin to see from a respectable distance something of what Lawrence was really striving for, and his consequent failure to realise that aim.

## Search for the Pure Primitive

The seventeen years from 1913 to 1930 covered practically the whole period of Lawrence's literary production, but between the publication of *The White Peacock* and his last works—*Lady Chatterley's Lover* and *The Man Who Died*—there emerged the modern novel in all its nakedness,—that is, with all its primitiveness and crudities, that were but suggestions of its earlier expression, fully exposed. We may well ask, however, if Lawrence was really the prophetic genius he was made out to be, or was he merely the writer of profanities breaking conventions and shocking people's sensibilities just to express what he felt to be real? Perhaps it would be safe to say that he was something of both. His genius lay in his subtle feeling into the inner life-rhythms, which are inherent in all things, animate as well as inanimate. At times he touched the true cosmic vision, but he was too responsive to the life-pull to accept the truths of those higher values which thus opened to him. It is not surprising therefore, that the sinuous power of sex played a predominant role in his works. For by giving full reign to the primitive and instinctive elements he lost, or rather violently rejected, the balancing effect of a discriminative and intellectual stability. This made him unable and unwilling to see sex in its true perspective within the cosmic movement as a whole. Like Blake before him, he tried to recapture something of the innocence that was man's before the "fall"—as symbolised in the Biblical story of Adam and Eve: that is, before self-consciousness had precipitated man into all the unresolved conflicts of his present condition or, as Lawrence puts it, into "the war of the self-conscious ego against the spontaneous old Adam." But for Lawrence it was more the full-blooded vital flow rather than the simple child-like innocence that drew him. He deliberately shocked his contemporaries by making use of what have become the discarded and obscene words of the language. And he justified his position in irrefutable terms: "All the old words", he wrote, "that belong to the body below the navel have come to be judged obscene—which is childish. The words themselves are clear, so are the things to which they apply. It is the mental association which has become unclear—the mind drags in a filthy association, so it is our business to cleanse the mind." In a similar way also, he justified his deliberate emphasis on sex, because he felt that "the only way to stop the terrible mental itch about sex (the disease of modern times) is to come out quite simply and naturally into the open with it." But unfortunately he let himself be swept away by these primitive urges, so that, particularly in his last works, he yielded to "the stirring half-born impulse to smash up the vast lie of the world (on sex) and make a new world." But alas, his efforts to create a new world out of the rubble of these vitalistic bomb-blasts proved in the end to be utterly futile.

It was that unrestrained "daimon" in him (as Aldous Huxley called it) which tore at his vitals and prematurely consumed him, producing that insatiable restlessness which pursued him throughout his life. With an all-consuming passion he searched incessantly for the spontaneous or the "pure" mind-free primitive expression and way of life. He failed to recognise or accept the fact that all this primitiveness belonged to the past of man, and could not possibly be recovered in its old pristine form by the present-day world. It was by rejecting entirely the self-conscious level of man, which we now recognise to be but an intermediary stage, a stepping-stone in man's development, that he had shut out all access to the higher mental reaches—the pure intuitive levels of mind. Instead of the intuitive, which he was really seeking, he merely grasped the instinctive lurking in the primitive depths of the being. He thus deliberately chose and fostered the darkness; and in this "dark womb of man's birth and origin" he pictured the ultimate re-emergence and resurrection of man into his fullness.

## Probing into Psycho-physical Secrets

The central core which formed the whole background to Lawrence's work, is perhaps most fully brought out in *Fantasia of the Unconscious* (published in 1923). Although he had read various esoteric works—such as books on Yoga and the writings of Plato, St. John, Herakleitos, and more recent authors like Fraser of *The Golden Bough* and Freud—he wrote always of what issued from his own inner experience. His acute analysis and probings into the inner secrets of man's psycho-physical nature have proved, however, to be as mystifying to his contemporaries as Leonardo da Vinci's detailed anatomical drawings appeared to the men of an earlier day. Certainly Lawrence's analysis of man's emotional nature (in terms of ganglia or chakras) finds no connection with the modern trend of thought. But to Lawrence it was a real experience, and one feels that in his own sphere,—that of the life-impulse—he had touched on some fundamental truths which man must observe, if he means to comprehend the whole nature of his being.

Let us briefly examine his description of these psycho-physical centres, since they are fundamental for a proper understanding of Lawrence's build-up of characters and situations depicted in his novels and short stories. Firstly, there are what he calls the two great primal centres of the body—both below the diaphragm. These are the solar plexus in front, and behind it the lumbar ganglion. These of course are the natural centres connected with alimentation and the primal life-flow, but for Lawrence they assumed a more fundamental significance. They are the negative and positive poles—assimilative and outward feeling—of a subjective consciousness which is wholly impersonal and absorbed in itself. Of these the solar plexus (positive) is the outflowing instinctive feeling into things; and the lumbar ganglion (negative) is the receptive centre which gives a sense of detachment from things other than oneself. It is in fact the stiffened upright back which gives the feeling of independence and individual will-power to man. Similarly there are two great centres immediately above the diaphragm—a sympathetic centre in the breast, and a volitional centre between the shoulders. Here we recognise the heart-centre on the one hand, and the thoracic plexus on the other, controlling respectively the blood-flow and the respiration. And again these form the dual poles of a positive outward feeling—seeking that which is beyond the individual self,—and a negative rejective force. The former is the symbolical sacred heart of love and compassion,—the source of light and inspiration. The latter is the powerful negative pole which, seeking to discover the knowledge and wonders of the world, transfers these wonders, as by impress, into itself. These four centres, then, form the unconscious strata of man's being. They are as yet below the mind, and are a means of direct knowing which functions quite spontaneously without the interference of mind. In them breathes the primal rhythm of life—as is typified by the steady inflow and outflow of breath from the lungs, and the rhythmic pulsating blood-beat from the heart. There are other centres (or chakras) which Lawrence touched upon, although he chiefly stressed the four large centres of the body as being the basic and primal consciousness. In adolescence, for instance, two subsidiary centres develop—one in the throat and the other in the cervical ganglia of the neck. These are respectively the centres of outward expression, and of conscious activity. Youth, growing into self-aware manhood, becomes both articulate and conscious of his own bearing in the world. It is interesting to note in this connection that science has recently pointed to a centre in the back of the neck, which not only balances the skull in its upright position, but controls the whole posture and movement of the body. This factor, it has been suggested, can be utilised to attain a more conscious control over all one's physical activities.

## Instinctive Levels and Mental Consciousness.

It is from these primitive instinctive levels that Lawrence traces the origin and rise of the mental consciousness. But it seems to him that this latter is more of an automatic function than the primitive spontaneous rhythms which are its source. It is therefore against the law and nature of life, to impose the mental will on the free spontaneity of the life-flow. The real function of the mental consciousness, Lawrence points out, is to provide us with the means to adjust ourselves to the external universe, and to give us the means also for subduing that external materio-mechanical movement according to the needs of our creative life. From this, Lawrence concludes that the massive growth of mental consciousness in recent times—particularly of self-consciousness—has overbalanced the old-world rhythm, when man enjoyed the freedom of a direct expression, and of an intimate feeling into the world around him. In this top-heavy mental development Lawrence sees the whole failure of modern man to adjust himself to the world and to the cosmos. He saw, however, that it is not the mind but rather the soul in man which is the ultimate unifying factor of all these separate degrees or layers of consciousness. And it is the soul, unique for each individual, which gives man the ultimate sense of oneness. But although he realised the spiritual nature of man's inner being—or Holy Ghost as he called it,—his actual contact with and experience of it led him to identify the soul with the "quick" of life (that is, with the vital spark of man's being), losing thereby the true spiritual quality of the soul-nature.

It is unfortunate that Lawrence in thus tracing the development of man's consciousness in terms of his psycho-physical functioning, did not venture beyond the adolescent stage. In judging too hastily the present condition of man—with his highly developed intellect and self-consciousness, and his corresponding loss of the subjective or sensual vision, as he termed it—he came to regard the ideative mind, and hence the brain-centre, as "the vampire of modern life, sucking up the blood and the life." Hence he says that the supreme lesson of human consciousness is to learn *how not to know*—that is, how not to interfere mentally, but live dynamically from the central source and origin of one's being. Inevitably he falls back to the primitive instinctive level of life, with its vital interchange and reactions, as being the true basis of man's dynamic fullness. We can see, therefore, how Lawrence in his later works came to abandon himself wholly to the instinctive life-spirit. Particularly in his last essays and poems, he kicked violently against man's mental probing of and interference with the realm of pure sensuality which consists primarily of instinctive and sub-conscious functions. "The business of mind", he states, "is first and foremost the

## CAPRICORNUCOPIAE

### To His Supposed Master

Hail, Southern son,  
Northborn, ecstatic one,  
Self-heliotropic, Southern sun!  
Shine on alone,  
Illumining our zone  
With frilly darkness. Through your  
Stanzaic horn  
I trumpet in this morn-  
ing your three hundredth year outworn  
In loftier heights.  
With what erratic flights  
Your Roman candles fire our nights,  
Your squibs and rockets  
Surprise our mental pockets,  
Tearing our feelings from their sockets!  
Queer mind-physician,  
Hypnotic shock-tactician,  
Mystic, tonecolourful technician!  
Saint on the spree,  
The subtle marquetric  
Of your conceited modesty  
Is plain grotesque  
Plus Christian arabesque  
Infused with cultured barbaresque.  
Your worship buoys  
With its fanstastic toys  
And ornate pyrotechnic joys.  
Blushes and blood,  
Kisses and perfumes scud  
Before us; we swim in your flood  
Of tears; are perched  
In nests and niches; smirched,  
Are washed in wine; and travel lurched  
Through sweat and smiles,  
Balsam and sugar, piles  
Of phoenixes and pearls, quaint styles  
Of paradox,  
*Concetti*, ox-  
ymora, twisted columns, stocks  
Of silver, gold  
And polychrome; take hold  
Of turtles; watch the mass unfold  
In unctuous odes—  
Rich, incense-scented loads  
Of flourishing figures sprung from nodes  
In seventh heaven.  
These luminous symbols leaven  
Our lump; we feed on cream of Devon

Loreto-kist.  
Unable to resist,  
Barocco-galactophagist  
Is what I turn.  
Through your untranquil churn  
The milk of rapture writhes to learn  
New, radiant shapes.  
(Teresa's lover rapes  
Our general fancy, and escapes  
Continent to  
The Continent.) Your true  
Visions in false perspective do  
Ignore convention.  
How musically you mention  
The Magdalene, fix our attention  
With spears and darts!  
What multivalent arts;  
Red, rapturous rhetoric that starts  
Our jaded souls  
(But ends not); purpose shoals  
Of pageantry; jet girandoles!  
You damascene  
And incandescence routine  
With an ultra-Marinist's ultramarine.  
Exuberant voice,  
Now I have made my choice,  
You may multivocally rejoice,  
Exuding sweets  
In broken outline: heats  
Of mysticism fire your feats  
Of motile verve,  
Where gay volute and curve  
Ingeniously prod each nerve—  
Make us see stars.  
In your bizarre bazaars  
We squander caution, buy up jars,  
Moisten our lips,  
And take our lucky dips.  
Oh often may we have these trips  
Past rich façades,  
Doing our promenades  
In such spectacular boulevards.  
Hail, Southern sun,  
In rhythmic-rubied fun  
Your soul-consoling consoles run  
Intercompeting.  
I trumpet you this greeting  
Through conical triplets. Here's to remeeting!

1949

TERENCE HEYWOOD

\* Richard Crashaw who died on August 21, 1649, and one of whose most famous poems, written in the same stanza as above, is entitled "To his (supposed) Mistress."

## D. H. LAWRENCE: THE APOSTLE OF THE LIFE-SPIRIT

—Continued from previous page

pure joy of knowing and comprehending, the pure joy of consciousness. The second business is to act as medium, as interpreter, as agent between the individual and his object. The mind should not act as a director or controller of the spontaneous centres. These the soul alone must control: the soul being that forever unknowable reality which causes us to rise into being . . . Mind and conservative psyche and the incalculable soul, these three are a trinity of powers in every human being. But there is something even beyond these. It is the individual in his pure singleness, in his totality of consciousness, in his oneness of being: the Holy Ghost which is with us after our Pentecost . . . The only way out of the vicious circle is to turn away, each one into the stillness and solitude of his own soul, and there to remain in the quiet with the Holy Ghost which is to each man his own true soul." How true! But how inadequately Lawrence himself dealt with this truth. He recognised the spirit-entity as the unifying centre of the being, but failed to perceive that it was other than the vital centre of man. Thus his interpretation of the spiritual nature was but a shadowy affair, vague and indistinct, which could not survive the forceful reality of the life-impulse.

In one of his last works—*The Man Who Died*, a short novel which sensitively portrayed the resurrected Christ, and which balanced and offset

to some extent the crudities of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*—he did endeavour to show a stage beyond mere sensuality, when man could look upon sex detachedly—that is, having transcended the sex-urge and become master of his soul. But he could not see the way by which this mastery and control could be achieved. He meant to convert profane love into sacred love, but this is impossible without the real transcendence. And it is precisely this latter from which Lawrence had fled. Having surrendered to the life-impulse, it was the living moment, the "now", which he took to be the great underlying reality of all things. He could not, on this account, even bring himself to believe in a progressively emerging evolution, which appeared thus to be contrary to the ever-creative spontaneity of the present. And, as Aldous Huxley observed, he had no concern for eternity—the timelessness of the mystics. This, of course, is understandable when we realise that his was a particular kind of mysticism of the cosmos, with nothing of the supracosmic in it. When, therefore, he touched on some truth of the spiritual Reality, it appeared ethereal and otherworldly; he could not reconcile it with the elemental life forces to which he had wholly given himself. And so he died leaving behind him a widely varied collection of writings through which one has to step correctly in order to sift out the truth beneath his all-too free, though always stimulating, spontaneity.



# BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

## A MODEL FOR HISTORIANS

THE VISION OF INDIA by SISIR KUMAR MITRA (Jaico Publishing House, New York, Bombay, Calcutta: Rs. 1/8)

This brilliant book is almost a model for the historians of to-day and tomorrow. It is a blend—a happy and fruitful blend—of philosophy and history, the divorce of which has reduced philosophy to a conglomerate of water-tight compartments of dogmas and history to a stodgy register of passing events. The ancients were wiser than we are in that they knew that philosophy is an endeavour of the human mind to relate Life to its parent Light and history a story of that Light progressively unfolding and fulfilling itself in Life. That is why there was no history in the present sense of the word in those good old days of deep and expansive vision, it was, instead, a picture of the manifold adventure of man in Time, a mobile representation of the meandering course of his inner and outer evolution. A nation's history is the annals of its soul's growth and self-expression, and the materialist historian, the crowned historian of to-day, ignores all this in his idolatrous pre-occupation with the brute facts of life and his vainglorious desire to make his records realistic. Realism, in so far as it means a loyal concern for the objective aspect of life, is a sound creed, no doubt, but if it means—as it has, indeed, come to mean—a denial of and an obstinate indifference to its deeper and subtler aspects, it is a pathetic blindness clamping man down to the dust and precluding a vision of all that lies below and behind and above him. And it is interesting to note that in spite of the fanatical fidelity to facts that this realism professes, it finds itself twisting away from the truth of the facts it observes and records, human preferences, prejudices and vital interests seriously obscuring its observation and human imagination introducing a distorting and falsifying element of conjecture into it. That was the reason why Napoleon branded history as a fable agreed upon. There is a deeper life behind the surface life of man, where the destinies of individuals and nations are forged, and unless the historian has a vision of it, unless his insight can probe into the subtle intricacies of a nation's inner life-mechanism, his history will be a dry catalogue of events seen through the unavoidable haze of his prepossessions.

### India's Many-sided Culture

The book under review is admirable in that it evinces such a vision of the organic development of the many-sided culture of India from the Vedic times up to the present day. It is Sri Aurobindo's vision of the entelechy of the national being and its evolutionary self-expression that the author has followed in his sweeping survey of the whole history, even the prehistory of this ancient land. He takes us, first, to the Vedic age, the age of the "deepest experiences of the higher truths", the age in which "the Vedic seers discovered the essential nature of the terrestrial existence as Sachchidananda veiled in the phenomenal oppositions of Matter, Life and Mind, but compelling in the earth-nature an effort to cleave through these contrary conditions and eventually arrive at its own unveiled splendour, the Perfection implicit in it." The end of human life was to the Vedic mystics "a divine outflowing." Explaining the inner significance of the Vedic sacrifice, so egregiously misinterpreted by most of the Oriental scholars and considered a stumbling block to a correct appraisal of the Vedic spiritual culture, the author says, "Sacrifice in its inner sense is a glad, ungrudging and aspiring renunciation of the lower and finite for the attainment of the higher and infinite. An offering of all one's possessions and powers to the Supreme from whom they are derived is the means to the realisation of the Supreme and the enjoyment of the bliss of His Light, Love and infinite plenitude. And the mystic Fire, the fire of the awakened Psyche, is the priest and leader of this sacrifice."

Then we are shown the glory of the Upanishadic age in which the intuitive vision of the Vedic seers is being steadily supplanted by intuitive thought. It is still the age of the Spirit, or the symbolic age, according to another classification, but it has already begun to betray a growing predominance of thought-mind and describe an incipient declivity of the cultural curve. The Upanishads represent a flexible systematisation, in terms of intuitive thought and not of discursive intellect, of the multiform, opulent experiences of the Vedic mystics. In society one feels the pulsing of a vigorous spirituality expanding its empire and creating novel forms of self-expression. "People lived a rich and robust life, and a harmony there surely was between it and the intense seeking after truth that was so much in evidence among the kings and nobles no less than among the sages and saints of the time. Royal courts and forest hermitages were humming with these activities; and such glowing examples were not solitary as those of the Rajarshis or sage-kings like Janaka ruling over a vast empire and at the same time living the unfettered, luminous life of the Spirit; and of the Brahmashis or kings of sages like Yajnavalkya—perhaps the greatest figure in the Upanishads—to whom truth was greater than anything else, and yet who accepted with both hands worldly possessions along with spiritual riches."

From the pervasive and puissant spirituality of the Upanishads we are conducted to the age of the Dharma, the mighty and magnificent age of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. This is the typical age in which Intuition is receding into the background and Reason is developing and coming

## A GREAT NOVEL

THE COINERS by ANDRE GIDE: Translated from the original French by Dorothy Bussy (Cassel, London: 9/6 net)

André Gide was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1947, and *The Coiners* (*Les Faux-Monnayeurs* in French) is his masterpiece. Yet the book is not exactly what one would call "readable". It begins well, arresting, or more properly exciting, the reader's curiosity by the picture of a young man leaving his home because he has discovered by the chance reading of his mother's old love letters that he was not the son of the man under whose roof he was living. The letter is brutal, but there is a sort of sincerity struggling somewhere, and there is adventure lurking round the corner. But soon afterwards the narration lags; and the device of presenting character and incidents through the long pages of the diaries of one of the important characters is not very helpful for easy reading. And yet the book has a quality, which raises the question as to what makes a novel valuable.

Evidently it is not what is called "easy reading". Were it so, not only this book but many recognized books will go under. Take Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*, or Conrad's *Lord Jim* or *Typhoon*, or Meredith's *The Egoist*. Many find these not readable in the ordinary sense. And yet the charm and attraction of them will not be denied by any discriminating reader. Not only that, such a reader will easily prefer it to the most easily readable "thriller". So also Gide's *Coiners*.

There are many things that make a novel great: story, character, atmosphere, thought. What makes *The Coiners* great is the deep insight it gives into the heart and mind of youth. In every intelligent and living soul there comes a period of doubt and desperation, the period of dark discontent, of the "everlasting nay" or, in the mystic's parlance, the darkness of the spirit. The more sensitive and deeper the soul the darker will be the disturbance; but it is only a phase, and after its struggles and sorrows the soul reaches understanding and balance. Obviously this period of man's life, which comes at about the end of the teens, is a period very valuable to observe and study, and a careful and understanding picture of it will be not only informative but also deeply interesting. M. Gide deals with this stage in youth, and once that is grasped, the novel becomes a book of absorbing interest. Not only that, even the seemingly uninteresting method of narration is recognized as the right method for the probes and revelations he wants to make. The diaries and intimate conversations take on a specially attractive character.

But at the same time it has to be observed that M. Gide seems to forget one very important fact of life. The period of doubt and darkness in the young soul is only a temporary phase. Not only the great mystics, not only Wordsworth and Carlyle, but the unknown young men and women in their hundreds, who felt the strange disturbances of the spirit passed through them and grew up to be balanced and steady, recognizing the real values of life. The night of despair with its iconoclasms, when it affects healthy youth is only a gangway. Hence M. Gide's young people who find themselves out of tune with many things about them, and who often act irresponsibly, as if they wanted to attract attention like the crying child, are to be expected to be cured of the malaise which is at the root of all that they strangely do. That impression, however, the novel does not give, and that is perhaps its chief defect.

In every great novelist, as in every truly great man, there is a large charity, and that is evident in *The Coiners*. Scott's *The Heart of Midlothian* and Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* are not more remarkable than *The Coiners* in this respect. Bernard's pilfering, Laura's unfaithful love and the aberrations of others are so pictured that no reader will see them through any narrow spectacles. This and the deep thought that animates nearly all conversation in the novel give a quality to it that is of the very highest order. *The Coiners* therefore is a novel to relish slowly and long, and though the beauty of the original style cannot be expected in a translation the more solid attractions of the art and skill in the presentation of characters and events may be enjoyed by careful readers.

P. L. STEPHEN.

forward to grapple with the problems of life. One notices here a further decline of the cultural curve, but a decline big with immense possibilities for the development and dynamisation of the latent or imperfectly evolved powers of the instrumental being of man. A partial and temporary obscuring of the peaks, it may be, but a stupendous expansion of the bases of life and their unparalleled enrichment and fortification. The *Ramayana* stands for a clean and powerful ethical organisation of society, in which the forces of life, held in balance and polarised to the Spirit, make for a splendid richness and purity of national existence. The *Mahabharata* represents an epoch of virile and versatile intellectuality, greater expansion and complexity of life and a more efficient systematisation. It seems as if the spiritual gains of the previous ages, though unavoidably diminished and modified in part, were being used for laying down the large lines and rearing the structure of the cultural life of the country. But all through these colourful changes, one is struck by two things: first, the persistence of

## LIGHT OF THE AGE

A mystic voice, the memory of a Face  
Shines through the unending mystery of the years  
To gauge the Truth twixt animal and God:  
But can we tell the all transforming hour?  
The brute we thought to be so well controlled  
Leaps from a moment of apparent calm  
With facile urge to sweep away all time,  
And time's own circumstance of high intent.  
Out of the depths of our subconscious selves,  
Rising upon a flood of wild desire  
A demon serpent strives to mar our dreams:  
Yet once where here a battle would have raged  
There now sits calm a strange inviolate Power,  
Shining as if with multi-coloured gleams  
Into the dim profundities of night.  
Here dwell the kings of jealousy and hate,  
Of passions wild and animal delights:  
The petty barons of our gross desires  
Bowed low before the advent of a Light  
Changing all jealousy and hate to Love,  
All passions and desires to brave ascent.

But who can tell what ages passed—before  
The Light could penetrate to these dark caves?—  
What aeons of anguish through unconscious lives  
Were spread across the rolling seas of Time?  
When early man, all animal and brute,  
Rose with the smoke and flame of primal fire  
He groped in darkness—yet 'twas then he made  
The first great victory o'er the brutish world.  
While treading the path of earth's tormented labour,  
The sloth and hate of a barbaric age  
He felt the birth-pangs of a growing mind,  
A mind then full of fear, of superstition—  
But fascinated still by that same fire

Which sprang from out volcanos and the skies.  
Then there awoke—in some—another flame,  
A flame that burned within the secret heart  
Bursting the bounds of earth's unconquerable law,  
Aspiring to heights ere then undreamed by man.  
From our life's suffering there arose a prayer,  
A vibrant force was flung into the void  
To find a place among the courts of heaven:  
Out of the Timeless came an answering call—  
As lark to linnet in the realms below,  
So from the Cosmic heights a ray of Light  
Descended into earth's dark hour of time.  
This Light, this Force, this emanating Power  
Here took upon itself the human form—  
In different lands and various ages came  
A Man—for man's advancement to the Light,  
Yet only the few could recognise It then—  
Veiled by illusion, Nature's discipline.

Who saw the Light of Krishna in His day,  
The Christ, Mahomed or the Buddha's gleam?—  
Illumined souls with divine authority—  
Few only knew Them... to inscribe Their Word  
Upon the pages of our history.

Awake ye dreamers in a world of death!  
The Light has come to bless the earth again,  
More powerful, more insistent on Its aim—  
As wedded to the Mighty Mother Soul,  
Arching the chasm twixt the heavens and earth  
It bridges time to all eternity.  
Arise and seek beyond the veil of night,  
Beyond the pale horizon of the mind!  
Drink in the Cosmic vision of the day:  
The Light is here!—creating future Dawns.

NORMAN C. DOWSETT.

the fundamental spirituality, and, second, the progressive dominance of Reason and formalism.

We pass from this age of colossal constructions to the period in which, as a revolt against the priestly oppression and formalistic ossification of society, Buddhism rose and brought to the shackled consciousness of man the message of freedom and simplicity. It was an age of national purification, sweeping reforms and a partial recovery and revival of the pristine purity of the racial consciousness.

Then follows the classical period, a period of "scholars, legislators, dialecticians and philosophical formalisers. It witnessed the creative and aesthetic enthusiasm of the race pouring itself into things material, into the play of the senses, into the pride and beauty of life. The arts of painting, architecture, dance, drama, all that can minister to the needs of a great and luxurious civic life received a strong impetus which brought them to their highest technical perfection." In every field of life there was an outburst of creative energy and enthusiasm and the abundant cultural output brimmed over to distant lands. In the age of the *Mahabharata* is was a wide and full-blooded intellectuality that had served as the expressive medium of the spiritual riches of the national being, but in the classical period it was life, a robust, manifold, splendidly creative, rainbow-brilliant life that received the lightning of the Spirit and cast it into immortal forms of beauty.

Proceeding further, we witness a strong and tense, but rather narrow spirituality raising an ochre-coloured standard of revolt against the growing hedonism of the age and pointing to the serene immobility of the naked Spirit. The decline or rather the voluntary descent of the national spirit to the vital-physical levels of existence, which was a purposive exploration for an integral self-enlargement, was misunderstood by Shankar who, enamoured of the Absolute, beckoned men away from the real relativities of the world.

This intolerant exclusiveness was combated and made up for by other spiritual revivals, more catholic and comprehensive, which tried to stem the tide of sheer hedonism on the one hand and restore something of the purity and amplitude of the ancient spirituality on the other.

A further downward movement of the cultural curve and we have almost an eclipse of the national soul in Matter as a result of the last and most difficult exploration of the long-neglected material field. For a brief moment it seemed as if the soul of the nation would set for ever, its past glory be expunged from the face of the earth. But that was not to be. A greater glory, a more integral perfection, a more sumptuous fulfilment awaited it in the future and summoned it to a renewal of its life and aspiration. Rammohan, Ramkrishna Paramhansa, Dayananda, Keshav Sen, Vivekananda—a galaxy of the torch-bearers of the Spirit—turned the tide and prepared the field for the work of Sri Aurobindo which bids fair to be the crowning achievement of the soul of India—the supramental transformation of man and the establishment of the Life Divine on earth.

In illuminating chapters on "India is One", "Akbar the Unifier", "Sri Aurobindo and Indian Polity", "The Vision of Ajanta", "India's Cultural Empire", "Early Contacts of India with Islam", "The Future of India",

"Towards a New World" etc. the author imparts a wide and varied knowledge of national evolution and gives a definite picture of its final accomplishment. After having shown how the Light descended from the summits of the national being to its lower and more active parts, quickening, enlarging, enriching and illumining them, he proceeds to outline the prospective integration of the whole and its sublimation into the very dynamic of the creative Spirit. It is, indeed, a treat and an instruction to follow the author through the various phases of the evolutionary culture of India and see in them the gradual steps of its organic growth into the fullness of a synthetic self-expression.

### India's Cultural Empire

The chapter on "India's Cultural Empire" reads like a romance. That India did not meditate or vegetate in ascetic isolation, but sent her ambassadors to sow the seeds of her cosmopolitan culture on the shores of the Mediterranean, in parts of Russia and Siberia and Lithuania; that her culture was a shaping influence in Greece, Persia, Asia Minor and Alexandria; that in the distant days of prehistory, "the extensive maritime activities of India brought her into contact with many countries, such as Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, Judea and prehistoric America"; that "influences of Vedic culture have been traced in Boghaz Keui in Cappadocia, in various parts of Central Asia, at Bamiyan, Bactria, Khotan, Miran, Kucher, Turfan and Tun-huang"; that "Indian influence in China was not confined to the sphere of religion alone, but is evident also in her arts and crafts, in her music and sciences"; that "the early temples of Cambodia resemble the Gupta temples of India and are the work of the artists and craftsmen brought by the Indian colonists"; that "Indian ideas began to flow out to Siam and permeate her mental soil"; that "the group of islands known as Malay Archipelago is another renowned outpost of Indian culture"; that "the Hindu basis of Java's culture is a marvel of India's cultural colonisation"; that "the island of Bali stands unique in the history of India's cultural empire, since it is the only colony which is still Hindu in its culture and civilisation"; that, coming to recent times, "it was Germany which was the first in Europe to discover the hidden treasures of Sanskrit literature"; that "another notable event in the expansion of Indian culture in the nineteenth century is the American Transcendentalist movement", and that the Ramkrishna-Vivekananda movement is an "invasion of the New World by Indian thought" are some of the glowing facts which fill our hearts with a legitimate pride in the greatness of India and an invincible faith in the eventual fulfilment of her spiritual destiny. The immemorial lighthouse of the world will guide onward man's pilgrimage to the Divine.

The last chapter on "Integral Vision in History" is a star-dance of stimulating thought and sparkling suggestions which no historian of the synthetic and panoramic school can afford to miss. To the historians of India the book will be an intellectual revel and a revelation in many respects and indicate several prolific lines of research and treatment.

It is printed and published in America and very attractively got up. A useful bibliography is appended to almost every chapter. It richly deserves the praise and popularity with which it is being rewarded.

RISHABHCHAND.

# SRI AUROBINDO AND MAN'S SOCIO-POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

By C. C. DUTT

*The Human Cycle* and *The Ideal of Human Unity*—these two books by Sri Aurobindo were published serially in the magazine *Arya* about thirty years ago. They were brought out in book form very recently. The author has made alterations where necessary, and has added a new chapter at the end of the second book.

We have undertaken the arduous task of introducing the ordinary reader to these two volumes in the firm conviction that no study of the Master's synthetic philosophy can be complete without knowing its applicability to life. All life is Yoga, as Sri Aurobindo has told us often. But the saying is true not only of individual life, but of the corporate life of mankind as well. Of these two books under review, the author said in the *Arya* over thirty years ago by way of a general preface to his synthetic philosophy—"We start from the idea that humanity is moving to a great change of its life which will even lead to a new life of the race—and our aim has been to search for the spiritual, religious and other truth which can enlighten and guide the race in this movement and endeavour. We have tried in the *Synthesis of Yoga* to arrive at a synthetic view of the principles and methods of the various lines of spiritual self-discipline and the way in which they can lead to an integral divine life in the human existence. But this is an individual self-development, and therefore it was necessary to show too how our self-ideal can work out in the social life of mankind. In the *Psychology of Social Development*\* we have indicated how these truths affect the evolution of human society. In the *Ideal of Human Unity* we have taken the present trend of mankind towards a clear unification and tried to appreciate its tendencies and show what is wanting to them in order that real human unity may be achieved."

The scope of the two works is thus clear. But so vast is the ground that has been covered, so comprehensive is the view that has been taken, so detailed has been the consideration of the various historical data relied on, that no perfunctory reading of the books is likely to be of any use. A certain amount of previous training would undoubtedly be helpful. But even when that is absent, the reader must make an honest attempt to follow the Master's lucid lines of reasoning and not take fright at a string of unfamiliar names to him such as Schleswig-Holstein, Alsace-Lorraine, Austro-Magyar, Hapsburg, Hohenzollern, Romanoff etc. Sri Aurobindo's language is, apart from its grandeur, so charming, so polite, that it will carry the reader along. No part of the two books is dry—the subject, the gradual blossoming out of man's corporate life, is entrancing and the luminous personality of the author never quite forsakes the devoted reader. A sentence like the following is brilliant, with its gorgeous sweep of the horizon, but to enjoy it truly, the reader must take the high flight with Sri Aurobindo as his inner guidance:

"Therefore the old status had to dissolve and disappear, in India into the longer and bureaucratic empires of the Gupta and the Maurya to which the Pathan, the Mogul and the Englishman succeeded, in the West into the vast military and commercial expansions achieved by Alexander, by the Carthaginian Oligarchy and by the Roman Republic and Empire."

In considering the gradual evolution of human society Sri Aurobindo has given us four definite stages—the Symbolic, the Typal, the Conventional and the Rational and shown how man's life has passed gradually from the earliest substantial to the present day rational stage. In political evolution, the Master has indicated how man's life has evolved from the family to the clan and tribe, from the clan and tribe to the nation, from the city and regional state to the nation state—how man has attempted throughout to transcend the narrower limits of a nation-unit and established empires, federations and leagues.

Before we go over the subject matter of the two books in the same detail, it would be needful to indicate briefly the ultimate goal of man's social and political progress as envisaged by the Master.

Speaking of the gradual advent of the Spiritual stage, he says that many new spiritual waves will probably come in the course of evolution with their special motives and disciplines, but they will only be steps in man's progress and will never be wholly valid. "The one thing essential must take precedence, the conversion of the whole life of the human being to the lead of the Spirit." For this, man as he is, the highly mentalised being, must be transformed to a creature divine. This is not only the need of the race, but the need and undoubted intention of Nature. This transformation will be integral of life as a whole and not piece-meal.

Even as the primitive insignificant living creature has risen to a high stage of intellectual mentality in man, so will the mental being of today ascend to a suprarational spiritual level. The pioneers on the higher plane will take up the whole human life for their province and proceed to divinise it. They will give a decisive turn to the progress of the race and lead it to a higher and higher spiritual level in a divine progress.

As to the ultimate goal of man's political endeavours, it can only be

achieved by a realisation of the triune principle of God, Freedom and Unity—God being the primary principle, for without him neither Freedom nor Unity can have a meaning on the spiritual level. From the commencement, man has been moving towards a larger and larger unit of corporate life. The tendency is perfectly clear even today. The Master declares explicitly that some form of world-union is necessary and inevitable in spite of "the disarranging features, and dangerous possibilities" that we see around us. Neither megalomania nor blind fanaticism is likely to be helpful to man. He has got to get over both these tendencies and there is no doubt that he will succeed some day. Rising to the life of the spirit is a slow process. A spiritual oneness creating oneness of the mind, but not dependent on the intellect in any way, would be the basis for the highest type of man's corporate existence. Until man realises this oneness of the spirit, he must go on with his attempt to bring about unity by mechanical means. Dishonest political protestation, unscrupulous tactics, cruel and inhuman weapons will continue playing their part. "The higher hope of humanity lies in the growing number of men who will realise this truth and seek to develop it in themselves." This is how the Yogic discipline of the individual connects up with the political destiny of the race.

We shall now go over the two books under review in some detail, indicating the steps by which man's collective life has arrived at its present stage. Let us take *The Human Cycle* first. In the nineteenth century human existence was looked at entirely from the point of view of physical science. Mind and Soul were not recognised as anything independent of matter. Thinking was looked upon as a material process, but of late, in Sri Aurobindo's words, a movement of emancipation from the obsession of physical science has set in. It has begun to be recognised that the historical development of Man's life is determined not only by economic causes but by "profound psychological, even perhaps soul factors." We have already referred to the four psychological stages accepted as a working hypotheses by the Master. It is necessary to know a little more about them. The first is symbolism, the symbol being of something hidden and mysterious behind his life and activities, the Gods. Out of this symbolism there developed easily the type with a corresponding ethical development and a social function. This second stage is, we see easily, pre-eminently mental and social or ethical and answers to the term of the Gita, "Gunakarmavibhaghshah." From the typal we pass on to the conventional stage when the division into types has become stereotyped. The great ethical and social ideals of the second stage endure for a time and then pass away leaving an urge which Sri Aurobindo calls the ideal of social honour. The division into four castes may be taken to illustrate what we mean. In the symbolic stage the conception of the Vedic sages was that the four orders represented the Divine as Knowledge, the Divine as Power, the Divine as Production and Enjoyment, and the Divine as Service and Obedience in human society. In the next stage, the four castes represented ideas of social honour—the honour of the Brahmin residing in purity, piety etc., the honour of the Kshatriya dwelling in courage, strength etc., the honour of the Vaishya living in skill in production, rectitude in dealing etc., and the honour of the Shudra in obedience and faithful service. In the conventional stage, the outward expression of the idea of honour tends to become more important than the inner spirit. "In the end", as Sri Aurobindo says, "they remain more as a tradition in the thought and on the lips than a reality of the life." Once this rigidity has set in, the need of maintaining an ethical type becomes secondary, even tertiary, and birth becomes the most important qualification. The old system becomes a name, a shell, a sham and must be dissolved in the crucible of the reason. When this has happened the stage has been set for the self-assertion of the individual, for the revolt of reason. Society enters into the fourth or rational stage.

And yet this conventional period is often very beautiful and attractive to the distant view of posterity by its precise order, symmetry, fine social architecture, the admirable subordination of its parts to a general and noble plan. We in India look back in the same way to our Hindu Satya Yuga when man had submitted his whole life, entirely, to the guidance of the Shastras. But this Golden Age was not all gold. Sri Aurobindo says that it was the copper age and not the true golden age for the outer form prevailed and the spirit receded. There were always subsequent attempts to reconstitute the form but without any success. The time-tendency was much too powerful. Of this we have had many examples in India, as well as in Christian Europe.

Ultimately when the gap between convention and truth becomes intolerable, rational intellect intervenes and sweeps aside the tissues of formulae and mandates, seeks out the truth and instals it as the sole guide in man's affairs. This is the Age of Reason, "a necessary passage to the subjective period of humanity through which man has to circle back towards the recovery of his deeper self and a new upward line or a new revolving cycle of civilisation."

To be continued in the next issue.



# SPIRITUAL ACHIEVEMENT : THE ANCIENTS AND OURSELVES

By T. V. KAPALI SASTRY

## The Vedic Yoga

*Mother India* has asked me to take up the question of spiritual achievements of the ancients with special reference to the ideal of Supermind as conceived and described in the writings of Sri Aurobindo. The request is prompted, I understand, by discussions and doubts in some quarters in regard to the statement of Sri Aurobindo that the Vedic sages did not arrive at the Supermind for Earth or did not make the attempt at all. In taking up this subject let me at the outset state that there is nothing of importance left unsaid or obscure by the Master which we can think of and put in writing here. Besides, basing themselves on the authority of his statements, well-known writers have followed in his footsteps and discoursed upon the nature of the Supermind and the preliminary, the preparatory work that is done and yet to be done for its advent. I propose, therefore, to contribute to this subject, not anything new or different from what has been said by others, but something that may interest the discriminating mind to know and find for itself the basis or bases of Sri Aurobindo's statement in regard to the Supermind; and in doing so it is necessary to clarify at the very beginning what the term connotes and what it does not. We shall also take into account the ancient achievements in the realm of the Spirit and their conceptual imagery, where *anna, prana, manas, Matter, Life and Mind* etc. are spoken of in the Upanishads and in the later Vedantic texts.

Now, first about the Supermind. It is a term coined and used by Sri Aurobindo in a definite sense to denote a principle which governs the fourth term, *vyahriti*, in the hierarchy of the sevenfold plane of being. It is a principle, yet not a mere principle, but a plane and a world—a plane of Knowledge and Truth in which the Many and the One are harmonised naturally, a spontaneous manifold unity in which Knowledge and Power are inalienable, or the one is the figure of another. This Supermind which is of a Divine world and plane above the Ignorance, above the triple world of Matter, Life and Mind, is a world of Light and Truth. Something essential in it could be brought down and made a part, a central part of the human being and consciousness, and as a result man can be changed into the terms of the Divine descending with the Supermind, his body and life and mind transfigured into the superior spiritual and divine counterparts in the Truth-Consciousness whose plenary home is the "Sun-World." The Sun is the symbol used by the ancients to connote this Supreme Light of the Truth. Such an advent of the supernal Light for Earth is not only possible, but is inevitable, says Sri Aurobindo and he has elaborated upon this theme in hundreds of letters in addition to the volumes of his well-known writings on the subject. Now let us quote his very words in this connection from the *Riddle of this World* (p. 2): "The Vedic Rishis never attained to the Supermind for the earth or perhaps did not even make the attempt. They tried to rise individually to the supramental plane, but they did not bring it down and make it a permanent part of the earth-consciousness." The last part of the sentence requires elucidation for a fuller grasp by the reader who is not quite familiar with the central thought of this teaching. We shall come to that later on; here we may first dispose of the question of the basis of the statement quoted above. A disciple, an intelligent follower of Sri Aurobindo does not raise the question because he has no doubt whatever in this regard. For when words fall from the Master, he knows and is convinced that Sri Aurobindo never utters anything from sheer speculation concerning matters of the Spirit. When he sees a truth, he primarily bases his utterance on that perception and secondarily adduces reasons where necessary for the enlightenment of the enquiring mind. When a hunter enters a forest his observing eye detects the kinds of denizens, tiger, bear, deer, lion or porcupine that inhabit it by the footprints they leave and other marks they throw on the surrounding wild vegetation. A man, when he is in a wood, can easily discover if human feet have trodden the earth there and if he finds marks of human habitation or finds a trodden track, he can follow where it leads and discern the parting of the ways, if any, or he can still walk alone until the path ends abruptly or meets with obstruction from an impenetrable block of wood or rock and then finds that the wild country is not passable and no man has ever walked it. The same can be said of the Yogi, especially of the path-finder of the Integral Yoga. For a set purpose when he shuts the doors of the senses and withdraws the outgoing mind and gets above it, in order to rise to the higher levels of being, he does so to discover the hidden truths in the higher consciousness and lays hold on the clues, wherever possible, that may lead to the higher heights, studies the actualities of the situation, discerns the achievements of the past, ponders over and decides upon the possibilities of the present endeavour. Rising from height to height, as did the Vedic seer, exploring plateau on plateau, peak after peak, he sees much that is yet to be done and achieved, but has not been ventured so far by any before him. He finds no sign, no pointer, no evidence in the vast country of the highest levels of the pure and luminous mind and still above in what is called the Overmind, to show the track, if any, trodden before, that freely leads to the Sun-World, the world of Truth-Consciousness, much less does he find any trace of return passage that leads step by step down from the Supramental World of Solar Light to the world of Mind, Life and Matter.

This actual seeing, this direct perception of what has taken place, of what has not taken place before, is the basis of the statement that the Vedic sages did not arrive at the Supermind for the earth. This is convincing enough so far as the disciple and a faithful follower of Sri Aurobindo is concerned. But for others, this may not be enough, they may require other proofs based on grounds of reason. Well, here we shall confine ourselves to the Hymns of the Rig Veda, as it is the Vedic sages that first concern us most. Let us then have a clear idea of the spiritual goal the Vedic seer set before himself and strove after; and this we can gather directly from the hymns. As a matter of serious concern we leave aside the exoteric religion and ritualistic meaning of the Riks, have as come down to us through the Brahmanas and some popular beliefs, and look to the true significance of the Yajna, the inner sacrifice and call it for our purpose here the Vedic Yoga. The Rishi's goal is to arrive at the Sun of Truth, the World of the Supernal Light. The means he adopts and the process of the Yoga and arrival at the goal may be stated summarily in a few sentences so that we may later cite instances from the Hymns to substantiate our view of what the sages strove for. The Sadhak of the Vedic Yoga by *tapasya*, discipline, qualified himself for initiation into worship of Agni, the youngest of the Gods who carries the offerings of the Sadhak to the other Powers of the Godhead, the Gods of whom Indra is the chief. He is the Divine Will, the Immortal; when born in man the mortal, he manifests himself as the flaming force that mounts higher and higher burning and devouring on the way all that opposes the onward march, lights up the darkened passages and lightens the burden of the worshipper since he takes upon himself the lead to arrive at the realm of the Gods and bring them down also to crown the worshipper's worship with success. Once he is born in man, and accepts his mission there is no halt, he brooks no opposition, and in his advance he assumes or is reborn, or transforms himself, into other Personalities of the Godhead and functions accordingly. Or He retains his Personality and in conjunction with the other Higher Powers achieves the object of the worshipper, the offering of the Soma, the delight of all his experiences to Indra, the Divine Mind, the Lord of the luminous pure Mind, Swar. When he accepts and is pleased, drunk with delight he gets stronger and stronger in man, dissipates all darkness, breaks through the clouds of Vritra, the Asura who obstructs and covers, and releases the Waters, streams of Conscious Energy from the rock, the hill of material existence, or pours down the Rain from the Immortal's world of heaven, the Rain of Consciousness-Force that descends from above. As a result he effects the release of the Cows—the Rays of the Sun, and lastly the Sun, the Sun of Truth-Consciousness, Truth-Light, is won for the worshipper, the Sadhak of the Vedic Yoga. This in sum is the process of the Vedic Yoga which aims at the winning of the Immortal Truth for the Sadhak. The beginning is made when Agni, the Divine Will, the Immortal in the mortal is kindled and fully awakened and grows into flame increasing in volume and strength by the progressive surrenderings of the Vedic Yogi himself and whatever is his to the Godhead; and when the process advances something of the Cosmic Powers of the Godhead is manifested in the Yogi enabling him to prepare for the great consummation which is the Revelation of the Sun of Truth which he beholds for ever, *sada pashyanti surayah* or which he arrives at and prays for to live in.

In all this nowhere do we find that the Rishi prays for the advent of the Sun of Truth for the benefit and transformation of man in his kind. But he always prays for the favour of the Immortal Powers while he lives on earth, and for life in the world of Immortals hereafter. There are prayers quite plain to show that the ultimate goal set before the Vedic seers is to get established in the Immortal world of undying Light where the Sun of Truth shines for ever. We may refer the reader to a hymn in the ninth Book of the Rig Veda, the last hymn but one where the Rishi describes and prays for arriving at the Sun-world where he may get settled in the Immortal. Riks 7 to 11 are an apt and typical illustration of the longings of the Vedic seer: "Settle me in that Immortal world that never decays nor dies, wherein the Light of Heaven, the Sun-world is set and the Lustre shines for ever..." (7)

"Make me immortal in that realm where the brilliant Vivaswan's son reigns, where flow the Waters, the mighty streams (of conscious Energy)." (8)

"Make me immortal in that realm where the luminous worlds are full of lustres..." (9)

"Make me immortal in that world where are found fulfilled all eager wishes and strong longings, where is found the Domain of the Sun..." (10)

"Make me immortal in that realm where are all joys and raptures, where are all delights and contentments..." (11)

These are a few relevant passages chosen from the last five Riks of the hymn, a full translation being found not necessary for our purpose here. From this, we can have an idea of the supreme aim of the Vedic Rishis which is to arrive at the Sun-world, symbol and occult

## SPIRITUAL ACHIEVEMENT —Continued from previous page

form of the Truth-Consciousness, the Eternal Light and joy undecaying, which in our parlance is the Supermind. This much as regards the Vedic goal. Even in the means adopted for its achievement there are indications in the hymns that the Rishi aims at this goal. As stated earlier, the means adopted is first the kindling of the Agni, the awakening of the Immortal Flame, the Divine Will, and feeding it by self-offering to grow and lead towards the Godhead, the Sun of Truth which is his own home. In a hymn addressed to the All-Gods, *vishve devah*, the Rishi proclaims that his soul is travelling onwards with the help of what he designates as the Pole, the shaft as of a car, which the commentator Sayana explains to be the indwelling Godhead, *antaryami devah*: here is an English translation of the Rik (V. 46.1): "I have yoked myself well-knowing, like a steed to the Pole. I bear that which bears us and gives succour. I seek no release, nor do I turn back. May he who knows the path, the Leader, lead me straight."

Here again, one finds that the Vedic seer offers himself to the Indweller, that he may lead in the path of the Sacrifice, Yajna, the goal of which is, indeed, the Sun-World. Instances can be multiplied to show that the common conception of the Vedic sages, and their ideal was to win for themselves the World of the Solar Light of Truth and Immortality in the Beyond, *tamasas parastat*. They did not aim at, or even seem to have conceived the idea of bringing down something of the Solar Splendour here on earth and for earth. They had realisations of the Cosmic Gods and the Godhead, and that qualified them for getting established, on departure from earth, in that Immortal World of the Solar Effulgence. It is not that they were unaware of, and insensitive to, the sufferings of fellow-beings groping in the dark, but they did not seek the remedy for the countless ills of the darkened earth in the descent of the Truth-consciousness from the Solar world. On the other hand, what they sought and prayed for were a common thought, common feeling, common goal, which would pave the way for an increasing harmony that would make for less misery and increasing happiness among fellow beings. The hymn 191 in the tenth Book of the Rig Veda is clear on this point. Sri Aurobindo had obviously this hymn in mind when he wrote in the *Ideal of Human Unity* these lines: "For that essentially must be the aim of the religion of humanity, as it must be the earthly aim of all human religion, love, mutual recognition of human brotherhood, a living sense of human oneness and practice of human oneness in thought, feeling and life, the ideal which was expressed first some thousands of years ago in the ancient Vedic hymn and must always remain the highest injunction of the Spirit within us to human life upon earth."

Now, we can very well say that the Vedic sages did not conceive the cure for human ills to be lying in the establishment of the Truth-consciousness in man on earth, and therefore the question of an attempt to that effect does not arise. Sri Aurobindo himself says, "perhaps they did not make the attempt." And this can also mean, according to some, that perhaps they made the attempt and did not succeed. This is quite possible; only we do not find instances in the Rig Veda that would enable us to hold that an attempt was made, but was uncrowned with success. There is another alternative and that is perhaps the well-established idea in the minds of the Vedic sages that it was an impossible proposition to think of: viz. to bring down the Truth-Consciousness so as to make it part of the earth-consciousness and, because of this idea of impossibility settled in their minds, there was no attempt, not to speak of getting hold of the means, not even a proper conception of the question at all. The absence of a tradition to this effect is a factor that must be taken into account to appreciate the authentic words of the Master in this context. Indeed, well-equipped they were with their high achievements in the Godward spheres for such a high endeavour and could have made an attempt. The failure to make the attempt, or the failure to succeed in the attempt if it had been made at all, which is a gratuitous conjecture, has had its consequences in the trend of philosophic thought of India in later times.

### The Yoga of the Upanishads

Let us now turn to the Upanishads: on the same page in the *Riddle*, the Master has stated: "Even there are verses in the Upanishad in which it is hinted that it is impossible to pass through the gates of the Sun (the symbol of the Supermind) and yet retain an earthly body." "Through the gates of the Sun they pass there where is the immortal Being whose self of Spirit wastes not nor perishes", says the Mundaka Upanishad. There are passages in the Maitri Upanishad to this effect, and this idea is present in some of the Yoga Upanishads also. In addition to this, if the ideal of the Vedic sages had been to bring down the Solar Truth for the earth, the Upanishads, the major ones, could very well have made mention of it; but they proclaim the ideal of Brahma-loka, the supremest World of Light Immortal which is the same as the Sun-world of Supermind, as the ideal to be achieved. And that is a world from which there is no return. *Salokya*, equal status, and *sayujya*, conscious union, form the goal of the endeavors of these ancient sages. Knowledge of Atman, realisation of Brahman as the All while man lives on earth is the goal here and on departure one goes forth to the worlds above, the highest of which is the Supreme abode, called variously Brahmaloaka, the Sun-world etc.; or one realises the Atman in the depths, and is absorbed, *laya*, in which case the question of departure does not arise. And this last kind of liberation which is absorption, *laya*, is supported by some of the

major Upanishads, notably the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad in some of its sections. Barring this, the Upanishads—we confine ourselves to the ten major ones—speak of the soul arriving at the Supreme world from which there is no return. As for the body, it is taken for granted that it does not escape from the grasp of death. We can state in a few lines what the Upanishads say about this body and the soul's departure and non-return from the world of Supermind.

The Isha Upanishad which takes a comprehensive view of the Creation and its Lord, the apparently irreconcilable opposites such as Enjoyment and Renunciation, Knowledge and Ignorance, Birth and Death etc. says: "Of this body ashes are the end". The Kena says: "If here thou hast known Him, then thou hast lived truly. If thou hast not known Him in this mortal life, then great is the perdition." Here it is taken for granted that the body perishes some day, and the soul departs, there is nothing further for the body to achieve, when the soul has known the Supreme. The Katha Upanishad says: "If before the body drops down one has been able to apprehend (It) here, then is one fit for embodiment in the worlds (that are His creations)." In the Prashna Upanishad the sages approach Pippalada the teacher for that Knowledge by which they can be taken across the other shore of Ignorance. And in the answer to the first of the six questions, we find that the Sun-world is the source of all forces and is the Immortal, free from danger. It is the supreme resort from which there is no return. Again in the Mundaka Upanishad (III.2.6): "The strivers after Truth, they who have made certain of the nature of things by knowledge that is the end of the Veda and are purified in their being by Yoga of renunciation, in their time of ultimate end become absolute and immortal and they are released into the worlds of the Eternal." (Sri Aurobindo's translation.) The last passage in the Mandukya puts in brief the ideal it sets before the seeker. "The Om without parts is the transcendental state of supreme Bliss, void of phenomenal existence and duality. This Om is Atman. He who knows this enters the Atman." And the Aitareya says that Vamadeva, having got over this world by means of Brahman as awareness, *prajnana*, and got all objects of his desires in the regions of Heaven, became immortal. The Taittiriya which of all the Upanishads best affords, like the Isha in some respects, a broad basis for the Yoga and Philosophy of the Supermind, teaches that the Knower of Brahman attains to the Supreme and, indeed, it reveals the truth about the gradations, levels and aspects of the Brahman, and the coverings, rather sheaths, of the Purusha which have great bearing upon the practical aspect. For that leads to the realisation of the separate elements severally that ensheath the being, the Purusha, with the corresponding layers of consciousness or on the various levels of being. We shall return to this part of the teachings of the Taittiriya when we come to consider the difference between the spiritual achievement of the ancients in regard to Vijnana and the present endeavour to achieve the realisation of the Supermind for earth. One more among the major Upanishads is the Chhandogya and its last word is that the soul arriving at the Brahmaloaka which is the same as the abode of the Supreme, the Sun-world in the symbolic sense, what we call the Supermind, does not return, *no cha punar avartate*. And this is also the phrase which forms the last aphorism of the Brahma Sutras. This has become a well-known and oft-quoted line to support the idea that there is no rebirth for one who has attained to the Brahman. But neither in the Prashna Upanishad nor in the Chhandogya where the same phrase occurs is any express statement about the rebirth though it can be so interpreted. Straightly and clearly the idea is expressed that when one reaches that world of Immortality, from there he returns not. Now from what has been stated regarding the ideal of the sages in the Upanishads, it can be easily gathered that the goal aimed at was not anything nearer to the line of Sri Aurobindo's approach to the Supermind, but it was the Knowledge of Brahman, the realisation of the Self, Atman. And they seek the support of the hymns of the Rig Veda for their conclusions quite often. They nowhere seem to hint that the idea of bringing down the Truth-consciousness was there in the minds of the Vedic seers, nor do themselves state anything to indicate that they had thought even of a remote possibility of such an endeavour, not to speak of the inevitability of such an advent of the Supermind.

Now an important distinction must be made when we speak of the spiritual achievement of the ancients. The sages of the Upanishads have tried to recover something of the Vedic wisdom and from their own experiences and intuitions they have spoken of two lines of realisation of the Truth, and both are valid in their own ways. The one realisation is related mainly and solely to the Atman, the Self of selves or Brahman that is the All. In the Consciousness of the Atman, or Brahman, the soul may be gradually absorbed and merged without any relation whatever to the world or plane in which it lives and gets the realisation. In other words, this line of realisation is essentially one that is indifferent to or does not admit of being related to the Cosmic manifestation. Another line is that in which the soul's progress is related at every turn to the existence of the world-order in the Cosmos. Obviously, it is to this latter kind we refer when we speak of the achievement of the ancients as compared to the Aurobindonian Yoga. From this point of view, the ancient achievements, whether of the Vedic seers or Upanishadic sages, or the later Vedantic Yogis, or those who followed the path of devotion and love, or the path of the Karma Yoga, were all essentially



for individual attainment; even when the realisation, whether it is God realisation or Self-knowledge, was dynamic and could be easily related to the Cosmic manifestation, and may have, as a matter of course, influenced the environment of the experiencing soul either on the path of knowledge or devotion or any other line, it was chiefly meant for and related to the individual concerned, and not for anything else, even remotely resembling the ideal of Supermind for earth. For it was taken for granted that this world is meant to be given up, and it is *jada*, eternally damned, the field of incurable ignorance, naturally wedded to Evil, or it is a false appearance, *Maya*. All have sailed, and even now those who profess the religions of different sects sail, in the same boat. None has had this conception—the idea itself that the world can be changed, and made the manifest dwelling place of the Divine. So we have come to the closing part of the theme that there has been neither a conception of anything similar to the Supramental ideal, nor any notable endeavour in the past for which there is textual evidence, nor even feeble testimony of tradition that the Truth-Light can come down for earth.

#### The Aurobindonian Ideal of Supermind

Now about the term Supermind used by Sri Aurobindo: in the hierarchy of planes it is Mahas, the fourth term, *vyahriti*, above the triple world of our being—matter, life and mind in the ignorance. As a Truth-principle, it is called Vijnana, a term used in the Taittiriya Upanishad, and it has a definite connotation in the parlance of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga and philosophy. Vijnana, ordinarily in classical Sanskrit, at any rate in the Buddhist and post-Buddhist Sanskrit, literature and philosophical works means *Buddhi*, intellect. Even when the term is used in the Taittiriya Upanishad pundits and scholars take it to denote only *Buddhi*. But the term Vijnana following the Manomaya Purusha, mental being, in the ancient scripture connotes that which is subtler and higher than the mental. Sri Aurobindo's discerning eye has seen the distinction in sense attached to these terms, *Prajnana*, Vijnana, Sanjnana and others, and has used the Vijnana in the sense of Supermind of his description, especially because it is above the mind, and the Manomaya in the Upanishad includes the *Buddhi* also just as the English word mind includes intellect. Now let us have some idea of the Upanishad's mention of Vijnana in the context. We know that it is a great dictum of the Upanishad that all this is Brahman, not merely in a general way, as the Chhandogya puts it, but in every detail, as the Svetasvetara Upanishad proclaims: "Thou art man and woman, boy and girl; old and worn thou walkest bent over a staff; thou art the blue bird and the green and the scarlet-eyed..." But this refers obviously to the world that we see around us. But there are other principles of existence, other elements not visible to the outward senses and mind, other worlds behind and above this world of Matter which is not the Sole Reality that is Brahman. The Taittiriya Upanishad says, all Matter, *annam*, is Brahman; then subtler and higher is Life, *prana*, that is Brahman; then Mind which is still higher and subtler is Brahman; and above it is Vijnana (Supermind) that is Brahman; and last is Delight, *Ananda*, that is finally to be realised as Brahman. Now instead of making a general statement, which is true and beneficial in so far as it goes, that all whatever is, is Brahman, the Upanishad makes a broad classification of the principles of Cosmic existence and calls upon the seeker to realise the Brahman in every part of the being, in all elements severally that make up the being, in the Universe or the individual and teaches the way of fulfilment. We can now see how this Upanishad gives a broad basis for the Yoga which does not stop with the radical or basic realisation of the ideal, God, Brahman or Self, but proceeds to realise Him in every aspect of the World-being, and since He is the All, even while not manifest as such, He could manifest himself in the mind, in the life, in the body of matter, and need not stop with manifesting himself in the Soul of man.

One word more about the difference in conception of Vijnana between the Yogis of the Vedanta and ourselves. When they speak of the five sheaths, *kosha*—matter, *anna*; life, *prana*; mind, *manas*; *vijnana* and *ananda*—each successive sheath is concealed in and covered by the preceding one until one reaches the last, *ananda*, which is not a sheath, though loosely termed so, but the Purusha himself, one gets more and more absorbed within, gains in tensity and goes ever deeper to the spiritual being which is the centre and inmost part of the being, the heart, the seat of the Divine being or Self. At the same time, one gets increasingly gathered up in the intense depths and endeavours to establish himself in the core of his being which is indeed laudable and indispensable for any seri-

ous and genuine Yoga, not to talk of the Supramental. But if we grasp the spirit of the Upanishad and its elucidation by Sri Aurobindo, our conception and image of the sheaths, which are true and necessary indeed for inward development, give place to a larger vision of things developing a cosmic breadth of view in which are open vast vistas before us—the world of Matter, itself infinite in spatial extension,—a poise of Brahman—the world of Life, behind and above it making its presence and activity felt upon it, the world of Mind overtopping the world of Life informing it and, through it, living matter, and still above, far above, the world of Vijnana, the Supermind about which it is not necessary to say anything here.

The mental perception and thought-vision one gains in pondering over the statements of Sri Aurobindo on the planes and worlds of matter, life and mind, not to speak of the higher and still higher ranges beyond the mind—the Overmind, the Supermind—are so overpowering that the ego-bound personality is humbled and dwindles into a nothingness lost in the Impersonality of a global infinitude, or in the infinite variety of the One in the manifold Existence, in the Immensity of Being itself. This, then, is the difference between our conception of the various elements, matter, life and mind etc. that make up the individual and that of the Vedantin's fivefold sheath of the being.

One more point, small but important, we promised to consider in the opening paragraphs. That is the question of Supermind for the earth. What exactly is meant by the expression "for the earth" must be clearly grasped for a fuller appreciation of the supramental descent. We know that the evolution of the Supermind on earth is brought about by the descent of the Supermind, something substantial of the splendour in its plenary home above. Then, when it so descends, it does come down to the earth-consciousness, and is to become part of it, the central and dominant part.

This is what we mean by the Supermind for earth, and as I had occasion to say elsewhere, the Earth does not welcome and lodge the Supermind in her dark and dense body of inert matter, *annam*, nor into her life, *prana*, in the vegetable kingdom, nor in her crude mind in the lower or higher animal, man. She receives it in her best developed part, in the most highly evolved element which is the aspiring soul in the human kind. Here too it is not that all individuals of the kind are at first prepared and suited to receive, accept and hold the higher spiritual principle of Supermind in its descent into the evolutionary earth-nature. The choice, therefore, falls upon that human vessel which is most ready and born for it, the being in whom the flame of Aspiration mounts up from Earth to Heaven solely for the Divine descent to the exclusion of everything else. For it is he who can and does lay bare absolutely open without reserve all the elements of his being surrendered to the Will and Power of the descending Light of the Truth-Consciousness, that it may establish itself as the ruling Divine principle of human life on earth. From such a one flow, like light from the sun, the influence, the light and power of the now settled Supermind transmitted to those who in the heights of their being are prepared or born competent to receive them. Well has it been said that the dawn breaks upon the peaks when the valleys are still dark in the night.

We have come to the end. What has been stated should go far to clear the doubts that may linger in the earnest mind about the past achievements and the present endeavour in the realm of the Spirit. The achievements of the ancients, especially of the Vedic mystics, are nothing short of marvels. But to say this is not the same as to admit that nothing more was left to be done by posterity. There are indeed certain types of men representing the forces of atavism in the extreme, who would and do go so far as to say that all that was to be discovered and taught is to be found in the Vedanta, the Gita, the Upanishads and nothing new can be found, said or propounded that could be of substantial benefit to man in the field of the Spirit, Religion, Philosophy. But, then, theirs is the logic of Caliph Omar who, historians tell us, gave orders for destroying the famous Alexandria Library on this ground: "If the writings of the Greeks agree with the Book of God, they are superfluous, therefore useless and need not be preserved; if they disagree, they are pernicious and ought to be destroyed."

Therefore it is only for the seeker, for the expanding intelligence, not for the narrow mind that moves in trodden grooves, that the question discussed here can be of some use and interest.

## The Divine Play

Your play-things are golden-glowing, fast-spinning, star-toys,  
You mount on the Joy-wheel of Space-Time Continuum.  
Climbing on the Spring-board of Supermind's power-poise  
Joyously you dive into the Inconscient's deep vacuum.

From the abyss you bring forth the empyreal Life-Flame  
And light up the dumb dust with your ecstasy's mirth.  
Creating Form and Name you play on your dual game  
Of good-evil, joy-sorrow, knowledge-ignorance, death-birth.

Though you are transcendent you still are immanent  
In all things, Divine Child! your *Maya* is inscrutable.  
The play is the Player, the fleeting Permanent,  
The world is but Brahman, the changing Immutable.

RAJANIKANT MODY.



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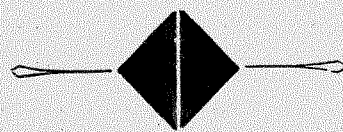
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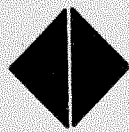
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