

MOTHER INDIA

Managing Editor:
K. R. PODDAR

FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW

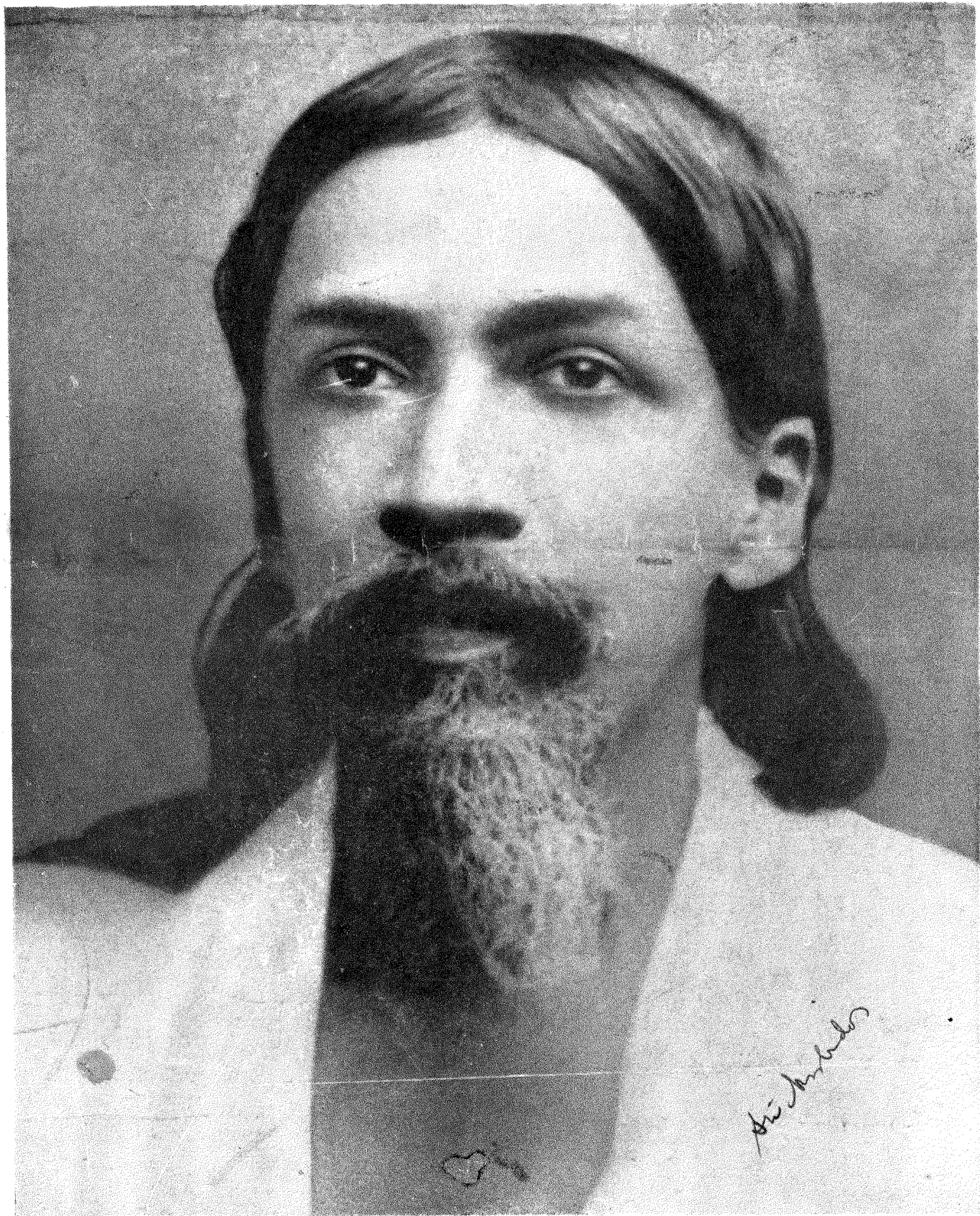
Editor:
K. D. SETHNA

"GREAT IS TRUTH AND IT SHALL PREVAIL"

VOL. II. NO. 1.

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SRI AUROBINDO

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CONTENTS

THE TRUTH WE SERVE

FEBRUARY 21—NIGHT (Poem) by Tehmi

THE BLISS OF BRAHMAN AND THE WAY OF DEVOTION by Sri Aurobindo

MUSA SPIRITUS (Poem) by Sri Aurobindo

MAHALAKSHMI (Poem) by Sri Aurobindo

THE DIVINE'S CONSCIOUSNESS AND WILL: A Talk by the Mother

THE MOTHER by Rishabhchand

SRI AUROBINDO, THE LEADER OF THE EVOLUTION
Part II of "The World Crisis and India" by "Synergist"

THE NEW ORIENTATION: THE INDIVIDUAL'S VALUE AND THE INNER LIFE
by Baron Erik Palmstierna

TOWARDS ESOTERIC WISDOM: THE SEARCH OF GURDJIEFF IN THE EAST
by Kenneth Walker

THROUGH LIMITLESS FREEDOMS....(Poem) by K. D. Sethna

THE DEMOCRACY OF TOMORROW by Nolini Kanta Gupta

OF MICE AND MEN by "Cynic"

LIGHTS ON LIFE-PROBLEMS by K. G.

A MERE MANUSCRIPT (Short Story) by K. D. Sethna

APE AND ESSENCE: ALDOUS HUXLEY AND HIS CRITICS by "Synergist"

SRI CHAITANYA (A Play) by Dilip Kumar Roy

LOOKING UP TO SAY "THANK YOU" by Joyce Chadwick

INDIA'S INFLUENCE ON WESTERN THOUGHT by Sisirkumar Mitra

SONNET AT DAWN (Poem) by Norman Dowsett

"VANDE MATARAM" AND "JANA GANA MANA" by Dr. Judith Tyberg

PRAYER (Poem) by Romen

MOKSHA (Poem) by Arjava

MORNING MEDITATIONS by Rajanikant Mody

THE MOTHER OF INDIA AND CHINA by Tan Yun-Shan

THE BIRTH OF A REPUBLIC by K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar

THE TRUTH WE SERVE

Mother India is launching on its second year. And we have chosen February 21 to celebrate its anniversary because this day is memorable, year after year, as one of the four on which the public at large takes the blessing of Sri Aurobindo and his radiant co-worker who in the Ashram at Pondicherry is called the Mother and whose birthday falls on February 21. We started our career with the light of this birthday in our eyes and our whole aim has been to see with the help of that light the nature of every world-movement and to judge all events according as they manifested or retarded the secret Truth that light represents. The Truth we have sought to serve is the presence of the Divine in the human, the presence that India throughout her history has regarded as the master key to human progress and fulfilment.

And because India, more than any other nation, has been afire with a sense of the Divine and because there has been down the ages a persistent cultural consciousness with this sense as its centre, we Indians in our collectivity should feel that through space and time we are held together by a supra-individual being which is not only our nationhood, the one self of our myriad Indianness, but also a dynamic delegate of the Divine. An emanation of the Supreme Creative Force, instinct with a special mission of the Infinite and the Eternal to raise mankind to the highest and harmonise all life: this is how we must intuit the reality we have so often spoken of in our patriotic moods as *Hind Mata*. Unless we are aware of living within such a national being, unless we stir to such a presiding genius, we shall never give our culture its full power and our dream of a fairer world will never tend completely to materialise. To be scattered individuals with great aims and capacities will be all our lot: we shall lack the inner cohesion without which no collectivity can come to total fruition and make its most effective cultural mark on the world.

The development of a national awareness of a mighty Mother, who is a face and figure of the infinite Divine, side by side with the development of an individual awareness of the authentic Person within us who is a flame of the Eternal—a double psychological growth towards godhead is the ideal for which during the past year our fortnightly has worked. That growth has an extreme world-importance: There is at present, because of many causes, a general decline of values and a general confusion of mind all over the earth. In India this state of affairs has a critical significance obtaining nowhere else. Not that the Indians are in comparison with other peoples more demoralised or distracted. But India has been in history the home of the immensest aspiration and the intensest search after the Good, the Beautiful and the True. The dimming of the fire in the hearts of her inhabitants and the paling of the light in their minds are, therefore, the gravest of tragedies and most to be fought against. For, if Indians can bring forth the real genius of their country the world's degeneration will be halted: the hope of the future is in the renaissance and resurgence of

essential India. And all the more powerful will be her influence because her genius is not only the typical idealist of the Divine but also a multi-mooded idealist, holding something of all national souls, functioning with an assimilative capacity which makes her as diverse in expression as she is single in motive. She can be all things to all men and so her uplifting force will be everywhere the most creative. And today even her inherent omni-effectivity is rendered more concentrated because, as a result of a long and pervasive impress on her by the Western mind through her past British rulers, she is a meeting-ground of the East and the West, and the consciousness with which she works is profoundly Asiatic with yet a strong European colour. In rising victorious over the tide of decadence and debasement now sweeping across the earth she will epitomise in every respect the entire humanity's victory.

But how shall we defeat this dangerous tide? Or, to put it more positively, how shall we grow in spirituality? Paradoxically the answer is: "Not only by overcoming all that has been looked upon as unspiritual but also by getting beyond what at the present day we take to be spiritual." The fact is that our current ideas about spirituality are inadequate and the inadequacy is itself a portion of the harm wrought by the dangerous tide we have to defeat. We talk of India's ancient wisdom, but we conceive it in terms that do it scant justice. So when we think of giving a new vitality, a contemporary life, to this wisdom we go no further than morality and religion. We never stop to ask: What is meant by India's ancient wisdom? Surely the most pointed answer is: the Upanishads and the Gita. There are various interpretations of these scriptures, but no interpretation can have any value if it denies that these scriptures put before us a life of direct concrete experience of the Eternal, the Infinite, the Divine. This experience must be distinguished from the merely moral frame of mind. One can be a great mystic, a great Yogi, as well as a highly moral person. But to be a practitioner of a moral life—however that may be conceived—does not necessarily make one a great mystic, a great Yogi. To be a knower of Brahman, Atman, Ishwara and let that supra-intellectual knowledge issue in a life lived in the light of a more-than-human consciousness is something far greater than to be a moralist following certain set principles of conduct by means of will-power and fellow-feeling. The moral life in itself can be a fine thing, but it cannot be compared in greatness to the mystical life—the life of a Krishna, a Chaitanya, a Mirabai, a Ramakrishna, a Vivekananda. Nor can we deny that it is the mystical life, the Yogic spirituality, that is the aim and ideal of the Upanishads and the Gita, the vibrant luminous essence of India's ancient wisdom.

When we add religion to morality we do bring in something more that is valuable, but mere religion cannot be put on a par with God-realisation. Religion at its best is a mental and emotional acceptance of the

THE TRUTH WE SERVE —Continued from previous page

Eternal, the Infinite, the Divine. It can be a good preparation for the truly spiritual life, just as the practice of moral virtues could be. But to be religious, no matter how highly, is not the same thing as to know the unitive life, the state of inner union with a more-than-human, a divine reality that brings a light, a bliss, a power, a love the purely mental and emotional acceptance of God can never compass. To have faith in God and even to listen to an "inner voice" is to encourage and practise the ordinary religious temper and the ordinary moral conscience. A man of unusual calibre may encourage and practise these things in an unusual way, but they still remain, for all their intensification, within the domain of ordinary morality and religion and never cross the barrier between them and God-realisation.

Here a very common misuse of terms must be exposed. Much glib talk is going on about what is called Karma Yoga and about the high place given it in Indian scriptures. Popularly, Karma Yoga is supposed to be the doing of work with trust in God, a keen sense of duty and as much disinterestedness as possible. And the motive behind it is believed to be service of mankind. But one may inquire, "How does such action become Yoga?" Yoga means union—with the Divine; where is any room here for the unitive life? What we have in such action is yet a mixture of religion and morality. The true Karma Yogi is aflame with aspiration to unite with the Eternal and the Infinite. Service of mankind is only a means to an end for him: it is a means towards the mystical experience by enlarging one's scope of action beyond the small individual ego and, when the mystical experience is reached, service of mankind is a means to express it in the world. But this service is not the only means. And true Karma Yoga is done fundamentally by a threefold process: (1) there is a deeply devoted inner offering of one's actions to the Supreme Lord—a constant remembrance and consecration; (2) there is an inner detachment not only from the fruit of one's actions but also from the actions themselves, an ever-increasing detachment until the infinite desireless impersonal peace of the Atman, the one World-Self that is an ever-silent Witness or Watcher, is attained and a spontaneous superhuman disinterestedness becomes possible; (3) there is, through this attainment and through complete surrender of one's nature-parts to the Lord, the Ishwara, the transmission of a divine dynamism, a superb World-Will from beyond the world, in all one's actions. God-realisation is the essence of Karma Yoga as of all other Yogas.

Without this God-realisation a man cannot give a new vitality, a contemporary life, to India's ancient wisdom—for he will not at all embody that wisdom at its purest and profoundest. This is not to refuse greatness to him, but it is not the greatness ancient India upheld as the top reach of the human soul. If India has anything to give humanity at present, it would be that wisdom in a form suitable and applicable to modern needs, that wisdom with a further development of its potency in certain directions. But in the absence of that wisdom the greatness one may achieve in oneself and induce in others is certainly never what ancient India considered the highest achievement in life and what modern India in tune with her inmost being could charge with appropriate new values and offer as the highest achievement.

Of course, all men cannot be Yogis in the full sense. But there must be a clear recognition of what genuinely constitutes the Indian ideal and in some way or other the ordinary existence must be brought into touch with it. Also, there must be whole-hearted acknowledgment of the actualisation of the ideal in those who have dedicated themselves for years to it. And towards these rare souls the mind of the nation must turn more and more. On the other hand, we must take care not to allow the Godward aspiration to end in a total neglect of earth. Earth's concerns are part of the scheme of things and the supreme Creative Force has not produced either an inexplicable illusion or an incomprehensible blunder in setting up the tremendous cosmos within which life agonises and exults, strives and falls and rises, presses forward as though some mysterious perfection urged it from behind and allured it from beyond. If by spirituality we understand a renunciation of the world's various calls and an impoverishment of life to the bare minimum we diminish in a different way its significance as much as we do when we take it to connote nothing else than morality and religion. Spirituality is at the same time a direct going of the human to the Divine and a direct coming of the Divine to the human.

If we Indians are to march in the van of the world and fulfil a mission which no other people can accomplish, we must feel that our genius is a dynamic world-transforming spirituality which lives in a concrete contact and communion with a Perfect Being, Consciousness, Power and Bliss. All events and movements must be evaluated by reference to one standard: Do they, however remotely, tend towards the increase of such spirituality? The phrase, "however remotely," has some importance. For, all happenings do not have an easily perceptible connection with the Spiritual Truth. There are plenty of intellectual questions, social issues, political problems, economic situations that seem far away from matters mystical. The apparent far-away-ness should not lead us to regard them as irrelevant and to decide them with considerations within a narrow and isolated sphere. If the Divine is the centre of things, there can be nothing on even the re-

motest periphery without an invisible radius running out towards it. We must find the radius and discern in the peripheral object the point at which contact is made or refused. The point is difficult to fix, but it is always there and certain broad indications can help us. The Divine has three simultaneous poises of being: the transcendent, the universal, the individual. The point of contact with the transcendent Divine is in general distinguishable by the sense of freedom, the sense of the inexpressible beyond formulas, the sense of the absolute perfection that puts "a yonder to all ends" while holding for each term its legitimate climax and consummation. The universal Divine is suggested generally by the sense of wideness and equality, the sense of unity-in-multiplicity, the sense of a greatly diversified yet persistent order. The general sign of the individual Divine is the sense of plastic form, the sense of adventurous variation without losing balance, the sense of numerous initiatives that compete and yet avoid mutual destruction. We must develop insight enough to mark the Divine at general play in any one of the poises or in a combination of more than one or in all at once, and according to the strength in which there is the play and according to the measure in which the threefold integrality is approached we must pass judgment. Of course, things are never to be taken at their surface value, many an undesirable force masquerades under attractive guises. Also, nothing should be studied in disparate sections—a whole view must be taken so that all the sections fall into their proper places and the complete nature of a force emerges. The labour of discovering whether there is or there is not a point of contact, however subtle, with the spiritual goal of mankind calls for intellectual no less than intuitive examination. To that labour *Mother India* has pledged itself and it puts no limits to the field which is to be examined. To help itself in its labour and become a force of action for world-change, it directs both mind and heart to whatever in this land of India most manifests the light of the Supreme Being, Consciousness, Power and Bliss. And that is why, on the occasion of starting our second year of serving to the best of our ability the Truth of truths that is the Divine's presence within the human, we join our obeisance to that of thousands who, whether in India or abroad, thrill to the day of *darshan*—February 21—when for hours a stream of people will pass reverently under the calm yet compassionate eyes of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother whose combined life-work is a sustained Yoga to embody the Divine Truth and bring about for earth

*What most she needs, what most exceeds her scope,
A Mind unvisited by illusion's gleams,
A Will expressive of soul's deity,
A Strength not forced to stumble by its speed,
A Joy that drags not sorrow as its shade.*

February 21—Night

The far voices of the earth die:
And in the vast lone Hush of Being, Thou
Foldest Thy love around my cry . . .

The worlds dissolve to darkness, now;
And in the gaps of emptiness we fly
Beyond the farthest star-hill's brow . . .

Aeons of memoried night unroll
Their cycles of chained Karmic griefs and mirths
Across the winging of my soul;

Thou bearest me past myriad births,
Fire-wheels of deaths and destiny's control,
To silent fashionings of new earths . . .

A white day dawns upon the deep,
The frozen rocks of Space divide and free
The warm, gold mystery they keep.

O power-winged Love, Thou bearest me
O'er storm-black gulfs and endless mires of sleep,
To sunlit havens of purity.

TEHMI.

THE BLISS OF BRAHMAN AND THE WAY OF DEVOTION

By SRI AUROBINDO

We are proud 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 magnificent essays out of "The Synthesis of Yoga."

THE DELIGHT OF THE DIVINE

Yoga is in essence the union of the soul with the immortal being and consciousness and delight of the Divine, effected through the human nature with a result of development into the divine nature of being, whatever that may be, so far as we can conceive it in mind and realise it in spiritual activity. Whatever we see of this Divine and fix our concentrated effort upon it, that we can become or grow into some kind of unity with it or at the lowest into tune and harmony with it. The old Upanishad put it trenchantly in its highest terms, "Whoever envisages it as the Existence becomes that existence and whoever envisages it as the Non-existence, becomes that non-existence;" so too it is with all else that we see of the Divine,—that, we may say, is at once the essential and the pragmatic truth of the Godhead. It is something beyond us which is indeed already within us, but which we as yet are not or are only initially in our human existence; but whatever of it we see, we can create or reveal in our conscious nature and being and can grow into it, and so to create or reveal in ourselves individually the Godhead and grow into its universality and transcendence is our spiritual destiny. Or if this seem too high for the weakness of our nature, then at least to approach, reflect and be in secure communion with it is a near and possible consummation.

The aim of the synthetic or integral Yoga which we are considering, is union with the being, consciousness and delight of the Divine through every part of our human nature separately or simultaneously, but all in the long end harmonised and unified, so that the whole may be transformed into a divine nature of being. Nothing less than this can satisfy the integral seer, because what he sees must be that which he strives to possess spiritually and, so far as may be, become. Not with the knower in him alone, nor with the will alone, nor with the heart alone, but with all these equally and also with the whole mental and vital being in him he aspires to the Godhead and labours to convert their nature into its divine equivalents. And since God meets us in many ways of his being and in all tempts us to him even while he seems to elude us,—and to see divine possibility and overcome its play of obstacles constitutes the whole mystery and greatness of human existence,—therefore in each of these ways at its highest or in the union of all, if we can find the key of their oneness, we shall aspire to track out and find and possess him. Since he withdraws into impersonality, we follow after his impersonal being and delight, but since he meets us also in our personality and through personal relations of the Divine with the human, that too we shall not deny ourselves; we shall admit both the play of the love and the delight and its ineffable union.

By knowledge we seek unity with the Divine in his conscious being; by works we seek also unity with the Divine in his conscious being, not statically, but dynamically, through conscious union with the divine Will; but by love we seek unity with him in all the delight of his being. For that reason the way of love, however narrow it may seem in some of its first movements, is in the end more imperatively all-embracing than any other motive of Yoga. The way of knowledge tends easily towards the impersonal and the absolute, may very soon become exclusive. It is true that it need not do so; since the conscious being of the Divine is universal and individual as well as transcendent and absolute, here too there may be and should be a tendency to integral realisation of unity and we can arrive by it at a spiritual oneness with God in man and God in the universe not less complete than any transcendent union. But still this is not quite imperative. For we may plead that there is a higher and a lower knowledge, a higher self-awareness and a lower self-awareness, and that here the apex of knowledge is to be pursued to the exclusion of the mass of knowledge, the way of exclusion preferred to the integral way. Or we may discover a theory of illusion to justify our rejection of all connection with our fellow-men and with the cosmic action. The way of works leads us to the Transcendent whose power of being manifests itself as a will in the world one in us and all, by identity with which we come, owing to the conditions of that identity, into union with him as the one self in all and as the universal self and Lord in the cosmos. And this might seem to impose a certain comprehensiveness in our realisation of the unity. But still this too is not quite imperative. For this motive also may lean towards an entire impersonality and, even if it leads to a continued participation in the activities of the universal Godhead, may be entirely detached and passive in its principle. It is only when delight intervenes that the motive of integral union becomes quite imperative.

This delight which is so entirely imperative, is the delight in the Divine for his own sake and for nothing else, for no cause or gain whatever beyond itself. It does not seek God for anything that he can give us or for any particular quality in him, but simply and purely because he is our self and our whole being and our all. It embraces the delight of the transcendence, not for the sake of transcendence, but because he is the transcendent; the delight of the universal, not for the sake of universality, but because he is the universal; the delight of the individual not for the sake of individual satisfaction, but because he is the individual. It goes behind all distinctions and appearances and makes no calculations of more or less in his being, but embraces him wherever he is and therefore everywhere, embraces him utterly in the seeming less as in the seeming more, in the apparent limitation as in the revelation of the illimitable; it has the intuition and the experience of his oneness and completeness everywhere. To seek after him for the sake of his absolute being alone is really to drive at our own individual gain, the gain of absolute peace. To possess him absolutely indeed is necessarily the aim of this delight in his being, but this comes when we possess him utterly and are utterly possessed by him and need be limited to no particular status or condition. To seek after him in some heaven of bliss is to seek him not for himself, but for the bliss of heaven; when we have all the true delight of his being, then heaven is within ourselves, and wherever he is and we are, there we have the joy of his kingdom. So too to seek him only in ourselves and for ourselves, is to limit both ourselves and our joy in him. The integral delight embraces him not only within our own individual being, but equally in all men and in all beings. And because in him we are one with all, it seeks him not only for ourselves, but for all our fellows. A perfect and complete delight in the Divine, perfect because pure and self-existent, complete because all-embracing as well as all-absorbing, is the meaning of the way of Bhakti for the seeker of the integral Yoga.

Once it is active in us, all other ways of Yoga convert themselves, as it were, to its law and find by it their own richest significance. This integral devotion of our being to God does not turn away from knowledge; the bhakta of this path is the God-lover who is also the God-knower, because by knowledge of his being comes the whole delight of his being; but it is in delight that knowledge fulfils itself, the knowledge of the transcendent in the delight of the Transcendent, the knowledge of the universal in the delight of the universal Godhead, the knowledge of the individual manifestation in the delight of God in the individual, the knowledge of the impersonal in the pure delight of his impersonal being, the knowledge of the personal in the full delight of his personality, the knowledge of his qualities and their play in the delight of the manifestation, the knowledge of the quality-less in the delight of his colourless existence and non-manifestation.

So too this God-lover will be the divine worker, not for the sake of works or for a self-regarding pleasure in action, but because in this way God expends the power of his being and in his powers and their signs we find him, because the divine Will in works is the outflowing of the Godhead in the delight of its power, of divine Being in the delight of divine Force. He will feel perfect joy in the works and acts of the Beloved, because in them too he finds the Beloved; he will himself do all works because through those works too the Lord of his being expresses his divine joy in him: when he works, he feels that he is expressing in act and power his oneness with that which he loves and adores; he feels the rapture of the will which he obeys and with which all the force of his being is blissfully identified. So too, again, this God-lover will seek after perfection, because perfection is the nature of the Divine and the more he grows into perfection, the more he feels the Beloved manifest in his natural being. Or he will simply grow in perfection like the blossoming of a flower because the Divine is in him and the joy of the Divine, and as that joy expands in him, soul and mind and life too expand naturally into their godhead. At the same time, because he feels the Divine in all, perfect within every limiting appearance, he will not have the sorrow of his imperfection.

Nor will the seeking of the Divine through life and the meeting of him in all the activities of his being and of the universal being be absent from the scope of his worship. All Nature and all life will be to him at once a revelation and a fine trysting-place. Intellectual and aesthetic and dynamic activities, science and philosophy and life, thought and art and action will assume for him a diviner sanction and a greater meaning. He will

seek them because of his clear sight of the Divine through them and because of the delight of the Divine in them. He will not be indeed attached to their appearances, for attachment is an obstacle to the Ananda; but because he possesses that pure, powerful and perfect Ananda which obtains everything but is dependent on nothing, and because he finds in them the ways and acts and signs, the becomings and the symbols and images of the Beloved, he draws from them a rapture which the normal mind that pursues them for themselves cannot attain or even dream. All this and more becomes part of the integral way and its consummation.

The general power of Delight is love and the special mould which the

joy of love takes is the vision of beauty. The God-lover is the universal lover and he embraces the All-blissful and All-beautiful. When universal love has seized on his heart, it is the decisive sign that the Divine has taken possession of him; and when he has the vision of the All-beautiful everywhere and can feel at all times the bliss of his embrace, that is the decisive sign that he has taken possession of the Divine. Union is the consummation of love, but it is this mutual possession that gives it at once the acme and the largest reach of its intensity. It is the foundation of oneness in ecstasy.

THE ANANDA BRAHMAN

The way of devotion in the integral synthetic Yoga will take the form of a seeking after the Divine through love and delight and a seizing with joy on all the ways of his being. It will find its acme in a perfect union of love and a perfect enjoyment of all the ways of the soul's intimacy with God. It may start from knowledge or it may start from works, but it will then turn knowledge into a joy of luminous union with the being of the Beloved and turn works into a joy of the active union of our being with the will and the power of being of the Beloved. Or it may start directly from love and delight; it will then take both these other things into itself and will develop them as part of the complete joy of oneness.

The beginning of the heart's attraction to the Divine may be impersonal, the touch of an impersonal joy in something universal or transcendent that has revealed itself directly or indirectly to our emotional or our aesthetic being or to our capacity of spiritual felicity. That which we thus grow aware of is the Ananda Brahman, the bliss existence. There is an adoration of an impersonal Delight and Beauty, of a pure and infinite perfection to which we can give no name or form, a moved attraction of the soul to some ideal and infinite Presence, Power, existence in the world or beyond it, which in some way becomes psychologically or spiritually sensible to us and then more and more intimate and real. That is the call, the touch of the bliss existence upon us. Then to have always the joy and nearness of its presence, to know what it is, so as to satisfy the intellect and the intuitional mind of its constant reality, to put our passive and, so far as we can manage it, our active, our inner immortal and even our outer mortal being into perfect harmony with it, grow into a necessity of our living. And to open ourselves to it is what we feel to be the one true happiness, to live into it the sole real perfection.

A transcendent Bliss, unimaginable and inexpressible by the mind and speech, is the nature of the Ineffable. That broods immanent and secret in the whole universe and in everything in the universe. Its presence is described as a secret ether of the bliss of being, of which the Scripture says that, if this were not, none could for a moment breathe or live. And this spiritual bliss is here also in our hearts. It is hidden in from the toil of the surface mind which catches only at weak and flawed translations of it into various mental, vital and physical forms of the joy of existence. But if the mind has once grown sufficiently subtle and pure in its receptions and not limited by the grosser nature of our outward responses to existence, we can take a reflection of it which will wear perhaps wholly or predominantly the hue of whatever is strongest in our nature. It may present itself first as a yearning for some universal Beauty which we feel in Nature and man and in all that is around us; or we may have the intuition of some transcendent Beauty of which all apparent beauty here is only a symbol. That is how it may come to those in whom the aesthetic being is developed and insistent and the instincts which, when they find form of expression, make the poet and artist, are predominant. Or it may be the sense of a divine spirit of love or else a helpful and compassionate infinite Presence in the universe or behind or beyond it which responds to us when we turn the need of our spirit towards it. So it may first show itself when the emotional being is intensely developed. It may come near to us in other ways, but always as a Power or Presence of delight, beauty, love or peace which touches the mind, but is beyond the forms these things take ordinarily in the mind.

For all joy, beauty, love, peace, delight are outflowings from the Ananda Brahman,—all delight of the spirit, the intellect, the imagination, aesthetic sense, ethical aspiration and satisfaction, action, life, the body. And through all ways of our being the Divine can touch us and make use of them to awaken and liberate the spirit. But to reach the Ananda Brahman in itself the mental reception of it must be subtilised, spiritualised, universalised, discharged of everything that is turbid and limiting. For when we draw quite near or enter into it, it is by an awakened spiritual sense of a transcendent and a universal Delight which exists within and yet behind and beyond the contradictions of the world and to which we can unite ourselves through a growing universal and spiritual or a transcendental ecstasy.

Ordinarily, the mind is satisfied with reflecting this Infinity we perceive or with feeling the sense of it within and without us, as an experience which, however frequent, yet remains exceptional. It seems in itself so satisfying and wonderful when it comes and our ordinary mind and the active life which we have to lead may seem to us so incompatible with it, that we may think it excessive to expect anything more. But the very spirit of Yoga is this, to make the exceptional normal, and to turn that which is above us and greater than our normal selves into our own constant consciousness. Therefore we should not hesitate to open ourselves more

steadily to whatever experience of the Infinite we have, to purify and intensify it, to make it our object of constant thought and contemplation, till it becomes the originating power that acts in us, the Godhead we adore and embrace, our whole being is put into tune with it and it is made the very self of our being.

Our experience of it has to be purified of any mental alloy in it, otherwise it departs, we cannot hold it. And part of this purification is that it shall cease to be dependent on any cause or exciting condition of mind; it must become its own cause and self-existent, source of all other delight, which will exist only by it, and not attached to any cosmic or other image or symbol through which we first came into contact with it. Our experience of it has to be constantly intensified and made more concentrated; otherwise we shall only reflect it in the mirror of the imperfect mind and not reach that point of uplifting and transfiguration by which we are carried beyond the mind into the ineffable bliss. Object of our constant thought and contemplation, it will turn all that is into itself, reveal itself as the universal Ananda Brahman and make all existence its outpouring. If we wait upon it for the inspiration of all our inner and our outer acts, it will become the joy of the Divine pouring itself through us in light and love and power on life and all that lives. Sought by the adoration and love of the soul, it reveals itself as the Godhead, we see in it the face of God and know the bliss of our Lover. Tuning our whole being to it, we grow into a happy perfection of likeness to it, a human rendering of the divine nature. And when it becomes in every way the self of our self, we are fulfilled in being and we bear the plenitude.

Brahman always reveals himself to us in three ways, within ourselves, above our plane, around us in the universe. Within us, there are two centres of the Purusha, the inner Soul through which he touches us to our awakening; there is the Purusha in the lotus of the heart which opens upward all our powers and the Purusha in the thousand-petalled lotus whence descend through the thought and will, opening the third eye in us, the lightnings of vision and the fire of the divine energy. The bliss existence may come to us through either one of these centres. When the lotus of the heart breaks open, we feel a divine joy, love and peace expanding in us like a flower of light which irradiates the whole being. They can then unite themselves with their secret source, the Divine in our hearts, and adore him as in a temple; they can flow upwards to take possession of the thought and the will and break out upward towards the Transcendent; they stream out in thought and feeling and act towards all that is around us. But so long as our normal being offers any obstacle or is not wholly moulded into a response to this divine influence or an instrument of this divine possession, the experience will be intermittent and we may fall back constantly into our old mortal heart; but by repetition, *abhyasa*, or by the force of our desire and adoration of the Divine, it will be progressively remoulded until this abnormal experience becomes our natural consciousness.

When the other upper lotus opens, the whole mind becomes full of a divine light, joy and power, behind which is the Divine, the Lord of our being on his throne with our soul beside him or drawn inward into his ray; all the thought and will become then a luminosity, power and ecstasy; in communication with the Transcendent, this can pour down towards our mortal members and flow by them outwards on the world. In this dawn too there are, as the Vedic mystics knew, our alterations of its day and night, our exiles from the light; but as we grow in the power to hold this new existence, we become able to look long on the sun from which this irradiation proceeds and in our inner being we can grow one body with it. Sometimes the rapidity of this change depends on the strength of our longing for the Divine thus revealed, and on the intensity of our force of seeking; but at others it proceeds rather by a passive surrender to the rhythms of his all-wise working which acts always by its own at first inscrutable method. But the latter becomes the foundation when our love and trust are complete and our whole being lies in the clasp of a Power that is perfect love and wisdom.

The Divine reveals himself in the world around us when we look upon that with a spiritual desire or delight that seeks him in all things. There is often a sudden opening by which the veil of forms is itself turned into a revelation. A universal spiritual Presence, a universal peace, a universal infinite Delight has manifested, immanent, embracing, all-penetrating. This presence by our love of it, our delight in it, our constant thought of it returns and grows upon us; it becomes the thing that we see and all else is only its habitation, form and symbol. Even all that is most outward, the body, the form, the sound, whatever our senses seize, are seen as this Presence; they cease to be physical and are changed into a substance of spirit. This transformation means a transformation of our own inner consciousness.

ness; we are taken by the surrounding Presence into itself and we become part of it. Our own mind, life, body become to us only its habitation and temple, a form of its working and an instrument of its self-expression. All is only soul and body of this delight.

This is the Divine seen around us and on our own physical plane. But he may reveal himself above. We see or feel him as a high-uptifted Presence, a great infinite of Ananda above us,—or in it, our Father in heaven,—and do not feel or see him in ourselves or around us. So long as we keep this vision, the mortality in us is quelled by that Immortality; it feels the light, power and joy and responds to it according to its capacity; or it feels the descent of the spirit and it is then for a time transformed or else uptifted into some lustre of reflection of the light and power; it becomes a vessel of the Ananda. But at other times it lapses into the old mortality and exists or works dully or pettily in the ruck of its earthly habits. The complete redemption comes by the descent of the divine Power into the human mind and body and the remoulding of their inner life into the divine image,

THE MYSTERY OF LOVE

The adoration of the impersonal Divine would not be strictly a Yoga of devotion according to the current interpretation; for in the current forms of Yoga it is supposed that the Impersonal can only be sought for a complete unity in which God and our own person disappear and there is none to adore or to be adored; only the delight of the experience of oneness and infinity remains. But in truth the miracles of spiritual consciousness are not to be subjected to so rigid a logic. When we first come to feel the presence of the infinite, as it is the finite personality in us which is touched by it, that may well answer to the touch and call with a sort of adoration. Secondly, we may regard the Infinite not so much as a spiritual status of oneness and bliss, or that only as its mould and medium of being, but rather as the presence of the ineffable Godhead to our consciousness, and then too love and adoration find their place. And even when our personality seems to disappear into unity with it, it may still be—and really is—the individual divine who is melting to the universal or the supreme by a union in which love and lover and loved are forgotten in a fusing experience of ecstasy, but are still there latent in the oneness and subconsciously persisting in it. All union of the self by love must necessarily be of this nature. We may even say, in a sense, that it is to have this joy of union as the ultimate crown of all the varied experiences of spiritual relation between the individual soul and God that the One became many in the universe.

Still, the more varied and most intimate experience of divine love cannot come by the pursuit of the impersonal Infinite alone; for that the Godhead we adore must become near and personal to us. It is possible for the Impersonal to reveal within itself all the riches of personality when we get into its heart, and one who sought only to enter into or to embrace the infinite Presence alone, may discover in it things he had not dreamed of; the being of the Divine has surprises for us which confound the ideas of the limiting intellect. But ordinarily the way of devotion begins from the other end; it starts from and it rises and widens to its issue by adoration of the divine Personality. The Divine is a Being and not an abstract existence or a status of pure timeless infinity; the original and universal existence is He, but that existence is inseparable from consciousness and bliss of being, and an existence conscious of its own being and its own bliss is what we may well call a divine infinite Person,—Purusha. Moreover, all consciousness implies power, Shakti; where there is infinite consciousness of being, there is infinite power of being, and by that power all exists in the universe. All beings exist by this Being; all things are the faces of God; all thought and action and feeling and love proceed from him and return to him, all their results have him for source and support and secret goal. It is to this Godhead, this Being that the Bhakti of an integral Yoga will be poured out and uptifted. Transcendent, it will seek him in the ecstasy of an absolute union; universal, it will seek him in infinite quality and every aspect and in all beings with a universal delight and love; individual, it will enter into all human relation with him that love creates between person and person.

It may not be possible to seize from the beginning on all the complete integrality of that which the heart is seeking; in fact, this is only possible if the intelligence, the temperament, the emotional mind have already been developed into largeness and fineness by the trend of our previous living. That is what the experience of the normal life is meant to lead to by its widening culture of the intellect, the aesthetic and emotional mind and of our parts too of will and active experience. It widens and refines the normal being so that it may open easily to all the truth of That which was preparing it for the temple of its self-manifestation. Ordinarily, man is limited in all these parts of his being and he can grasp at first only so much of the divine truth as has some large correspondence to his own nature and its past development and associations. Therefore God meets us first in different limited affirmations of his divine qualities and nature; he presents himself to the seeker as an absolute of the things he can understand and to which his will and heart can respond; he discloses some name and aspect of his Godhead. This is what is called in Yoga the *ishita-devata*, the name and form elected by our nature for its worship. In order that the human being may embrace this Godhead with every part of himself, it is represented with a form that answers to its aspects and qualities and which becomes the living body of God to the adorer. These are those forms of Vishnu, Shiva, Krishna, Kali, Durga, Christ, Buddha, which the mind of

—what the Vedic seers called the birth of the Son by the sacrifice. It is in fact by a continual sacrifice or offering, a sacrifice of adoration and aspiration, of works, of thought and knowledge, of the mounting flame of the Godward will that we build ourselves into the being of this Infinite.

When we possess firmly this consciousness of the Ananda Brahman in all of these three manifestations, above, within, around, we have the full oneness of it and embrace all existences in its delight, peace, joy and love; then all the worlds become the body of this self. But we have not the richest knowledge of this Ananda if it is only an impersonal presence, largeness or immanence that we feel, if our adoration has not been intimate enough for this Being to reveal to us out of its wide-extended joy the face and body and make us feel the hands of the Friend and Lover. Its impersonality is the blissful greatness of the Brahman, but from that can look out upon us the sweetness and intimate control of the divine Personality. For Ananda is the presence of the Self and Master of our being and the stream of its outflowing can be the pure joy of his Lila.

man seizes on for adoration. Even the monotheist who worships a formless Godhead, yet gives to him some form of quality, some mental form or form of Nature by which he envisages and approaches him. But to be able to see a living form, a mental body, as it were, of the Divine gives to the approach a greater closeness and sweetness.

The way of the integral Yoga of bhakti will be to universalise this conception of the Deity, to personalise him intimately by a multiple and all-embracing relation, to make him constantly present to all the being and to devote, give up, surrender the whole being to him, so that he shall dwell near to us and in us and we with him and in him. *Manana* and *darshana*, a constant thinking of him in all things and seeing of him always and everywhere is essential to this way of devotion. When we look on the things of physical Nature, in them we have to see the divine object of our love; when we look upon men and beings, we have to see him in them and in our relation with them to see that we are entering into relations with forms of him; when breaking beyond the limitation of the material world we know or have relations with the beings of other planes, still the same thought and vision has to be made real to our minds. The normal habit of our minds which are open only to the material and apparent form and the ordinary mutilated relation and ignore the secret Godhead within, has to yield by an unceasing habit of all-embracing love and delight to this deeper and ampler comprehension and this greater relation. In all godheads we have to see this one God whom we worship with our heart and all our being; they are forms of his divinity. So enlarging our spiritual embrace, we reach a point at which all is he and the delight of this consciousness becomes to us our normal uninterrupted way of looking at the world. That brings us the outward or objective universality of our union with him.

Inwardly, the image of the Beloved has to become visible to the eye within, dwelling in us as in his mansion, informing our hearts with the sweetness of his presence, presiding over all our activities of mind and life as the friend, master and lover from the summit of our being, uniting us from above with himself in the universe. A constant inner communion is the joy to be made close and permanent and unfailling. This communion is not to be confined to an exceptional nearness and adoration when we retire quite into ourselves away from our normal preoccupations, nor is it to be sought by a putting away of our human activities. All our thoughts, impulses, feelings, actions have to be referred to him for his sanction or disallowance, or if we cannot yet reach this point, to be offered to him in our sacrifice of aspiration, so that he may more and more descend into us and be present in them all and pervade them with all his will and power. his light and knowledge, his love and delight. In the end all our thoughts, feelings, impulses, actions will begin to proceed from him and change into some divine seed and form of themselves; in our whole inner living we shall have grown conscious of ourselves as a part of his being till between the existence of the Divine whom we adore and our own lives there is no longer any division. So too in all happenings we have to come to see the dealings with us of the divine Lover and take such pleasure in them that even grief and suffering and physical pain become his gifts and turn to delight and disappear finally into delight, slain by the sense of the divine contact, because the touch of his hands is the alchemist of a miraculous transformation. Some reject life because it is tainted with grief and pain, but to the God-lover grief and pain become means of meeting with him, imprints of his pressure and finally cease as soon as our union with his nature becomes too complete for these masks of the universal delight at all to conceal it. They change into the Ananda.

All the relations by which this union comes about, become on this path intensely and blissfully personal. That which in the end contains, takes up or unifies them all, is the relation of lover and beloved, because that is the most intense and blissful of all and carries up all the rest into its heights and yet exceeds them. He is the teacher and guide and leads us to knowledge; at every step of the developing inner light and vision, we feel his touch like that of the artist moulding our clay of mind, his voice revealing the truth and its word, the thought he gives us to which we respond, the flashing of his spears of lightning which chase the darkness of our ignorance. Especially, in proportion as the partial lights of the mind become transformed into lights of gnosis, in whatever slighter or greater degree that may happen, we feel it as a transformation of our mentality into his and more and more he becomes the thinker and seer in us. We

cease to think and see for ourselves, but think only what he wills to think for us and see only what he sees for us. And then the teacher is fulfilled in the lover; he lays hands on all our mental being to embrace and possess, to enjoy and use it.

He is the Master; but in this way of approach all distance and separation, all awe and fear and mere obedience disappear, because we become too close and united with him for these things to endure and it is the lover of our being who takes it up and occupies and uses and does with it whatever he wills. Obedience is the sign of the servant, but that is the lowest stage of this relation, *dasya*. Afterwards we do not obey, but move to his will as the string replies to the finger of the musician. To be the instrument is this higher stage of self-surrender and submission. But this is the living and loving instrument and it ends in the whole nature of our being becoming the slave of God, rejoicing in his possession and its own blissful subjection to the divine grasp and mastery. With a passionate delight it does all he wills it to do without questioning and bears all he would have it bear, because what it bears is the burden of the beloved being.

He is the friend, the adviser, helper, saviour in trouble and distress, the defender from enemies, the hero who fights our battles for us or under whose shield we fight, the charioteer, the pilot of our ways. And here we come at once to a closer intimacy; he is the comrade and eternal companion, the playmate of the game of living. But still there is so far a certain division, however pleasant, and friendship is too much limited by the appearance of beneficence. The lover can wound, abandon, be wroth with us, seem to betray, yet our love endures and even grows by these oppositions; they increase the joy of re-union and the joy of possession; through them the lover remains the friend, and all that he does we find in the end has been done by the lover and helper of our being for our soul's perfection as well as for his joy in us. These contradictions lead to a greater intimacy. He is the father and mother too of our being, its source and protector and its indulgent cherisher and giver of our desires. He is the child born to our desire whom we cherish and rear. All these things the lover takes up; his love in its intimacy and oneness keeps in it the paternal and maternal care and lends itself to our demands upon it. All is unified in that deepest many-sided relation.

From the beginning even it is possible to have this closest relation of the lover and beloved, but it will not be as exclusive for the integral Yogin as for certain purely ecstatic ways of Bhakti. It will from the beginning take into itself something of the hues of the other relations, since he follows too knowledge and works and has need of the Divine as teacher, friend and master. The growing of the love of God must carry with it in him an expansion of the knowledge of God and of the action of the divine Will in his nature and living. The divine Lover reveals himself; he takes

possession of the life. But still the essential relation will be that of love from which all things flow, love passionate, complete, seeking a hundred ways of fulfilment, every means of mutual possession, a million facets of the joy of union. All the distinctions of the mind, all its barriers and "cannot be's", all the cold analyses of the reason are mocked at by this love or they are only used as the tests and fields and gates of union. Love comes to us in many ways; it may come as an awakening to the beauty of the Lover, by the sight of an ideal face and image of him, by his mysterious hints to us of himself behind the thousand faces of things in the world, by a slow or sudden need of the heart, by a vague thirst in the soul, by the sense of someone near us drawing us or pursuing us with love or of some one blissful and beautiful whom we must discover.

We may seek after him passionately and pursue the unseen beloved; but also the lover whom we think not of, may pursue us, may come upon us in the midst of the world and seize on us for his own whether at first we will or no. Even, he may come to us at first as an enemy, with the wrath of love, and our earliest relations with him may be those of battle and struggle. Where first there is love and attraction, the relations between the Divine and the soul may still for long be chequered with misunderstanding and offence, jealousy and wrath; strife and the quarrels of love, hope and despair and the pain of absence and separation. We throw up all the passions of the heart against him, till they are purified into a sole ecstasy of bliss and oneness. But that too is no monotony; it is not possible for the tongue of human speech to tell all the utter unity and all the eternal variety of the ananda of divine love. Our higher and our lower members are both flooded with it, the mind and life no less than the soul: even the physical body takes its share of the joy, feels the touch, is filled in all its limbs, veins, nerves with the flowing of the wine of the ecstasy, *amrita*. Love and Ananda are the last word of being, the secret of secrets, the mystery of mysteries.

Thus universalised, personalised, raised to its intensities, made all-occupying, all-embracing, all-fulfilling, the way of love and delight gives the supreme liberation. Its highest crest is a supracosmic union. But for love complete union is *mukti*; liberation has to it no other sense; and it includes all kinds of *mukti* together, nor are they in the end, as some would have it, merely successive to each other and therefore mutually exclusive. We have the absolute union of the divine with the human spirit, *sayujya*; in that reveals itself a content of all that depends here upon difference,—but there the difference is only a form of oneness,—ananda too of nearness and contact and mutual presence, *samipyā, salokya*, ananda of mutual reflection, the thing that we call likeness, *sadrisya*, and other wonderful things too for which language has as yet no name. There is nothing which is beyond the reach of the God-lover or denied to him; for he is the favourite of the divine Lover and the self of the Beloved.

Musa Spiritus

O Word concealed in the upper fire,
 Thou who hast lingered through centuries,
 Descend from thy rapt white desire,
 Plunging through gold eternities.
 Into the gulfs of our nature leap,
 Voice of the spaces, call of the Light!
 Break the seals of Matter's sleep,
 Break the trance of the unseen height.
 In the uncertain glow of human mind,
 Its waste of unharmonised thronging thoughts,
 Carve thy epic mountain-lined
 Crowded with deep prophetic grotts.
 Let thy hue-winged lyrics hover like birds
 Over the swirl of the heart's sea.
 Touch into sight with thy fire-words
 The blind indwelling deity.
 O Muse of the Silence, the wideness make
 In the unplumbed stillness that hears thy voice,
 In the vast mute heavens of the spirit awake
 Where thy eagles of Power flame and rejoice.
 Out, out with the mind and its candle flares,
 Light, light the suns that never die.
 For my ear the cry of the seraph stars
 And the forms of the Gods for my naked eye!

Let the little troubled life-god within
 Cast his veils from the still soul,
 His tiger-stripes of virtue and sin,
 His clamour and glamour and thole and dole;
 All make tranquil, all make free.
 Let my heart-beats measure the footsteps of God
 As He comes from His timeless infinity
 To build in their rapture His burning abode.
 Weave from my life His poem of days,
 His calm pure dawns and His noons of force.
 My acts for the grooves of His chariot-race,
 My thoughts for the tramp of his great steeds' course!

SRI AUROBINDO

Mahalakshmi

In lotus-groves Thy spirit roves: where shall I find a seat for Thee?
 To Thy feet's tread—feet dawn-rose red—opening, my, heart Thy
 throne shall be.
 All things unholy hurt thy soul:
 I would become a stainless whole:
 O World's delight, All-beauty's might! unmoving house Thy grace
 in me.
 An arid heart Thou canst not bear:
 It is thy will love's bonds to wear:
 Then by Thy sweetness' magic completeness make me Thy love's
 eternal sea.

SRI AUROBINDO

(Translated from the Bengali song of Anilbaran)

THE DIVINE'S CONSCIOUSNESS AND WILL

A TALK BY THE MOTHER, AS I REMEMBER IT—EDITOR

Knowledge by Unity with the Divine

Consciousness is the faculty of becoming aware of anything through identification with it. But the Divine's Consciousness is not only aware but knows and effects. For, mere awareness is not knowledge. To become aware of a vibration, for instance, does not mean that you know everything about it. Only when the consciousness participates in the Divine's Consciousness it gets full knowledge by identification with its object. Ordinarily, identification leads to ignorance more than knowledge, for the consciousness is lost in what it becomes and is unable to envisage proper causes, concomitants and consequences. Thus you identify yourself with a movement of anger and your whole self becomes one angry throb, blind and precipitate, oblivious of everything else. It is only when you stand back, remain detached in the midst of the passionate turmoil that you are able to see the process with a knowing eye. So knowledge in the ordinary state of being is to be obtained rather by stepping back from a phenomenon to watch it without getting identified with it. But the Divine's Consciousness identifies itself with its object and knows it thoroughly thereby, because it becomes one always with the essential truth or law inherent in each fact. And it not only knows but, by knowing, brings about what it wants. To be conscious is for it to be effective—each of its movements being a flash of omnipotence which, besides illumining, blazes its way ultimately to the goal dictated by its truth-nature.

Your ordinary consciousness is very much mixed up with unconsciousness—it fumbles, strains and is thwarted, while by unity with the Supreme you share the Supreme Nature and get the full knowledge whenever you turn to observe any object and identify yourself with it. Of course, this does not necessarily amount to embracing all the contents of the Divine's Consciousness. Your movements become true, but you do not possess all the rich manifold of the Divine's activity. Still, you are able to see correctly and according to the truth of things, within your sphere,—which is certainly more than what is in Yogic parlance called knowledge by identity. For, the sort of identification as taught by many disciplines extends your limits of perception without piercing to the innermost heart of an object: it sees from within it, as it were, but only its phenomenal aspect. For example, if you identify yourself with a tree, you become aware in the way in which a tree is aware of itself, yet you do not come to know everything about a tree for the simple reason that it is itself not possessed of such knowledge. You do share the tree's in-feeling, but you surely do not understand the truth it stands for, any more than by being conscious of your own natural self you get at once the divine reality which you secretly are. Whereas if you are in touch of oneness with the Divine's Consciousness, you know—over and above how the tree feels—what the truth behind it is: in short, everything, because the Divine's Consciousness knows everything.

Indeed there are many means of attaining this unity. It may be done through aspiration, or surrender, or some other method. Each followed with persistence and sincerity leads to it. Aspiration is the dynamic push of your whole nature behind the resolution to reach the Divine. Surrender, on the other hand, may be defined as the giving up of the limits of your ego. To surrender to the Divine is to renounce your narrow limits and let yourself be invaded by it and made a centre for its play. But you must bear in mind that the Universal Consciousness so beloved of Yogis is not the Divine: you can break your limits horizontally if you like, but you will be quite mistaken if you take the sense of wideness and cosmic multiplicity to be the Divine. The universal movement is after all a mixture of falsehood and truth, so that to halt there is to be imperfect; for, you may very well share the cosmic consciousness without ever attaining the transcendent Truth. On the other hand, to go to the Divine is to get the universal realisation also and yet remain free of falsehood.

The real bar to self-surrender, whether to the Universal or to the Transcendent, is the individual's love of his own limits. It is a natural love, since in the very formation of the individual being there is a tendency to concentrate on limits. Without that, there would be no sense of separateness—all would get mixed, as happens quite often in the mental and vital movements of consciousness. It is the body especially which preserves separative individuality by being not so fluid. But once this separateness is established, there creeps in the fear to lose it—a healthy instinct in many respects, but misapplied with regard to the Divine. For, in the Divine you do not really lose your individuality: you only give up your egoism and become the true individual, the divine personality which is not temporary like the construction of physical consciousness which is usually taken for your self. One touch of the Divine's Consciousness and you see immediately that there is no loss in it. On the contrary, you acquire a true individual permanence which can survive a hundred deaths of the body and all the vicissitudes of the vital-mental evolution. Without this transfiguring touch, you always go about in fear; with it, you gradually

develop the power to make even your physical being plastic without losing its individuality. Even now, it is not entirely rigid, it is able to feel the conscious movements of others by a sort of sympathy which translates into nervous reactions to their joys and sufferings: it is also able to express your inner movements—the face is well-known as an index and mirror to the mind. But only the Divine's Consciousness can make the body so responsive that it can reflect all the movements of the supramental immortality and be, so to speak, an expression of the true soul, and by being divinised reach the acme of a supreme individuality which can even physically rise superior to the necessity of death and dissolution.

The Divine's Will and the World

To one point, in conclusion, I should like to draw your attention; for it very frequently obstructs true union. It is a great error to suppose that there is always the Divine's Will acting openly in the world. All that happens is not, in fact, divine: the Supreme Will gets distorted in the manifestation owing to the combination of lower forces which translate it. They are the medium which falsifies its impetus and gives it an undivine resultant. If all that happened were indeed the unflawed translation of it, how could you account for the distortions of the world? . . . Not that the Divine's Will could not have caused the cosmic Ignorance. It is omnipotent and all possibilities are inherent in it: it can work out anything of which it sees the secret necessity in its original vision. And the first cause of the world is, of course, the Divine, though we must take care not to adjudge this fact mentally according to our petty ethical values. But once the conditions of the cosmos were laid down and the involution into nescience accepted as the basis of a progressive manifestation of the Divine out of all that seemed its very opposite, there took place a sort of division between the Higher and the Lower. The history of the world became a battle between the True and the False, in which the details are not all direct representations of the Divine's progressive action but rather distortions of it owing to the mass of resistance offered by the inferior nature. If there were no such resistance, there would be nothing whatever to conquer in the world, for the world would be harmonious, a constant passage from one perfection to another instead of the conflict which it is—a game of hazards and various possibilities in which the Divine faces real opposition, real difficulty and often real temporary defeat on way to the final victory. It is just this reality of the whole play that makes it no mere jest. The Divine's Will actually suffers distortion the moment it touches the hostile forces in the Ignorance. Hence we must never slacken our efforts to change the world and bring about a different order. We must be vigilant to co-operate with the Divine and not placidly think that whatever happens is always the best. All depends upon the personal attitude. If in the presence of circumstances that are about to occur, you can take the highest attitude possible—that is, if you put your consciousness into contact with the highest Consciousness within reach, you can be absolutely sure that in that case it is the best that can happen to you. But as soon as you fall down from this consciousness into a lower state, then it is evidently not the best that can happen, since you are not in your very best consciousness. As Sri Aurobindo once said, "What happened had to happen, but it could have been much better." Because the person to whom it happened was not in his highest consciousness, there was no other consequence possible; but if he had been bringing a descent of the Divine, then, even if a situation in general had been inevitable it would have turned out in a different way. What makes all the difference is how you receive the impulsion of the Divine's Will.

Not before you rise high can you meet this Will in its plenary splendour of authenticity; not before you open your lower nature to it can it begin to manifest in terms of the Truth. You must, therefore, refrain from applying the merely Nietzschean standard of temporary success in order to differentiate the Divine from the undivine. For, life is a battlefield in which the Divine succeeds in detail only when the lower nature is receptive to its impulsions instead of siding with the hostile forces. And even then the test is not so much external as internal: a divine movement cannot be measured by apparent signs—it is a certain kind of vibration that indicates its presence—external tests are of no avail, since even what is in appearance a failure may be in fact a divine achievement . . . What you have to do is to give yourself up to the Grace of the Divine; for, it is under the form of Grace, of Love, that it has consented to uplift the universe after the first involution was established. With the Divine's Love is the supreme power of Transformation. It has this power because it is for the sake of Transformation that it has given itself to the world and manifested everywhere. Not only into man but into all the atoms of the most obscure Matter has it infused itself in order to bring the world back to the original Truth. It is this descent that is called the supreme Sacrifice in the Indian scriptures. But it is a sacrifice only from the human point of view; the human mind thinks that if it had to do such a thing it would be a tremendous sacrifice. But the Divine cannot be really diminished, its infinite essence can never become less no matter what "sacrifices" are made.

THE MOTHER

By RISHABHCHAND

Not much has got into print about the Mother, gracious active spiritual guide of Sri Aurobindo's Ashram. The present article is therefore all the more valuable and illuminating in the sensitive and profound glimpses it gives of her great mission.

The Aspiration and the Work

"When I was a child—about the age of thirteen and for about a year—every night as soon as I was in bed, it seemed to me that I came out of my body and rose straight up above the house, then above the town, very high. I saw myself then clad in a magnificent golden robe, longer than myself; and as I rose, that robe lengthened, spreading in a circle around me, to form, as it were, an immense roof over the town. Then I would see coming out from all sides men, women, children, old men, sick men, unhappy men; they gathered under the outspread robe, imploring help, recounting their miseries, their sufferings, their pains. In reply, the robe, supple and living, stretched out to them individually, and as soon as they touched it, they were consoled or healed, and entered back into their body happier and stronger than they had ever been before coming out of it. Nothing appeared to me more beautiful, nothing made me more happy; and all the activities of the day seemed to me dull and colourless, without real life, in comparison with this activity of the night which was for me the true life. Often as I thus rose, I would see on my left an old man, silent and immobile, who looked at me with a benevolent affection and encouraged me by his presence. This old man, dressed in a long robe of sombre violet, was the personification—I knew him later—of him who is called the Man of Sorrows.

Now the profound experience, the almost ineffable reality is translated in my brain by other notions which I can define thus:—

Many a time during the day and in the night it seems to me that I,—that is to say, my consciousness is wholly concentrated in my heart, which is no longer an organ, not even a feeling, but the divine Love, impersonal, eternal; being this Love, I feel myself living in the centre of everything upon the whole earth, and at the same time it seems to me that I am stretching out immense, infinite arms and enveloping with a limitless tenderness all beings clasped, grouped, nestled upon my breast, vaster than the universe... Words are poor and clumsy, O divine Master, and mental translations are always childish... But my aspiration for Thee is constant, and to tell the truth, it is often Thyself and Thou alone who livest in this body, an imperfect means of Thy manifestation.

May all beings be happy in the peace of Thy illumination." (February 22, 1914).

This is one of the earliest—it does not seem to be the very first—spiritual experiences of the Mother. It signalizes the beginning of a great mission and is eloquently prophetic of the Mother's future. Four things stand out in it arresting our attention and compelling our wonder:

- (1) the Mother's ascent high up into the sky,
- (2) her putting on of a golden robe,
- (3) the lengthening and stretching out of the golden robe to all those who had gathered under it, imploring help and consolation, and
- (4) the Mother's delight in this experience.

We have here, in this experience of the Mother when she was a mere child of thirteen, practically all the basic elements that constitute her life and work in the world—a sort of epitome of the greatness and grandeur of her future creative self-expression. The vision is remarkable—I should have said, unique—in the history of spiritual lives. For about one whole year, day in and day out, the Mother used to have it at the same hour and in the same invariable way. This persistence of the vision with its details unchanged and its full realization in the Mother's subsequent life challenges the complacent theories of psycho-analysis and proves that the vision was not a conditioned reflex of the individual Unconscious, but a prophetic revelation of that which was preparing in the Super-conscious. Looking at the Mother's present activities, one would say that this childhood experience was the blue print of her later work on earth. The experience is remarkable for another reason: the sequence of its details is flawlessly perfect, it corresponds exactly to that of the spiritual experiences on the path of Sri Aurobindo's integral Yoga, as promulgated years afterwards.

The first movement in the Mother's experience is one of ascent. "I came out of my body and rose straight up above the house, then above the town, very high." It signifies, I suppose, first, transcendence of the body-consciousness, then of the habitual environmental consciousness and, last, of the universal human consciousness. This transcendence of all human formulae and ascent "very high" gives the Mother a secure station in the superconscience. But by transcendence we do not mean exclusion, nor do we imply a suspension of the physical consciousness, an act of abstraction and a rocket-flight into the empyrean of the Spirit. The Spirit's skies are, of course, attained; the Mother does stand in their serene, shoreless infinity; but not as a naked soul or an unvestured mind. Her experience is much too concrete, much too physically real and definite to permit of such an interpretation. The truth and tenor of her whole spiritual life have been consistently characterized by an unflinching, downright practicality. Her ascent is an ascent of her whole integrated being, including the subtle physical—it is only the outer physical body that remains below; and the lengthening of her robe and the touching of it by those who implored her help and consolation—

as we shall see presently—are as real, as vivid, as distinctive and decisive an experience as any we get by means of our physical senses. The Mother does not regard any realisation as complete so long as it is not rendered into the terms of the physical consciousness and possessed by it as a hard, solid, indubitable reality.

The second movement is the assumption of the Supernature or the supramental nature as represented by the putting on of "a magnificent golden robe". "I saw myself then", says the Mother, "clad in a magnificent golden robe." The word "then" in the sentence is very important, as it emphasizes the true order of the movements—first, ascent and then the assumption of the golden robe. It is a commonplace of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga that there can be no conversion or change of nature without ascent.

The third movement is the lengthening and stretching out of the golden robe, "supple and living", to each individual of the crowd that had gathered under it. The lengthening and stretching are the movement of descent consequent upon the ascent. An important thing to be noted here is, that it is not the Mother descending, but only her golden robe which symbolizes the Supernature. The central consciousness of man, once it has travelled beyond the borders of even the spiritual mind, finds a stable base above in the Transcendent, and a tranquil, luminous poise in it, and never spirals back—*na punarāvartate*—into the whirl of the lower energies. It is the divine nature assumed after the ascent that descends as a vehicle of the divine Grace to help and heal humanity. This movement illustrates the Mother's rôle, so well indicated in many of her later Prayers, of the Mediatrice between the supreme Transcendent above and the material world below. The stretching out of the golden robe is a significant gesture of the divine Grace, leaning down to succour suffering humanity. It is interesting to note again that the "men, women, children, old men, sick men, unhappy men" gathered under the robe after it had lengthened, spreading in a circle around the Mother "to form, as it were, an immense roof over the town." It is always, indeed, the Grace that acts first, the divine Love that leans down first and exerts a secret, silent pressure from above, and the human aspiration and appeal are but a reflex action from below.

The fourth movement—it is not really the fourth in succession, but a constant accompaniment of the others—is the Mother's delight in the experience. "Nothing appeared to me more beautiful, nothing made me more happy; and all the activities of the day seemed to me dull and colourless, without real life, in comparison with the activity of the night which was for me the true life." The later "Prayers" of the Mother—they are prayers in a special sense—are literally soaked in an ineffable delight.

"Thou hast heaped Thy favours upon me, Thou hast unveiled to me many secrets, Thou hast made me taste many unexpected and un hoped-for joys, but no grace of Thine can be equal to this Thou grantest to me when a heart leaps at the touch of Thy divine breath." (March 31, 1917).

To be a plastic and powerful instrument of the Divine for the progressive elimination of ignorance and suffering from the life of humanity has been the acme of the Mother's delight. She has even forgone, for a period, the absorbed bliss of the transcendent union for the sake of descending into the darkness of Matter and calling upon the Divine from below as the representative of the earth to illumine and transform her. The joy of selfless service, the unutterable rapture of God-willed and God-impelled impersonal work is regarded by the Mother as the very highest happiness of her life.

"Let me be like an immense mantle of love enveloping the whole earth, penetrating all hearts, murmuring to every ear Thy divine message of hope and peace."

This experience is the prophetic dawn of the Mother's life whose blazing noontide is revealed in the *Prayers and Meditations of the Mother*. Here it is only a foreshadowing, but what a marvellously precise foreshadowing!

We now propose to proceed very humbly to consider—it is foolhardy to presume to interpret such high spiritual experiences—(1) the constant seeking of the Mother's soul, (2) the means of fulfilling that seeking, and (3) the nature and significance of her work on earth.

The constant seeking of the Mother's being has been the Divine. With a consuming passion and unblemished sincerity each fibre of her being has sought Him and nothing but Him. This intensity of aspiration has found a most moving expression in many of her Prayers.

"Beyond all human conceptions, even the most marvellous, beyond all human feelings, even the most sublime, beyond the most magnificent aspiration and the purest élan, beyond Love, Knowledge and the Unity of the Being, I would enter into a constant communion with Thee, O Lord. Free from all trammels, I shall be Thyself; it will be Thou seeing the world through this body; it will be Thou acting in the world through this instrument.

In me is the calm serenity of perfect certitude."

RADHA'S PRAYER

"O Thou whom at first sight I knew for the Lord of my being and my God, receive my offering.

Thine are all my thoughts, all my emotions, all the sentiments of my

heart, all my sensations, all the movements of my life, each cell of my body, each drop of my blood. I am absolutely and altogether Thine, Thine without reserve. What Thou wilt of me, that I shall be. Whether Thou chooseth for me life or death, happiness or sorrow, pleasure or suffering all that comes to me from Thee will be welcome. Each one of Thy gifts will be always for me a gift divine bringing with it the supreme felicity."

The Mother's body has participated as much as her soul in this constant aspiration for and surrender to the Divine. It would even seem, reading some characteristic Prayers, that the immediate urge of her body and, in fact, of her whole physical consciousness has been even greater than that of her soul. And this is not surprising, for, on the basis of the Prayers it can very well be asserted that she had already realized a complete and constant inner union with the Divine very early in life and that her subsequent aspiration and endeavour have been to realize an equally complete and constant union in her physical consciousness and outer life. In the Prayer of Nov. 19, 1912—this is the year with which the *Prayers and Meditations* begins—she says: "I said yesterday to that Englishman who is seeking for Thee with so sincere a desire, that I had definitely found Thee. that the Union was constant." But this is not the union to satisfy the Mother's whole being. She starts with this union as the base, but for the immense spiritual structure she has to rear upon it, much greater conquests have to be made, a more integral union has to be attained. So, not content with this union, she says, "Yet I know that this state of union is poor and precarious compared with that which it will become possible for me to realize to-morrow." Again, in the Prayer of May 16, 1914, the Mother says, "Now I clearly understand that union with Thee is not an end to be pursued, so far as this present individuality is concerned; it is a fact accomplished long since. And that is why Thou seemest to tell me always: 'Do not revel in the ecstatic contemplation of this union, fulfil the mission I have confided to thee on this earth.'"

This is a point of capital importance inasmuch as it affords the right perspective to the tremendous significance of the Mother's life-work. Not union only in the depths of her being, which is the common objective of all mystics, but a union even in the outermost nature and a complete possession and government of the whole being by the divine Love, so that the divine Will, realized by the Mother in her union with the Eternal, may fulfil itself in her terrestrial existence. But what is this divine Will in regard to the Mother? "To be the Life in all material forms, the Thought organizing and using this Life in all forms, the Love enlarging, enlightening, intensifying, uniting all the diverse elements of this Thought, and thus by a total identification with the manifested world, to be able to intervene with all power in its transformation. On the other hand, by a perfect surrender to the Supreme Principle, to become conscious of the Truth and the eternal Will which manifests it. By this identification, becoming the faithful servant and sure intermediary of the divine Will, and uniting this conscious identification of the Principle with the conscious identification of the becoming, to mould and model consciously the love, mind and life of the becoming according to the Law of Truth of the Principle. It is thus that the individual being can be the conscious intermediary between the absolute Truth and the manifested universe, and intervene in the slow and uncertain advance of the Yoga of Nature in order to give it the swift, intense and sure character of the divine Yoga."

A colossal work, wellnigh staggering to our timid and tethered intelligence! Our imagination faints before the vastness and complexity of its conception, and yet something in us, awed and attracted, pledges to it its eternal adhesion and loyalty.

This, then, has been the sole aspiration of the Mother's whole being: to realize an integral union with the integral Divine and become the conscious intermediary between Him and the material world, so that His unflawed manifestation may be possible in transformed human nature. Divine manifestation can, therefore, be said to be the pith of her mission in this life.

The Means of Fulfilment

We turn now to the means the Mother adopts and advocates for the fulfilment of this matchless aspiration. The first means,—in fact, the means *par excellence*,—is Love. But this Love is the dynamic and creative divine Love which is instinct with the supreme Knowledge and the supreme Power.

"O Lord, Thou of whom I would be constantly conscious and whom I would realize in the smallest cells of my being, Thou whom I would know as myself and see manifested in all things, Thou who art the sole reality, the sole reason and the sole aim of existence, grant that my love for Thee may go on increasing incessantly, so that I may become all love, Thy very love, and that being Thy love, I may unite integrally with Thee. May this love become more and more intense, complex, luminous, powerful; may this love be an irresistible élan towards Thee, an invincible means to manifest Thee. May all in this being become pure love, profound, disinterested, divine, from the unfathomable depths to the outermost substance. May the God in form who is manifesting this aggregate be wholly moulded of Thy complete and sublime love, that love which is at once the source and the realization of all knowledge; may the thought be clarified, classified, enlightened, transformed by Thy love; may all the forces of my life, solely penetrated and moulded by Thy love, become irresistible rurity and constant energy, power and rectitude;and may this body, becoming a burning brazier, radiate Thy divine impersonal, sublime and calm love through all its pore. . . .may the brain be reconstituted by Thy love. Finally may Thy love overflow, inundate, transfigure, regenerate, animate every thing with the power, splendour, sweetness and force which are its very

nature. In Thy love is peace, in Thy love is joy, in Thy love is the sovereign lever of work for Thy servitor.

Thy love is vaster than the universe and more enduring than the ages; it is infinite and eternal, it is Thyself. And it is Thyself that I would be and that I am, since such is Thy Law such Thy Will."

Thy love, as I have already said, is not a static but a supremely dynamic love, and the union it leads to is not a union in trance, but a perfect union in action. . . .Action, then, has to be performed, action of every kind and at every instant. A life of ascetic inaction and flight from the world is a life of spiritual defeat and frustration, whatever may be its otherworldly value. If God is evolving in man, then the world is the field of His evolution and eventual self-revelation, and action is one of the most indispensable means by which alone both the evolution and the revelation can be fully effected.

The second means, therefore, that the Mother advocates is an ungrudging, unreserved and loving surrender to the Divine through action. A long and arduous discipline of selfless and surrendered action alone—and this is Yogic action—can purify and impersonalize the numberless elements of our dynamic personality and prepare them for participation in the integral union. I quote below a Prayer which is a brilliant exposition of Yogic action as understood by the Mother and Sri Aurobindo.

"The outer life, the activity of each day and each instant, is it not the indispensable complement of our hours of meditation and contemplation? And is not the proportion of time given to each the exact image of the proportion which exists between the amount of effort to be made for the preparation and the realization? For, meditation, contemplation, Union is the result obtained—the flower that blooms; the daily activity is the anvil on which all the elements must pass and repass in order to be purified, refined, made supple and ripe for the illumination which contemplation gives to them. All these elements must be thus passed one after the other through the crucible before outer activity becomes needless for the integral development. Then is this activity turned into the means to manifest Thee so as to awaken the other centres of consciousness to the same dual work of the forge and the illumination. Therefore are pride and satisfaction with oneself the worst of all obstacles. Very modestly we must take advantage of all the minute opportunities offered to knead and purify some of the innumerable elements, to make them supple, to make them impersonal, to teach them forgetfulness of self and abnegation and devotion and kindness and gentleness; and when all these modes of being have become habitual to them, then are they ready to participate in the Contemplation, and to identify themselves with Thee in the supreme Concentration. . . ."

The Mother, therefore, rightly insists in many of her Prayers on the unwearied performance of Yogic action, so that the whole of our life, which has been up till now under the sway of the forces of ignorance and falsehood, may be conquered for the Divine and rendered a radiant scene of His rapturous self-manifestation.

The Manifestation of God in Matter

We have seen what is the constant seeking of the Mother's soul and the means of its fulfilment in the material world. Let us now try to understand the nature and significance of her work upon earth. If we take a synoptic view of all her experiences and teachings, we cannot resist the conclusion that it is not her personal salvation that she has ever sought, not even, as we have already seen, an ecstatic union with the Divine in the depths or on the heights of her being, for, she seems to have been in constant possession and enjoyment of it as her birth-right; but what she has steadfastly yearned for and willed, is the manifestation of God in Matter through the liberated and transformed nature of man. It was the reconciliation of Spirit and Matter, the long-dreamed-of marriage of Earth and Heaven that was the problem the Mother set before herself early in life, and her work has been a progressive solution of it.

"Do not revel in the ecstatic contemplation of the union, fulfil the mission I have confided to Thee on the earth." "One day thou wilt be my head, but for the moment turn thy look towards the earth."—Such has been the invariable and insistent command of the Divine to the Mother. The earth, the tortured, convulsed, agonized earth has to be redeemed, illumined and rendered "the home of the Wonderful." Darkness and death, sorrow and suffering have to be blotted out from her face and a superior race of men must people her, revealing the divine Presence in her transfigured bosom.

. . . "It is a veritable work of creation we have to do; to create new activities and new modes of being, so that this Force, unknown to the earth till now, may manifest in its plenitude. It is to this work of a bringing to birth that I have consecrated myself, O Lord, because it is this that Thou demandest from me."

"All that has been conceived and realized up to now is mediocre, commonplace, insufficient compared with what has to be. The perfections of the past have no longer any force at present. A new puissance is needed to transform the new powers and make them submit to Thy divine Will—'Ask and it shall be', such is Thy constant reply. . . .Let all these elements perish, so that from their ashes may emerge new elements adapted to the new manifestation."

This new manifestation is the Will of the Divine and the mission of the Mother upon earth, and because it is the Will of the Divine, it will be accomplished by His Force alone, and not by any thought and plan of man. But for His Force to act freely—it never acts arbitrarily—man has to have an infinite faith in it. "Thou art the sovereign power of transformation,

Continued overleaf

why shouldst Thou not act upon all those who are put in relation with Thee through us as intermediaries? We lack faith in Thy power. We always think that for this integral transformation to take place, men must will in their conscious thought; we forget that it is Thou who willest in them and that Thou canst will in such a way that all their being may be illumined. . . ."

But the mind of man is beset by doubts which impede the working of the divine Will. Man judges by his very limited and often misleading experiences of life and Nature and by the puny standards he has erected in his half-lit mind. By a fraction of the past which is all that he has at his command, he presumes to judge the infinite and incalculable potentialities of the future. But, the Mother says, "It is always wrong to try to judge of the future or even foresee it in the light of the idea that we have of it, for this idea is the present, it is, in the very measure of its impersonality, a translation of the present inter-relations which inevitably are not the future inter-relations of all the elements of the terrestrial problem. To deduce the future from the present circumstances is a mental activity of the order of reasoning, even if the deduction takes place in the sub-conscious and is translated in the being under the form of intuition; and reason is a human, that is to say, an individual faculty; the inspirations of the reasoning do not come from the infinite, the unlimited, the Divine. It is only in the All-Knowledge, it is only when we are at once That which knows, that which is to be known and the power of knowing that we can become conscious of all relations past, present and future; but in this state there is no longer any past, present and future, all eternally is." To the tranquil eye of faith "the formidable omnipotence of Thy Force is there; ready for manifestation, waiting, it is building the propitious hour, the favourable opportunity: it is there, the incomparable splendour of Thy victorious sovereignty."

"The Force is there. Rejoice, you who wait and hope; the new manifestation is sure; the new manifestation is near."

We have already had a glimpse of the Mother's rôle in this new manifestation. But in order to have an indubitable idea of what it implies, let us listen to what the Divine Himself says to her:—"I have chosen thee from all eternity to be my exceptional representative upon the earth, not in an invisible way, but in a way apparent to the eyes of all men. And what thou wert created to be, thou shalt be." Again, "By renouncing every thing, even wisdom and consciousness, thou wert able to prepare thy heart for the rôle which was assigned to it: apparently the most thankless rôle, that of the fountain which always lets its waters flow abundantly for all, but towards which no stream can ever remount; it draws its inexhaustible force from the depths and has nothing to expect from outside. But thou feelest already beforehand what sublime felicity accompanies this inexhaustible expansion of love; for, love is sufficient unto itself and has no need of any reciprocity. This is true even of individual love, how much more true, then, of divine love which so nobly reflects the infinite.

"Be this love in every thing and everywhere, ever more widely, ever more intensely, and the whole world will become at once thy work and thy estate, thy field of action and thy conquest. Strive with persistence to throw down the last limits which are but frail barriers before the expansion of the being, to conquer the last obscurities which the illumining power is already lighting up. Fight that thou mayst conquer and triumph; struggle to surmount all that has been up to this day, to make the new light emerge, the new example which the world needs. Fight stubbornly against all obstacles, outer or inner. This is the pearl without price which is proposed for thee to realize." (Dec. 25, 1916.)

"Thou wilt lead them all towards their supreme destiny." (March 27, 1917.)

We have been able to contemplate from a respectable and respectful distance and through the unavoidable haze of our mental preferences and preconceptions only a few aspects of the Mother's multi-dimensional spiritual career. As we follow the course of her spiritual achievements, a point of profound interest and significance to the future of humanity strikes us with an increasing force and clarity: it is the representative character of her Yoga. Not only has she aspired for the elimination of ignorance and suffering from the earth and the revelation of the Spirit in her transfigured substance, but, identified with the earth, she has constituted herself her sole representative and practised the Yoga for the earth's liberation and transformation. Her Yoga has, therefore, been a collective rather than an individual Yoga; and many of the Prayers are not so much prayers for her soul or her heart for any personal boon or gain; as prayers for the earth and of the earth herself and humanity through the Mother for a descent of the Light and Force, Peace and Harmony of the Divine. The Mother gave all herself to the Divine, so that, through her as an intermediary, He might act directly upon the earth and her children. She gave all herself in a supreme holocaust, so that the Divine might "reign over all the earth" with His "sovereign Love", and the consciousness of men might be full of the "Light of His serenity". This representative character of her Yoga is luminously brought out in her following utterances:—

"O Thou whom I cannot name but whose will I perceive in the supreme silence and in a total surrender, let me be the representative of the whole earth, so that united with my consciousness, she may give herself to Thee without reserve."

"It was their pain and suffering that my physical being was feeling, O Lord."

The Mother's rôle of an intermediary presupposes, on the one hand, a complete identification of her whole being with the integral Divine, who is at once transcendent and immanent, static and dynamic, and, on the

other hand, an equally complete identification with the whole material universe for which she invokes and canalizes the Love and Light of the Divine. And this double identification has been either graphically expressed or cryptically indicated in many a Prayer of surpassing beauty and sublimity.

"In a silent and inward quietude, in a mute adoration, uniting myself with all this dark and sorrowful substance, I salute Thee, O Lord, as the divine saviour; I bless Thy love as the supreme liberator; I thank it for its innumerable boons, and I surrender myself to Thee, so that Thou mayst complete Thy work of perfectionment. Then I identify myself with Thy love and I am nothing but Thy inexhaustible love; I penetrate every thing, living in the heart of each atom I kindle in it the fire that purifies and transfigures, the fire that is never extinguished, the messenger flame of Thy beatitude, which realizes all perfections.

Then this love itself silently draws inwards, and turning towards Thee, unknowable splendour, awaits with ecstasy Thy New Manifestation."

Within the limited scope of this article it has not been possible to attempt a fuller treatment of the subject. We have, therefore, had to omit any consideration of the Mother's more deeply mystic experience: her descent into the frozen darkness of Matter; her contact with "the horror of the falsehood and the inconscience," "the seat of oblivion and a supreme obscurity"; her intimate colloquies with the Eternal and the Divine Mother, and the help rendered to her in her terrestrial work by the supreme Gods. Perhaps they are a little too mystic and mysterious for the bleared and blinkered human reason to understand and value. We have had also to omit pondering some of her characteristic teachings, vibrant words of light, sprung from a plenary Wisdom, which prove that her thoughts are not confined to a narrow spirituality, but embrace all the manifoldness of life and the multiplicity of its vital issues; for, to her unhorizoned consciousness there is no division between the Light of the Supreme and the Life of the universe—they are different aspects of the same indivisible Reality.

But we cannot close this cursory survey without citing in extenso two of the Mother's outstanding experiences which seem to us to serve as a permanent background of her thoughts and her great terrestrial work. We do not know if there is anything in the whole range of mystical literature to compare with these two gems of spiritual realization.

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

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

"The return towards the consciousness of the individual body took place very slowly in a constant and invariable splendour of Light and Power and Felicity and Adoration, by successive gradations, but directly, without passing again through the universal and terrestrial forms. And it was as if the modest corporeal form had become the direct and immediate vesture, without any intermediary, of the supreme and eternal Witness." (November 26, 1915.)

"My heart has fallen asleep down to the very depths of my being.

The whole earth is in a stir and agitation of perpetual change; all life enjoys and suffers, endeavours, struggles, conquers, is destroyed and formed again.

My heart has fallen asleep down to the very depths of my being.

In all these innumerable and manifold elements, I am the Will that moves, the Thought that acts, the Force that realizes, the matter that is put in motion.

My heart has fallen asleep down to the very depths of my being.

No more personal limits, no more any individual action, no more any separatist concentration creating conflict; nothing but a single and infinite Oneness.

"My heart has fallen asleep down to the depths of my being." (April 10, 1917.)

SRI AUROBINDO, THE LEADER OF THE EVOLUTION

PART II OF "THE WORLD CRISIS AND INDIA"

By "Synergist"

SECTION II: THE NEW WORLD-VIEW

(iii) THE ONTOLOGICAL PROCESS

In *The World Crisis and India* and in the previous essays in this Series, three inter-related major themes have been discussed. It is necessary here to bring them still closer together in order to see the central thread that runs through them. The first theme deals with the evolution of man; not his biological but his psychological evolution. Here the term evolution does not merely refer to that development by which the rational animal, after growing anatomically and physiologically to the utmost, started inventing tools, machines and instruments as extensions of his limbs and senses. This development is that of man's outer natural being in a particular direction; it is not as, we have seen, a harmonious growth of his entire being. Evolution here refers to the growth of consciousness—to the developing capacity in man to detach himself to a greater and greater extent from the physical, vital and mental parts of his outer surface being, and to the growing power in him of living in a deeper and higher consciousness, ultimately making this higher consciousness a settled realisation in his being. The true history of the world is the history of the evolution of consciousness, from its emergence out of the nescience of matter first into plants, then into animals, and finally into man as he is today.

This brings us to the second major theme: it states that consciousness is the main determinant in the creation of cultures, that its type, level and range determine the character of the culture it creates. This implies that as man's consciousness turns inwards making him aware of the inner regions of his being, and learns to ascend to the summit of the Divine Consciousness, his apprehension of reality increases; he not only sees the working of the world process but sees behind it the Power, the Consciousness that determines and governs it. The higher the level of his consciousness, and the wider its range, the greater is his apprehension and profounder is his knowledge of existence. For knowing the deeper truths of existence such a knowledge gained through inner psycho-spiritual means is necessary. The usual indirect means are not adequate. Sri Aurobindo explains this in *The Human Cycle*: "Therefore to find the truth of things and the law of his being in relation to that truth he must go deeper and fathom the subjective secret of himself and things as well as their objective forms and surroundings. . . . The need of a deeper knowledge must then turn him to the discovery of new powers and means within himself. He finds that he can only know himself entirely by becoming actively self-conscious and not merely self-critical, by more and more living in his soul and acting out of it rather than floundering on surfaces, by putting himself into conscious harmony with that which lies behind his superficial mentality and psychology and by enlightening his reason and making dynamic his action through this deeper light and power to which he thus opens."

Then, on a basis of this direct knowledge of the nature of man, the universe and the Ultimate Reality, gained through inner means as well as the indirect knowledge arrived at through outer means, he erects the whole superstructure of his civilisation,—philosophical and religious conceptions, or as in India, the spiritual metaphysic, becoming the matrix that ensures the integration of the component parts of the socio-cultural configuration and brings about its central unity. Here the reference is made to major cultures only, not to congeries held together by geographical and spatial ties. This theme stresses the importance of man and of his freedom to shape his social and cultural environment.

The third theme which is intimately connected with the second deals with the influence of this environment on man, the cultural conditioning of his being. The social, political and economic factors all play their respective parts in influencing his personality and life; but it is the prevailing world-view, the current philosophy of life that will affect him most—his attitude towards life and towards other men. This world-view will greatly affect the social, political and economic systems themselves. The influence of Positivism, with its side-growths Utilitarianism and Hedonism, on modern Western civilisation can be very clearly seen; so also the influence of the economic-historical materialism of Marx on Russian life, and that of the *Herrenvolk* philosophy of Hitler on German culture. That is why we have stated that the metaphysical and ideative elements in the growth of cultures, which were neglected by anthropo-sociologists in their genetic, psycho-analytical, and sociological interpretations, are the truly basic ones, elements which form the very ground of the culture pattern of a nation.

At first sight this theme may seem to contradict the second which emphasises the freedom of the individual to mould his environment, but actually it does not. The relation of the inner to the outer, of consciousness to environmental impacts, has been shown. We shall now attempt to see this problem in greater detail. The inner and the outer interact with each other; the outer serves to stimulate the inner and to bring out its potentialities, and aids it first to grow and then to realise itself outwardly and

objectively in life. Man, being a soul—an emanated power of the Divine—besides being a nature organism and a social entity, can through an inner spiritual development attain knowledge, power and mastery over his environment and can remould and recreate it. No doubt he does not live alone as a separate self-existing unit; he is open to the action of the forces of the external world—he is not only subjected to the influence of Universal mental, vital and physical Nature, Prakriti, he is also affected by the social and cultural milieu in which he grows up; but it is an error to presume that he is wholly influenced by these factors. There is in every individual consciousness a dual action, a power of self-development from within, and the receiving of impacts of an external world which it adjusts to its own individuality and turns into material for its own development; it then projects itself outward and remoulds its environment in consonance with its own inner truth. Sri Aurobindo remarks about this inner-outer relation: "As we rise in the scale we find that the power of original development from within, of conscious self-determination increases more and more, while in those who live most powerfully in themselves it reaches striking, sometimes even divine proportions. But at the same time we see that the allied power of seizing upon the impacts and suggestions of the outside world grows in proportion; those who live most powerfully in themselves, can also most largely use the world and all its material for the self—and, it must be added, most successfully help the world and enrich it out of their being. The man who most finds and lives from the inner self, can most embrace the universal and become one with it; the *Swarat*, independent, self-possessed and self-ruler, can most be the *Samrat*, possessor and shaper of the world in which he lives, can most too grow one with all in the *Atman*."

The soul-being in man is the *purusha*, the emanation in Nature of the one Supreme Purusha—the Divine Purushottama, and is therefore a light and a power. As long as he identifies himself with his surface-being and knows himself as a formation of Nature only and as a unit in the social machinery, he is subdued by the conditions around him, but if he becomes aware of his inner consciousness, he realises his true being and knows himself as a power of the Divine, and finds that he is capable of mastering the forces around him. In other words, as long as *purusha* is enmeshed in the workings of *prakriti*, he is subject to its action, but as he detaches himself from it, he begins to see it clearly and then to control and govern it.

Once the triune status of man as a soul-being, a natural being and a social being is understood, the second theme which approaches the position of the Personalists and stresses the freedom of the individual to rise above subjugation by his socio-cultural environment and to remould it, need not contradict the third which approaches the position of the Superorganicists and emphasises the fact that men and their aims and ideals are only the consequences of the cultural process which follows its own laws and is in no way determined by them.

With reference to this particular problem, a general classification can be made dividing the various Schools of Socio-Culturology into two categories. On the one hand there are the Personalists, Realists, and the Humanists, and on the other, the Superorganicists. The Superorganicists can be divided into the Transcendentalists and the Materialists—the economic-historical Materialists of the Marxist type, and the socio-historical Materialists of the Positivist type. The Personalists and the Humanists emphasise the role of the individual in shaping his socio-cultural environment and assert his freedom from its subjugation; they have faith in the power of the human mind and will and in the creative capacity of the human consciousness. The Materialists on the contrary, aver that the life of the individual as well as the collectivity is entirely conditioned by sociological factors, the Marxists stressing the economic factor and the importance of technics more than others. The Transcendentalists view the cultural reality as a super-personal entity, which follows the stages of growth and decay according to its own inherent laws independent of the individual and collective efforts of men. Whilst the first theory is personalistic, individualistic and voluntaristic, the second is impersonalistic and deterministic. Actually these are not contradictory theories if we view them in the light of the arguments advanced regarding the relation between consciousness and culture and between the inner and the outer in *The World Crisis and India* and in the essays in this Series. But this problem is a highly complex one; its real solution can only be found in an interpretation that can reconcile these two theories.

We see a time-process, a world of becoming, by examining the workings of which we arrive at the conclusion that man is its culminating point; matter, life and mind, the three principles that have emerged up to now

Continued overleaf

THE NEW ORIENTATION

THE INDIVIDUAL'S VALUE AND THE INNER LIFE

By BARON ERIK PALMSTIERNA, G.C.V.O.

President of the World Congress of Faiths, author of *RIFTS IN THE VEIL*, Baron Palmstierna makes, in the special article below, a short but enlightening survey of the sensitive movement towards Personalism and the non-sectarian turn towards Mysticism by a considerable body of serious people in Europe after the last war.

In our Western World the first symptoms of the effect of experiences recently undergone begin to appear. The disastrous wars, economic and social troubles, the revolutionary transformation of our concepts, which science has brought about, all this has unsettled the minds of people. A general feeling of uncertainty and uneasiness prevails. Traditional views have lost their grip on people, but they do not know in what direction they should turn for guidance regarding the future. A state of confusion and apprehension reigns.

People have lost faith in authority. They feel that they have been misled and have become drifting objects exposed to any wind that may blow from the corners of the earth. They are rootless and know it. Old ideals have broken up around them, but no satisfaction has been gained through materialistic hunting for profits. They feel they are moving across a transitory stage in human history where former landmarks have disappeared, and no new ones are in sight.

In these circumstances individuals withdraw within themselves and begin to search for a firm basis of personal experiences, disregarding old beliefs, conventions and authorised dicta. In contrast to an earlier generation they feel in a better position of enlightenment, since schools and popular scientific propaganda have done a great deal to foster independent thinking in the common man.

Out of the turmoil one begins to visualise a change of mind approaching and it is particularly evident in the rising, young generation. They have been brought to a situation in which each one has to clear up matters for himself and gather personal experiences on which he may rely. A certain wariness has set in against slogans, against proclamations of 'trust', against an acceptance without personal confirmation of other people's confessed experiences. Anxious interest has become focussed on the individual, his possibilities and his life. A reaction against the mass-phenomena which have characterised the past has increasingly become evident. The overpowering might of nationalistic states, and the demands to submit to dogmatic creeds are looked upon as dangers which threaten individual freedom and growth. We notice the early spearheads of a Personalism, which very likely will spread and cause a turn of events towards a recognition of the individual as the object and aim of all measures taken by collective corporations. The old-fashioned conception of a mankind, figured as an organic unit, a Whole, loses ground and one sees mankind to be a stream of individual lives, which floats across earth for a period of uncertain duration. The Individual stands in the foreground requesting that his interests be safeguarded, his propensities developed and his future made safe. If humanity is little else than an agglomeration of individuals, who live within themselves in separate worlds, we should speak less of mankind and more of the units of which it consists.

We may be sure to hear further about this Personalism in the future. It builds on a truth, which all religions have recognised. Individual man is their object.

This growing appreciation of individuality and the felt necessity to reach personal experiences of a decisive nature regarding the security of individual man, has an effect inside the field of religion, which is no less remarkable. We see before our eyes a repetition of happenings which occurred earlier in the history of religions. When church-life became stale and new discoveries had upset fixed and formulated doctrines, individuals turned inwards and sought within themselves for the light which could throw a gleam on their way. Individual Mystics appeared and proclaimed the existence of a Reality beyond reason and argument, a Reality which could be reached by the seeking mind in solitude and outside the noise of a world of strife. Their personal experiences had a tremendous effect in their time. A force of spirit issued through them, and they still have an influence. Now we find ourselves becoming involved in such a period of new Mysticism. We need not to look backwards and collect data regarding the lives of the mystics; we have them among us, and personalities rise up, often from obscurity, to bear witness to an inner flow of spirit which rejuvenates and inspires hope. In several countries we see them step into the foreground, personally conducting a life we cannot call otherwise than saintly.

And groups of people, not the least young people, foregather for "whiles" of contemplation and meditation in all earnestness and sincerity. Those "whiles" become precious to them and they experience an opening of closed channels within their souls, that lets in light from a plane of existence above our own. They get an assurance and peace, which is untouchable. The fact that, however loyal a mystic may be to his own religion, the main features of the experiences gained from the inner life concord, notwithstanding religious diversities, to a very great extent, speaks out loudly that One Source feeds all, and opens possibilities for adherents of separate religions to join in such groups for individual benefit. It may interest the readers of *Mother India* that the World Congress of Faiths in London has unofficially taken part in a group where, Hindus, Buddhists and Christians, a small brotherhood of seekers, conjointly meditate for the development of spiritual life within each individual.

In the land of spirit no frontiers exist, except between good and evil, and Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, to name a few, have had an influence in the Western World, corresponding to the influence mystics of the West have exercised on Eastern Gurus. More and more people begin to understand that the fatal mistake of man in past years has been that he shelved the spiritual force which alone has power to save him from his self-imparted misery.

THE NEW WORLD-VIEW —Continued from previous page.

are active in him in a more organised form than in any other existent. Man's evolution and his fulfilment upon earth then seems to be the central activity of the world-movement. This evolution is at first biological, and later psychological. Over and above his psycho-biological evolution, we see the evolution of his social and cultural life. Thus we witness two processes, the psycho-biological and the socio-cultural. Their inter-action has already been discussed, but their basic relation cannot be understood without knowing the working of the one process of which these are two interdependent movements—the ontological process, and the Intelligence, Will and Power behind that determines and governs this process. And to gain this knowledge, we have to know first the relation of the Timeless Eternal to the temporal, of the causal to the actual, of the Infinite to the finite, of God to man and the universe. Without an insight into the action of this process, the *raison d'être* of world-existence, the place of man in the universe, his relation to other beings and to the Ultimate Reality cannot be understood, nor the significance of the history of his evolution on earth. The history of man's evolution is part of the history of the cosmos, and without a knowledge of the latter, the former can only be an interesting speculation connecting separate events in a particular type of intellectual framework, the inter-relatedness of these events, inherent or causal, and the forces that brought them about remaining unknown. It is only when human history is seen as part of the cosmic movement, which is a becoming in Time of the Timeless, a gradual unfolding and deploying of the infinite potentialities locked in the depths of Being, that it can be seen in its true perspective.

Though processes like the psycho-biological and the socio-cultural may seem to the analytical reason to be working independently according to their own laws, they are really movements of a single process whose action

can be seen only in a global view. The atomistic approach is incomplete, it has to be supplemented by a synthesistic* and organic approach. Social philosophers have not been able to correlate the individual or the collective consciousness to the cultural reality because of the absence of a spiritual metaphysic that can reveal the truths of existence, a metaphysic that can not only show the triple status of the individual, but also the three-termed ontological relation between God, universe and man, the triune Transcendent-Universal-Individual poise of the Divine Being, and the relation between Reality and Process, or Being and Becoming, the Divine Self and His cosmic manifestation. Without this basic knowledge, no system of thought can be complete; for without an understanding of the ontological process the significance of man upon earth remains a mystery. No doubt we are free to look upon him either as an economic unit or as an organism in the body social, or again, as an evanescent formation of universal nature—a bubble on the sea of life, or perhaps as a rational animal seeking hedonistic, aesthetic and intellectual satisfaction. But such conceptions built upon a very superficial examination of facts do not take into account a man's whole nature and throw no light upon the meaning and purpose of his life or his destiny upon earth. Only a knowledge of the ontological process can give us these fundamental truths of existence. Then we understand his terrestrial as well as supra-terrestrial status, and see him as a creature striving after perfection, seeking light and bliss and immortality, ascending the summits of his being and descending to its base to make actual in Time the ideal of the Timeless, creating for himself on earth the kingdom of Heaven.

*This term has been used instead of the usual "Synthetic", which has now acquired a connotation unsuitable for our purpose.

TOWARDS ESOTERIC WISDOM

THE SEARCH OF GURDJIEFF IN THE EAST

By KENNETH WALKER

In this specially written article the distinguished author of *THE CIRCLE OF LIFE, MEANING AND PURPOSE* and *THE DIAGNOSIS OF MAN* outlines, in a simple style yet with deep suggestiveness, the work of a "searcher for truth" who influenced many important men in Europe and who himself had been greatly influenced by Eastern mysticism. At the end, Mr. Walker hints at the increasing awareness, in the West, of the spiritual and mystical quest for Reality going on in India today.

In October of last year there died at the American Hospital in Paris a very remarkable man, G. Gurdjieff, a man who has profoundly affected the lives of many Europeans and Americans. He was by birth a Greek and was born and brought up in the Caucasus. Living as he did at the junction of Europe and Asia he was destined in time to teach a system of knowledge in which were united many ancient Eastern doctrines with the discoveries of Western science. As at the present moment a synthesis of Eastern wisdom and Western learning is something devoutly to be desired, it will be worth while to give a brief sketch of the man and his work.

As a boy he attracted the attention of the Dean of the Cathedral at Kars, who supervised his education with the intention that he should become in time both a priest and a doctor. It was impossible, in the Dean's opinion, to separate the care of a man's body from that of his soul, and the young Gurdjieff must study both professions. To begin with, therefore, he was given a good education in science. Gurdjieff's father, who had previously been an owner of many flocks, fell upon bad times and took up the work of a carpenter. He was also a bard, a man who recited to the villagers ancient Asiatic ballads and stories. These ancient legends had a great effect on his son. He became convinced that they had allegorical meanings, that they were messages coming down to men from an incredibly distant past. There slowly grew in him the belief that somewhere in the world there still existed this ancient learning and he developed an overwhelming desire to find it.

"Searchers for Truth"

In time this desire took precedence of everything else and he abandoned the career on which he had embarked. He collected around him a small number of similarly minded young men and formed a band that called itself "Searchers for Truth". In two's and three's they wandered further and further afield, their journeys extending into Persia, Baluchistan, Afghanistan, the borders of India and Thibet. They met and talked with wandering dervishes, and "holy men", they visited monasteries and ancient Asiatic brotherhoods, and penetrated into places that no other Europeans would have been able to reach. And in time they discovered what they had been searching for, traces of an ancient learning. They pooled all they had found and constructed a complete system of knowledge, both cosmological and psychological, in the formulation of which use was made of many Western terms. During this prolonged search for knowledge, some of the seekers had died and others had remained in the monasteries they had reached. Gurdjieff believed that it was his duty to return to Europe and to make known there what had been found. His return to Russia synchronized with the first World War and the outbreak of the bolshevik revolution. He had barely started on his work as a teacher before he was compelled to leave Russia. Eventually he arrived in Paris, where he remained teaching his system of knowledge to a growing number of followers until his death in 1949.

The salient points in his teaching were as follows. He taught that man was potentially a self-creating being. God, Nature, Providence—whatever man calls the creative agent—has developed man up to a certain point and has then left him to his own devices. If he is to evolve further it must be by means of his own conscious efforts. As he is he has no inner unity; he has no permanent Self, but only a number of conflicting "I's". He has no will, his actions being the resultant of his many desires. He believes that he is self-conscious, but actually he lives in only a twilight of consciousness; he is asleep. He is an incomplete being that cannot hope for any automatic evolution. It is quite true that Gurdjieff taught that the whole universe is slowly evolving, but on a time scale so vast that it would be hopeless for man to wait for this—his life is too fleeting. He must struggle for his conscious evolution. Here the system taught by Gurdjieff comes into conflict with Western science. Instead of believing, as the latter does, that a created universe is now in process of slowly running down, he stated that it was still in process of creation, like a growing tree evolving new shoots.

Man, he said, was a microcosm in a macrocosm, a tiny universe himself. Everything that was in the universe was to be found in miniature in him and he was subject to the action of the same great cosmic laws, the law of three and the law of seven. By studying himself he would understand

better what lay outside him; by studying the universe he would learn much about himself. A great deal of time was devoted in Gurdjieff's teaching to the study of these two cosmic laws, and it is perhaps unnecessary in a journal such as this to call attention to the similarity between his law of three and the three *gunas*.

Vital Relation Between Knowing and Being

Another important point in Gurdjieff's teaching was the idea of the relationship between a man's knowledge and his "being". In the West it was commonly believed, he said, that so long as a man was clever enough, he could understand almost anything he wanted to understand. He could remain an egotistical, dishonest, arrogant and bad-tempered person, and yet be able to appreciate truth. This, Gurdjieff maintained, was quite untrue. To know more, a man must become more; he must contrive to raise the level of his being. This failure of man to realize that knowledge was dependent on being had far-reaching consequences for him. Men pinned their faith on accumulating more and more facts that they were completely unable to put together and understand. They believed that by mere, external planning the world's difficulties could be overcome, not realizing that their difficulties would only disappear when there was an inner change in themselves. So long as man remained as he was, a machine, a creature at the mercy of his desires, everything would remain the same.

The first step, he taught, was to reach a realization of what man was. This could only be done by self-observation and self-study. Gurdjieff was eminently practical and he would not allow his pupils just to accept his words and repeat them correctly. Everything had to be put to a personal test, and he set them many exercises, both physical and mental, exercises that revealed to them that they did not possess control. His school was a hard one and many of his pupils left him to search for something more comfortable and less austere. But others remained and the number of his followers both in Europe and America slowly grew. In England his system was taught for many years by a very gifted Russian exponent of it, the late P. D. Ouspensky, the author of *Tertium Organum* and *A New Model of the Universe*. Before Ouspensky died he left an account of his meeting with Gurdjieff and of what he learnt from him. This book, together with one written by Gurdjieff himself, is shortly to be published.

I bring these facts to the notice of the readers of *Mother India* purely because I believe that it will be of interest to them to know that many people in the West are now beginning to realize the importance of Eastern systems of knowledge. Those who live in Pondicherry are fortunate enough to possess their own teacher whose name is also becoming familiar to us in the West through his books. It is by the interchange of ideas and not merely by external treaties that a better understanding may in time arise between the different peoples of the world.

Through Limitless Freedoms...

Your little purities, your temperate pleasures
I fling away. For ever mine the fierce
Hunger of the naked fakir or the lover nude,
For some huge heart-break of ecstatic tears!

Through limitless freedoms of bareness or of beauty,
To a superhuman sky's effulgent peace
Or an oceaned eternity of love I strain—
A lonely traveller of transcendences.

No rest until—beyond brief clay's control
And past our mortal senses' flickering charms—
The abyss of timelessness at Buddha's feet,
Time's treasure of infinite truth in Krishna's arms!

K. D. SETHNA

THE DEMOCRACY OF TOMORROW

By NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

The great gift of Democracy is that of personal value, the sanctity of the individual. And its great failure is also exactly the failure to discover the true individual, the real person.

The Collectivity and the Individual

The earlier stages of human society were chiefly concerned with the development of mankind in the mass. It is a collective growth, a general uplifting that is attempted: the individual has no special independent value of his own. The clan, the tribe, the *ku'la*, the order, the caste, or the State, when it came to be formed, were the various collective frames of reference for ascertaining the function and the value of the individual. It is in fulfilling the *dharma*, obeying the *nomoi*, in carrying out faithfully the duties attached to one's position in the social hierarchy that lay the highest good, *summum bonum*.

Certainly there were voices of protest, independent spirits who refused to drown themselves, lose themselves in the general current. That is to say, a separate and separative growth of the individual consciousness had to proceed at the same time under whatever duress and compression. An Antigone stood alone in the inviolable sanctity of the individual conscience against the established order of a mighty State. Indeed, individualised individuals were more or less freaks in the social set-up in the early days, revolutionaries or law-breakers, iconoclasts who were not very much favoured by the people. In Europe it was perhaps with Luther that started a larger movement for the establishment and maintenance of the individual's right. The Reformation characteristically sought to make room for individual judgment and free choice in a field where authority—the collective authority of the Church—was all in all and the individual was almost a nonentity. In India the spiritual life, it is true, was more or less the individual's free venture to the unknown. The Buddha said, Be thy own light: and the Gita too said, Raise thy self by thy own self. Yet here too, in the end, the individual did not stand, he rose but to get merged in the non-individual, the universal, the Vast and the Infinite. The highest spiritual injunction was that God only existed and man had to annul his existence in Him.

The great *mantra* of individual liberty, in the social and political domain, was given by Rousseau in that famous opening-line of his famous book, *The Social Contract*, almost the Bible of an age: Man is born free. And the first considerable mass-rising seeking to vindicate and realise that ideal came with the tocsin of the mighty French Revolution. It was really an awakening or rebirth of the individual that was the true source and sense of that miraculous movement. It meant the advent of democracy in politics and romanticism in art. The century that followed was a period of great experiment: for the central theme of that experiment was the search for the individual. In honouring the individual and giving him full and free scope the movement went far and even too far: liberty threatened to lead towards license, democracy towards anarchy and disintegration; the final consequence of Romanticism was Surrealism, the deification of individual reason culminated in solipsism or ego-centricism. Naturally there came a reaction and we are in this century still on the high tide of this movement of reaction. Totalitarianism in one form or another continues to be the watchword and, although neither Hitler nor Mussolini remains, yet a very living ghost of theirs stalks the human stage. The liberty of the individual, it is said and is found to be so by experience, is another name of the individual's erraticism and can produce only division and mutual clash and strife and, in the end, social disintegration. A strong centralised power is necessary to hold together the warring elements of a group. Indeed, it is asserted, the group is the true reality and to maintain it and make it great the component individuals must be steam-rolled into a compact mass. Evidently this is a poise that cannot stand long: the repressed individual rises in revolt and again we are on the move the other way round. Thus a never-ending see-saw, a cyclic recurrence of the same sequence of movements appears to be an inevitable law governing human society: it seems to have almost the absolutism of a law of Nature.*

The True "Man" and His Society

The true individual has not been found: and therefore a true collectivity has not found its true and eternal basis. In looking for the individual we have confined ourselves only or principally to either the political or

economic or at the highest the mental and moral man. All this makes up the inferior nature of man; it is the domain of separativeness, exclusiveness, we have confined ourselves only or principally to either the political or economic or at the highest the mental and moral man. All this make up the inferior nature of man; it is the domain of separativeness, exclusiveness, egoistic individuality (even though that may be *satwic*, kindly and altruistic) and therefore ultimately of clash and conflict: a permanent and perfect harmony cannot be built upon such a basis.

When the Rights of man are declared, when liberty and equality of men are affirmed, what is not defined is *man*. And yet that is the crucial factor that has to be determined first. For if we mean by man the normal apparent man, the overwhelmingly biological being and not much more, then we shall arrive nowhere, our ideals and declarations will end in nothing. Man has all the rights, his liberty and his equality to the fullest degree only when he is the true man, when he is his real self. It is the soul, the divine personality in the individual that has to be called forth and it is that that has to be established in the relations of life. The plenary right of vote belongs to this individual being and not to the other which is a creature of ignorance and environmental contingencies.

A rather interesting claim has been made in modern times on behalf of absolute totalitarianism negating all individualism and whatsoever, holding the individual as a specialised limb or function of the indivisible body social. The total abandonment and sacrifice (holocaust) of the individual at the altar of the collective life is a familiar conception and ideal. But the new gloss or rider we refer to is that the individual in this act of self-immolation does not merely lose itself, but gains a wider life and existence. That is to say, instead of being confined to his narrow unitary self which he calls his personality or separate particularity, he lives a widened life—*la vie unanime*—his consciousness becomes one with the group consciousness. Thus totalitarianism instead of repressing and restricting enlarges the being: we forget and lose our individual ego but awaken to the social, the global, the cosmic consciousness.

There is a hidden sense in this new outlook, but naturally not the meaning that is put into it to suit a particular theory. The individual does not attain his true social identity, is not a whit enlarged by being pressed into, screwed and riveted into the machine of collective working. It is just as if one were to say that by simply dying one became immortal. Self-annihilation is not self-fulfilment. The individual being has to be coterminous with the social being, the frontiers of the two must coincide and coalesce, but this is not done by the larger existence swallowing and abolishing its component units. Nor can the individual being reach its wider existence by simply extending or distending itself, all the while remaining within its present consciousness. The individual bound to the triple knot, built upon the norm given by his mind and life and body, is, as I have said, the mortal creature following eternally the round of ignorant life: and the social pattern that man weaves round this norm of ignorance or half knowledge must be imperfect in its very nature and doomed to decay. It is only by rising above the three-fold complex of his normal nature that the individual can hope to find the reality that he is.

The ancient seers and sages speak of a Person (Purusha), no bigger than the thumb, who is ever seated within the heart of creatures, and from there guides and controls (*antaryamin*) the whole outer personality and its activities: it is the individual Divine and the "bridge of immortality"—for it connects, links up the mortal man with his immortal source and origin. That essential individuality each individual has to realise and it is upon that that he has to base and build his life—his life and mind and body too. The individual there lives in a state of transcendent consciousness in which he finds himself identified with all others: he is the one self that is and has become all selves. Each individual lives and expresses a truth that is his true truth and, all being modes and forms of one truth, they are in perfect harmony. The social life of such individuals is a pattern of sublime symphony. Absolute freedom here does not involve any transgression: it is the curve of one's truth-movement. And since all are held in the supreme rhythm of one and single being and consciousness—soul and self—we have at last realised the ideal that humanity has ever pursued and has ever failed to reach, namely, a social life, a collective living in which the life of the individual and the life of the group become unified and identified: the two terms lose their contrariety and become two ends or facets of the same consciousness. For, in living oneself fully and absolutely, one lives in and through others also fully and absolutely. The wholeness of the social aggregate is repeated in the units composing it and is guaranteed by the wholeness of each and every unit.

Democracy has been defined as the government of the people, by the people and for the people. The maxim can have its full value and truth, only when *people* here is taken to mean not the common man, the average individual but the aristocracy of souls. In the status of supreme harmony and equation founded on the deepest and highest consciousness, Democracy is married to Aristocracy and even Totalitarianism has the prospect of being wedded to a sovereign Anarchy.

* In this connection we can recall Plato's famous serial of social types from "aristocracy" to "tyranny", the last coming out of Democracy, the type that precedes it (almost exactly as we have experienced it in our own days). But the most interesting point to which we can look with profit is Plato's view that the types are as men are, that is to say, the character and nature of man in a given period determines the kind of government or social system he is going to have. There has been this cyclic rotation of types, because men themselves were rotating types, because, in other words, the individuals composing human society had not found their true reality, their abiding status. Plato's aristocracy was the ideal society, it was composed of and ruled by the best of men (*aristos*, *sreshtha*), the wisest. And the question, put by many and not answered even by Plato himself, was: what brought about the decline in a perfect system. We have attempted to give our answer.

of MICE AND MEN

By "Cynic"

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM OF INDIA

Why is there all this fuss about the National Anthem of India? The solution is really very simple.

England has a king, so her National Anthem is "God Save the King". We have no king, so ours should be "God Save Our Government",..... for indeed, now only He can.

THE SARVODAYA PLAN

It is reported that Pakistan nationals have perpetrated raids on the Bikaner border. It seems they have studied the Sarvodaya Plan, wherein it is stated that efforts will be made to "replace the military by non-violent defence".

"DIETETICAL" MATERIALISM

The Indian Socialist leader, who had previously declared his intention of starting his Nature-Cure treatment from 5th February, has now decided not to do so. He will continue to take three square meals a day as usual. In matters of Dietetics at least, he seems to be a follower of Francis Bacon, who said that a man should be able to do both, fasting as well as feasting.

THE REALITIES OF THE SITUATION

It was recently announced by Jawaharlal Nehru that India will not join the anti-Communist bloc, and that instead he will try to remove in India the economic evils which breed Communism. Our Prime Minister who is always a great humanist hopes to avert another world war by bringing about a reconciliation between the two major powers, and sincerely feels that he can best do so by himself remaining neutral. This humanism, however, does not place all his pronouncements above criticism.

At first sight his attitude seems to be what is commonly known in political circles as "a positive and constructive approach". But to those who are in the habit of getting down to fundamentals instead of examining the superficialities of life, this pronouncement may seem to be a little callow, and an over-simplification of an issue which is really more complex than it seems to be. Supposing that what Nehru considers to be stable and fair economic conditions are established; and everyone is assured of a decent living wage, and facilities are provided for all men to educate their children and give them adequate medical treatment when they are ill. Where is the guarantee that even after such conditions prevail, people will cease to be influenced by Communist propaganda? Is there any evidence to show us that the various Unions will cease to be incited by the Communists? On the contrary there is ample evidence to show that there is no reason to expect such a change. We see before us every day the capital-labour tussle. First we have a strike, and a list of grievances is submitted. After some days the grievances are redressed and wages are raised, and the strikers are satisfied. Yet after a few months there is the same story all over again. Why is this so? Is the economic factor only at work here or has some other factor come into play? The first time it may have been the economic one, but what about the second time, and often, even a third time? The first strike may have been a natural reaction against capitalistic exploitation—which is not exactly a myth—but those that follow have at bottom another factor working. It is the factor of human greed, which is cleverly exploited by the Communists. It is this psychological factor that must be considered when dealing with the Moscow-paid quislings. Now imagine all this on a country-wide scale, and you have a picture of what will happen even after our economic millenium comes. Because good economic conditions prevail, it does not necessarily follow that the Communists will cease to be successful in their work. Human greed will always ask for more, and as long as hirelings of a foreign country are allowed to foster it, it will keep on asking for more, till finally industry will be utterly paralysed. How does our Prime Minister propose to eradicate this defect in human nature and a host of others that usually accompany it, and how is he going to prevent the Communists from exploiting it? To talk of the economic factor without taking into consideration the human factor—the psychological factor, is to talk in the air. And yet it was declared at the Colombo Conference that the problems of the Asian people are economic, not political; the psychological factor was not even recognised. It is high time politicians realised that the problems of men, whether in Asia or Europe, are psychological, political and economic; not just this or that, but all three. Human problems cannot be separated into water-tight compartments at the will of politicians. In the face of Communist infiltration and underground activity everywhere in Asia, in the face of Moscow supplying arms and ammunition to Mao, to say that the problems of the Asian people are only economic, is to shut one's eyes to "the realities of the situation" and to hide behind a catch-phrase.

The Fifth Gospel

During my explorations in Bethlehem I unearthed some old and valuable documents. Among them was the missing Fifth Gospel. Unlike the Synoptic Gospels this one does not concern itself with Jesus Christ, but deals with the future Messiah—the one who is going to bring in the millenium. The author's name, as far as I can make out with the help of the magnifying glass, is St. Philip. Perhaps he is the one about whom Christ said to Peter: "And if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" Unfortunately only a few fragments are in good condition. As my readers may like to know what they contain, I am reproducing them here.

The Gospel According To St. Philip

1. The Spirit of the Foster-Father is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted; to preach deliverance to the captives and send them to Siberia, and recovering of sight to the blind so that they may stop worshipping God and take up Dialectical Materialism.
 2. There came unto him a man from Yugoslavia and said: Master, I wish to serve in thy Kingdom. The Messiah replied: Not everyone who saith unto me, Marx, Marx, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Foster-Father, which is in Beelzebub.
 3. Then he went to the Mount of Olives, and after munching a few, began to preach to the people: Ye cannot serve God and Mammon, nor can ye serve God and the Foster-Father. For behold! The kingdom of Heaven is outside of you; ye cannot see it at present because of the Iron Curtain.
 4. Verily I say unto you, the Kingdom of Heaven, which also happens to be the Kingdom of the Proleteriat, is like unto a merchant seeking goodly pearls; who when he had found one of great value, sold all that he had, and simply ran away.
 5. For what profiteth a man if he save his mind, soul and freedom, and lose all contact with the Ogpu?
 6. Then he came down from the mountains and went into Galilee; and great multitudes of people followed him. They came from Decapolis, from Jerusalem, from China, and from beyond the Jordan. And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him; and he opened his mouth, and taught them saying:
 7. Blessed are the poor in spirit; for they shall be given vodka.
 8. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall not feel the contrast in my Kingdom.
 9. Blessed are the meek, for they shall be molested the least.
 10. Blessed are the peace-makers: for this time I shall work through them too.
 11. But cursed are the pure in heart: for they shall never see the Foster-Father.
 12. And it came to pass, that when he had finished these sayings and had distributed amongst his disciples the tomatoes and eggs received from the kindly people, he departed from Galilee, and came to the coasts of Judaea beyond Jordan. Great multitudes followed him and he spoke to them about the Kingdom. Then came to him a Pharisee and said: Rabbi, may I be thy servant?
 13. The Messiah replied: Follow thou me. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth.....like unto all who oppose me.
 14. I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Kingdom but by me; if you had known me you would have known my methods also.
 15. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of bourgeois prophets!
 16. Then he went unto a place called Gethsemane, and had the "Agony" when he heard from Peter that the man over yonder was preparing a hydrogen-bomb. He prayed to the Foster-Father: Rescue me from this fate and let thy will be done. Peter who was close to him suddenly got up and said: Master, is there anything wrong?
 17. He replied: Verily I say unto thee, this day thou shalt deny me. When the cock crows thrice, thou shalt think that I am making a speech.
 18. Then turning to the other disciples, he said: I am the Resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me though he were alive, yet shall he be like the dead, and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, even though thought to be alive, shall tell no tales.
 19. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me you might have peace; in the world you shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have almost overcome the world.....only half of Asia and Europe remain; and of course, America.
 20. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Foster-Father, the Proleteriat, and the Economic Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, that will be the end of the world.
- So now my brethren, be of good cheer; at long last you have a Messiah. Therefore bear this life with equanimity. Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto the devil the things which are his. God's name does not come in at all. People stopped giving him things years back. Hence the saying: Give the devil his due, and nothing to God.

LIGHTS ON LIFE-PROBLEMS

(24)

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: Materialism, from which the objectivist theory of reality and knowledge was derived and which has now lost much of the ground it held in the last century, has been credited with the creation of a large number of great evils and its decline and passing away has been proclaimed, especially by the idealists and the religionists, as a fortunate deliverance for the human spirit. Is this accusation wholly valid? Has materialism been a force only for the retardation of knowledge and deviation from the true path of progress?

A: All that materialism is accused of "may have and much of it has its truth. But most things that the human mind thus alternately trumpets and bans, are a double skein. They come to us with opposite faces, their good side and their bad, a dark aspect of error and a bright of truth; and it is as we look upon one or the other visage that we swing to our extremes of opinion or else oscillate between them."

Q. 2: We have then to admit that materialism of the previous age, inspite of its basic limitations did contribute to the positive advancement of human knowledge and civilizational progress?

A: "This age of which materialism was the portentous offspring and in which it had figured first as petulant rebel and aggressive thinker, then as a grave and strenuous preceptor of mankind, has been by no means a period of mere error, calamity and degeneration, but rather a most powerful creative epoch of humanity. Examine impartially its results. Not only has it immensely widened and filled in the knowledge of the race and accustomed it to a great patience of research, scrupulosity, accuracy,—if it has done that only in one large sphere of inquiry, it has still prepared for the extension of the same curiosity, intellectual rectitude, power for knowledge to other and higher fields,—not only has it with an unexampled force and richness of invention brought and put into our hands, for much evil, but also for much good, discoveries, instruments, practical powers, conquests, conveniences which, however we may declare their insufficiency for our highest interests, yet few of us would care to relinquish, but it has also, paradoxical as that might at first seem, strengthened man's idealism. On the whole, it has given him a kindlier hope and humanised his nature. Tolerance is greater, liberty has increased, charity is more a matter of course, peace, if not yet practicable, is growing at least imaginable. Latterly the thought of the eighteenth century which promulgated secularism has been much scouted and belittled, that of the nineteenth which developed it, riddled with adverse criticism and overpassed. Still they worshipped no mean godheads. Reason, science, progress, freedom, humanity were their ideals, and which of these idols, if idols they are, would we like or ought we, if we are wise, to cast down into the mire or leave as poor unworshipped relics on the wayside? If there are other and yet greater godheads or if the visible forms adored were only clay or stone images or the rites void of the inmost knowledge, yet has their cult been for us a preliminary initiation and the long material sacrifice prepared us for a greater religion."

Q. 3: Science and reason which were the two principal powers by which the entire structure of materialistic thought was built are also now discredited along with materialism especially as they fostered scepticism, agnosticism and atheism. But have we not to concede that they too had their utility, even a sort of a necessity in the progressive development of human knowledge?

A: "Reason is not the supreme light, but yet is it always a necessary light-bringer and until it has been given its rights and allowed to judge and purify our first infra-rational instincts, rash fervours, crude beliefs, and blind prejudgments, we are not altogether ready for the full unveiling of a greater inner luminary. Science is a right knowledge, in the end only of processes, but still the knowledge of processes too is part of a total wisdom and essential to a wide and a clear approach towards deeper Truth behind. If it has laboured mainly in the physical field, if it has limited itself and bordered or overshadowed its light with a certain cloud of wilful ignorance, still one had to begin this method somewhere and the physical field is the first, the nearest, the easiest for the kind and manner of inquiry undertaken. Ignorance of one side of Truth or the choice of a partial ignorance or ignoring for better concentration on another side is often a necessity of our imperfect mental nature. It is unfortunate if ignorance becomes dogmatic and denies

what it has refused to examine, but still no permanent harm need have been done if this willed self-limitation is compelled to disappear when the occasion of its utility is exhausted. Now that we have founded rigorously our knowledge of the physical, we can go forward with a much firmer step to a more open, secure and luminous repossession of mental and psychic knowledge. Even spiritual truths are likely to gain from it, not a loftier or more penetrating,—that is with difficulty possible,—but an ampler light and a fuller self-expression."

Q. 4: Critics of materialism attach no substantial value to the help it rendered to human progress and the advancement of freedom and humanitarianism because all this progress and advancement was confined to man's outer life while true progress, freedom and charity, in their view, could only be found in man's inner being. Is this criticism entirely justified?

A: "Progress is the very heart of the significance of human life, for it means our evolution into greater and richer being" and the materialistic ages "by insisting on it, by forcing us to recognize it as our aim and our necessity, by making impossible hereafter the attempt to subsist in the dullness or the gross beatitude of a stationary self-content, have done a priceless service to the earth's life and cleared the ways of heaven. Outward progress was the greater part of its aim and the inward is the more essential, but the inward too is not complete if the outward is left out of account. Even if the insistence of our progress fall for a time too exclusively on growth in one field, still all movement forward is helpful and must end by giving a greater force and a larger meaning to our need of growth in deeper and higher provinces of our being. Freedom is a godhead whose greatness only the narrowly limited mind, the State-worshipper or the crank of reaction can now deny. No doubt, again, the essential is an inner freedom; but if without the inner realisation, the outer attempt at liberty may prove at last a vain thing, yet to pursue an inner liberty and perpetuate an outer slavery or to rejoice in an isolated release and leave mankind to its chains was also an anomaly that had to be exploded, a confined and too self-centred ideal. Humanity is not the highest godhead; God is more than humanity; but in humanity too we have to find and to serve him. The cult of humanity means an increasing kindliness, tolerance, charity, helpfulness, solidarity, universality, unity, fullness of individual and collective growth and towards these things we are advancing much more rapidly than was possible in any previous age, if still with sadly stumbling footsteps and some fierce relapses. The cult of our other human selves within the cult of the Divine comes closer to us as our large ideal. To have brought even one of these things a step nearer, to have helped to settle them with whatever imperfect expression and formula in our minds, to have accelerated our movement towards them are strong achievements, noble services."

Q. 5: But it is contended that these great movements were not the results of materialism because the urge towards them had been long active in the mind of the race and the seeds from which they naturally grew had been sown long time back. The principle of humanitarianism, for example, was first made prominent by Christianity and Buddhism which preached insistently compassion and love. Materialism therefore cannot be credited with originating these high ideals which existed in previous religious cultures though it gave them a fuller development. Is this view quite true?

A: "This is the truth, but not the whole truth. The old religious cultures were often admirable in the ensemble and always in some of their parts, but if they had not been defective, they could neither have been so easily breached, nor would there have been the need of a secularist age to bring out the results the religions had sown."

Q. 6: What were the defects in these old cultures which prevented the full realisation of the social ideals of progress, freedom and liberalism?

A: "Their faults were those of a certain narrowness and exclusive vision. Concentrated, intense in their ideal and intensive in their effect, their expansive influence on the human mind was small. They isolated too much their action in the individual, limited too narrowly the working of their ideals in the social order, tolerated for instance, and even utilised for the ends of church and creed, an immense amount of cruelty and barbarism which were con-

A MERE MANUSCRIPT—BY K. D. SETHNA

"Is there forgiveness for me? Tell me, holy father, what should I have done? My eyes are dimming and my own voice comes from afar as came those sounds that made me hurry across the Piazza. A terrible fire was eating up the house, and when I saw its hungry colours leap madly laughing above and around, and all the crowd helpless in the street, I forgot that I was lame and my body rushed like a moth towards the glare.

"Before I knew where I was, I found myself plunging through smoke and cracking woodwork, up the stairs to the room where my old mother lay, sick and stifled in a ring of fire. The door was open and I could have burst in to drag my darling out. Oh I loved her as no man ever loved his sweetheart—my little frail mother with that soft glance full of understanding!

"But I saw a still fiercer confusion of flames raging higher up where the stairs reached the second floor. And in a flash I remembered the man whose room was there. He could not be in, for he returned late every night from a lonely walk. His firm short step I used to hear on the landing, and he would be humming to himself in a slow and rhythmic tone. I had often seen him in those humming moods—his large gaze forgetful of everything, the nostrils of his curved nose quivering as if he had run and were breathless. What a strange man, with a long melancholy face and with eyes for ever absorbed to recall some felicity lost like a dream. He looked almost a priest. If he had your robe, father, he would suit it as even priests seldom do. He seemed to have no interest any more in life—but there was something unbreakable in him, hard like a diamond and like a diamond precious...."

After a pause the weak voice went on.

"Yes, his room was above, there where the flames were hissing most violently. I stood on the edge of one terrible moment of decision—then tore myself away from my mother's chamber and stumbled upstairs, fighting through that golden torture which shrieked like a hundred devils. My clothes were ripped by the keen fire, the flesh of my legs sizzled, but I clove my way undaunted.

"Through the door I rushed. I saw his huge lamp which had been left burning overturned somehow and splintered. I knew where his table stood, and with a blind hand I searched the dazzle that now enveloped it. The bundle I was looking for was there; I grabbed it just in time—a mass of sparks and ashes flew from its wrapper, but to my great delight the contents seemed almost undamaged. I thrust the heap into my doublet and dashed downstairs. But here it was indeed too late. My mother attempting to rise had fallen upon the floor. Her face and hair were so horribly burnt that I nearly swooned at the sight....

"My heart has known pain such as nobody will guess. What had I done? I had killed my mother, for I could have saved her. I had killed her for a mere bundle of manuscript. I myself would have gladly dropped beside the dear flesh all ruined now. It would have been a joy to get rid of a heart seared with grief and a soul consumed by sin—but I could not let go that manuscript. I ran down the scorching stairs and afterwards I knew nothing. The people in the street must have caught me as I staggered out, and carried me here."

Niccolo Scalza, the young poet of Udine, was too exhausted to continue. He stared straight in front of him while his mouth endeavoured vainly to form words. At last he mumbled for water and the friar put it to the ashen lips. Then with a weak twisting of them, the disfigured man continued:

"When I look back, I shudder. If I had saved her, I would have saved myself too; but there is no hope now. I must be ugly, father, with the signature of fire all over my face—ugly as my own crime. But I knew also that I could not have acted otherwise. For I was aware of what lay hidden in that manuscript. It is a miracle, it is a word born from the skies. To let so much of the mind's magnificence perish would have been to fling away the Creator's grace—grace not only to our time but to the endless future as well....

"Where is my friend? He will be mad with sorrow, thinking his work has been destroyed, but he will come to see me—to see my corpse. Give then the treasure to him; it is his ten years' labour, and when the world will see it he shall wear the crown of immortality. Even the cruel city that has exiled him will bow at his feet and repent the miseries and humiliations heaped on his head....

"Whose face is this? Is she still alive? I wish she were and it was not only my wandering brain which painted her. But she had most understanding eyes, and perhaps she will forgive me. Father, is there mercy for me from God? Why are you silent? Ah, you have not read the divine poem."

"My son, yours is a deed most unbelievable. You have sacrificed two lives. May God look at the heart of your folly, not at its cruel exterior."

"Give me your hand, father. My head is throbbing with too sharp a pain. I am a little afraid of the coming darkness."

"There is a Love in which often the darkness feared by the world proves to be pure light. I commend your soul to that Love. Pass in peace."

The friar performed the last ministrations. The dying man listened, tried to smile and before the smile could fade from his lips life was gone. The friar arranged the thin scorched hands, put a crucifix in them and turned sadly to the open window. The town of Udine was asleep, for it was near midnight. The clear Italian sky was filled with stars. He moved back to the bed where in one corner the saved manuscript was lying. As he lifted it, the last sheet broke in two, owing to the effect of the fire; but luckily there were only a few lines scribbled there. The friar bent his head and puckered his eyes to decipher them and slowly read a music unknown yet to the world:

*All' alta fantasia qui mancò possa;
Ma già volgeva il mio disiro è il velle,
Si come ruota ch'egualmente e mossa,
L'amor che muove il sole e altre stelle!**

**Then vigour failed the towering fantasy;
Yet, like a wheel whose speed no wavering mars,
Desire rushed on, impelled perpetually
By the love that moves the sun and all the stars.*

LIGHTS ON LIFE-PROBLEMS

Continued from previous page

trary to the spirit and truth from which they had started. What they discouraged in the soul of the individual, they yet maintained in the action and the frame of society, seemed hardly to conceive of a human order delivered from these blots. The depth and fervour of their aspiration had for its shadow a want of intellectual clarity, an obscurity which confused their working and balked the expansion of their spiritual elements. They nourished too a core of asceticism and hardly cared to believe in the definite amelioration of the earth life, despised by them as a downfall or a dolorous descent or imperfection of the human spirit, or whatever earthly hope they admitted, saw itself postponed to the millennial end of things. A belief in the vanity of human life or of existence itself suited better the preoccupation with an aim beyond earth. Perfection, ethical growth, liberation became individual ideals and figured too much as an isolated preparation of the soul for the beyond. The social effect of the religious temperament, however potentially considerable, was cramped by excessive otherworldliness and distrust in the intellect accentuated to obscurantism.

Q. 7: But did not materialism which prevailed in the secularist centuries that followed these old religious cultures go very much to the opposite extreme?

A: "The secularist centuries weighed the balance down very much in the opposite direction. They turned the mind of the race wholly earthwards and manwards, but by insisting on intellectual clarity, reason, justice, freedom, tolerance, humanity, by putting these forward and putting the progress of the race and its perfectibility as an immediate rule for the earthly life to be constantly pressed towards and not shunting off the social ideal to doomsday to be miraculously effected by some last divine intervention and judgment, they cleared the way for a collective advance. For they

made these nobler possibilities of mankind more imperative to the practical intelligence. If they lost sight of heaven or missed the spiritual sense of the ideals they took over from earlier ages, yet by this rational and practical insistence on them they drove them home to the thinking mind. Even their too mechanical turn developed from a legitimate desire to find some means for making the effective working of these ideals a condition of the very structure of society. Materialism was only the extreme intellectual result of this earthward and human turn of the race mind."

Q. 8: What was the intention of the Time-spirit in turning the mind of the race so exclusively to materialistic pursuits and to the intensive exploration and mastery of physical Nature?

A: "It was an intellectual machinery used by the Time-spirit to secure for a good space the firm fixing of that exclusive turn of thought and endeavour, a strong rivet of opinion to hold the mind of man to it for as long as it might be needed. Man does need to develop firmly in all his earthly parts, to fortify and perfect his body, his life, his outward-going mind, to take full possession of the earth his dwelling-place, to know and utilise physical Nature, enrich his environment and satisfy by the aid of a generalised intelligence his evolving mental, vital and physical being. That is not all his need, but it is a great and initial part of it and of human perfection. Its full meaning appears afterwards; for only in the beginning and in the appearance an impulse of his life, in the end and really it will be seen to have been a need of his soul, a preparing of fit instruments and the creating of a fit environment for a diviner life. He has been set here to serve God's ways upon earth and fulfil the Godhead in man and he must not despise earth or reject the basis given for the first powers and potentialities of the Godhead. When his thought and aim have persisted too far in that direction, he need not complain if he is swung back for a time towards the other extreme, to a negative or a positive, a covert or an open materialism. It is Nature's violent way of setting right her own excesses in him."

K. G.

APE AND ESSENCE

ALDOUS HUXLEY AND HIS CRITICS

By "Synergist"

*But man, proud man,
Drest in a little brief authority—
Most ignorant of what he is most assured.
His glassy essence—like an angry ape,
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
As make the angels weep.*

Nowadays it is not unusual to read bad reviews of Aldous Huxley's novels. Therefore Roy Campbell's outburst against *Ape and Essence* does not come as a great surprise. Mr. Campbell is very angry with the book, and goes so far as to compare Huxley, first to a "wild African giraffe" and then to a "super-gorilla". The outdoor man of action—Mr. Campbell informs us in his review that he was "a cattleman, a whaler, hunter, and fisherman"—is obviously rattled by the philosophisings of a cerebrotonic mystic. At first sight it may seem surprising that anyone should throw a fit after reading this book—Victorian moralists excepted; but when one takes the subjective factor into consideration, it becomes clear why the judgment of so many critics has been vitiated, and why Huxley produces an antagonistic reaction in the minds of some of his readers. Three types of readers throw this kind of epileptic reaction. First we have the highly "realistic and practical men" who believe in attaining the "health, wealth and happiness of mankind" through reason and science, and babble foolish nineteenth century nostrums about the realisation of "the greatest happiness of the greatest number" through social and economic reforms or mumble the usual Marxist jargon about the "economic factor" and the "dictatorship of the proletariat". These people, like the widows of Ashar are loud in their wail when Huxley breaks their idols to pieces, tears all their illusions to shreds, and brings a whole armoury of scientific and philosophic knowledge to prove that these are the delusions of minds that have lost all contact with reality. Then there are the orthodox Christians; they look upon Huxley with suspicion as they are afraid of his luring the lambs away into some unknown kingdom of the "Atman that is Brahman". Lastly, there are the men of self-conceit; they find it difficult to read Huxley with composure when he ruthlessly exposes the petty egoisms and the animal desires of men, their arrogance and stupidity. This Huxleyian type of iconoclastic writing is definitely needed today in a world where sophistry is mistaken for wisdom, where dilettantism masquerades as knowledge, where instead of a philosophy of life you have a political slogan, and where men, instead of following an ethic, a dharma,—a law of right action and conduct,—practise fads. However, this idol-breaking is not the only kind of literary and philosophic work Huxley is capable of.

He is a creative artist as well as a constructive thinker; one cannot easily forget his Bruno in *Time Must Have a Stop*, nor the valuable work he has done in the sphere of ethics, mystical philosophy and religion by writing *Ends and Means*, *Grey Eminence*, and *The Perennial Philosophy*. In *Ape and Essence*, which promises to be the best devil-tale of the twentieth century, the destructive element is no doubt prominent, yet the mystical and idealistic one is not altogether absent.

He very graphically shows the dire consequences the world will have to face if men persist in behaving like aberrant monsters. He says that man worships false gods, the biggest being material progress, and instead of realising his "glassy essence" and co-operating with the "Order of things" goes against it and becomes more and more confirmed in his apehood. He writes about progress: ".....the theory that you can get something for nothing; the theory that you can gain in one field without paying for your gain in another....." No one can deny that what Huxley says here is true. Man has pursued material progress with a certain amount of success; and this is a gain in one direction, but he has paid for it in another by having his moral and spiritual development arrested. His advance in technics has been inversely proportional to his psycho-spiritual evolution. Huxley continues: "...the theory that Utopia lies just ahead and that, since ideal ends justify the most abominable means, it is your privilege and duty to rob, to swindle, torture, enslave and murder all those who, in your opinion (which is, by definition, infallible), obstruct the onward march to the earthly paradise. Remember the phrase of Karl Marx's: 'Force is the midwife of Progress'?"

Then Huxley proceeds to speak about the essence: "Joy? But joy was murdered long ago. Joy is only for those whose life accords with the given Order of the world. For you there, the clever ones who think you can improve upon that Order, for you, the angry ones, the rebellious, the disobedient, joy is fast becoming a stranger..... Love, Joy and Peace—these are the fruits of the spirit that is your essence and the essence of the world." At another place he says: "Then the sun rises again, and our ape wakes up once more to his own self and the freedom of his personal will—to yet another day of trick-playing or, if he chooses, to the beginnings of self-knowledge, to the first steps towards his liberation." This is not pure iconoclasm. Even when Huxley becomes destructive he does not cease to preach, nor when he portrays the ugliness of life does he forget the existence of beauty. In the midst of death, destruction and demons suddenly a voice rings out

*'For love and beauty and delight
There is no death nor change; their might
Exceeds our organs, which endure
No light, being themselves obscure.'*

Huxley, like many an idealist before him, is so obsessed with the ideal that he finds the ugliness and sordidness of the actual positively oppressive and hits out at it; when he sees clearly how much love and beauty and joy there can be in this world if men ceased to perform their fantastic tricks before high heaven and tried to seek their glassy essence, he very sincerely and earnestly tries to awaken them. This he does through two ways; one is the *Ape and Essence* way, the other is *The Perennial Philosophy* way. It is rather unfortunate that many people do not seem to realise this.

The most beautiful part of the book is the ending. Admittedly, it is a little difficult to appreciate it, because Huxley is one of those who put the maximum of meaning in the minimum of words, and at times one has to be an encyclopaedia of knowledge to understand the cross-sections of his thoughts. But then, if one does not understand a writer, one should observe silence and not criticise him.

In the end Dr. Poole and Loola escape from the land where Belial reigns supreme. Here Huxley speaks of love, and of the theme with which he is most of the time occupied—the union of the individual with the Divine Ground. No doubt he does not go into long explanations; such explanations which would be appropriate in *The Perennial Philosophy* would be out of place in a book of this kind—Huxley is too consummate an artist to make such a mistake. However, what he says here is quite clear: "...And when, in the darkness, the lover's voice whispers again of

*'A mortal shape indued
With love and life and light and deity,'*

is there already the beginning of an understanding that beyond *Epipsychidion* there is *Adonais*, and beyond *Adonais* the wordless doctrine of the Pure in Heart?" This means that the love of Dr. Poole is the kind depicted in *Epipsychidion*—a highly subtilised and rarefied emotional love; yet there is already visible in it that which appears in *Adonais*, on a higher plane, as a secret longing of the soul for the Light beyond. It seems that Huxley has here in mind the teaching of St. Bernard, who spoke of the "human carnal love" gradually turning into the "spiritual love" of God. In the following lines selected from Shelley we see how *Adonais* follows *Epipsychidion*:

*Seraph of Heaven! too gentle to be human,
Veiling beneath that radiant form of Woman
All that is insupportable in thee
Of light, and love, and immortality!
Sweet Benediction in the eternal Curse!
Veiled Glory of the lampless Universe!*

In *Adonais* this feeling is uplifted and transformed into:

*That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,
That Beauty in which all things work and move,
That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse
Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love
Which through the web of being blindly wove
By man and beast and earth and air and sea,
Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
The fire for which all thirst; now beams on me,
Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.*

*The breath whose might I have invoked in song
Descends on me.....
I am borne darkly, fearfully afar!
Whilst burning through the inmost veil of Heaven,
The soul of Adonais, like a star,
Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are.*

And in these lines from *Adonais* there is that which points towards the doctrine of the Pure in Heart, the aspiration of the soul to attain union with the Divine Being. Man has to pass through a process of Purgation or Katharsis—the purification of the mind and the emotions—before it can be one with its Divine Source. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

And still Mr. Campbell writes that Huxley's mind is "out of focus with reality." It is a pity that he, like many other critics, fails to see behind the bitterness of the cynic the idealism and aspiration of the mystic, and behind the iconoclast, the seeker of the Absolute.

SRI CHAITANYA

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

By DILIP KUMAR ROY

Author's Preface

It all happens in Navadwip, the hallowed town of Bengal, where Sri Chaitanya was born, in 1485, and felt an irresistible call to give up his hearth and home, his mother and young wife—in short, everything that man holds dear—for Krishna, his one Love on earth and his one dream when he breathed his last at the age of forty-eight.

A Vaishnava friend of mine wrote to me pointing out certain historical errors. In one point he was mistaken, for he wrote that Sri Chaitanya had never taken his mother's permission before he decided to take to renunciation. In *Amiya Nimai Charita*—the most authentic life of Sri Chaitanya—it is written he had persuaded both his mother and his wife to let him follow the call of Krishna. But even if it had been written otherwise I would have made him take the permission in order to bring out the great character of his mother. I do not feel obligated to stick to such history as is extant about Sri Chaitanya, since I set out not to write history but to express dramatically my heart's vision of one whom I have regarded as an Avatar of Krishna since my childhood, whose songs I have passionately loved and sung and whose presence I have felt while singing of his divine humanity. That is why historically, I have been less loyal to the letter that I might be more faithful to the spirit that moved Sri Chaitanya, the spirit which has, alas! been often grossly misunderstood by many who style themselves Vaishnavas, that is, his adherents. To give but one instance. It is written in *Chaitanya Charitamrita* that he damned furiously a Brahmin, saying: "You made Sribash worship Goddess Bhavani; so I curse you that you shall suffer in hell for ten million years." I confess I cannot see Sri Chaitanya, an Avatar of Love and forgiveness, whose mere contact reformed ruffians like Jagai and Madhai into saints, cursing anyone, no matter for what transgression.

One last word of explanation about his names that occur in my play. He became known as Sri Krishna-Chaitanya—or, more popularly, Chaitanya, meaning Divine Consciousness—after his great renunciation before which he used to be called by three names:

Nimai Pundit, because of his deep scholarship;

Gouranga (nicknamed Gora) because of his peerless beauty;

Bishwambhar which means one who bears the burden of the world.

This last name reminds me of a great utterance of Sri Aurobindo in *Savitri*, which I shall quote as it is eminently applicable to the Avatarhood of Sri Chaitanya:

"The Great who came to save this suffering world
And rescue out of Time's shadow and the Law,
Must pass beneath the yoke of grief and pain;
They are caught by the Wheel that they had hoped to break,
On their shoulders they must bear man's load of fate.
Or they pay the gift of knowledge with their lives.
The Son of God born as the Son of Man
Has drunk the bitter cup, owned Godhead's debt.
The debt the Eternal owes to the fallen mankind
His will has bound to death and struggling life
That yearns in vain for rest and endless peace."

ACT ONE: ASPIRATION

1510 A.D. Evening. Sachi Devi is seen performing her daily *pujah* (devotions) before her cherished Ishtadeva, Lord Vishnu who was incarnated as Sri Krishna and, later as, she believed, in Sri Chaitanya. At the conclusion of her worship she offers her flowers at His feet when Sri Chaitanya steps in hesitantly and waits in silence. His mother turns round and gives an involuntary start.

SRI CHAITANYA:
Mother, I

SACHI:
Yes, my son?

SRI CHAITANYA:
I have been thinking

SACHI
(anxiously):
You are not unwell, I hope?

SRI CHAITANYA:
I wish I was!

SACHI
(nervously):
Whatever has happened?

SRI CHAITANYA:
Oh, nothing: look not so scared.
I only meant: I wished I were in that mood,
Which lights on you when you are a trifle unwell,
In which your inmost self outflowers in feeling
Although the worldly-wise shake their great head
At such bloom-bursts and call them sentimental.

SACHI
I am glad you are well. How you did frighten me!
(heaving a sigh of relief)

SRI CHAITANYA
(forcing a smile):
Ah, that is why I said. . . .but never mind.

SACHI
(drawing near and scanning his face):
What is it ails you?
(Pausing for a few seconds expectantly)
And why this hesitation?

SRI CHAITANYA:
Because. . . .one dreads to hurt those one adores. . . .
And I adore you, mother!

SACHI
(alarmed):
But what's all this?
And how could such a strange thought cross your mind?
Do I not know you too well to believe
Or even imagine you to be capable
Of hurting me—you, who never could hurt a fly?

SRI CHAITANYA:
(giving her a quizzical look):
But are you sure?

SACHI
I know not what you mean.
You are so. . . .far away!I almost feel
As though I never knew you truly, Gora,
You—whom I have known these five and twenty years!

SRI CHAITANYA

—Continued from previous page

SRI CHAITANYA
(smiling ironically):

Ah, there you are! And yet do we not claim:
A mother knows the inmost thoughts of one
She has borne and nursed even as the honey-bee
Must know the shiest murmur of the bud
Which opes at morn to greet her humming lover?

SACHI

(gathering herself together):

I implore you, Gora, not to alarm me so.
I am only a common woman who understands
The simplest things—the things all women know.
I have only claimed I knew you as a mother
Who bore a child and reared him day by day
Could not help knowing, seeing him slowly grow
Under her gaze towards the skies of Gods
From whom she got him—a boon and sacred trust;
And there my claim ends....

(Her voice trembles)

For.... do I not know

Who you are, son, and who's the thing that calls
Herself your mother? Could I help but know
That I am a mere lamp whose flame you are,
A dim frail stem whose one mission is to help
The hundred-petalled lotus to bloom in light?
I never claimed: a lamp could understand
The flame....no more than a stem could understand
The bud it bears till it has blossomed out.

SRI CHAITANYA

(bowing his head):

Mother....forgive me, pray....I stand rebuked.
But will you not believe—I never intended
To hint I was superior as the flame
Is superior to the lamp? Nor am I sure
That any flame that ever shed its dimmest
Spark-glint upon the dark would dare disclaim
Its native kinship with its source and haven
Sundered from which it never could realise
Its self of gleam—no more than could the lotus
Its self of full-blown beauty, balked of the stem.

(His voice becomes thick with emotion)

To you I owe not only this my body
Which naught but a mother's angel tenderness
And mysterious overawing solicitude
For a thing unmet—for a refugee from worlds
She had not even glimpsed—could ever dream
Of offering her hospitality,
An enduring shelter in her blood, her heart-beat,
To fashion out from an amorphous speck
A being of sentient beauty, and answering
Its helpless, half-inconscient cry to be born
With a vow born of an equal mystic hunger
To sustain, augment it, throb by throb, with all
Her fabulous patience—nourish, vindicate
With every spasm of her nerves and flesh
And the holiest sap of her being's virgin core....

(His eyes glisten as he meets her eyes):

Yes, I owe you, mother, not such a body alone,
But even how much of what I call my will,
My moods, my mind....and what else—do I know?
Can ever one know a thing down to its roots,
The Ultimate Purpose—working as a leaven
Transforming momentarily, relentlessly
This multitudinous hurtling play of life?

(He shakes his head ruefully)

And yet we claim: we know and act from knowledge
Not even knowing what knowledge signifies!....
And who knows....maybe it was so intended
That this our mystified play of sparks of peace
At war with oceans of eddying, roaring passion,
Of love-sprouts lashed by blasts of demon hail
And yet surviving....(a grim spectacle
Of inconceivable grandeur—a miracle
Wrought by Krishna, the Wizard!)....this mighty drama
Of the Timeless unrolling on Time's wheeling stage,
Of the fathomless Sphinx who pilots us through this
Our inescapable maze of paradoxes
That face us, dog us even as our own shadows.

(He lifts his eyes to hers)

Or....maybe....we do know something after all
Even when we strive in vain to voice it, mother!
For why else do we go on participating

In this *lila* of bubbles, this cosmic dance of hues,
This kaleidoscopic *maya* we hug as life!

(He goes on abstractedly as though in a muse)

Why else do we uphold it, new-create
Symbols and sounds and words....why else, when baffled
At every turn, do we still probe, explore!
Or can it be: we give to the deepest things
Some names or labels that through these we may clutch
At a momentary respite from despair!
Or that through their perfidious picturesqueness
We may escape from the abysmal pain
And shame of our ignorance!

(He suddenly comes to, and meets his mother's anxious eyes)

I forgive me, mother.

I ought to have known—only I know no better.

(With an ironical smile of self-pity)

But 'tis an ill wind blows none any good.

So you do see at last, do you not, mother!

How ignorant I am—your idol, whom

You extolled just now?

(He heaves a deep breath and then his irony changes into bitterness)

And yet they will proclaim:

I am a great pundit drunk with the ruby wine
Of knowledge! Knowledge indeed! Do I not know
How little is the difference, in the end,
Between my knowledge and the multitude's
In the eye of God in Heaven?..Is not the tallest
Peak and the lowliest cottage equidistant
From the sun on high?

(He gives her a look of deep reproach)

But do you know, good mother,

Who came to spoil me most?—Your doting heart.
You turned my head, even more than did the others,
Insisting I was a deep initiate
In the primal lore of light and wisdom born
Of the summit vision given but to the giants.
But I tell you: 'tis all futile, futile, futile:
My scholarship, my learning and my knowledge
Even as a painted flame which apes the fire
But sheds no warmth or light. And that is why
I come to you tonight to ask you—something.

SACHI

(beads of perspiration break out on her forehead):

I am waiting, Gora!

(after a slight pause)

Why do you not speak?

SRI CHAITANYA:

Because....I quail to ask you....

SACHI

(tilting his face up with trembling hands):

Look up, my son!

You quail to ask me—me, for anything?

Or am I dreaming?

(She hugs him, drowning his face in her heaving bosom)

Know you not, my child,

Who—what you are to me—my life and heart

And the hub of my universe?....How could you, Gora?

Can I deny you anything on earth?

SRI CHAITANYA:

You can....and that is why I said: I quailed.

SACHI

(with an involuntary shudder):

Oh, keep me no more in this agony of suspense.
Better the storm released than this pent hush.
Come, speak your mind. Do you not know I can
Deny you naught? Or do you take me for
A sentimental woman whose only strength
Lies in exhibiting her tears and sighs?

SRI CHAITANYA

(desperately):

Mother, I want to leave my hearth and home
To sing the name of Krishna, my Beloved,
From door to door—a wandering mendicant.

SACHI

(stammering):

You....you will....what?

SRI CHAITANYA

(averting her eyes):

Mother....I long to leave my all for Krishna
Whose call I have heard. And He enjoins on me

SRI CHAITANYA

—Continued from opposite page

To beg henceforth for food from day to day
And to become a beggar in His name.
You mean....you will....leave....me....

SACHI

(Tears choke her voice as she stares at him):

SRI CHAITANYA

(nodding ruefully):

You see why now

I said: I quailed....knowing how this must come
To you as a dagger-thrust from a loved one
To whom you opened your dear arms to hug.

SACHI

(gazing at him like one stunned):

I....understand....but....Oh, what shall I say?

(She steps back and rivets her eyes on the Image)

SRI CHAITANYA

(placing his hand appealingly on her shoulder):

Mother....forgive me....listen, I implore!
For what can I say either—if you look
So lost and broken-hearted—you who know:
I cannot go without your sanction and blessing?
But....mother mine! Oh, take it not so hardly.
Listen: I know—you are one in a million,
By nature brave....but now you must be braver.
I know you are love itself....I know you love me
As the breeze loves blooms....adore me even as skies
Adore the sun....cherish me as the old
Cherish the thrill of youth that is no more,
Depend on me as the acolyte on faith,
Or the initiate on his Guru....

(He pauses and heaves a sigh)

Have I not felt,

Since the day I uttered my first infant cry,
Your eyes of steadfast tenderness around me
Even as the budding blossom feels the tender
Circumambient greeting of spring with all
Its native welcome—generous, unbargaining—

(He halts again and shakes his head)

But no—how could one limn with similes
What a child owes to its mother? Can such debts
Be ever repaid?

(He looks at her appealingly)

But then who'd dare repay

One's breath with breath-born thanks? I only pray:
You may not deem me an ingrate, a pitiful
Renegade who would shun his faith for lucre,
Or a lover who loves for the thrill of drama it brings?

(He lowers his voice)

I voiced my inmost feelings now because—
But how shall one explain the inexplicable?
Can one ever know how sound breaks into song,
Or anguish at its peak dissolves in bliss?
I only implore you, mother, to plumb my pain
With the pain I know I must occasion you now,
When I desire release from what I have grown
To count as precious day by day....I know
You are a noble mother, and so, today,
You are called to be nobler still, and understand
What I find hard to explain—being impelled
Now by an urge I fail to fathom myself.
For although I hear my Beloved calling me,
I know not whither, through what devious paths,
He is leading me—to which last gleaming Goal.
I only know: my yearning to my heart's
One Lord is authentic even as the mother's
For her child she worships and adores, and so
I adjure you, mother mine, to—let me go.

(A silence intervenes during which Sachi stands staring at
him unseeing....Suddenly her eyes are drowned in tears
and she turns round again to face the Image and covers her
face in her hands)

SRI CHAITANYA

(moving up to her and drawing her to him):

O Mother!....Listen, 'tis this I dread most:
Your tears....You do not know how weak I am.
I cannot bear to see you cry in pain.
O mother!

(Then as she disengages herself from his embrace and wipes
her eyes)

Can you not understand why I

Feel thus constrained to eschew all I have cherished,
You who have known what is the call of God?

SACHI

(passionately):

And child! Can you not understand why I
Feel even as a stalk whose flower is gone
And how I have long forgot my Gods in Heaven
For the one and only God who is—my Gora?

(She turns round once more upon the Image of Vishnu)

Forgive me, Lord! And be not hard on me:
For you must know, if you know anything,
How a God-believer you yourself made Godless
By giving her one who has usurped your place
Till she felt you were a projection of himself
And yet felt not a qualm of shame—compunction!
Strange are your ways, my Lord, that you, a God,
Should suffer a human form to overshadow
Your Divinity itself and make it grow
Till the deputy seems taller than the King!

(She gives an involuntary shudder)

But what am I saying? Forgive me, give me strength:

I must not make a scene nor beat my breast,
For I am not a common woman—I
Who have given the Ethereal to earth and borne
A human rival of yourself who, strangely,
Means more to earthlings than your Unborn Self!

(She turns to her son)

You said, son, I must understand. Believe me:
I am not blind but—frail and weak. For listen:
I'll tell you what I have kept, as a fearful secret,
Even from you. 'Tis not imagination
That fails me now: 'tis only the irony
That cuts so deep into my derelict soul.
For I knew always: I would be a naught
And stay a naught without you all my life,
And my one mission was to bring to birth

(Indicating the Image of Vishnu)

His God-stuff that's your soul and breath and self.
In my dream I saw Him when I was a virgin.
He said: "You shall give birth to a son who's one
With Light and Bliss derived from my quintessence,
Descended from a world but few have glimpsed.
Rear him until he comes into his own:
His kingdom of Love Divine—when he will come
To you imploring you to let him cut
The chains that will have bound him to his mother
And wife and friends and what men call the world,
To redeem the world. On that great fateful day
You shall unyoke him from his obligations
That he may fulfil the mission of his life:
To bring to men the message of my Love
They grope for in the blind dark of their egos.
This, by his selfless life, he'll show to all
And prove the Eye of Light to humankind.
Your sight you'll then be called to sacrifice
For others, O blessed virgin, who are chosen
To accept a pain to deliver the world from pain."
And then, as hushed the deep-toned Organ Voice,
I woke to find my pillow wet with tears.
A fear then seized me and I supplicated:
"Why must you, Lord, ask those to carry your banner
Who cannot bear its weight for a moment? How
Can you expect a heart to behave like stone?
The mother in me will never, never be able
To rear a son and then bid him farewell."

(She half closes her eyes)

Just then, I visioned a strange Face: 'twas human,
And yet....I know not how to tell you what
I saw....'twas made of something that was in essence
Pure light. Its eyes, dark with reproach, met mine
And I felt a deep dread as time stood bewitched.
The Face drew near and nestled in me. I hugged
It close till it broke out in a cry of pain.
Startled, I looked when lo, I saw you Gora:
Just as you looked on the day you saw the light:
That exquisite, unforgettable face and the self-same
Timbre of voice that was an endless thrill!
And then, as you, my child, clutched at my breast,
Milk spouted—'twas no fancy I tell you, son!
Since, when I woke, I found my bed was drenched
With the milk that had outflowed for my dream child,
But no, it was no dream, for nothing I ever
Have seen in my waking moments has seemed more
Vivid, nor sounded any human voice
More real than yours I heard on that great day,
That fateful day, when you, my child divine,

LOOKING UP TO SAY "THANK YOU"

By JOYCE CHADWICK

In one of his Essays on Contemporary Events, C. G. Jung deplors the fact that, outside Roman Catholicism, there is no longer any worship of a Divine Mother—or consciousness of Her existence even—in the West. If I remember rightly it is the aspect of *lack* that he chiefly laments: to be spiritually and mentally healthy, the human Child (of whatever age) should have a Mother to turn to for comfort as well as a Father to apportion it its work in the world. But if indeed there is a Divine Mother, to have forgotten, or ignored, or lost Her, must in the nature of things lead to many lopsidednesses, not only one. To begin with, the principle of hierarchy is quite cut through: for in the absence of some kind of divine principle of Motherness, and embodied emanation of it, from what source are women to get increase of knowledge, and to whom or what give their special allegiance—who or what is, so to speak, to be at the head of their craft and mystery: to whom is the human mother to "look up"? A Moon cannot shine with its own light.

But many little moons have been attempting to do this impossible thing lately. Any being, however, who does the work of a mother—and all women, most men, and all artists "mother" *i.e.*, give form to, something if only their own thoughts and emotions—while still unlinked to this function's divine prototype, comes easily to take the worship due to that prototype to him or herself: thinking the self, because it is unaware of any motherly thing higher, really to be at the top of the ascending scale. Then how easily that one error breeds a million! Ideas and Powers which a woman

has been used by their, and her, divine Inventor, to give shape to, she begins to think are in reality "hers"—her jewels, possessions, extensions, mirrors—and so coming gradually to "love" them no longer with the modest love of human moulder for Divine child but with the frightful vampire desire (I have observed it) of tiger for lamb, or the sea-anemone for the limpet. Psychiatrists' consulting-rooms are crowded with the horrid results, and "smother"-love is a word not many moderns fail to understand.

Mother in Pondicherry! We who have watched this happening bring to you on your Birthday a garland of strange hopes—some of them too fierce, I expect, and some too fearful. Making contact, we stretch out praying hands to receive from you that lost midway position that all of us who perform the shape-making function should (should we not?) be occupying: step of ascension between the obsolete unconscious rightness of bird and animal motherhood and the coming conscious rightness of the divine motherhood. For we remember the words of Sri Krishna: "Whosoever there is the fading of the Dharma... then I loose myself forth into birth. For... the enthroning of the Right I am born..." and we hear these words, we think, coming now from that pure and powerful aspect of the Divine Person which is the female aspect: Shaper, Comforter, Upholder, Initiator, Teacher, You, us. We see you helping Motherhood, everywhere, to become again the giver of perfect form by means of absolute insight and altogether innocent, awed and delighted power, to divine Possibility. We look up and say "Thank you."

SRI CHAITANYA —Continued from previous page

Appealed to me, a mortal mother, in pain:
 "I would be born from out your holy womb:
 Will you not have me, mother?" I kissed your Face
 And cried: "I will, my darling! I'll defy
 Aeons of torture if I may just hold
 And nurse you at my breast for a single hour.
 I will hail you and promise, in return,
 I will not shy at pain in self-love nor
 Claim to possess you and will let you go
 When you, to companion those who have need of you,
 Shall leave me to my utter loneliness."
 (She looks longingly at her son's face)
 And abide I will now by my word—if I
 Be blinded by the tears, I know, I'll shed,
 Abandoned by you. For know I not that Ight
 Cannot consort with gloom, nor truth with falsehood?
 Who hails from the world of beauty and bliss must fare
 To his kin and counterparts. For only they
 Can claim you truly and not I, a woman
 Who, strangely, bore to earth a soul of star!

SRI CHAITANYA:

Oh speak not in this strain. You do not know—

SACHI

(giving a melancholy smile):

But it is true, son, as I told you now:
 You were given to me as fire is given to flint:
 A myth incredible which yet came to pass!
 An Emperor as guest in a beggar's hut!
 But a guest is not a resident: he comes
 Only to go... When the brief blessed hour
 Shall pass as must all interludes divine
 In this our world which cannot house such bliss
 For long—then what? I know not, for, alas,
 I am but an ignorant—a common woman;
 So foresee I cannot what will happen when
 You, my one world, will leave me, wandering back
 To your great worlds—leaving no world for me.

SRI CHAITANYA:

How can you wail you are an ignorant
 And common woman? Could unconsciousness
 Give birth to a resplendent conscient soul,
 A timid heart beget celestial courage,
 A dead sun flash out from the mirror of moon?
 Would a common woman feel as you have felt?
 And then, how could I ever abandon you
 Who nursed me with your milk of tenderness?
 Release I seek not to fare far from you
 But to come nearer—through your own deep pain
 And the pain of all who need Sri Krishna's Grace.
 No love that joins a soul to soul on earth

Can ever be mocked. And is not bliss our birthright?

We were not tossed into this our world of pain
 To deepen its gloom with our unending sighs
 But to transfigure it with the touch of One
 Who indites love-letters with the alphabet of stars,
 Whose Lustre fecundates dead ash with fire,
 Whose Flute reverberates in the hearts of rocks
 And laughter makes our tears outgleam in rainbows
 As the mystic Force in the seed transforms the mire's
 Dark anarchy into a kingdom of radiant blooms.

(He smiles beatifically and embraces her)

You bore me not to have but a brief reprieve
 From an arid living. Krishna visits earth,
 From age to age in inconceivable guises
 Nor as a chance guest nor for a passing whim.
 Every time He comes to set the stage
 To produce a new play deep with His own Purpose.
 I know not what is that last denouncement:
 But this I know that His great Cosmic *Lila*
 Has not for its end an epilogue of sighs
 Preluded by a pledge of phantom concord.

I know, for His Flute sings in my heart of hearts:

"No pain is fortuitous, nor a revel mood
 Of a ruthless Devil—far less of a lunatic
 Omnipotence who toys with sentient puppets,
 Who cannot help but act like marionettes
 Or sinners who must cringe to Him for pity
 And even thank Him for His lunacy."
 This too I know: no sigh that once has waked
 In an aspiring soul for Krishna's Grace
 Can fall asleep again: He never comes
 To plough the soil of human destiny
 But He leaves behind a Trail when He withdraws,
 Which lives in the sunken world of memory
 Until He visits with a new downsurge
 To create a deeper furrow in our lone
 Vale of despond. And that is why His Flute-call,
 Stronger than destiny, now wrenches me
 Away from you and all I cherish still.

I have heard the Call: I know not yet the Goal.
 But this I know that you (who have given me
 To Earth that I may bring to her His Love)
 Losing your claim on me, would hold me closer
 Than ever you could by clinging fast to me
 For your little world of worldliness and clamour
 To which I have been an alien since my birth.

So weep no more: I give you my solemn pledge:
 You shall see me whenever you'll need my presence.

(He falls prostrate at her feet... She stoops and hugs his
 head to her bosom)

Act Two in next issue

INDIA'S INFLUENCE ON WESTERN THOUGHT

By SISIRKUMAR MITRA

About thirty years ago Sri Aurobindo contributed to his philosophical monthly, *Arya*, a most revealing sequence on the principal aspects of Indian culture, in which he told for the first time the true story of India's creative endeavours through the ages. His was indeed an entirely original approach unfolding the secret of India's soul, the essential aim and intention of her historic development, the inner and, therefore, the real significance of the ways in which her children have tried over her long past to give form to their aspirations and strivings. Compared with this luminous exposition, almost all the works, the so-called standard ones too, on the history of India are utter misnomers, wholly lacking in the correct perspective of India's cultural evolution. An integral vision, a coherent picture, embracing all the manifold aspects of the creative life of the people is rarely found in what passes for the history of India.

Unending narrations of political events may tell us much but not everything about a people, since these events as they outwardly are, do not, because they cannot, indicate the real intention of Nature in them, without an understanding of which we know next to nothing of the true history of a country, far less the forces that have shaped its destiny. The story of India's political development will be not only inaccurate and incomplete but a fundamentally poor and wrong representation, if it is not told with reference to the true nature and tendency of her racial being, and the psychology that impelled that tendency to fulfil itself in the endeavour of the people to build up a strong collective life based on the truths seen by the ancient fathers of the race.

The work of the foreign Indologists for the reconstruction of India's history must always be gratefully acknowledged. But it must also be said, that the writings of many of them as well as of Indian scholars who have followed these Western pioneers, betray defects which greatly detract from their value as a faithful record of India's historic development through centuries. Besides, the ulterior motives of many of those European writers and their attitude of superiority towards the Indians, because of their long—fortunately now past—political subjection, are not a little responsible for the deliberate attempts they have so often made to belittle ancient India and her greatness and to prove to the world her incapacity to manage her own affairs. But what is more deplorable is that few Indian historians have so far cared to understand the "inwardness" of their country's history, the central purpose of its existence. And this understanding they can have only through an insight into the true character of India's culture and civilisation, into the spirit that has inspired and moulded the various expressions of her soul. Their exclusive attachment to the scientific method of the West, confined to the obvious and superficial view of things, has blinded these historians to the deep and intrinsic values which India evolved through centuries of creative striving and which formed the very centre of her life and culture.

The Vedas, the Upanishads and the sacred literature of the later ages contain utterances of the Rishis which proclaim the urge of India's soul to share with others the "sweetness and light" of these values, the fruits of her age-long quest for the ultimate meaning of life. It is this urge that motivated the expansive movement of Indian culture whose story—a romantic one indeed,—has yet to be fully told and given its proper place in the cultural history of India as well as of the world.

In her golden days the culture of India was like a sky-high tower of light shedding its lustre on the surrounding countries, even on those at the far ends of the earth, illumining the mind of man, exalting his heart, ennobling his life and, above all, beckoning him on to the realisation of his highest spiritual destiny. By this light, says Sri Aurobindo, India possessed the world or at least enlightened it in far-off ages.

Thanks to the efforts of the Greater India Society of Calcutta and the researches of Indian and European scholars who have made Indian influences in Asia their special subject of study, there is already available some knowledge of the nature and extent of this influence and history has just begun to take notice of it, but very little is known, far less historically accepted, about how this movement spread also to the West and contributed to the growth of the early thought of Europe and later, of Christianity. George B. de Huszar says that Greek thought and Christianity are the foundations of Western culture but behind Greece and Christianity stands Asia. Asia Minor, Egypt and India influenced Greek development. It is the conviction of eminent scholars that systematic investigations into this subject are sure to yield startling results which might very well be the basis of a new chapter in the history of human thought in which India would shine as the source of many of the ideas not only of the Greek thinkers but also of the Christian and later ones.

Four times in history, says Sri Aurobindo, the stream of Indian thought has poured out upon Europe. The first attempt was the filtering, among others, of Indian wisdom through the thought of the Greek philosophers from Pythagoras to Plato and the Neo-Platonists; the result was the brilliant intellectual civilisation of Greece and Rome which prepared the way for the second attempt when Buddhism and Vaishnavism filtered through the Semitic temperament and entered Europe in the form of Christianity. The third was through the Arabs after the rise of Islam; the result was the

reawakening of the European mind in feudal and Catholic Europe. The fourth and last attempt was the quiet entry of Indian thought into Europe, first through the veil of German metaphysics which inspired most of the modern developments of European thought, and then openly through the dissemination of ideas of the various schools of Indian thought by exponents, both Indian and European; the result is the growing tendency today in Europe and America to acknowledge the superiority of spiritual values.

Indian Culture and the Ancient World

Scholars have recently begun to accept the view that India is the original home of the Aryans, the latest theory being that the whole of the north-western India and Iran were called Aryana where four successive movements took place through which the Aryan genius expressed itself, first in the Bactrian culture, secondly in the Indus Valley, thirdly in the Vedic, and lastly in the Avestan. Prof. R. K. Mookerji has shown how no other region than India could be the cradle of the Aryans, where they must have lived for a very long time before they evolved their civilisation. There are, besides, other evidences which point to this conclusion. Sri Aurobindo says that the hymns of the Rig Veda belong to a later period of a long anterior stage which witnessed more luminous dawns of the supreme knowledge upon the forefathers of the race. There is, therefore, no doubt that the Aryan culture had taken its birth in India and was then spread to different parts of the world by the early missionaries of the race who in those dim days hazarded the perils of land and sea and went to countries far beyond the borders of their own, carrying with them the torch of that matchless wisdom of which they were the proud inheritors.

Traces of Hindu culture have begun to be found in various parts of eastern Europe. Archæologists are of opinion that Russia and Siberia have several regions whose excavations may yield evidences of Indian influence. It is believed that *Aswamedha* (the horse-sacrifice of the ancient Hindu kings) was one of the royal ceremonies in some parts of northern Europe. Lithuania observes even to this day many rites and customs of the Hindus. The names of the Lithuanian rivers are undoubtedly Indian in their origin. Tapti is one such name which is the name of a river in the Punjab; some of the others are Nemuna (Indian Yamuna), Srohati (Indian Saraswati), Narbudey (Indian Narmada). The tribal or clan names of the Lithuanians such as Kuru, Puru, Yadav, Sudav are distinctly Indian: so also are the names of their gods such as Indra, Varuna, Purakanya (the Vedic Parjanya). These are facts, however startling they may look. Patient investigations may throw further light on this relation between India and Lithuania in pre-historic times. The eminent Lithuanian archæologist Pulk Tarasenska in his book *Priesistorie Lietuva* has made revealing observations on the early history of the Lithuanian tribes.

A very significant proof of the Vedic influence in Asia Minor has been discovered in Boghaz Keui in Cappadocia where tablets have been unearthed whose inscriptions say that a treaty was concluded in the fourteenth century B.C. between two belligerent tribes known as the Hittites and the Mittanis in terms of their respective customs which included the invocation of the Vedic gods Mitra, Varuna and Indra for their blessings. In another inscription they invoked the twin-gods, the Aswins, whom they call by their Vedic title Nasatya to bless a marriage-alliance between two royal families. Tel-el-Amarna letters point to a period between 1470 B.C. and 1400 B.C. during which there reigned in Mittani four kings, whose names were Artatana, Artasuma, Sutarna and Dasaratta, the last named must have been derived from the Sanskrit word Dasaratha. The other ones also bear close resemblance to Sanskrit and are held to be of kings who were connected with the Aryans of the Vedic age, then dwelling in the Punjab. These inscriptions show that Indian ideas penetrated the upper valley of the Euphrates in those early days. Before the rise of Islam there lived in Arabia many Hindus, mostly Brahmanas, who settled there observing Hindu religious customs including the worship of Shiva as Makkasha from which the name of Mecca is said to have been derived. The famous astronomer Yavanacharya was born of one such Brahman family. It was from these Brahmanas that the Arabs learned the sciences of mathematics, astronomy, algebra and decimal notation, which had been first developed in India and were later transmitted by the Arabs to Europe.

Researches have unravelled fragments of the story of how Indian ideas travelled to Greece and the neighbouring countries through Persia, Asia Minor and Alexandria, and became an inspiring factor in the development of thought in those regions. Centuries before Christ these regions were widely known for their numerous, crowded, many-sided seats of learning which were visited by seekers of knowledge as also by wise teachers from various parts of the world, who used to participate in the philosophical discussions for which these seats were reputed. And there can be no doubt that in those discussions representative thinkers of each country made their contribution. Authorities agree that India figured most prominently in these centres of intellectual fellowship and that her ideas were

INDIA'S INFLUENCE ON WESTERN THOUGHT—Continued from previous page

most popular among their members. Eminent scholars like Max Muller, Garbe and Winternitz believe in the factual basis of the Greek and Persian traditions that Brahmanas from India visited those countries in very early days. It is to them that is traced the origin of the Orphic cult, of its rites and practices, which are neither Greek nor Semitic. Orphists flourished in the seventh century B.C. during which the Ionian philosophers were influenced by Indian wisdom. Garbe, regarded as the greatest authority on Sankhya philosophy in Europe, holds that Sankhya ideas have exerted great influence on the doctrines of Heraclitus, Empedocles, Anaxagoras, Democritus and Epicurus. Winternitz is convinced that Pythagoras was influenced by the Indian Sankhya, nor has he any doubt that the Gnostic and the Neo-Platonist philosophers have been influenced by Indian philosophical ideas. It is again the opinion of Garbe that the theory of Thales (600 B.C.), the father of Greek philosophy, that everything springs from water, that of Anaximander, that the first principle is not water but infinite atmosphere, and that of his disciple Anaximenes, that it is air which is the source of phenomena, are derived from almost similar Vedic theories which their Greek exponents are said to have been helped to conceive while they were in Persia on a "mission of pilgrimage for philosophical studies." The view of Heraclitus (500 B.C.) is that "all bodies are transformations of fire, and that everything that exists is derived from it and strives to return to it." This is only an echo of a similar idea in the Chandogya Upanishad. Garbe compares this doctrine with the Sankhya theory of "the innumerable annihilations and re-formations of the Universe." Empedocles's (450 B.C.) theory of the eternity and indestructibility of matter is only a restatement of the Sankhya principle of *satkaryavada* or the beginningless and endless reality of all products. He also believed in the transmigration of soul and posited the evolution of the material world out of primeval matter, which is acted upon by the "three qualities, lightness, activity and heaviness, which are nothing but the three *gunas*, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* of the Sankhya system. To Zenophanes (575 B.C.), the father of the Eleatic School, God and the Universe are one, eternal and unchangeable. According to Huszar, the ideas of the Eleatic School were profoundly influenced by the teachings of the Upanishads. Says Erdmann: "The absorption of all separate existence in a single substance, as is taught by the Eleatics, seems rather an echo of Indian pantheism than a principle of Hellenic spirit."

The indebtedness of Pythagoras (550 B.C.) to India is almost a fact of history. There is an Indian tradition that Pythagoras was a Hindu of the Sanskrit name Prithviguru, who went to Greece to preach Hindu philosophy. Evidence however is lacking in support of this view. But that he came into touch with Brahmanas in Persia, if not in India, has been admitted by Max Muller. Pythagoras learnt from India the forty-seventh theorem of the Euclidean Geometry which is found in the *Shulva Sutras* of Baudhayana. And it is also from India that he received his ideas of the science of music, the importance of numbers and the existence of a fifth element, all of which were unknown in Greece and Egypt in those days. The origin of the Pythagorean doctrine of reincarnation is traced to India, as also the "holy tetractyls," the swearing symbols of the later Pythagoreans, whose meaning may be found in the formula of diagrams for Vedic sacrifices (also in the Katha Upanishad) to which again is traced the origin of the decimal system of notation. The Pythagoreans regarded spitting before fire as a grievous sin, and they abstained from beans, both of which are Vedic conventions. D. N. Tagore holds that all these ideas of the Pythagorean School are undoubted borrowings from India. Colebrooke says that the doctrines of Pythagoras were rooted in India. He says: "Adverting to what has come to us of the history of Pythagoras, I shall not hesitate to acknowledge an inclination to consider the Grecian to have been indebted to Indian instructors." Schrader declares India to be the birthplace of Pythagorean ideas.

The mention by Plato and Aristotle of the name of Zoroaster, and the study by Hermippus of the books of the Persian teacher, are among the evidences that the Persians were in touch with Greece and that their literature had many students in that country. We know that the Archæmænian empire touched the borders of India and Greece and that Persia was a centre of contact between these two countries. It is therefore quite probable that not only Persians, but Indians also visited Greece and had contact with Greek thinkers. Max Muller is one of those who believe that in the fifth century B.C. there were in Greece Brahmanas from India. He attests to the presence of the Brahmanas in Athens in the time of Socrates. He says that there was in Athens an Indian philosopher who had personal intercourse with Socrates. It is said that when Socrates told him that his philosophy consisted in enquiries about the life of man, the Indian philosopher is said to have smiled and replied that no one could understand things human who did not first understand things divine.

Urwick is one of those scholars who are convinced that India is the birthplace of many of the ideas which Plato set forth in his *Republic*. There is a Greek tradition that Plato undertook a journey in the East. He is believed to have visited Persia. There is a view that he came to India also. His ideas of the bondage of soul to matter and its liberation therefrom, as also his doctrine of reincarnation are distinctly Sankhyan. Says Hopkins: "Plato is full of Sankhyan thought worked out by him but taken from Pythagoras." His use of the simile of the charioteer and the horses are clearly an echo of the same simile in the Katha Upanishad. Plato's divi-

sion of an ideal society into four classes is the Hindu caste system in another garb. The Orphic cosmogony, quoted by Plato, is the same as found in the Code of Manu. These similarities, says Rawlinson, are too close to be accidental. Max Muller says that the similarity between Plato's language and that of the Upanishads is sometimes startling. From the foregoing outlines we may conclude with Garbe that the historical possibility of the Grecian world of thought being influenced by India through the medium of Persia must unquestionably be granted, and with it the possibility of the above-quoted ideas (of the Sankhya and the Vedanta philosophy) being transferred from India to Greece.

The writings of Pliny, Strabo, Ptolemy and the anonymous pamphlet *Periplus Maris Erythraei* published at Alexandria in the first century A.D., show that for centuries there was regular intercourse, both cultural and commercial, between India and Alexandria. The discovery by Sir Flinders Petrie of the statues and other Indian relics at Memphis, the ancient capital of Egypt, led that famous British Egyptologist to believe in the existence of an Indian colony in ancient Egypt about 500 B.C. Madame Blavatsky thinks that Egypt received her laws, her social institutions, her arts and her sciences, from India. The Egyptians had a caste system similar to that of India. Herodotus wrote that some of the customs of the Egyptians were essentially Aryan. Pliny says that there were a number of Buddhists in Syria, Palestine and Egypt and that the Gnostic School of thought of Alexandria was directly under their influence. Its concept of man and Nature is distinctly Buddhist. Towards the close of the third century B.C. Alexandria under the Ptolemies who were great patrons of learning, acquired considerable importance as a far-famed centre of culture. It attracted scholars from various parts of the world. Among the Buddhists in it there must have been some who were missionaries sent by Ashoka, and there were Brahmanas too, who carried with them the ancient lore of the Hindus. Evidences show that these exponents of Indian thought wielded immense influence upon the scholars from different countries who assembled there, it is said, for the purpose of imbibing Indian wisdom. Through these great sons of hers, India made her distinctive contribution in the development of Gnostic and Neo-Platonist ideas as well as of early Christian thought. It is admitted that Gnosticism grew out of a synthesis of Christian and Indian ideas. The Gnostic idea of the plurality of heavens and spiritual worlds echoes similar Upanishadic ideas, particularly the Mahayana doctrine of innumerable gods or Bodhisattvas. Mahayana Buddhism and Sankhya philosophy inspired much of what is known as Alexandrian thought.

A notable figure in the history of Alexandrian philosophy was Philo who lived in the first century B.C. Philo had contact with Indian Gymnosophists. He knew also the Buddhist communities called the Therapeutæ and the Essenes. There is a view that Philo was himself a lay follower of the Buddhist Faith. He propounded the doctrine of Logos which passed into Christianity (in the Gospel of St. John) and whose origin is traced to the Indian idea of Vak (Word) which is personified in the Rig Veda as a divine power. Ammonius Saccas (200 A.D.) was another Alexandrian philosopher whose thought reflects Indian inspiration. He is said to have had direct intercourse with travellers from various countries including India. It is however from the Indians he met that he had his initiation in Yoga of which he became a master. It may be noted that the disciplines he practised were unknown in Alexandria at that time. Mead says that Ammonius made such an impression on his time by his wisdom and knowledge that he was known as the 'God-taught', believed to be an appellation for a Yogi in Alexandria.

Ammonius was the teacher of Plotinus, the founder of the Neo-Platonist School whose influence on European thought is well known. That this School had much in its ideas which was derived from India was due to Plotinus being imbued with the truths of the Yoga and the Vedanta philosophy of the Hindus. Erdmann says that Plotinus had a desire to visit India, but no mention is found in the fragmentary account of his life whether he was able to fulfil it or not. But, thinks the same authority, there can be no doubt that he had deep knowledge of Indian mystical thought, particularly of the Vedanta School, which he might have received from his master whom he followed in his spiritual life. Like his master, he led an ascetic life and practised Yogic disciplines. He used to remain most of his time in meditation and would often rise into those states of trance and ecstasy which are likened to states of Samadhi mentioned in the Yoga philosophy. The Good, the One Reality, of his system is the same as Brahman or Paramatman. He declared with the Upanishads that the Absolute is inexpressible. His Universal Mind and World-Soul are respectively the Ishwara and the Hiranyagarbha of the Vedanta. What he called Nature is the Prakriti of the Sankhya. He believed in Karma and reincarnation. At the time of his death he said like a Hindu Yogi: "Now I seek to lead back the self within me to the All-Self." The words of Plotinus that "We say what He is not, we cannot say what He is" seem to be a mere repetition of the famous expression of the Upanishad, *neti, neti* (He is not this, not this). Garbe sees Sankhya influence in the explanation Plotinus gave of how the world happens to be in the bondage of matter and so of sorrow and suffering, and of how the world could be redeemed and brought to "a state of absolute cessation of pain", which is also an echo of the Buddhist view of Nirvana. It is not possible, says Garbe, to question the Indian origin of the thought of Plotinus.

INDIA'S INFLUENCE ON WESTERN THOUGHT—Continued from opposite page

The tracts of Porphyry (third century A.D.), a famous disciple of Plotinus, indicate that he was devoted to Indian ways of self-discipline perhaps more ardently than his master. He was fortunate in having a personal acquaintance with ideas of Indian philosophy through an access he got to an important treatise on India by Bardesanes, the noted Babylonian Gnostic teacher of the early third century A.D., "who acquired authentic information about India from the Indian ambassadors who were sent to the court of Emperor Antoninus Pius." A quotation from it by Porphyry, still preserved, gives an intimate knowledge of the Brahmanas and the Buddhists, their discipline and their mode of life. Porphyry made a critical study of the Sankhya doctrines of the contrast between the spiritual and the material world. But his strong insistence on abstention from animal slaughter and his denunciation of sacrifice for religious merit show his Buddhist bias.

Indian Culture and Christian Times

Clement of Alexandria knew of Buddhism in the second and third centuries A.D. He heard about India from his tutor Pantaenus, one of the earliest Christian missionaries to visit India. He makes repeated mention of the presence of Buddhists in Alexandria, and declares that "the Greeks stole their philosophy from the barbarians." He is the first Greek to refer to the Buddha by name. The Therapeutae of Alexandria and the Essenes of Palestine, who were so well known to the Greek world, were in fact communities of Buddhist Bhikkus, practising Buddhist rites, preaching Buddhist doctrines and spreading the teachings of the Buddha in the West. The word Therapeutae is only a Greek variation of the Pali word Theraputta, meaning son of the Buddha. The Christian historian Mahaffy says: "These Buddhist missionaries were the forerunners of the Christ." Philosophers like Schelling and Schopenhauer, and Christian thinkers like Dean Mansel and D. Milman admit that the Essenes and the Therapeutae arose through the influence of Buddhist missionaries who had come from India during the reign of Ashoka.

The influence of Buddhism on the development of Christian faith has been admitted by many scholars. The parable style of the Bible is held to be an echo of the story-telling method of the Buddhist Jatakas, and, says Vincent Smith, "some orthodox forms of Christian teaching owe some debt to the lessons of Gautama." Winternitz believes that "in the combination of the Jewish and the Greek ideas on which the teachings of the Christian Gospels are based, there was also some admixture of Buddhist thoughts and legends. Some undoubted borrowings from the Buddhist religious literature are also found in the Apocryphal Gospels." The strong insistence of the orthodox form of Christianity on the observance of rituals, penance, celibacy and other rigid austerities is said to have been imbibed from Buddhism. The Gospel Story of the Bible bears striking resemblance to the account of the Buddha's life given in such Buddhist works as the *Lalita Vistara*, which describe the Buddha's miraculous conception and birth, the star over his birthplace, the prophecy of the aged Asita, the temptation by Mara and the twelve disciples. But points of similarity between the Buddhist and the Christian parables are even more striking. Discussing the coincidence of the Jataka story of the pious disciple walking on the water with the similar story in the Gospels, Max Muller remarks that it can only be accounted for by some historical contact and transference, and the Jatakas are centuries older than the Gospels. The story of the Prodigal Son is found almost in the same form in the Buddhist work, the *Suddhamma Pundarika*. Another fact which confirms the possibility of Indian influence on Christianity was revealed years ago in a book called *The Unknown Life of Jesus Christ*, translated from a manuscript discovered in a monastery of Tibet by the Russian explorer, Lutovitch. The book fills up the gap of the Christ's absence from Jerusalem for twelve years by describing his itinerary in northern India during that period when he visited India's well-known cities and centres of learning and her great saints and scholars.

There is positive evidence that Indian faiths and philosophies flourished in Asia Minor in pre-Christian times. Zenob, an early fourth-century classical writer of Christian Armenia, relates the episode of two Indian chiefs who as a result of their discomfiture in an insurrection against their king, left their country with their following and settled in Taron in the upper Euphrates, west of lake Van. There they built a town and erected temples for the worship of a deity called Giasne which is no other than a corruption of the name Krishna. This was about the middle of the second century B.C. They flourished in that region for more than four hundred years when about the year 304 A.D. St. Gregory appeared there in his temple-breaking campaigns and after overcoming stiff resistance razed the temples to the ground. There were at that time more than 5000 followers of the Krishna cult, Vaishnavism as we may call it. And, obviously enough, all of them could not be Indians.

The Syrian countries which formed part, first of the Persian and later of the Graeco-Roman world for nearly five centuries before the Christian era, were long exposed to Indian influence. They had intimate contact particularly with the Bhagavata (the worship of the Hindu Godhead Vishnu of whom Krishna represents an aspect) religion and Buddhism. There is a view that this impact of India upon Israel had much to do with the rise and growth of Christianity and that it was one of the reasons why Judaism became hostile, and remained so ever afterwards, to the new faith as something outlandish.

Indian knowledge was familiar to the Eastern churches of the Levant. A notable instance is furnished by the presence of Indian ideas

in the writings of Origen (third century A.D.), who was one of the greatest of the Greek Fathers of the Eastern church and a writer of many authoritative books on Christian theology. Origen believed in reincarnation and showed extreme eagerness to imbibe Indian wisdom, "those insights and illuminations from 'the Christians that were before Christ.'" He was thrice persecuted, the last time to death, for holding 'un-Christian' views' one of which must have been on reincarnation. An eminent Christian thinker says that had not in the fourth century the Council of Chalcedon condemned reincarnation, then believed in by many Christian Fathers, the 'religion of love' would have been saved the disgrace of the cruel finality of everlasting punishment for the mistakes of this one life.

Many authorities have felt that in India there is a source-land rich and constant enough in its yield of the Water of Life to have fed all mankind's ecclesiastical channels. They think that India influenced, directly or indirectly, that stream of lofty idealism and devotion which arose in the Rhineland in the spring of the Middle Ages. Indian ideas were transmitted through a succession of teachers and disciples like the Arabian monk Bar Sudali, also known as Dionysius the Areopagite, whose doctrines were more Vedantic than "Synoptic", Erigena, Eckhart and his spiritual sons. This was, as it were, a transplantation of Indian wisdom from the banks of the Ganga to those of the Rhine. In his book *The Flowering of Mysticism*, Rufus Jones has traced quite clearly the movement of Indian ideas through Persia, Alexandria, Cordova, Padua and thence by Paris on to the Rhine, "influencing and forming the thought and practice of the first great schools of Western mysticism." Scholarship, says Gerald Heard, has now proved as a fact of literature that the specific concepts which gave to Western religion its deepest insights and its most effective techniques were all imported from the Indian areas.

It is well known that the stories of India form a substantial element in those of Europe, the *Panchatantra*, the *Hitopadesha* and the Buddhist Jatakas having played a most important part in this migration of stories from India. The famous Welsh story of Llewellyn and Gæbert, many fables in La Fontaine's French work, a number of fairy-tales in Grimm and Hans Anderson, many stories in the *Gesta Romanorum*, the *Decameron*, and Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, not to speak of the fables of Aesop, are derived from India. Barlaam and Josaphat in the well-known Christian story have now been definitely identified with a Bodhisattva and the Buddha. The story is that of Gautama Buddha's Great Renunciation, as told in the *Lalita Vistara*. Thus the Buddha is worshipped today in a garbled form in a church in Sicily dedicated to St. Barlaam. A Jataka story is traced in Shakespeare's play *The Merchant of Venice*.

Nor is India's contribution to early Western science less noteworthy. The so-called Arabic numerals, the decimal system, the place-value system for numerals, the use of zero, the fundamental principles of Algebra and Geometry are distinctly of Indian origin, carried to Europe by the Arabs. Royle says that Hippocrates, the father of Western medicine, borrowed his *Materia Medica* from India. In the time of Alexander, says Garrison, "Hindu physicians and surgeons enjoyed a well-earned reputation for superior knowledge and skill." Aristotle is believed to have been indebted to them. India's science of music is held to be the source of Wagner's principal idea or "the leading motive". Beethoven was not untouched by India.

It is not possible within the brief scope of a short article to give further details of the story of the diffusion of Indian ideas in the Western world. What however we have so far been able with the help of authorities to say about the main movements and personalities in it, suffice to show that India left the indelible stamp of her individuality upon the culture of those regions in the West with which she came into contact. Let us sum up in the reverent words of Will Durant, the eminent American thinker and historian: "India was the motherland of our race, and Sanskrit the mother of Europe's languages; she was the mother of our philosophy; mother, through the Arabs; of much of our mathematics; mother, through the Buddha, of the ideals embodied in Christianity; mother, through the village community, of self-government and democracy. Mother India is in many ways the mother of us all."

Sonnet At Dawn

Traced with thy finger on a furrowed brow,
The Hush of thy Spirit presses ever near—
Trance-held in ecstasy a prescience now
Dawns upon us from some other sphere—
A ruby jewel on the calm breast of Time
Rides the vast ocean of our world's desires,
Sounding a chord in forgotten realms, to chime,
Earth's soul awakes! the heart of man aspires!
While in the surrendering pathos of the fawn
A nerve-note quivers; and o'er translucent seas
Green-amber shades smile on a rose-flushed dawn,
Mounts there the tide of aeon'd memories
To capture from the margin of the Night
The delicate splendours of the Dawn's first Light.

NORMAN DOWSETT.

'VANDE MATARAM' AND 'JANA GANA MANA'

By DR. JUDITH TYBERG

Asked: Which of India's two national anthems should take precedence, *Jana Gana Mana* or *Vande Mataram*, both as regards word content and orchestral and choral possibilities?—I answer:

As a Western lover and student of India, her wisdom-lore and her lofty-souled men, her dynamic broad-based culture and her fundamentally spiritual turn of mind, I must declare that *Vande Mataram* answers to these unique qualities in a far superior way than does *Jana Gana Mana*. The popular is not always the most deeply typical as is instanced by what is generally spread abroad concerning America through the movies and jazz music, though it certainly does suggest a trend.

The *Jana Gana Mana* of Tagore is a fine stirring and noble call to the many-faceted nation to unite and is measured with the refrain referring to God as Dispenser of India's destiny. I consider this approach to God as quite un-Indian, too similar to the national songs of other nations where God is treated as Something or Someone separate from the country and the nation. (For example, England's "God save our King".) It is just this very point which, to me, prevents *Jana Gana Mana* from being a national song typical of the true India with her glorious past, her spiritually resurging present, and her promising future of puissant Divine Service to all the world.

As Sri Aurobindo pointed out in one of his speeches to the nation during his early political career for the freedom of India, it is not the bare intellectual idea of God, or of the motherland, or desire for freedom that was the inspired motive or driving force in the Indian mind. It was when the Motherland was portrayed as a "great Divine and Maternal Power in the form of beauty" that Indian hearts were gripped and a passion for the Mother and her service fired the religious note that gave force to their patriotism. *Vande Mataram* was the spiritual clarion-challenge to their patriotism, for it answered to the characteristic core of their natures, and therefore like a true mantra it had the power to awaken the vision and the self-sacrifice of the people, so that the Divine Mother might be free to bless and heal. Patriotism became a religion.

Indians have never taken God as a mere abstraction, as only impersonal in expression, or as an intellectual idea. One just has to travel over vast India to be convinced of this. Every image, every temple, every stream, every holy man is the Divine, is a living Divine Reality, so that the image of India as the Divine Mother easily gained response and the creation of the song *Vande Mataram* was the sign of the spiritual rebirth of a once glorious nation seemingly crushed and doomed. This song was the harbinger of a still greater service to the Divine as a virile nation. So it is just this identity of India with the Divine that makes *Vande Mataram* bespeak the true Indian *swabhava* or characteristic nature, striking once again the high wisdom of Veda and Upanishad and Gita—*Sarvam idam eva Brahma*.

As Sri Aurobindo points out in his book, *The Doctrine of Passive Resistance*, the sap which keeps alive self-sacrifice and self-forgetfulness, great service, and high endurance for the country, is the realization of the Motherhood of God in the country, the vision of the Mother, the knowledge of the

Mother, the perpetual contemplation, adoration and service of the Mother. Love for this Divine Mother must be the spring of the political actions of India, as well as all her other activities.

This is the tonic, the mighty basic ring of *Vande Mataram*. India must keep her high place as the spiritual Guru of all divinely-thirsty peoples. She must dare to sustain her ancient origin and destiny. For this, surely *Vande Mataram* is the sacred mantra, her national anthem representative of her religiously patriotic heart.

As regards the orchestration and choral arrangements possible for *Vande Mataram*, there is little to support the statement that it is not suitable for popular singing. Certainly any words, and indeed such soul-stirring words as *Vande Mataram* can easily be adapted to a tune either for choral or orchestral or band music. An Indian musician acquainted with Western music and inspired by the pulsating divine call of the words could create fitting music for them. I consider that one such arrangement has already been made suitable for bands, soldiers singing while marching, for choruses and orchestras, I have heard a 12-inch phonograph record of this from the Ananda Bazar and Hindusthan Standard Co. of India. It is the choral and orchestral rendering by Timir Baran (2 MC, 11731-3 and 2 MC 11732-3). I have also heard Timir Baran's tune sung with moving spirit by the people of Sri Aurobindo Ashram and was very favourably struck with its power and call to the spiritual consciousness. This arrangement also has a surging movement and is marked constantly with the mantric *Vande Mataram*, "Mother, I bow to Thee", repeated in the same melodic strain, thus keeping alive the spiritual challenge of the song.

It is true also that the more purely Indian classical music with its delicate moving through semi-and-quarter tones from one note to the next and with its unique rhythms might be a more typically Indian accompaniment to the words, but such music is not suitable for general popular untrained singing, for it requires artistry and long years of practice to render the true beauty of such music. But even such classical music can be rendered for chorus and orchestra as well. But it would require trained musicians to execute it with the finesse required. Tagore evidently recognised this when he composed his very simple musical arrangement of *Jana Gana Mana*, which is certainly not either typically Indian Raga music, but quite Western in structure. But Tagore's music for *Vande Mataram*, more Indian in nature, requires delicacy and fine musicianship to keep its true beauty alive. There are also in existence several purely classical compositions in the ancient Raga form of *Vande Mataram*. These can still live and be cultivated and used for the finer cultural circles and then be shared with the people by musical artists at public functions and thus keep the Indian populace conscious of the higher type and nature of their own ancient music. But this should not prevent the encouragement of the more popular tune of *Vande Mataram* with an arrangement more easily sung by all, by public groups, choruses, marching troops, schools and universities so that the newly rising activities of the reborn nation may have a musical medium to express their religious patriotism. So the merits of Timir Baran's rendering should be considered unless a better one is composed. His setting is also less purely Western than is the delightfully popular and simple arrangement of Tagore's *Jana Gana Mana*.

Prayer

Wings of sleep afloat in an argent air—
The dream-lone altitude of flame-wide hush
Aglow with the white rapture of the stars.
A silver breath from the ivory-deep poise
Illumines the edge of night's endless seas.
To thy unvalled fire-omnipotent trance
I lift the cry of my earth's abysmal drouth,
O august bird of a deathless universe!
Bring thy radiant ecstasy to my soul—
A remote oblivious splendour-gleam
Waking a mute prayer for the Unseen—
And rouse from the unborn slumbering core
The dust-dimmed memory of the Unreachable!
O swan of high unhorizoned secrecy,
Kindle the mind's sky-mirroring lamp
Within the hollow bonds of ageless clay,
The ancient cathedral of somnolence—
And open the body's cryptic fount of light,
Marrying matter's night of oblivion
To the blazing zenith of summit noon.
O topless sun-eagle of golden power,
Lift this earth to the pinnacle of thy Face!

ROMEN.

Moksha

As one who saunters on the seabanks in a wilderness of day
Is dazzled by the sunshot marge and rippling counterchange
Of wavebeams and an eagerhood of quivering wings that range—
Grey on the sky's rim,—white on the foam-pathway,—
Each man is wildered myriadly by oversight and surface tone
Engirdling soul with clamour, by this fragmentary mood,
This patter of Time's marring steps across the solitude
Of Truth's abidingness, Self-Blissful and Alone.
But when eastward-streaming shadows bring the hush of eventide
The wave-lapped sun can wield again his glory of hence-going
And furnish by his lowlihead vast dreams of heaven-knowing—
A golden wave-way to the One where Beauty's archetypes abide.

—ARJAVA (John Chadwick).

MORNING MEDITATIONS

BY RAJANIKANT MODY

I

An Infinitude of inwardness and a sweet vast roseate pressure in my heart.

And the heart melting like pure snow-crystals into the Mother of the Universe.

'Mother, Mother, Mother!' A rising crescendo of Silent Word, of snow-silent Sound. And profound reverberations from all the hidden caverns and valleys of Being.

And a cool Fire sending its sparks downwards, kissing with its myriad flame-lips the whole of my being.

And Fire feeding the Snow.

II

I am standing right in the middle of the Avenue of Light, Mother, awaiting Your august Arrival.

Two rows of flower-laden trees of Dreams weave arches overhead and Thought-birds sing.

Smooth white cool dust-like sand of Peace is carpetting the path of Your Coming.

* * *

Come mounted on Your chariot of gold, O Mother, fluttering high Your Streamer of the Unknown Star.

I am standing right in the middle of the Avenue of Light, Mother, awaiting Your Sweet Arrival.

III

O infinite Mother, we are Your children in the Playground of the Universe.

Marching, marching, marching, forward and forward we go to meet the Supreme.

The Inconscient was our starting-point. The Infinite is our Goal.

In the Playground of the Universe, we march behind You. Led by You we are sure to reach the Goal, for the Leader and the Goal are one.

O infinite Mother, sweet is the marching and sweet the Goal.

IV

O two Poles of the axis of my existence, held by You my earth spins on securely, firmly, freely in the heavens of the infinite Vast.

Its journeying through the depths of space is a joyous movement through luminous star-dust and Leonid showers and aurorae boreales and nebular dreams of Light.

O biune Polar Stillness, be a firm support in my revolution round the Sun.

Or, rather, in some mysterious way, are You Yourself not that distant Sun?

V

O to take a plunge into the Infinite from the spring-board of meditation! A vast Aloneness entering into the being from above the head. An inner Solitude rising from within the heart's profundities to greet and embrace its erstwhile playmate. And both falling into an utter identity.

O Mother of Aloneness and Solitude! O Trance of Silent Stillness! Ineffable *Nirvāna* of the mute Unknown! How sweet it is to take a plunge into the Infinite from the spring-board of the Finite!

VI

O Sun, out of the Inconscient's Night, You led me to Light. You infused *prāna* into my lifeless frame. But for You, where would I have been? O Sun, O all my Life and Light, I will for ever revolve round You.

O Moon, two mighty Oceans in my being heave and surge at Your risings. Your *Soma*-nectar quickens my plant and animal life. O Moon, O all my Love and Bliss, I will for ever keep You close to my heart.

O Sun, O Moon, my biune Dream of Light and Bliss, of Life and Love, I am Your Earth, Your mute unquestioning Earth and Field, Yours for ever and for ever.

VII

I will build a Home of Peace for You, my biune Beloved. Surrender will be its base and Faith its walls. Sincerity will serve as pillars of support. A seven-storied Mansion it will be. And Openness will be its spacious doors. A rainbow-paint of Bliss will decorate the whole. A terrace on the top will show the Supramental Sun by day and magic Moonlight in the night.

And Time will never make the Mansion old, for he will be a silent Watchman at the Gate.

Such a Home of Peace I'll surely build for You, my biune Beloved.

VIII

On the wide plateau of my heart's inner Silence Your Whisperings are snow-capped hills. Cool rivulets of Bliss descend forming rainbow-hued waterfalls sparkling in the sun.

On my plateau of Silence there has been going on an eternal Festival of Joy, ever since You came and made it Your playground of luminous Dreams.

IX

In the Heaven of silent Stillness within my heart there was a stirless stir. And Someone came up mounted on Time-Eagle's wings, descending yet ascending, moving unmovingly. I recognised him. It was my other self, my all-pervading Self.

The Eagle perched upon the Psyche's still hill-verge. And the All-pervading Presence soon pervaded all. The Eagle was a still self-gathered point on a distant marge. The other Self of mine became myself and this my self became a white cloud-moon in Stillness' Heaven. And all became a landscape and a skyscape of the Infinite.

X

My tears of joy reflect the peaceful gorgeous hues of an inner dawn.

Every tear-drop is a world, a wide wide world peopled by unknown sweetnesses and rosy dreams and dew-delicate emotions.

Every tear-drop is a prism catching Thy inner Light and transforming it into rainbow-arches on the horizon of the External.

O sweet and silent Daybreak!

XI

When in this world of birth and death You took a dive, You became I. And the Inconscient's waters bore the Infinite in their womb.

O Unborn One, when I was born, You too were born in me. O Formless, Nameless Absolute, when I assumed this form and name, You too were formed and named in me.

I became a *Jiva* in the world of *Jivas*; You too became a *Jiva* in the world of *Jivas*.

O what a mimicry in Identity!

But still You are my Light and I Your shadow, You my Dreamer, I Your dream, You my Possibility, I Your Actuality.

XII

A vast and deep Silence advancing and thickening like fog envelops and penetrates into my being. By its cool mesmeric touch my thoughts become mute and still, like birds in the evening twilight.

And then Thy giant Image rises from the caverns of the heart and fills all space and sky, like a giant glow emerging from an active volcano.

My whole being is flooded with Thy Light and Thy Peace.

XIII

The day dawns and I put more fuel-wood into my aspiration's fire. The flames put out or dimmed by the night become rekindled and leap upward towards You, O Infinite.

And all becomes a Festival of Flames.

* * *

Descend, O Flame Almighty, come hither along the *Devayāna* Paths of Light and mingle with these upward-leaping flamelets. Stuff of Your Stuff, they will be self-fulfilled in You, O Fire Divine.

Or perhaps they will become, each one of them, a flaming pillar to support and hold the impending Descent of Yours, O Mystic Agni.

XIV

Another day has dawned, O Mother, and the Night of Stygian gloom has burst into a plethora of gorgeous colours.

O Plenitude of Bliss, O snow-pinnacled Peace, You have become for me the very morning air I breathe, this cool sweet air. And every breathing-in brings the fragrance of Your roses and Your lotuses from the Unknown. An infinite sweetness is Your morning-face.

Another day has dawned, O Mother, another night is gone. And Light has shown the purpose of the darkest heart of Night.

XV

Cycles of Time! Wheelings of the Chariot of Time! What matters if they go on ceaselessly, since You are in their centre? Let the Chariot roll on, let it sweep onward, for it moves, ever moves along the track to the Infinite.

You are the centre and You are the goal of our journey and that is why we have mounted on Time's roaring, thundering chariot, with the sun and the moon yoked to it alternately.

The road is rough and full of ups and downs, but after the next station it will become quite smooth and level, and pleasant with lovely scenery. So let us move on in the chariot of Time.

You are the Centre and You are the Goal, but, greater than that, You Yourself are our Divine Charioteer. So onward, forward, upward, till we reach the End.

XVI

How could I have known Your workings in me, O sweet Infinite? My consciousness is limited and is like an ice-berg almost wholly submerged in the Inconscient's sea with just a tiny crest above the waters. And You are the all-pervading Ether pressing upon that crest from all sides with all Your virgin might. And even on my submerged portion that very pressure is there, constant and intense, from within as well as from without. And I have now become dimly aware of it.

And now I am all joy, my silent ever-present Companion, for now I know I am in the hands of One who is All-Wisdom and All-Love.

XVII

My breathing has become a rosary of beads for the spontaneous *japa* of Your Names, Your countless Names.

My days and nights have become beads in the rosary of Time, one white, one black, alternately, for Your sweet Comings and sad Goings.

My births and deaths have been strung together into a rosary of Time-Eternity, for keeping a count of Your manifestations into and withdrawals from this physical world.

THE MOTHER OF INDIA AND CHINA

By TAN YUN-SHAN

The oldest and the most important Chinese scripture Yi-Ching, the Book of Change, which is the origin and source of the whole of Chinese culture, including religion, philosophy, literature, etc., like the Vedas of India, begins with two Diagrams of Chien and Khun, or Heaven and Earth. Here Chien or Heaven was interpreted as the Universal Father, similar to the Indian Brahma; Khun or Earth, as the Universal Mother, analogous to the Indian Sakti.

According to the ancient Chinese philosophy as embodied in the book Yi-Ching, Chien and Khun are the beginning of the Universe and the commencement of all natural phenomena. So the Scripture says:—

“How great is the Chien!
from which all things have their beginning.”
“How supreme is the Khun!
from which all things have their birth.”

Again:—

“When there were the existence of the Heaven
and the Earth, then came the birth of all other things.”

But these, Chien and Khun, are not entirely two separate and independent things. They are interdependent and intermingled. They are the two principles or aspects or attributes of the One Absolute. They are at the same time made of the One Absolute and the makers of all other things. Thus the book Yi-Ching says:—

“There is the Great Absolute in the Yi that begets the two Principles (i.e. the Heaven and the Earth or the Masculine and the Feminine). The Two Principles beget the Four Elements. The Four Elements beget the Eight Diagrams.”

Lao-Tsu said the same thing in another way:—

“Tao begets One; One Begets Two; Two begets
Three; Three begets all things.”

The Chinese people therefore always put these Two, the Chien and Khun, or the Heaven and Earth, or the Father and Mother, together and term them into one single phraseology as “Chien-Khun”, or “Heaven-Earth”, or “Father-Mother”. Sometimes when they even say something of One of the Two, it implies Both. Thus: when they speak of the Chien, they do also mean the Khun; when they speak of Heaven, they do also mean the Earth; when they speak of the Father, they do also mean the Mother and vice versa.

The Mother, to the Chinese people, in the metaphysical sense, is not only the Mother of mankind but the Mother of all other things. They see the same Mother in human beings as well as in all other beings such as plants and animals. They regard the mother of all other beings as the same as the mother of human beings. They therefore call a tree which bears fruit, “Mother tree”; a cow, “Mother cow”; a female sheep, “Mother sheep”; a hen, “Mother hen”; and so on. The Chinese people always compare the Mother to the Earth because the earth gives birth and every thing to all beings in the world. They therefore worship the Earth, the Mother and the Ancestors. They regard filial piety as the root of virtue.

In the first chapter of The Hsiao-Ching, the Book of Filial Piety, it was thus described:—

“When Confucius was unoccupied, and his disciple Tseng-Tsu was sitting by in attendance on him, the Master asked, ‘Shan (Tseng-Tsu), the ancient kings had a perfect virtue and an all-embracing rule of conduct through which they were in accord with all under heaven. By the practice of it the people were brought to live in peace and harmony, and there was no ill-will between superiors and inferiors. Do you know what it was?’ Tseng-Tsu rose from his mat, and said, ‘How should I, Shan, who am so devoid of intelligence, be able to know this?’ The Master said, ‘It was filial piety. Now filial piety is the root of virtue, and the stem out of which grows all moral teachings. Sit down again, and I will explain to you. Our bodies—to every hair and bit of skin—are received by us from our parents, and we must not presume to injure or wound them:—this is the beginning of filial piety. When we have established our character by the practice of the teachings, so as to make our name famous in future ages, and thereby glorify our parents:—this is the end of filial piety.’”

In India the Mother has been from time immemorial even more praised, eulogized and worshipped than in China. In the Rigveda there is a sacred hymn, *Devisukta*, describing the Mother as *Vak*, the spiritually enlightened daughter of the Seer Ambhrina, identifying herself with the primal energy of eternal life.

In the Narayana Upanishad, the Mother was called Kanyakumari, Durgi, and Durga, and was described as a Goddess enveloped in flames of fire, and eternally associated with the Supreme Universal Self, and worshipped by devotees for the fulfilment of their desires here and hereafter.

In several books of the Mahabharata, namely, Vanaparvan, Bhishmaparvan, Virataparvan, etc., numerous epithets were given to her, such as Durga, Uma, Parvati, Chandī, Kali, Mahakali, Bhadrakali, Kapalini, Katyayani, Jaya, Vijaya, Karalika, Kamakshi, Shakambhari, Skandamata, Saraswati, Savitri, etc. The Mahabharata described her as the fierce black Goddess of destruction, who was a sister of Lord Krishna, and who killed

the demon in the form of a buffalo while she dwelt on the Vindhya hills.

The Mother appeared in the Puranas, especially in the Markandeya Purana, as the centre of the great Shakti cult. The Devimahatmya section of the Markandeya Purana contains an account of the glorification of the great Mother Chandika.

The Devimahatmya is more commonly known as the Saptashati Chandī. It is one of the most sacred scriptures of the Shaktas, and ranks only second in importance and popularity to the philosophical song, the Bhagavadgita.

But the most illustrative and illustrious record of the Mother we find is that in “The Mother” by Sri Aurobindo. According to him the Mother has four great aspects; four leading powers and personalities. Thus Sri Aurobindo said in his book:—

“One is her personality of calm wideness and comprehending wisdom and tranquil benignity and inexhaustible compassion and sovereign and surpassing majesty and all-ruling greatness. Another embodies her power of splendid strength and irresistible passion, her warrior mood, her overwhelming will, her impetuous swiftness and world-shaking force. A third is vivid and sweet and wonderful with her deep secret of beauty and harmony and fine rhythm, her intricate and subtle opulence, her compelling attraction and captivating grace. The fourth is equipped with her close and profound capacity of intimate knowledge and careful flawless work and quiet and exact perfection in all things. Wisdom, Strength, Harmony, Perfection are their several attributes and it is these powers that they bring with them into the world, manifest in a human disguise in their Vibhūtis and shall found in the divine degree of their ascension in those who can open their earthly nature to the direct and living influence of the Mother. To the four, we give the four great names, Maheshwari, Mahakali, Mahalakshmi, Mahasaraswati.”

The powers, the virtues, the merits, the personalities etc. of the Mother have also been delightfully illustrated in a Chinese Mahayana Buddhist Sutra called “Kwan-Shih-Yin-Ching” or the Avalokiteshvara Sutra, which is the 25th Section of the famous “Miao-Fa-Lien-Hua-Ching”, the Saddharma Pundarika Sutra or the Lotus of the Wonderful Law. This is one of the most important scriptures for the Mahayana Buddhists in China as well as in Japan. It was translated from Sanskrit into Chinese. Six Chinese translations of the Canon had been made by Indian missionaries and Chinese scholars but only three of them are now existing. The best and the most popular one of the three existing versions is the one rendered by the famous Indian Buddhist teacher Kumarajiva in A.D. 406. Since then it became very familiar not only to the Chinese Buddhists but also to the Confucianist scholars and scholars of other sects and schools of Chinese religion and philosophy. It was always read and recited by the Chinese people with great respect, adoration and devotion. Numerous commentaries were written by Chinese Buddhist scholars on it. It is therefore a work of combination and synthesis of the spirit of the Indian and Chinese peoples.

The Mother appeared in this scripture as the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, called in Chinese as “Kwan-Shih-Yin-Pu-Sha”, Regarder-of-the-Cries-of-the-World; or “Kwan-Yin-Lao-Mu”, Old-Mother-Avalokiteshvara. The Chinese people regard her as the Goddess of Mercy, and salute and address her as “Most Merciful, Most Pitiful”. For She had from time without beginning made a vow to save all beings in the world from all kinds of their sufferings. Whoever is in any difficulty whatsoever, need only call her name and she will come immediately to help him or her. It was thus described in the Scripture:—

“If there be any who hold fast to the name of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, though they fall into a great fire, the fire will not be able to burn them, by virtue of the august supernatural power of the Bodhisattva. If any, carried away by a flood, call upon her name, they will immediately reach the shallows. If there be hundreds, thousands, myriads, kotis of beings, who in search of gold, silver, lapis lazuli, moon-stones, agate, coral, amber, pearls, and other treasures, go out on the ocean, and if a black gale blows their ships adrift upon the land of the Rakshasa-demons, and if amongst them there be even a single person who calls the name of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, all those people will be delivered from the woes of the Rakshasas. . . .”

The foregoing paragraphs have shown briefly the Indian and Chinese conception of and belief in the Mother. Now the Mother of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram at Pondicherry is the exact emblem and embodiment of this conception and belief of the Indian and Chinese peoples. I have had the opportunity and privilege of visiting the Ashram once in November, 1939, and had Darshan of both the Master and the Mother. The Mother is indeed extremely and perfectly sweet and gracious and merciful. When I talked to her, I felt as if I was talking to my own mother who was so near and dear to me and who very unfortunately departed from me in my childhood. On this auspicious occasion of February 21, the birthday of the Mother, let us all offer her our homage and pray for the success of her great mission.

THE BIRTH OF A REPUBLIC

BY K. R. SRINIVASA IYENGAR

The birth of the Republic of India is an auspicious exhilarating event,—the event that shall for ever be memorable in the annals of our chequered history. It is an occasion for guarded rejoicing in a prayerful mood, an occasion too for honest stock-taking and dedication to the still unfilled tasks ahead. India has at long last ceased to be a subject nation,—ceased even to be a dominion,—and is today reborn as a Sovereign Democratic Republic. It is surely a day of destiny for India, and indeed for the whole world. Yet, while we are self-consciously exultant, a nameless regret and a nameless fear place their restraining hand on our back, and a shudder rises in our heart, courses through our veins, and fills our entire being. The Past cannot be recalled, and the Past cannot be blotted out. We are a party to intermittent spurts of remorse, we spasmodically look before and after, and we have not fully awakened from the hideous nightmare of August 1947, nor firmly shaken off the fearful ghosts of the ill-fated Partition.

The attainment of national independence, the inauguration of the Republic of India, is by no means the comforting end of the story, an inn of tranquillity for tired limbs to rest. The apparent end is but a new beginning, and fresh energies need to be mobilized on the arduous issues of Tomorrow. Life—national history—human history: these are no static things. Life is a ceaseless Becoming. We cannot pause; we cannot go back; we must for ever forge onward, for ever fare forward. The direction and the speed of the movement will be largely determined by our knowledge, by the wisdom born of knowledge, and by our faith, by the strength born of faith. Thus our knowledge must be fed continually, and our faith must still burn with a steady gem-like flame. If we are not well-informed, if we fail in our faith, the look of things here and abroad may daunt us. Civilizations have risen and fallen, empires have come and gone, republics have been hushed up by infant mortality,—but to what end? Is history—all human endeavour—no more than “a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing?” Is Progress an illusion? Is human “free will” but a figment of the imagination? Shall we, then, elect for the cynic’s tub or the hedonist’s bower of bliss,—or shall we take a dose of prussic acid, end this strange disease, life? That way lies madness, to be sure. To surrender to despair is not wise; to resort to self-indulgence is not manly. What then? We should determinedly inform ourselves; we should study history in a mood of attention, with prayerful concentration; we should rediscover the grounds of faith,—faith in ourselves, and faith in the future destiny of our country and of the human race as a whole. And on the twin foundations of this knowledge and this faith we should structure the edifice of the future.

Purposive Progress

The Dharma Chakra from the Lion Capital at Sarnath figures at the centre of the Flag of the Republic of India. The background colours are saffron, white and green, the Wheel itself being painted blue across the central white band. We need not go into the esoteric significance of the different colours. It is sufficient for us to see in the flag an attempt to suggest both variety and unity, both movement and fixity. Unity, not uniformity, movement, not scattering or disintegration, ought to be the ruling dual principle of our life, making for richness as well as harmony, reconciling the splendours in the firmament of Time with the inapprehensible white radiance of Eternity. The location of the centre of the Wheel of Law at the centre of the white band offers the clue to the secret of purposive evolution. What is even this memorable day, this phoenix hour, this

splendorous moment, but

“A moment in time and of time, A moment not out of time, but in time, in that we call history: transecting, bisecting the world of time, a moment in time but not like a moment of time, A moment in time but time was made through that moment: for without the meaning there is no time, and that moment of time gave the meaning.”

The Wheel shall move indeed, but the axle, the “still centre”, shall be left undisturbed. Somnolence and inertia are easy, but they must be resisted. The price of the light of liberty is a perpetual alertness, an unwearying struggle with the powers of darkness that are only too ready to reclaim what they have lost. In his own rugged and manly way Whitman rightly warns us:

“Alone! we must not stop here, However sweet these laid-up stores,

however convenient this dwelling we cannot remain here . . .” Have the past struggles succeeded?

What has succeeded? yourself? your nation? Nature?

“Now understand me well—it is provided in the essence of things that from any fruition of success, no matter what, shall come forth something to make a greater struggle necessary.”

But is progress no more than a wheel executing numberless revolutions, repeating for ever the same cycle of error and correction and advance and decline? Professor Toynbee says that it is not impossible to reconcile the Graeco-Indian cyclic view of history with the Jewish-Zoroastrian straight-line view of progress: “After all, if a vehicle is to move forward on a course which its driver has set, it must be borne along on wheels that turn monotonously round and round. While civilizations rise and fall and, in falling, give rise to others, some purposeful enterprise, higher than theirs, may all the time be making headway, and, in a divine plan, the learning that comes through the suffering caused by the failures of civilisations may be the sovereign means of progress”. That is why I said that without the sure ground of Faith no purposive or creative action is possible. Knowledge, certainly; but Faith no less. These assured, we may march breast-forward, and we shall not fail to forge nearer to our goal.

Liberty and Authority

Formally and visibly the Republic of India is born today, but was it not born when the first Indian nurtured in his heart the germ of the idea, when our progenitors dreamed the first dreams of our redemption and regeneration? And the Republic can have meaning, it can live, it can prosper, only just so long as the people of India, the Mother’s three hundred million children, are

prepared to sustain it with the light of their understanding and the warmth of their affection. Sovereign power brings with it supreme responsibility as well; and self-government cannot be a success unless the people assiduously cultivate the virtues of self-knowledge and self-control. The enduring health and massive strength of the collectivity can be ensured only by ensuring the health and strength of the individual, of the numerous members that make a society, of the many million citizens that cohere into the state.

The crux of the problem, the Sphinx riddle writ across human history, is to devise means that would effectively balance the seemingly contradictory pulls of individual freedom and collective security and well-being, to harmonize freedom in its personal and spiritual sense with liberty in its political and economic sense. Which of these is the parent, and which the progeny? Security no doubt is necessary, and the individual must be prepared for a certain amount of restriction of movement in the interests of the collectivity. But may not so-called security be purchased by the individual at too great a price? May not the human collectivity shed its humanity and grow into the monster, Leviathan, the soulless all-powerful totalitarian State? In their anxiety to promote the safety, the sovereign strength, of the aggregate, political thinkers are sometimes apt unduly to reduce the importance of the individual. Dr. C. R. Reddy says rather bluntly: “The liberty of the individual cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the safety of the nation, for the individual may perish but the race may survive, and it very often survives as a result of the sacrifice of its individuals, just as an army survives by the valorous sacrifice of its soldiers and regiments”. It is easy to understand what Dr. Reddy means, for he adds that the relationship between the State and the individual is essentially organic and is best expressed by the Sanskrit term *anyonya asraiya*, mutual dependence. Hegel, on the other hand, rhapsodizes about the omnipotence of the State: “It is the absolute power on earth: it is its own end and object. It is the ultimate end which has the highest right against the individual”. The Hegelian conception, duly accentuated and perverted, found its dark fulfilment in what Sri Aurobindo has described as “the rigid, armoured, aggressive, formidable Nazi State...the armoured social body of a huge collective human dinosaur”; and it will not do therefore to accept the omnipotence and omniscience of the State. It would be wiser far to assert that personal and spiritual freedom is the real parent, and political and economic liberty only the consequence; and national liberty is not truly lost till the desire for it is lost, and where does this desire for liberty sprout and blossom and bear fruit except in the heart of man? But when the individual’s liberty is curtailed to the point of extinction, when personal freedom is hushed up, the god-state of Hegel, the nightmare Leviathan, or even a world-flung commissar-run steel-frame Administration, cannot save humanity. No doubt, not even the most thoroughgoing despotism can altogether stifle the still small voice of individual man. A million might

die, a hundred million might be rendered into the status of sub-men or infra-men; still a “remnant”—a few here, a few there—might plan in the chance sheltered obscurity of a “Lost Horizon”, or in a self-forged pocket of light at the very centre of the reigning darkness, a return to the conditions of freedom and light, and ultimately bring about a new efflorescence, another bright era of hope and high endeavour and glorious fulfilment. But in the meantime the dark ages might descend, and hold sway for a millennium or more. We must prevent such a fearful contingency at all costs. And if we have the will, we can prevent it.

Our Constitution and Ourselves

The constitution of India is a bulky document of 395 Articles and 8 Schedules; and it has been hammered out over a period of three years, and at a cost of Rs. 64 lakhs. But if our Constitution is a bulky document, it is also an impressive document; derivative it may be, at times even painstakingly and superfluously derivative, yet there is nothing to cavil at in the simple dignity and noble articulation of the Preamble:

“We, the People of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a Sovereign Democratic Republic and to secure to all its citizens:

JUSTICE, social, economic and political;

LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;

EQUALITY of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all

FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity of the Nation:

IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949, do HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION”.

The criticism may indeed be justly levelled at the authors of the Constitution that, in their pathetic anxiety to make everything clear, to provide for every possible contingency, they have only made things too clear, and reduced the Constitution to a complicated legal Code. Mr. Ruthnaswamy thinks that this is the evil legacy of the British practice of formulating Office Manuals for the various Government Departments: “Nothing is left to usage, or discretion, or common sense, or the spoken word. The purpose is to make these instructions fool-proof. But the folly of such attempts is that there is no limit to human folly, and in the attempt to eliminate fools from our administration these Manuals make them robots. This attempt at detail might have been avoided in our Constitution. But we are told that an infant State like free and independent India must be provided with these swaddling clothes. Swaddling clothes do not help a child to walk or exercise its limbs. And too many clothes of any kind may overlie a child”. Nevertheless, now that the Constitution is there, it would be the part of wisdom to receive it with reverence and try to get the best out of it. The Constitution is largely the work of lawyers, specialists, and politicians; but it now belongs to us, to the People of India. It is to be worked not by Pundits and Professors,—not alone by our lawyers and politicians,—but by the entire

population of India. A Kingdom needs no Constitution; a Dictatorship needs no Constitution; but a People's Government needs one,—and the people should lodge it in their hearts and prevent ambitious unscrupulous power-groups or influential individuals from using the Constitution—misusing or twisting or perverting it—for their own un-social ends.

Under the Constitution the People are "sovereign",—in other words, it is for them to choose the Parliament, to man the Services, and to fill the offices of Government and local administration with the right personnel. Adult franchise is provided for in the Constitution, and this naturally raises the question whether the 170 million voters who will go to the polls in due course can really be trusted to think wisely and exercise their right to vote in the best interests of the country. It is not only a question of formal education, because in our country—as in all countries—there are as many educated asses as there are uneducated donkeys. Ignorance, superstition, apathy, fear, a paralyzing caste-consciousness, a pernicious communal consciousness, a fatal readiness to play into the hands of careerists, . . . there is no need to continue the catalogue of the causes of our phenomenal backwardness as a people. We complain against corruption, administrative callousness and inefficiency, favouritism and nepotism in high places, wasteful extravagance in national and institutional expenditure, the wide currency of the Black Market, . . . yet as a people we too have to share the burden of the impeachment. Every people gets the Government it deserves. Corruption must be met by probity, inefficiency by efficiency, incompetence by ability; and the answer to official indifference is individual alertness, an unwearying wide-awake interest in the society, in the world, in which the individual finds himself. In a democracy every individual ought to feel the responsibilities of a Prime Minister, take a lively interest in all that pertains to the life of a nation, and thereby contribute to the efficiency and high quality of the Government and the richness of the nation's many-sided life. We cannot wait till everyone has mastered the alphabet, or has been taught in a formal way the rudiments of civics and administration. The average educated man in the country has a fund of common sense, and is capable of right thinking and patriotic endeavour. It is the careerist politician who has long found it to his advantage to exploit superstition and prejudice, thereby consigning the masses to lower and still lower circles of enervating ignorance and fiendish fanaticism. The overweening pretensions of politics and politicians have structured elsewhere the Fascist Ogre-State, and today the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. glare at each other like mutually consuming furies, dangling in their hands the dreaded Atomic Bomb and the spectre of the Hydrogen Bomb. It is for the individual to rebel against the gigantic presumptions of political parties and politics generally, and return to a virile and purposive and many-sided humanism. Technological advance is being exploited in countries like Russia for organizing the omni-competent Ogre-State which claims and exercises the right to control the citizen's education, his leisure, his working conditions, his aesthetic tastes, his income, his personal possessions, his ethic,—in a word, every segment of his outer and inner life,—while systems of passports and exchange controls make even flight beyond the Iron Curtain all but impossible. The ex-

perience of Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia must not be lost upon us. It is for the individual to claim and exercise the rights given to him in the Constitution, revere and defend it, and make the Constitution a living reality. A written Constitution is like New Year Resolutions,—it is but a crisp promissory note. The Resolutions have yet to be carried out,—the note has still to be redeemed. Everything will therefore depend upon the sincerity, the earnestness, the determination with which we rise to discharge our responsibilities as free patriotic citizens of this Sovereign Democratic Republic. If the individual citizens, if masses of them, scoff at the Constitution or prove indifferent to their rights and duties, we cannot escape or checkmate the evils of political banditry, and our Constitution will go the way of the Weimar Constitution,—which would be a calamity worse even than the slavery we have just put aside.

It must be sadly admitted that the imperatives of modern civilization make bureaucratic encroachments on individual liberty more or less unavoidable. What Lord Hewart called the "New Despotism", like Milton's "grim wolf with privy paw", gains further ground every day even in countries like Great Britain and it does not seem to be easy to arrest its progress. Yet liberty is assured so long as the people are free to change their masters,—without a violent revolution,—from time to time; and also so long as the independence of the Judiciary is properly secured. Law should reign, but not despotic law, but "known" law. Above all, Governments, while refusing to abuse the trust placed in them by the people, should at the same time be strong enough to resist the influence of pressure groups such as high finance, big business, communal fanaticism, private armies, service chiefs, and extra-constitutional political bosses or caucuses. If the average citizen is personally free to exercise his choice, sufficiently intelligent to discriminate between rival candidates or policies, and endowed with enough moral strength both to discriminate and to act, we shall then have the basic conditions that will promote a vigorous and fruitful democratic regime in our country. There is no lack of paper "rights": we have no less than twenty-four articles in our Constitution covering "Fundamental Rights", while there are thirty articles in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights accepted a little over a year ago by the United Nations General Assembly. The need is to educate the masses—and re-educate the wrongly educated—in these "Rights" so that they may know their scope as well as their limitations, and learn, not only to claim their guerdon, but also to discharge the duties that are necessarily involved in the "rights".

Democracy and Education

A word about Education. In a democracy, adult education is a necessity rather than a luxury. "We must educate our masters", said a British statesman after the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832; that is also the position in India today. "If democracy is to be an enduring success", says Mr. Michael Roberts, "it must mean that the whole people form the base of every hierarchy of taste and judgment". In a democracy, authority ought to spring up from below, exerting the necessary pull on responsibility which should gravitate towards the base. In a dictatorship, on the other hand, authority trickles from above, while responsibility timidly looks up from below. Adult education must therefore be given high priority in the policies of our Sovereign Demo-

cratic State. The end of adult education is not mere literacy, but the many-sided training of the individual till he can play a worthy part as a conscious and useful member of society. In a word, the sense of citizenship and all that it implies should be the full aim of adult education, although we may always have to begin with the spelling-book and the multiplication table. Even apart from adult education, it would be necessary to give a new orientation to all grades of education, from the Basic School to the University. Education at all stages, besides giving the instruction and practical training appropriate to each stage should also aim at imparting to students a worthy view of life, a social ethic which should transcend the nation and embrace all humanity. Education should foster in the beneficiary a respect for man,—Man as the embodiment of such values as we can still swear by in this fear-ridden atomic age. It is fatally easy to reduce information to propaganda, inquiry into advertisement, and discussion of problems into the injection of pet ideas. Education should equip the student with the background knowledge to discern and choose aright, not actually impose from above a particular choice upon the students. In particular, self-respect should be fostered, and self-respect naturally involves respecting others, and an unwillingness to inflict pain or humiliation on others. The so-called "sporting spirit" and the ideal of the "gentleman" mean, among other things, the capacity to win without vanity or pride and lose without rancour or viperous regret. Thus the emphasis in education has henceforth to be both on intellectual or technical equipment and on character. "A democracy cannot be successful", says Dr. C. R. Reddy, "unless the average character of the people is sufficiently high. . . . A corrupt government corrupts society. A corrupt society can only give us corrupt governments, and each will intensify the rottenness of the other. . . . Ideas don't breed character; it is character that breeds character."

Here indeed is the core of the problem, and so long as the solution eludes us or is ignored by us, our agitated attempts to fiddle with this delicate and difficult instrument of democratic government will produce only cacophonies and hideous sounds, not the rich life-giving strains of harmony. In the modern world, on account of pseudo-scientific criticism of religion and morals and the shock of two World Wars and the attendant political and economic revolutions, there has occurred a tragic collapse of moral values; and individuals and collectivities are now only too eager to practise, if not openly to profess, a moral nihilism that strikes at the very root of the Good Life. Describing the "democratic man" of his time, Plato remarks in a luminous passage that "his life has neither law nor order; and this distracted existence he terms joy and bliss and freedom; and so he goes on. His life is motley and manifold and an epitome of many lives". Commenting on this passage, Sir Richard Livingstone makes the apt remark: "Witness that chaos of values, the cheap newspaper". The average citizen, put on the weekly diet of the cheap newspaper, is not only ill-equipped, but sometimes even perniciously equipped, to play the part expected of him in a democracy. Reading exciting items and loud advertisements, gazing at semi-nude photographs and sadist wild-west picture reels, the head whirls, the sensibilities are progressively blunted and rendered useless, and the man falls a prey to random impulses, his life becomes a matter of perpe-

tual apathy, he becomes by turns fiddler, buffoon, patriot, comrade, saboteur, sadhu, and satyagrahi. If excessive regimentation is the devil, unbridled individualism is evil no less; law and liberty have to be so reconciled that we may resort to law to keep in check impulses that induce aggression and tyranny, and claim freedom to give free play to impulses that are essentially creative or contribute to the general well-being.

The Highest Hope of Mankind

Modern civilization is a glittering edifice reared on three pillars, technology, science, and morality, or as Sir Richard Livingstone calls it, a certain ideal of human nature and conduct. Science may be equated with ordered knowledge, and science, Sir Frederick Gowland Hopkins authoritatively tells us, is one of the humanities, no less. Knowledge applied to practical uses has given us instruments of life and death, of pleasure and cruelty; knowledge applied to social well-being has given us a code of morality, the ideal of virtue or *dharma*. But for the categorical imperatives of an acknowledged social ethic, "all things are lawful", as Ivan Karamazov might put it. The difficulty today is that, while technological advance has been rapid and has given us, on the one hand, penicillin and the rest of the wonder drugs of modern medicine, and on the other, the atomic bomb and the rest of the destructive weapons of modern warfare, pure science is being subject to shackles of all kinds, and morality in personal, national and international relations is making itself scarce. The edifice is massive, no doubt, and outwardly imposing and even attractive; but of the three pillars that support it, one is rising higher and still higher, another is stunted in its growth, and the third is visibly cracking and crumbling. Technology has advanced to heights unimagined by our forefathers, but hunger and fear stalk amidst us, and war clouds still hover over us, but solace and relief seem to be far away. Will the structure come down with a giant crash one of these days,—will "THE THING" happen in the nightmarish manner described in Mr. Aldous Huxley's *Ape and Essence*? Will Homo Sapiens go the way of the giant lizards and armoured reptiles of the remote Past? Will it be then the burden of the Ant's destiny to write Man's epitaph? Or will Man meet the urgent challenge of the hour with wisdom and determination, and structure a new civilization, gathering up and assimilating the discoveries of science and the achievements of technology, but transforming them into engines for the enrichment, not destruction, of life?

The alternatives are clear before us: World Ruin and the destruction of the Race, or World Renaissance and the rehabilitation of the Race. Constitutional experiments or makeshifts, the search for compromises or paper-formulas, periodical international gatherings and well-intentioned resolutions,—these are good as far as they go, but alas! they do not go very far. Social reform, educational reform, the gradual unfolding of a civic conscience,—these too are necessary, they go further than formulas, yet by themselves they cannot usher in the renaissance and the rehabilitation that we want. Man himself must will and bring about his own rebirth, and redeeming himself, he should redeem the world, and redeem the race. After all, what are JUSTICE, LIBERTY, EQUALITY and FRATERNITY—the cardinal aims of the Republic of India—but the quadruple godheads of the soul, capable of realization

Continued opposite

and splendid harmonization at the spiritual level, and nowhere else? But spirituality need not mean, and must not mean, an escape from the arduous, anxieties, and compulsions of life. At the end of his great book, *The Psychology of Social Development*, recently republished with the title, *The Human Cycle*, Sri Aurobindo takes us to the heart of the whole matter and outlines the shape of things yet to be realized by the questing spirit of Man:

"This at least is the highest hope, as human life, and therefore the individuals who lead the way will take all human life for their province. These pioneers will consider nothing as alien to them, nothing as outside their scope. For every part of human life has to be taken up by the spiritual,—not only the intellectual, the aesthetic, the ethical, but the dynamic, the vital, the physical; therefore for none of these things or the activities that spring from them will they have contempt or aversion, however they may insist on a change of the spirit and a transmutation of the form. In each power of our nature they will seek for its own proper means of conversion; knowing that the Divine is conceal-

ed in all, they will hold that all can be made the spirit's means of self-finding and all can be converted into its instruments of the divine living

"This at least is the highest hope, the possible destiny that opens out before the human view, and it is a possibility which the progress of the human mind seems on the way to redevelop. If the light that is being born increases, if the number of individuals who seek to realize the possibility in themselves and in the world grows large and they get nearer the right way, then the Spirit who is here in man, now a concealed divinity, a developing light and power, will descend more fully as the Avatar of a yet unseen and un-guessed Godhead from above into the soul of mankind and into the great individualities in whom the light and power are the strongest. There will then be fulfilled the change that will prepare the transition of human life from its present limits into those larger and purer horizons; the earthly evolution will have taken its great impetus upward and accomplished the revealing step in a divine progression of which the birth of thinking and aspiring man was only an obscure preparation

and a far-off promise".

And in the carrying out of this programme of world renaissance and evolutionary ascent into those "larger and purer horizons", India has her own pioneering part to play, and thus the Republic that is just born is charged with a destiny that is unique. India is no doubt a "secular" State, but secularism, while it should keep clear of communal acerbity and religious bigotry, should nevertheless take its secure stand on the abiding ground of the Spirit. India cannot afford to play with what Dr. Reddy has called "freakisms", but neither must India deny her soul and elect for a barren mimicry of the all-powerful West. As Sri Aurobindo warned her in the course of his Message to the Andhra University about a year ago:

". by following certain tempting directions she (India) may conceivably become a nation like many others, evolving an opulent industry and commerce, a powerful organization of social and political life, an immense military strength, practising power-politics with a high degree of success, guarding and extending zealously her gains and her

interests, dominating even a large part of the world, but in this apparently magnificent progression forfeiting its Swadharma, losing its soul. Then ancient India and her spirit might disappear altogether, and we would have only one more nation like the others, and that would be a real gain neither to the world nor to us It would be a tragic irony of fate if India were to throw away her spiritual heritage at the very moment when in the rest of the world there is more and more a turning towards her for spiritual help and a saving light. This must not, and will surely not happen; but it cannot be said that the danger is not there No doubt we will win through, but we must not disguise from ourselves the fact that, after these long years of subjection and its cramping and impairing effects, a great inner as well as outer liberation and change, a vast inner and outer progress, is needed if we are to fulfil India's true destiny."

Let us prayerfully hope that, notwithstanding the perils and difficulties that beset her, India will yet save herself by her own sovereign exertions, and the world by her great example.

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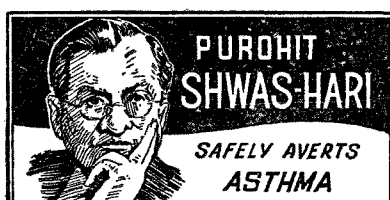
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