

MOTHER INDIA

Managing Editor:
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FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW

Editor:
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"GREAT IS TRUTH AND IT SHALL PREVAIL"

ALTERNATE SATURDAYS

JULY 14, 1951

VOL. 3 NO. 11: ANNAS 4

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SRI AUROBINDO'S LETTERS

YOGA AND LIFE

(Series of Questions and Answers continued from previous issue)

(I am feeling uneasy and unsettled. Aspiration seems almost extinguished. To put it more precisely, although I want to aspire I don't have the necessary impetus to satisfy that wish. *Tamas* weighs my consciousness down—so that I don't have the inward energy left even to try writing poetry with sufficient effort. Please send me inspiration—and tell me if all this recurring cloud of incapacity comes as a sign that after all I am doomed to taste nothing more than a mere drop of the yogic life. I find yoga ever so difficult—but I am appalled by a prospect of labyrinthine uselessness when I think of the ordinary life.

I have fallen between two stools—the old joy is gone and there is nothing else to replace it. I remember myself as I was before this desire for the Infinite and the Eternal invaded my consciousness. Morning after morning I used to get up full of a laughing energy—confident and impregnable, eager to taste everything and happy with a sense of power to do so, aware of a certain harmony between myself and the universe and of a poised mental capacity to mould experience to the purposes of literature. No difficulty, no disaster could daunt me: the star of accident was there to cast its malign influence, but through the worst vicissitudes I passed with unabated vigour and courage and optimism and grip of the intellect on life. I had evolved a half-Shavian half-Goethean outlook—fearlessness, force, gusto, wideness, idealism, all these mixed together and made me feel complete in general, looking forward only to fill in detail after enriching detail as the years would unroll their various surprises. There were also crudenesses in my composition just as there were disasters in my experience, but everything was held together, every strain assimilated by a dominating tune of mentalised vitality... Then, all of a sudden, came the devastating glory of the Divine: an earthquake, as it were, and almost in the moment when I felt most masterful and triumphant on my peak of intellect and life-force, the foundations of the world shook and I was broken utterly by the sense that a whole infinitude was wanting to my experience, by an immeasurable hunger that found all I had valued and acquired a mere morsel of miserable pleasure. The old poise and power were lost, common passions grew stale and I was just a poor mortal struggling helplessly and understanding that only the Divine could save me and that nothing had any worth without the Divine. But where have I come through all this? I have achieved so little, though I have seen and known and felt the greatest that life can offer—the truth that is you and the Mother. Yes, this is great, yet in myself I seem to be a failure. To replace what has been destroyed, something more is required, a deeper and more permanent experience. You have made me write poetry that you have considered fine and I am extremely thankful, but I am also extremely dissatisfied with my incapacity to move forward in even the poetic field. What a limited instrument I am after all! Others with a much smaller natural endowment are proving far more receptive and fluent mediums. Of course all artistic creation is a glory and a rapture and it would show a most mean mind to encourage envy and a most pitiable temperament to be unable to enjoy intensely the beauty of other people's work. What I am realising is my own limitation in the sphere of art just as in the sphere of yoga. I have not won the same degree of confident power here as I had in the pre-yogic days. I can never return to that, because that kind of intellectual and vital vigour is now inaccessible—and not even attractive, since I have known greater splendours, but all the same I am acutely conscious of being incomplete, a quivering fragment, an interplay of chords not yet resolved into a harmony. And, what is worst, I am obsessed at present by a sense of "thus far and no further." Could you give me any hope? Why is my mind so wretchedly limited, my soul such a feeble flame?)

"It is not the question, for this is not a question of personal capacity but of the development of the receptivity and for that the sole thing necessary is an entire or at least a dominant will to receive. What you call your mind and your soul are only a small surface part of you, not your whole being. Personal capacity belongs to the temporary surface personality which you have put forward in this life and which is mutable, is already changing and can change much farther—e.g. the poems you are writing are certainly beyond what was your original capacity—they belong to a range of experience to the Word of which you have opened by a development beyond your old mental self—a farther development beyond not only your old mental self but also your old vital self is needed to get the concrete realisation of that range of experience.

"What is standing in the way is something that is still attached to the limitations of the old personality and hesitates to take the plunge because by doing so it may lose these cherished limitations. It stands back in apprehension from the plunge because it is afraid of being taken out of its depth—but unless one is taken out of the very shallow depth of this small part of the self, how can one get into the Infinite at all? Furthermore, there is no real danger in finding oneself in the Infinite, it is a place of greater safety and greater riches, not less; but this something in you does not like the prospect because it has to merge itself into a larger self-existence. You asked the Mother to press on you the lighting of the fire within, and she has been doing so, but this is standing back with the feeling, 'Oh Lord! what will become of me if this flame gets lit.' You must get rid of this clinging to the past self and life; then you can have a fire which will not be feeble. You have not fallen between two stools—you are hesitating between two consciousnesses, the old and the new, the small and the great; that is all.

"As for the poetry, well—you have developed up to a point at which your work is of a very rare and unique quality in no way inferior to that of the others of whom you speak,—the difficulty of controlling production is nothing, for all feel that except Nishikanto and Dilip who have no misgivings about their creative power. Yours rises probably from the fact that in order to have free command of the highest planes of poetry, you have to rise into them and not only open to the Word from them—it is therefore the same difficulty in another form. Otherwise if you had the old self-satisfaction of which you draw so glowing a picture, you would have found your present poetry marvellous and gone on writing it—only oscillating between the different planes achieved and content to do so. This is not a proof of incapacity but of the will to greater things. Only that will must not be in the mind only but take full hold of the vital also and must be a will that what you write of should be a part not only of thought but of life. Which comes back to what I have written above—get free from the obscure hesitation to open and let the fire do its work.

"One must either do that if one wants a rapid change or go quietly and wait for the slower working from behind the veil to reduce and break the obstacle."
(10-8-37)

(Will the Supermind, when it makes its descent, have the power to transform us in spite of ourselves?)

"I suppose the (vital's) will to resist will disappear."

(I am all agog to know whether I should pack up for Pondicherry. Should I come away with my heart still far below normal by medical

Sri Aurobindo's Letters —Continued from page 1

standards? I surely can't expect it to catch up with normalcy so soon after that mistake of mine with the tonic stimulant powder given me by a friend. You know that owing to an error in instructions, instead of taking the normal dose of 1/12 of a grain I swallowed more than 4 grains, which—if I may believe the doctors—means about 50 times the normal dose, over 4 times the dose a horse might be given and nearly 25 times the dose at which the drug begins to be sheer poison for human beings! I also remained without real medical aid for 45 minutes! In my awful condition I only kept calling to Mother and you. Of course I am again up and doing, and I can't take this set-back very seriously, though I have semi-collapses now and then and the medicos say I need regular attention and should not exert myself. Mother and you get me out of all scrapes; the sweet grace of you both has been unailing. And I don't think I am much frightened by theoretical possibilities of death. Will my undertaking to come away do me any harm? This is a year in which, I believe, the Truth-Consciousness may make up its mind, or rather its Supermind, to descend. I was expecting a wire from Mother in May; its almost the end of July now—but the year is not out yet, and August 15 is pretty close. Won't I be losing something great if I don't throw all caution to the winds?)

"You must on no account return here before your heart has recovered. No doubt, death must not be feared, but neither should death or permanent ill-health be invited. Here, especially now when all the competent doctors have gone away or been sent to a distance from Pondicherry, there would be no proper facilities for the treatment you still need, while you have them all there. You should remember the Mother's warning to you when she said that you would have your realisation in this life provided you did not do something silly so as to shorten your life. That 'something silly' you tried your best to do when you swallowed with a cheerful liberality a poison-medicine without taking the least care to ascertain what was the maximum dose. You have escaped by a sort of miracle, but with a shaken heart. To risk making that shaky condition of the heart a permanent disability of the body rendering it incapable of resisting any severe physical attack or shock in the future, would be another 'something silly' of the same quality. So it's on no account to be done.

"You need not be afraid of losing anything great by postponing your return to Pondicherry. A general descent of the kind you speak of is not in view at the moment and, even if it comes, it can very easily catch you up into itself whenever you come if you are in the right openness; and if you are not, then even its descending would not be of so urgent an importance, since it would take you time to become aware of it or receive it. So there is no reason why you should not in this matter cleave to common sense and the sage advice of the doctors." (1-8-38)

(It is well-known and pretty evident that you realised the Supermind years ago. But is the impression right that you stand on that high level and act directly from there and the sole thing left is to bring the Supermind down completely into the embodied consciousness here? Or is it that even the outer consciousness of you is acting straight from a supramental realisation? Or would it be correct to say that at present this consciousness is functioning from only the top of the Overmind established in it?)

"If I had been standing on the Supermind level and acting on the world by the instrumentation of Supermind, the world would have changed or would be changing much more rapidly and in a different fashion from what is happening now. My present effort is not to stand up on a high and distant Supermind level and change the world from there, but to bring something of it down here and to stand on that and act by that, but at the present stage the progressive supramentalisation of the Overmind is the first immediate preoccupation and a second is the lightening of the heavy resistance of the Inconscient and the support it gives to human ignorance which is always the main obstacle in any attempt to change the world or even to change oneself. I have always said that the spiritual force I have been putting on human affairs such as the War is not the supramental but the Overmind force, and that when it acts in the material world it is so inextricably mixed up in the tangle of the lower world forces that its results, however strong or however inadequate to the immediate object, must necessarily be partial. That is why I am getting a birthday present of a free India on August 15, but complicated by its being presented in two packets as two free Indias: this is a generosity I could have done without, one free India would have been enough for me if offered as an unbroken whole." (7-8-47)

(What has happened to my letter of request for a Message to grace the Special Number of *Mother India* of August 15? I have heard nothing from you.)

"I have been trying to get you informed without success about the impossibility of your getting your expected Message from me for the 15th August. I had and have no intention of writing a Message for my birthday

this year. It is psychologically impossible for me to manufacture one to command; an inspiration would have to come and it is highly improbable that any will come in this short space of time; I myself have no impulse towards it. But how is it that you have clean forgotten my rule of not writing any article for an outside paper, magazine or journal—I mean other than those conducted from the Ashram by the Ashram—and even for these I write nothing new except for the *Bulletin* at the Mother's request,—also my reasons for this fixed rule? If I started doing that kind of thing, my freedom would be gone; I would have to write at everybody's command, not only articles but blessings, replies on public questions and all the rest of that kind of conventional rubbish. I would be like any ordinary politician publishing my views on all and sundry matters, discoursing on all sorts of subjects, a public man at the disposal of the public. That would make myself, my blessings, my views and my Messages exceedingly cheap; in fact, I would no longer be Sri Aurobindo. Already the *Hindusthan Standard*, the *Madras Mail* and I know not what other journal and societies are demanding at the pistol's point special messages for themselves and I am supposed to stand and deliver. I won't. I regret that I must disappoint you, but self-preservation is a first law of nature." (3-8-49)

(I am sending you a statement by a friend about certain experiences of his. Will you please comment on it? Another friend wishes to collect money for Mother. He says he will be very much helped if Mother writes for him a statement about approaching people for monetary help.)

"I am not very sure of the significance of your friend's statement about experiences. The 'double' voice is a frequent phenomenon; it happens very often when one has been long repeating a mantra that a voice or consciousness within begins to repeat it automatically—also prayer can be taken up in the same way from within. It is usually by an awakening of the inner consciousness or by the going in of the consciousness more deeply within from its outward poise that this happens. This is supported in his case by the fact that he feels himself half way to trance, his body seems to melt away, he does not feel the weight of the book etc.; all these are well-known signs of the inner consciousness getting awake and largely replacing the outer. The moral effects of his new condition would also indicate an awakening of the inner consciousness, the psychic or psychic-mental perhaps. But on the other hand he seems to feel this other voice as if outside him and to have the sense of another being than himself, an invisible presence in the room. The inner being is often felt as someone separate from or other than the ordinary self, but it is not usually felt outside. So it may be that in this state of withdrawal he comes into contact with another plane or world and attracts to himself one of its beings who wants to share in his sadhana and govern it. The last is not a very safe phenomenon, for it is difficult to say from the data what kind of being it is and the handing over of the government of one's inner development to any other than the Divine, the Guru or one's own psychic being may bring with it serious peril. That is all I can say at present.

"You will find with this a letter from the Mother giving you her point of view with regard to the request for a written statement from herself about approaching people for money. You must make your friend understand that this is not done and cannot be done. If he feels moved to do this as work for the Mother, the knowledge that it is needed should be enough. It is not a question of a public appeal for funds, but of getting friends and sympathisers to help. You will see from the Mother's letter the spirit in which it should be done."

THE MOTHER'S LETTER

"I am not in the habit of writing for money to anybody. If people do not feel that it is for them a great opportunity and Grace to be able to give their money for the Divine cause, *tant pis pour eux!** Money is needed for the work—money is bound to come; as for *who* will have the privilege of giving it, that remains to be seen." (29-4-38)

*"So much the worse for them!"

Ojas

Rise upward, stream of passion in the gloom!
Rise where lone pinnacles mate with heaven's womb!
Earth drags you down, but all your shimmers know
The stars' enchanted fire calling you home.

Mountains of mind are sacred: join your cry
Unto their peaceful marriage with the sky.
Your children shall be words eternal, sprung
From golden seeds of packed immensity.

K. D. SETHNA

SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER

A LETTER

By PRITHVISINGH

The face of Sri Aurobindo with his eyes closed as if in some deep Yogic trance may evoke different emotions in different people. To most of us as we saw that majestic form that had housed the Divine Soul with the golden supramental light radiating from it almost visible to the physical eye it seemed like the God Shiva asleep in Samadhi after he had drunk the poison that would destroy the worlds. In the bosom of this mighty peace the whole universe could find shelter. Infinity was there in that august form, rugged and austere, that might create perhaps, if looked at from a certain angle, an impression of suffering. But I'll speak no more. The more one gazed at it in quiet concentration, things hidden were revealed to one and tears came to the eyes as one contemplated all that he had done for us and how unworthy we had been!

Now I would like to say something to you about our Mother very frankly. It may be especially important for those who have been doing the sadhana from outside and have not had the opportunity of visiting the Ashram. It is our Master who taught us not to make any distinction between himself and the Mother. "It is the same Consciousness divided into two for purposes of the play." And so we always look upon our Mother, following her guidance and her wishes as our poor limited human capacity would allow. And today, when Sri Aurobindo is no more in his body, we realise more than ever the profound significance of his words. Because of the Mother the Ashram has not disintegrated. She alone has the secret of transformation and the change that has to take place upon this earth, as Sri Aurobindo has said, and he has by his "supreme sacrifice" opened the way for its rapid descent. We feel no depression in our sadhana because the Mother is upholding us with her tremendous spiritual Power. And if "our Lord has sacrificed himself totally for us" for reasons too sublime for the human mind to understand, we feel that the sacrifice of the Mother is, if anything, perhaps greater. For she has consented to remain on the material plane without him! And if she has consented to do so, it is out of

infinite compassion for the "unreceptive earth and man" and to carry on his work to its triumphant fulfilment. Our hearts bow down to her in infinite gratitude and we pray Victory to her! Very truly indeed you say that "the Divine never bungles", and that is why he enjoined on the Mother to remain here among us, for that is the certitude of the fulfilment of all that he saw and laboured and shaped to bring to birth. When the supramental Will stands on earth and takes complete possession of body and Matter, then will his dominion be truly established.

I have written to you at length that you may know that Mother is our sole Guru now, and those who would follow this path have to look to her for guidance and transformation which cannot come by any human *tapasya*, however severe. We love her dearly, as we have always loved her, and pray to our Lord from the depth of our souls that she remain with us till his work is fully done and the supramental evolution accomplished.

Indeed the Mother's burden is heavy, the earth being unreceptive and the disciples who form part of the earth-consciousness being what they are, but our World-Mother upbears everything and with a forward pace which nothing can stop she moves steadily towards her goal. But for her we would have drooped like flowers torn from their roots, waiting for our days to end that we might come again with the Divine for his work.

You have asked if anything needs more emphasising at this hour. "The Supramental is a Truth and its descent is, in the nature of things, inevitable". That is the thing that needs to be said now, with all emphasis and a faith unshaken by appearances. Sri Aurobindo's decision to leave his own body does not invalidate the truth of his teachings. We accept it as the working out of a terrible Divine Wisdom whose logic is unknowable to us, and we bow down before it in deep reverence! His last act of Grace was to keep his body intact for several days so that all his disciples may have the chance to come from distant places in India for his last *Darshan*.

Offerings

Some bring to you their learning,
Their wisdom new and old;
Some fame and power and glory,
Rich treasures, art and gold.

I too would offer something
To you, my Lord and King!
I claim no power or knowledge,—
O what then shall I bring?

I bring a heart that loves you
And lips that sing your praise,
A soul that seeks one honour:
To learn to tread your ways.

INDIRA

Nostalgia

I long to fare, Lord, far from this
Dark world of din to a lonely nook,
Beyond the pale of friends or kin,
And live in a glen by a blissful brook,
Where only the murmur of her waves
My music shall be...or the trees'
Soft soughing when, from time to time,
Will pass a waylost pilgrim breeze.
There I shall fashion a temple of peace
With fragrant flower-petals and make
A tender couch of dew which I
With virgin creepers will bedeck.
There with the stars as alms from sky
My little basket shall I fill
And the soft rhythmic rain will be
My one and only sentinel.
With moonbeams I'll my censer build
And the fireflies will my tapers be
And the lapping of waves shall mingle with
The woodland's crooning melody.

My heart I'll change to a conch and play
With my life's breath for thee, my King!
At morn with peacocks will I dance
And at evetide with the cuckoos sing.
There save thy Name, my only mate,
None else shall, Lord, companion me:
I will adore thee ever alone
In the aura of tranquillity.
Nor will I there, Beloved, demand:
Thou be my Guest compassionately.
Love bargains never: only give
That I may ache for none but thee.
When my day is done and shadows loom
At life's nightfall—from out the heart
Will pray my last breath: breathe thy Name
And put out the light as I depart.
And then...what then?...Perhaps...some day,
A chance wayfarer there may call
And offer a flower to me as one
Who madly lost for love her all.

(Translated from INDIRA's Hindi song in the same metre
and rhyme-scheme by DILIP KUMAR ROY).

THE INTEGRAL YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO

By RISHABHCHAND

(2) THE VARIETIES OF YOGA

Before we enter upon a detailed consideration of the nature, process and aim of the Integral Yoga as evolved by Sri Aurobindo, let us take a bird's eye view of the general Yogic background in India against which this new, dynamic synthesis of spiritual culture rises in massive grandeur, embodying the essentials of the past and claiming to fulfil the more complex and manifold aspirations of the present.

Man is a progressive being. He emerges from the past only to march towards the future, which is an ever-extending line of light luring him to greater and greater conquests. His greatest achievements of yesterday are but stepping stones to the yet greater achievements of tomorrow. His loyalty to the past must not, therefore, be a conservative clinging to the dead shells, but an enlightened assimilation and utilisation of the ever-living spirit of what has contributed to the present, and perfectly compatible with a large and perceptive opening to the future. The revolutions that take place in the world are Nature's violent pointers to the truth that in the onward progress of life there can be no complacent abiding in the effete forms of the past: evolution is a perpetual call to the new and the unknown. Conserving the essential gains of the past and consolidating and harmonising them in the present, man must advance towards the higher gains and greater victories of the future.

In India, where spirituality has been the very life-breath of the people, many forms of spiritual culture, many Yogas, have been propounded and practised since the time of the Vedas. Human nature has been systematically and vigorously explored to discover what it is made of, how many chambers it contains, what the purpose of its creation and action is and what avenues it affords to the Infinite that sustains and surrounds and surpasses it. Its individual idiosyncrasies have been studied with as much thoroughness as its collective traits, and their origins below the threshold of the surface consciousness have been investigated with a marvellous penetration and precision. Life, it has been held, cannot be rightly lived, if its source is not discovered and its sense and significance are not properly grasped in the light of true knowledge. The Indian mind could not remain satisfied with the ordinary material interests of human life; it had an in-born intuition, a persistent divination of the Infinite and Eternal, stretching below it, behind it and above it; and this intuition impelled it to go behind the frontal appearances of things and surprise the secrets of the supraphysical and the spiritual existence. It came in contact with truths, principles and realities which, because they obtain in worlds of other dimensions than those accessible to our physical consciousness, are sealed to our normal experience and, therefore, readily regarded as non-existent. It discovered that the supraphysical is the parent of the physical, the invisible the shaper of the visible, the subtle at once the womb and core of the gross. It went beyond the mere supraphysical to the spiritual and beyond even the spiritual to the Ineffable and Inconceivable in its giant hunger for the ultimate truth of existence. This scrupulous, super-scientific exploration of the hidden, boundless expanses of the human consciousness and the untold possibilities of the human being yielded a wealth of knowledge which is enshrined in the philosophies of India; and practical means and methods by which this exploration was conducted and carried to its consummation crystallised themselves into different schools of Yoga.

It would be fatuous to imagine that this spiritual hunger is peculiar to the Indian mind and this exploration of the recondite reaches of the being a monopoly of the Indian Yogas. The vanguards of the Spirit, the enamoured of the Infinite have been born in all countries and in all times. What is peculiar to India is not the hunger, but the generalisation of the hunger. Spirituality has not been in India, as in many another country, an exceptional pursuit or a hot-house growth, but a universal, national pre-occupation. Mystics and saints have been born in all countries, but nowhere as in India, has the ideal of the saint, the illumined God-drunk man, exerted such a permanent and powerful influence upon the generality of men. Nowhere has the call of the Infinite been responded to with such a resounding chorus of fervid assent. It is true that some forms of spiritual culture were prevalent in the West in the times of Pythagoras and Plato, and that Plotinus and some of the Gnostics and Stoics were regular Yogis, so also some of the Neo-Platonists and the Essenes. Among the mediaeval mystics of Europe and the Manicheans of Persia there was a systematic culture of some forms of spiritual self-discipline. But nowhere, as in India, has there been such a varied and wide spread spiritual culture, such a passionate approach to the Eternal from every part of human nature, and such an abundant harvest of experiences reduced to a diversity of mystical sciences, each representing a special approach and a special result, though having a general community in their ultimate realisations.

But the natural nostalgia of the finite for the Infinite, of life for its fount of Light, of the soul of man for the supreme Oversoul has been usually characterised by a certain excess of stress and tension. The ancient Vedic balance between Spirit and Matter was soon lost in the subsequent ages and a cleft was made between Purusha and Prakriti. The transcen-

dence of Brahman became the exclusive aim of all, or almost all, spiritual seeking, and the intention of the Transcendent in its own immanence in the world was more or less completely ignored. Therefore we meet with two divergent lines of Yoga in India—one inclusive and comprehensive, embracing Light and linking it to life, and aiming at a marriage of Heaven and earth and the manifestation of Spirit in Matter; and the other, intense and exclusive, renouncing life in its intolerant thirst for the Light, and creating a permanent divorce between Purusha and Prakriti, Spirit and Matter, the One and the Many. The Vedic Yoga, grown obsolete and somewhat obscure, survives in some of its lingering vestiges only in some forms of Pauranic Bhakti Yoga and Tantra; the Sankhya holds the field, and it is no exaggeration to say that most of the post-Upanishadic Yogas in India have more or less been imbued with the spirit of Sankhya. Even Jnanayoga, which does not subscribe to the pluralism of the Sankhya, accepts its fundamental dichotomy and tends towards the silent immobility of the Purusha. Even Bhaktiyoga and Tantra envisage as their ultimate goal a supracosmic consummation and not the divine union and manifestation in life and on this earth, which the Vedic Yoga seems to have sought to achieve. We shall see in our cursory review of some of the principal Yogas of India how the large unitary end of the Vedic discipline has been overlooked or ignored in most of them; and in our subsequent exposition of Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga we shall try to show how the ancient ideal has been revived, incorporated, enlarged and made the lever of a crucial ascent of man to the supramental or gnostic consciousness.

Hathayoga

Hathayoga is founded on the truth that the human body is not "a mass of living matter, but a mystic bridge between the spiritual and the physical being".* It houses powers and energies which, once properly quickened and marshalled, can achieve the release of the human mind and the soul from the cramping hold of Matter. The very body which is the cause of man's bondage to ignorance and suffering and all sorts of obscurations, can be made, if rightly tackled and trained, a powerful means of spiritual progress. It is a marvellous instrument possessing unreckoned possibilities of perfection. But normally it is a mere clod of Matter, ignorant and inert and liable to suffering and accustomed to mechanical movements. By its dual practice of Asana and Pranayam, Hathayoga changes this inert lump of flesh into a dynamo of vibrant energies and, awakening the coiled serpent power at the base of its spinal column, carries the consciousness of man through the intermediate planes into the embrace of the Brahman. Asana teaches the body to conserve in placid immobility the currents of vitality that flow into it from the universal life; and Pranayam controls the fivefold movement of life, purifies the entire nervous system by directing the circulation of the life-energy through all the nerves and, by a masterful manipulation of vitality, effects the release of the being from its subjection to the body and its normal impurities and disabilities. Hathayoga is a Yoga, that is to say, it is a means to a union with the Supreme, whatever the nature of that union may be; but in its excessive zeal for the purification and control of the body and the life-energy, it seems to forget its goal and remains constantly obsessed with the means. The results it achieves by an enormous output of energy can be obtained more easily and rapidly by other methods than the elaborate and cumbrous ones it employs. It is very widely, though by no means very wisely, practised in India, and betrays a facile tendency to degenerate into clap-trap and miracle-mongering. And yet, in spite of its physical pre-occupation and frequent aberrations, it has made a substantial contribution to Yoga by its discovery of the potential powers and capacities of the human body and the life-energy playing in it. It will be seen later how in the dynamic synthesis of the Integral Yoga this contribution has been incorporated with certain vital modifications and given an important place in its comprehensive scheme of spiritual values.

Rajayoga

Unlike Hathayoga, Rajayoga does not start with the body and the life-energy, but with the mind of man. It does not dispense with Asana and Pranayama, but relegating them to a subsequent stage, gives the primary importance to Yama and Niyama, which are mental disciplines calculated to conquer desires and passions of the lower nature of man and, by an increase of moral purity and calm, help the concentration of his consciousness on the Supreme. It aims "at the liberation and the perfection not of the bodily, but of the mental being, the control of the emotional and sensational life, the mastery of the whole apparatus of thought and consciousness. It fixes its eyes on the chitta, that stuff of mental consciousness in which all these activities arise, and it seeks, even as Hathayoga with its physical material, first to purify and to tranquillise."* When the mind has been

* "The Synthesis of Yoga" by Sri Aurobindo.

THE VARIETIES OF YOGA—Continued from previous page

quieted, its passions quelled to a certain extent and its pervading egoism relentlessly discouraged, Rajayoga resorts to Asana and Pranayam almost for the same purpose as does Hathayoga: for stilling the body, purifying the nervous system and controlling the life-energy, so that they may not impede or disturb the concentration and meditation through which it passes into Samadhi or trance of union. Rajayoga is an ancient science of spiritual culture and its subtly graded eightfold process commands universal homage and trust among spiritual seekers. Even non-Hindu schools of Yoga, such as those of Jainism and Buddhism, owe much of the power and perfection of their systems to Rajayoga. But its preponderant pre-occupation and meditation and samadhi makes it rather inapt for any substantial life-effectuation and life-fulfilment, and the purification of the chitta which it achieves is a mere cleansing and quieting, just enough for the consciousness to enter undistracted into the silence of meditation, and not a radical conversion and transformation. The Integral Yoga weaves into its composite texture the outstanding contributions of Rajayoga—the importance it gives to psychological purification and the power of concentration, and the distilled essence of its supraphysical experiences—but refuses to be bound by its psycho-physical means and influenced by its anti-pragmatic bias.

The Three Paths

Corresponding to the three principal powers of the human being,—will, knowledge and love—there are three Yogas in India: Karmayoga or the Yoga of Works, Jnanayoga or the Yoga of Knowledge and Bhaktiyoga or the Yoga of Love and Devotion. Karmayoga takes its stand upon the will of man and turning it Godwards through a dynamic surrender of all actions and all movements of the nature, emancipates him from the yoke of the ego and leads him to a union with the object of his quest and worship. A living and constant self-consecration in action and an uncompromising rejection of egoistic desires is the most effective method of Karmayoga. As most men live in their vital-physical being, predominantly concerned with the satisfaction of their desires and wants, the practice of Karmayoga is usually attended with rapid and remarkable results in the general purification of the nature and the opening and orientation of the being to the Divine. It is a dynamic Yoga which has to be pursued from moment to moment avoiding the pitfalls of tamasic passivity on the one hand and the heady drive of desires on the other. If all desires are renounced, including even the desire for the fruit of one's actions, and all actions are done as a conscious and living offering to the Divine, the knots of the ego are gradually loosened, and the consciousness of the Karmayogi rises into the limpid skies of the Spirit, beyond the habitual insistences of the passing moments. Dwelling upon the conditions of this effort and the ideal to which they point, Sri Aurobindo says in his *The Synthesis of Yoga*:

"To live in God and not in the ego; to move, vastly founded, not in the little egoistic consciousness, but in the consciousness of the All-Soul and the Transcendent.

"To be perfectly equal in all happenings and, to all beings, and to see and feel them as one with oneself and one with the Divine; to feel all in oneself and all in God; to feel God in all and oneself in all.

"To act in God and not in the ego. And here, first, not to choose action by reference to personal needs and standards, but in obedience to the dictates of the living highest Truth above us. Next, as soon as we are sufficiently founded in the spiritual consciousness, not to act any longer by our separate will or movement, but more and more to allow action to happen and develop under the impulsion and guidance of a divine Will that surpasses us. And last, the supreme result, to be exalted into an identity in knowledge, force, consciousness, act, joy of existence with the Divine Shakti; to feel a dynamic movement not dominated by mortal desire and vital instinct and impulse and illusive mental free will, but luminously conceived and evolved in an immortal self-delight and an infinite self-knowledge. For this is the action that comes by a conscious subjection and merging of the natural man into the divine Self and eternal Spirit; it is the Spirit that for ever transcends and guides this world-Nature."*

Jnanayoga or the Yoga of Knowledge takes its stand upon the mind or rather the intelligence of man and, turning his thoughts towards the Divine, seeks to lift his consciousness to the absolute Existence. By an act of abstraction, the buddhi or the intelligence detaches itself from the other parts of the being and concentrates on the silent and immutable Brahman or the sheer, unqualified Spirit. As in all other Yogas, it is the nature of the means that determines the nature of the end. Jnanayoga, by making the buddhi the chief instrument of spiritual realisation, effects a split between the Brahman and the world, which is practically and essentially the same split that is made by Sankhya, and regarding the world or phenomenal Nature as illusory and dream-like, seeks to lead the individual consciousness to the undifferentiated unity and merge it in the featureless infinity of the One. By noetic abstraction, by sustained reflection on the sole, relationless Reality, by subtilised reasoning and intense contemplation, it achieves an evulsion and extinction of the individual soul—evulsion from the illusion (Maya) of embodied existence and extinction in the in-

effable Absolute. It can be sincerely practised only by those whose intelligence has developed enough to separate itself from the sense-mind, the life and the body, and, by force of one-pointed thought, endeavour to escape out of the nightmare of the world.

Bhaktiyoga or the Yoga of Love and Devotion makes the heart of man its principal means of fulfilment. Unlike Jnanayoga, it seeks the Lord of Love and Beauty and Bliss, and not the relationless, incommunicable Absolute. The emotions of the heart of man are turned in this Yoga towards the Divine, the supreme, eternal Lover of all creatures and their unique deliverer, the one, infinite Person, and not a mere impersonality. The very intensity of Godward love consumes the ego and abolishes its self-regarding concerns and plunges the soul in the ecstasy of the divine embrace. Bhaktiyoga does not care for the reasoning and reflection of the mind, but feels in its faith the promise of its final fulfilment, which is an infinity of bliss in an eternal proximity to the supreme object of its love and adoration. The lover of God yearns after an intimate and thrilled union with Him, but it must be a union which permits of a certain ineffable distinction between him and his Beloved, and not a oneness in which his individuality is completely extinguished and lost in the being of his Beloved. He wants to enjoy and not be obliterated in the ecstasy of the divine union.

Bhaktiyoga seeks a divine fulfilment of the emotional being of man, but leaves out his intellectual, volitional and physical parts in the cold shade of neglect. It envisages the love and delight of the Divine rather than His Light and Power.

The Synthesis of the Gita

The Gita makes a monumental synthesis of these three paths of will, knowledge and love and proposes to raise the whole consciousness of man to the Divine. Jnanayoga seeks the fulfilment of the intellectual being of man, and leaves the other parts to starve and languish. It seeks union with the Supreme in His eternal and undifferentiated existence (Sat) alone and not in His Conscious-Force (Chit-tapas) and immortal Delight (Ananda). Karmayoga envisages union in the Will, the Conscious-Force alone, and Bhaktiyoga in the eternal Delight. An integral turning of the whole human being through will, knowledge and love will have the unique result of realising the integrality of the Supreme and an integral self-fulfilment by that realisation. The Gita lays down the three large lines of man's approach to the Divine Being with an unsurpassed clarity and catholicity; it shows how the lines intertwine and interfuse as they proceed towards the goal, in which they unite and become indistinguishably one; but it leaves rather weak and obscure two things which are very important to the seeker of an integral consummation and have a direct and dynamic bearing upon his spiritual progress: the beginning and the end. The Gita starts with Sankhyayoga, that is to say, with a separation between Purusha and Prakriti through the instrumentality of the buddhi, the most enlightened part of the human mind; but it seems to be rather a poor and precarious beginning for the realisation of such a stupendously dynamic aim, for the buddhi is, after all, a tool of the lower nature and cannot be a safe guide in such an adventure. There is a mightier, a more comprehensive beginning in the Tantric Yoga, which has much in common with Karmayoga, and the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo absorbs some of its cardinal principles as it proceeds to lay the foundation of an integral divine fulfilment upon earth. The end of the Gita's synthetic Yoga has been left wrapped in a mysterious indication of a total divine living for man; but the *uttama rahasyam*, the supreme mystery, has nowhere been resolved and outlined before the gaze of the spiritual seeker. A living in the Divine, a constant, blissful and dynamic living in the Divine emerges as the *grand finale* of the synthetic Yoga of the Gita, but by what definite culminating steps will this consummation be attained, by what process of transmutation and transfiguration of this base metal of human nature, and what will be the status and active poise of the individual in that victorious apotheosis and the purpose and influence of his presence in the world, have been left to be worked out in the experience of the sadhaka.

The Integral Yoga assimilates the triple path of the Gita, but starts its career with a far mightier sweep and divine dynamism and a clear and comprehensive vision of the crowning achievement. It marches with firm but flexible steps, profiting by the landmarks of the principal Yogas of the past, but solely depending upon the divine Grace and following the subtle guidance of the divine Force. Because its creative vision is fixed upon the realisation and expression of the splendours of the Supermind in human life, much of its path is a revolutionary departure from the beaten tracks, and traverses many virgin fields and unexplored countries of the being. Especially, its aim of physical transformation is an original aim of far-reaching consequences, which makes it descend into the inconscient and subconscious abysses in order to purify and transform the human body, the life-energy and the physical consciousness of man at their very roots. It considers the body as a potential tabernacle of the unveiled Godhead and bestows considerable care upon its radical transmutation. These are some of the characteristic aims and actions of the Integral Yoga which mark it out from the traditional Yogas, even from the great synthetic Yoga of the Gita, and stamp upon it the glory of creating a supramental race of men upon the earth.

* This is a description of Karmayoga as propounded by Sri Aurobindo and made an important part of his Integral Yoga.

CHAPTER XI
THE MESSAGE OF "SAVITRI"

There is an idea abroad that a Yogi or mystic is of a piece with the anchorite, and as such has no message to deliver to humanity at large. What is contended in this view is something interesting because there is a modicum of truth, as Sri Aurobindo wrote to me once, in every intellectual conviction seriously cherished. What is true in this indictment against the mystic is that his contribution to human culture is not uniform with that of the social man in his various, more or less, social moods. Art, poetry, music, the crafts, philosophy,—in fact every walk of life hitherto trod by men the world over—all fall more or less under the category of our social moods. It has indeed, been claimed by some poets, artists and thinkers that since their handiworks are inspired by their daemons and matured by their faculties *in silence*, therefore what they create cannot be counted, strictly speaking, as a social product. This contention is valid but only up to a point, since what the man in his creative impulse produces is usually a resultant of forces which sway him in his solitude, countered by those that sway him in his social setting. Even the argument of the highbrow, world-alooof scientist, living for his laboratory, cannot be fully valid when he claims that his findings have nothing to do with humanity and its aspirations. For man being born from others, nurtured by others, living with others, sustained by others and, last though not least, often killed by others, cannot claim to be a perfect solitary in any of his moods on earth. That is why we are confronted almost daily with a paradox, namely, that the most abstract and even seemingly impossible of scientific theories (theories which once upon a time men could only gape at) have been fruitful in inventions which have profoundly modified not only the outer life of man but his thoughts and aspirations as well. "*Tout se tient*" (things lean upon one another and hold together), as Rolland wrote to me once.

Consequently, we do somewhat look askance at mystics and Yogis even when something within us is impressed by something about them which defies our analysis and therefore offends us. It hurts our self-respect: Why must a rational man be led to kowtow to what his reason cannot label or docket? I recall a remark Tagore made years ago. He and Bertrand Russell had once gone out for a stroll in Cambridge. As they passed by King's College Chapel they heard a choral hymn being sung by the boys: lovely music! Tagore suggested to Russell that they step inside the Chapel. "Nothing doing," replied the rationalist mathematician, "I can't let myself be influenced by music and incense and coloured gleams trickling through the stained-glass windows and be made to feel what my reason holds suspect." And how Tagore laughed!

But it is not a laughing matter—not to the much-maligned mystic, anyway. For whatever the scientist and rationalist in man may say, the mystic *knows* what he feels not because he wishes to feel but because he cannot live without feeling it, because life becomes for him a blind alley without the lead of the mystic light, or, to put it in the words of Sri Aurobindo:

*Impenetrable, a mystery recondite
Is the vast plan of which we are a part;
Its harmonies are discords to our view,
Because we know not the great theme they serve.**

Those who hold, with the rationalist, that such themes are "suspect" must, in their turn, be held suspect from the mystic's point of view. For the mystic knows that the sum total of spiritual emoluments are not all made up of the reason's findings any more than what the anatomist's eye sees by dissecting a dead body is the sum total of all that the body is in its full vital functioning. He knows this because he has peeped into something behind the veil and is not only delighted but overawed by what he has glimpsed. He is in fact profoundly impressed because he realises, from what little he has visioned, that:

*Inscrutable are the cosmic agencies.
Only the fringe of a wide surge we see;
Our instruments have not that greater light,
Our will tunes not with the eternal Will,
Our heart's sight is too blind and passionate.**

From the mystic's point of view—who knows that he has seen what most people have not—there can at best be a deep regret that what has been granted to him has been withheld from the rank and file, but never any question of agreeing with the verdict of those who have not seen what they might have if they had accepted to develop their powers of supraphysical perception. But this does *not* mean that what he has seen is *against* reason. Dean Inge has put the mystic's case rather well when he writes that "... at every step we can only see what we deserve to see. The world that we know changes for us, just as a landscape changes as we climb the mountain. It seems to follow that we have no right to dispute what the mystics tell us that they have seen, unless we have been there ourselves and not seen it."†

But here Dean Inge only touches the surface of the validity of mystic seeing. It is not only that the "landscape changes" as one rises higher and higher in the mystic knowledge of reality, but that something else happens simultaneously—at least with the greatest among them—namely, what they see imposes on them a corresponding responsibility if not obligation which Sri Aurobindo has described in his noble language as a "divine self-

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interest to bear the burden of others."‡ This makes them plunge into ceaseless activity, not indeed of the blind or the semi-blind kind hailed by the merely restless activist but of a pure and selfless brand which they undertake because of a mandate they have received from on high to do what has to be done without an eye to the fruit of their action. "Today we all exist in a divided if not anarchic world society of men," says a thoughtful writer. "To follow the example of mystics would mean healing and orderliness, fraternalism and freedom and peace".* Or, to put it in the language of Sri Aurobindo, the greatest of the mystics have always given a luminous lead to men and never acquiesced in a mere passive enjoyment of their bliss, steeped in their solitary contemplation." Because, he asserts, "accepting life he (a *sadhaka* of the Integral Yoga) has to bear not only his own burden, but a great part of the world's burden too along with it, as a continuation of his own sufficiently heavy load. Therefore his Yoga has much more of the nature of a battle than others'; but this is not only an individual battle, it is a collective war waged over a considerable country. He has not only to conquer in himself the forces of egoistic falsehood and disorder, but to conquer them as representatives of the same adverse and inexhaustible forces in the world."†

It is obvious, that if what is claimed here is valid—that to win through to the Light is not to turn one's back on those who live in darkness but to help them come out into the sunshine, the sunshine invoked by the true vision—then the mystic's world cannot be dismissed as a world of selfish inaction, euphemistically called "contemplation". Any one who has ever had the supreme good fortune of living under the aegis of a really great mystic must testify that the latter wants nothing as much as to share the boons he has earned with others, and who will dare deny that this aspiration itself is a living message of Light to the lack-lustre?

For the sake of clarity one may perhaps be justified in admitting, provisionally, that the two exist side by side: the social man and the spiritual aspirant. But one must add, to make matters complete, that these are naturally interdependent: the social man needs the spiritual aspirant to enable him progressively to work in the Light the latter cannot help shedding, while the spiritual aspirant needs the other to induce in him the urge and vision to realise himself completely. The great Sage of the Upanishad did not mouth a platitude when he said: "One loves one's kin—one's children, consorts and parents—not because they are they but because they are indistinguishable from one's inmost self": he only uttered something the greatest mystics in all climes have proclaimed with one voice: that one must utilize whatever one is given to *serve* others. Or, to put it in the mantric words of the great Messiah of Divine life, the mystic wins God not to rocket up to him leaving the earth to her fate, but to invoke His light here below for all.

But this does not mean that the lure is an imaginary one: the lure of escapism. It would be idle to deny that, human nature being what it is, man generally prefers to travel light. Also, the knot of egoism is fastened so tight in him that he cannot possibly cut it at one trenchant stroke even when he does aspire to Godliness. The anchorite is a real and impressive figure in spite of his unsatisfying gospel of a swift personal salvation because he does help the soul's evolution at a certain stage in life, when the answering light that comes down seems too all-fulfilling to be missed; but as the soul wants to mount higher still, even the gods themselves, as legend has it, come to deflect him from the path of his highest fulfilment and Supreme Goal. Thus, to put it in the language of exhortation of the Master:

"Imagine not the way is easy; the way is long, arduous, dangerous, difficult. At every step is an ambush, at every turn a pitfall. A thousand seen or unseen enemies will start up against thee, terrible in subtlety against thy ignorance, formidable in power against thy weakness. And when with pain thou hast destroyed them, other thousands will surge up and take their place. Hell will vomit its hordes to oppose and enring and wound and menace; Heaven will meet thee with its pitiless tests and its cold luminous denials.

"Thou shalt find thyself alone in thy anguish, the demons furious in thy path, the Gods unwilling above thee. Ancient and powerful, cruel, unvanquished and close and innumerable are the dark and dreadful Powers that profit by the reign of Night and Ignorance and would have no change and are hostile. Aloof, slow to arrive, far-off and few and brief in their visits are the Bright Ones who are willing or permitted to succour. Each step forward is a battle. There are precipitous descents, there are unending ascensions and ever higher peaks upon peaks to conquer. Each plateau climbed is but a stage on the way and reveals endless heights beyond it. Each victory thou thinkest the last triumphant struggle proves to be but a prelude to a hundred fierce and perilous battles..."**

Sri Aurobindo chose the legend of Savitri to bring out not only the "fierceness" of these "perilous battles" but through these the "beautiful face of the Divine Mother" in Savitri, the "Daughter of Infinity" and symbol of Light born to be established in this our world of shadows.

But the daughter is also the Mother of Mothers who comes to us, weak-

* "Savitri": Book II, Canto V.
* Ibid.
† "Mysticism in Religion": Chapter XI.

‡ "The Synthesis of Yoga".
* "Men Who Walked With God" by Sheldon Cheney (p. 384).
† "The Synthesis of Yoga": Chapter II.
** Words of the Master—a message of Sri Aurobindo's published posthumously in the Bulletin Vol. III, No. 2.

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lings, to show that "Immortality" is not "a plaything to be given lightly to a child," nor "the divine life a prize without effort or the crown for a weakling."**

The legend is an old one, even older in age than the *Ramayana* since in this first epic of India Sita makes mention of Savitri and says to Rama: "Know me as flawlessly faithful to you even as Savitri was to Satyavan, the son of Dyumatsen"†

The famous legend as it has come down to us is beautiful in its simplicity as it is pregnant in its implications. Princess Savitri, the lovely daughter of King Aswapati, wants to marry Satyavan the son of King Dyumatsen who having lost his kingdom has been forced to live in a forest, a blind exile. But the Sage Narada tells her that Satyavan is fated to be dead within a year, whereupon Savitri reaffirms her pledge to Satyavan saying that her die is cast since she can choose no other for her consort. So the marriage takes place and Savitri leaves her palace and luxury to do her duty by her lonely husband and his helpless parents living as exiles in the forest. The fateful day, however, cannot be stayed and Satyavan dies resting his head on the lap of Savitri. Yama, the Lord of Death, then comes to carry back with him Satyavan's life but Savitri refusing to admit defeat to Death follows him. A duologue, or rather an altercation, ensues on the way between the frail victim of Fate and the mighty all-powerful Lord of Destiny till, in the end, Savitri prevails upon the dread Dispenser of Doom to reverse the verdict of Time: Satyavan is at last restored to her.

This is the story. Sri Aurobindo has metamorphosed it into what may be fittingly called a marvellous epic, luminous with the message of Immortality. The argument, in brief, is as follows:

The advent of Savitri cannot be an accident. The earth has to aspire for her Descent. So Aswapati has to pave the way through his lordly aspiration—Aswapati, "the colonist from immortality" and "the treasurer of superhuman dreams" whose "soul lived as eternity's delegate."‡

But the heart of flame of this doughty aspirant cannot rest content with a mere realisation. So when he meets the World-Mother face to face the first question he asks her is:

*How long shall our spirits battle with the Night
And bear defeat and the brute yoke of Death,
We who are vessels of a deathless Force
And builders of the godhead of the race?**

He cannot help asking such a challenging question to the Great Mother because his mighty heart finds little consolation in the current philosophy that a human being must accept its human limitations. So he asks:

*Or if it is thy work I do below
Amid the error and waste of human life
In the vague light of man's half-conscious mind,
Why breaks not in some distant gleam of thee?
Ever the centuries and millenniums pass....
All we have done is ever still to do.
All breaks and all renews and is the same.**

Not that he is a defeatist. How can he be after having seen
... the Omnipotent's flaming pioneers
Over the heavenly verge which turns towards life
Come crowding down the amber stairs of birth....
The sun-eyed children of a marvellous dawn....
The massive barrier-breakers of the world....
The architects of Immortality....?*

Therefore even though he is eager to see the Kingdom of Heaven established on earth, here and now, and feels restless to have to stay a passive witness to human suffering, he says:

*I know that thy creation cannot fall....**

Because man as he is today—ruling at best by his mind and intellect—is not the final term of the Ascending Consciousness:

*This strange irrational product of the mire,
This compromise between the beast and God,
Is not the crown of thy miraculous world....
Even as of old man came behind the beast
This high divine successor surely shall come
Behind man's inefficient mortal pace,
Behind his vain labour, sweat and blood and tears....**

And as the destined

*Inheritor of the toil of human time,
He shall take on him the burden of the Gods.**

He knows all that. Yet the human mind's supine acceptance of the world makes the Divine in the human impatient—inevitably, because without this impatience the impossible cannot be translated into the possible. *Vyakulata* or burning aspiration of the dauntless heart is necessary if the heart is to serve for a foothold of the Divine. So he cries out as it were frantic with

the tardy pace of the ascent of Consciousness:

*Heavy unchanged weighs still the imperfect world;
The splendid youth of Time has passed and failed;
Heavy and long are the years our labour counts
And still the seals are firm upon man's soul
And weary is the ancient Mother's heart.**

So he appeals passionately:

*O Truth defended in thy secret sun....
O radiant fountain of the world's delight....
O Bliss who ever dwellest deep hid within
While men seek thee outside and never find....
Mission to earth some living form of thee.
One moment fill with thy eternity,
Let thy infinity in one body live,
All-Knowledge wrap one mind in seas of light,
All-Love throb single in one human heart.
Immortal, treading the earth with mortal feet
All heaven's beauty crowd in earthly limbs!
Omnipotence, girdle with the power of God
Movements and moments of a mortal will,
Pack with the eternal might one human hour
And with one gesture change all future time.
Let a great word be spoken from the heights
And one great act unlock the doors of Fate.**

Then at long last, his Divine Interlocutor answers assuring him that she, Savitri, will be born:

*O strong forerunner, I have heard thy cry.
One shall descend and break the iron Law,
Change Nature's doom by the lone Spirit's power.
A limitless mind that can contain the world,
A sweet and violent heart of ardent calms
Moved by the passions of the gods shall come.
All might and greatnesses shall join in her;
Beauty shall sleep in the cloud-net of her hair
And in her body as on his homing tree
Immortal Love shall beat his glorious wings.
A music of griefless things shall weave her charm;
The harps of the Perfect shall attune her voice,
The streams of Heaven shall murmur in her laugh,
Her lips shall be the honeycombs of God,
Her limbs his golden jars of ecstasy,
Her breasts the rapture-flowers of Paradise.
She shall bear Wisdom in her voiceless bosom,
Strength shall be with her like a conqueror's sword
And from her eyes the Eternal's bliss shall gaze.
A seed shall be sown in Death's tremendous hour,
A branch of heaven transplant to human soil;
Nature shall overleap her mortal step;
Fate shall be changed by an unchanging will.**

So the Great Sphinx reveals her secret: the incredible comes to pass: the un hoped for incarnation comes down to earth as Aswapati's daughter though none can guess her essential divinity because although

Even her humanity was half-divine,

and

Apart, living within, all lives she bore,

she is, intrinsically,

Too unlike the world she came to help and save.

But all the same,

*All in her pointed to a nobler kind....
Her mind, a sea of white sincerity,
Passionate in flow had not one turbid wave....†*

For the lila of the Divine to be consummated her human face has, perforce, to be a mask, but even so,

*Immortal rhythms swayed in her time-born steps;
Her look, her smile awoke celestial sense
Even in earth-stuff, and their intense delight
Poured a supernal beauty on men's lives....
A deep of compassion, a hushed sanctuary,
Her inward help unbarred a gate in Heaven;
Love in her was wider than the universe.
The whole world could take refuge in her single heart!‡*

Never was a woman born of flesh limned with hues so ethereal—so incredible yet convincing, so all-embracing yet lonely, so powerful yet tender. It almost seems too Utopian to be true. That is why earthlings now fail to recognise the Incognito and so reject all that she comes to give to earth:

*The proud and conscious wideness and the bliss....
The calm delight that weds one soul to all,
The key to the flaming doors of ecstasy.‡*

We call for the Divine but on our own terms: we know no better. That is why the light-bringers of the world are not accepted as they want

** Ibid.

† Dyumatsenasutam viram Satyavantam-anuvratam.

Savitrimiva mam vidhi twamatma-vashavartinim (Ramayana: 2.30)

‡ Savitri: Book I, Canto III.

* Savitri: Book III, Canto IV.

* Ibid, Book III, Canto IV.

† Ibid, Book I, Cantos I & II.

‡ Book I, Canto II.

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to be. No wonder Savitri has to realise little by little, to her sorrow, that
*There is a darkness in terrestrial things
 That will not suffer long too glad a note.**

Consequently,

*On her too closed the inescapable Hand.
 The armed Immortal bore the snare of Time.**

She had to, because unless she accepts the cross of morality she cannot induce cave-dwellers to welcome her crown of the Everliving. But though she has to accede to this compromise to start with—because otherwise she cannot prepare the ground—she knows that it is but a divine strategy—*reculer pour mieux sauter*—a drawing back to be able to invade the more effectively, because

To wrestle with the Shadow she had come,

and

*Not to submit and suffer was she born;
 To lead, to deliver was her glorious part.*

But the nature of man as it is today cannot succeed even in imagining what supernature is like—not to mention *welcoming* the superhuman. So when Savitri chooses to forsake the protection and plenitude of her father's royal palace, a hue and cry arises. Her mother cannot possibly consent to such "madness" and essays frantically to dissuade her from marrying a poor exile, a nonentity who, besides, is going to die in twelve months. Were it not for exigencies of space, I would give long excerpts from the "Book of Fate" where Sri Aurobindo brings out forcefully this dramatic situation: Savitri is resolved to stake everything for her ideal; her mother, the queen, is afraid of disaster, fear making her pessimistic in the extreme; Narada admonishes the queen and, siding with Savitri, counsels her parents to let her marry Satyavan. Lastly, he winds up with a revealing prophecy. But as that is impossible to cite in full I shall only quote a few lines from his oracular revelation:

*Queen, strive no more to change the secret will;
 Time's accidents are steps in its vast scheme,
 Bring not thy brief and helpless human tears
 Across the fathomless moments of a heart
 That knows its single will and God's as one.*

For Savitri is not human in the ordinary acceptance of the term but being "an ambassadress twixt eternity and change," she can "sit apart with grief and facing death" front "adverse fate, armed, and alone," because

Sometimes one life is charged with earth's destiny,

Therefore, the Sage enjoins on the Queen Mother:

*Intervene not in strife too great for thee....
 The great are strongest when they stand alone.*

Consequently, he proclaims prophetically, when the day will come when "she must stand unhelped"—

*On a dangerous brink of the world's doom and hers,
 Carrying the world's future in her lonely breast,
 Carrying the human hope in a heart left sole....
 She must cross alone a perilous bridge in Time
 And reach an apex of world-destiny
 Where all is won or all is lost for man.*

In a word, her destiny of loneliness is meant to forge the last link which will complete the circuit. That is why

*In that tremendous silence lone and lost
 Of a deciding hour in the world's fate....
 Alone she must conquer or alone must fall,*

because

*No human aid can reach her in that hour,
 No armoured God stand shining at her side.*

Therefore the Queen is told:

*Cry not to heaven, for she alone can save,
 For this the silent Force came missioned down,*

inasmuch as it is preordained about Savitri that

She only can save herself and save the world.

A tremendous prophecy, indeed! But then is not Savitri "missioned" to make the impossible possible?—

*Here was no fabric of terrestrial make....
 An image fluttering on the screen of fate....
 And tossed along the gulfs of Circumstance.*

That is why she has been destined to dare what no human heart could even contemplate:

Her single will opposed the cosmic rule.

And she was justified in flinging this challenge because
The great World-Mother now in her arose.

* * *

This is the stuff of which dramas are made. But Savitri's life, being the enactment of a divine drama, starts from scratch, that is the human, and culminates in the superhuman. And this deepening drama of lesser loves calling the Soul but failing to grip her because her lesser loves have, progressively, to give place to the higher and higher through an ascending aspiration—till she has to sacrifice everything to the highest call—has been

achieved by the Seer-Poet in his epic drama in six movements of her Soul-evolution:

First, the human in Savitri seeks the Divine.

Second, she weds Satyavan in order to realise through their mutual adoration the Presence of the Divine in every heart of love.

Third, Satyavan dies and she prays to the Lord to give him back to her in order that they may now fulfil their joint mission together—of uplifting the Earth to Heaven, counting no cost.

Fourth, the Divine tempts Savitri to leave such a futile endeavour and invites her to desert earthlings (as the earth is not ready yet for His light and bliss) to merge back in His primal Truth-Consciousness.

Fifth, Savitri declines and asks His boon for Earth and Humanity.

Sixth, the Divine is pleased and grants the Boon of Boons.

This supreme message of Savitri to humanity (or rather of Dawn to Night) has been brought out in three progressive stages through the personality of Savitri who is the Incarnation of the All-transcendent Mother-shakti, the Creative Dynamis of the Divine.

First, she wants to realise her highest self through a sense of kinship with all earthlings whom she embraces in her inmost being accepting their "load of Fate" unflinchingly.

Secondly, she wants to induce in them as it were the Godhead that is born in her by the miracle touch of her will which has achieved unison with the Divine Will.

And lastly, she insists on transforming their humanity into utter Divinity by the alchemy of her soul-force overriding Fate, staking her all for the All-in-All.

The whole history and drama of this evolution in and through her is the *Leitmottif* of this epic poem—the mighty theme, the vibrant symphony. I would have liked to quote copiously from the earlier cantos to trace the evolution of this mighty diapason. But as that is not possible I shall have to be content with quoting only a few apt extracts from the "Book of Everlasting Day" to illustrate how Sri Aurobindo has depicted in his mantric epic the movements to which I have referred.

Savitri comes first to petition the Divine that Satyavan to whom death has come prematurely be restored to her:

*I know that I can lift man's soul to God,
 I know that he can bring the Immortal down....
 Give not to darkness and to death thy sun,
 Achieve thy wisdom's hidden firm decree
 And the mandate of thy secret world-wide love.*

His answer comes almost as an admonition:

*How shall earth-nature and man's nature rise
 To the celestial levels yet the earth abide?*

Then after telling her that the gulf between Heaven and Earth cannot be bridged here and now (because Earth is still too far from the consciousness of Heaven) the Lord says that though Earth may indeed espy a few stray gleams from Heaven's starland,

*They are a light that fails, a Word soon hushed
 And nothing they mean can stay for long on earth.
 These are the high glimpses, not the lasting sight.*

For though He admits that

*A few can climb to an unperishing sun,
 Or live on the edges of the mystic's moon,
 yet is it not a stark fact borne out by history that
 The heroes and the demi-gods are few
 To whom the close immortal voices speak?*

True, the Divine Voice is heard through silence, but then

*Few are the silences in which Truth is heard,
 Unveiling the timeless utterance in her deeps,*

And though the great seers can and do win through to something of the Light Divine which means so much to earth, yet

*Few are the splendid moments of the seers.....
 Heaven's call is rare, rarer the heart that heeds;
 The doors of light are sealed to common mind.*

And if

Men answer to the touch of greater things,

quickly enough

They slide back to the mud from which they climbed.

Thus after damping her widowed ardour with such unanswerable arguments He enjoins on her:

*Leave to its imperfect light the earthly race:
 All shall be done by the long act of time,
 Break into eternity thy mortal mould,
 Melt, Lightning, into thy invisible flame.
 Clasp, Ocean, deep into thyself thy wave,
 Happy for ever in the embosoming surge.*

This was the Divine *lila* of testing her as it is to come out directly—in the *dénouement*. But as Savitri does not know this yet, she has to follow the lead of the highest light in her and so answers the "radiant God", a sunbeam answering the Sun:

*In vain thou tempt'st with solitary bliss
 Two spirits saved out of a suffering world;*

* Ibid, Book I, Canto II.

SRI AUROBINDO CAME TO ME —Continued from opposite page

*My soul and his indissolubly linked
In the one task for which our lives were born
To raise the world to God in deathless Light,
To bring God down to the world on earth we came,
To change the earthly life to life divine.
I keep my will to save the world and man;
Even the charm of thy alluring voice,
O blissful godhead, cannot seize and snare.
I sacrifice not earth to happier worlds.*

A great answer of a great soul which has definitely turned its back on defeatism even against desperate odds. For Sri Aurobindo is not earth-averse. Has he not heard Earth's moving song so vibrant in his marvellous poem, *The Life Heavens*:

*I, Earth, have a deeper power than Heaven:
My lonely sorrow surpasses its rose-joys—
A red and bitter seed of the raptures seven:
My dumbness fills with echoes of a far voice.*

Whether those who have not heard this her great message believe him or not he does not care for he has heard it as he wrote to me in an explanatory letter (when I asked him in despair how could such an inglorious, disharmonious and creaturely thing as our earth be redeemed):

"All the non-evolutionary worlds are worlds limited to their own harmony like the 'life heavens'. The Earth, on the other hand, is an evolutionary world, not at all glorious or harmonious even as a material world (except in certain appearances) but rather most sorrowful, disharmonious, imperfect. Yet in that imperfection is the urge towards a higher and more many-sided perfection. It contains the last finite which yet yearns to the supreme infinite, it is not satisfied by sense joys precisely because in the conditions of the earth it is able to see their limitations. God is pent in the mire—mire is not glorious, so there is no claim to glory or beauty here—but the very fact imposes a necessity to break through that prison to a consciousness which is ever rising towards the heights."

It is true, as he admitted in the same letter, that at present, so long as the earth remains as it is, there can be "no question of a divine life". Nevertheless, as he indicates in his poem, *A God's Labour*:

*Heaven's fire is lit in the breast of earth
And the undying suns here burn;
Through a wonder cleft in the bounds of birth
The incarnate spirits yearn
Like flames to the kingdoms of Truth and Bliss:
Down a gold-red stair-way wend
The radiant children of Paradise
Clarioning Darkness's end.*

No one can possibly understand Sri Aurobindo until he has learnt to take full account of his appreciation of the glorious divine potentiality lying latent in what he terms "the earth-consciousness." This we find in his *Ideal of Human Unity*, in his *Life Divine* and lastly, in the constant emphasis in his *Integral Yoga* on the nature of the Divine that is sought, who is "not a remote extra-cosmic reality, but a half-veiled Manifestation present and near us here in the universe." And it is because he has known this through the sanction of the Supreme in his missioned soul that he asseverates again and again that it is "here, in life, on earth in the body that we have to unveil the Godhead."

He has stressed this tirelessly to us in his various letters and messages till in *Savitri* he repeats it with the luminous accent of the inspired Word that is Poetry. So *Savitri* posits that earth-life must translate a Divine Purpose, because—

*If earth can look up to the light of heaven
And hear an answer to her lonely cry,
Not vain their meeting, nor heaven's touch a snare.*

And here is her reason dictated not by her brain but her heart:

*If thou and I are true, the world is true;
Although thou hide thyself behind thy works,
To be is not a senseless paradox;
Since God has made earth, earth must make in her God;
What hides within her breast she must reveal.
I claim thee for the world that thou hast made.*

To which the propitiated Godhead answers, beginning to relent:

Thou art my vision and my will and voice....

But impatience is still to be deprecated:

*Lead not the spirit in an ignorant world
To dare so soon the adventure of the Light.*

The same note of warning was sounded, in a previous Canto, to *Savitri's* father, *Aswapati*:

*Let not the impatient Titan drive thy heart....
Awake not the immeasurable descent,*

because

Truth born too soon might break the imperfect earth.

But what *Aswapati* could not afford to disobey, *Savitri* can, because she is the last perfection of the aspiring Incarnation herself,

*A wonderful mother of unnumbered souls
Bearing the burden of universal love.*

Therefore when she is invited—or rather tempted—for the last time by the assaying Godhead who offers her a quick exit out of the dismal world still unready for "the Immeasurable Descent":

*Choose, spirit, thy supreme choice not given again,
as there is still time to choose Nirvana bringing in its train an
End of the trouble of thy wandering thoughts
Close of the journeying of thy pilgrim soul.
Accept, O music, weariness of thy notes,
O stream, wide breaking of thy channel banks.*

But the indomitable spirit of *Savitri* obstinately declines to accept a "personal salvation". She indeed craves His boon but for the whole world:

*Thy peace, O Lord, a boon within to keep
Amid the roar and ruin of wild Time
For the magnificent soul of man on earth.
Thy calm O Lord, that, bears thy hands of joy....
Thy oneness, Lord, in many approaching hearts.*

But—as Sri Aurobindo wrote to me once in a letter—the Divine subjects His Incarnations to the fieriest of ordeals; so He asks her once again to reconsider her refusal to comply with His invitation:

*A third time swelled the great admonishing call:
"I spread above the refuge of my wings."*

In other words, He asks her to seek final asylum under His wings where there is only peace and silence.

But *Savitri* is not to be deflected from the Goal: what is offered to her must be offered to all. So—

*Now passionately the woman's heart replied:
"Thy energy, Lord, to seize on woman and man,
To take all things and creatures in their grief
And gather them into a mother's arms."*

Still God insists for the last time:

*A last great time the warning sound was heard:
"I open the wide eye of solitude
To uncover the voiceless rapture of my bliss,
Motionless in the slumber of ecstasy,
Resting from the sweet madness of the dance
Out of whose beat the throb of hearts was born."*

But *Savitri* declines again and appeals to Him to deliver all as against the elect, from the pain of life, to vouchsafe to all—

*Thy embrace which rends the living knot of pain,
Thy joy, O Lord, in which all creatures breathe,
Thy magic flowing waters of deep love,
Thy sweetness give to me for earth and men.*

Every authentic mystic knows that the Godhead's injunction to his devotee evolves with the latter's inner evolution. Everyone receives but in the measure of his receptivity. That is why *Dhruva* was first offered a Kingdom and only when he refused it was he deemed eligible for the Boon of the *Vaikuntha*. The lesser mystics are often content with inferior boons but, as they evolve, their aspiration too becomes greatened. That is, the lesser boons are offered to comparatively lesser hungers. Sri Aurobindo himself, as he said to us explicitly, had come to the Yoga to liberate his country but as he delved deeper, his lesser loves gave place to the greater till he wanted the Divine Bliss and Light for all, not for himself and his countrymen only. That is why he heard the Voice also ascending in pitch and deepening in timbre as he progressed more and more in his *sadhana*, till he compelled as it were the last sanction of the Supreme to his summit prayer voiced through *Savitri*:

Thy sweetness give to me for earth and men.

"Seek and thou shalt find." He sought and found, and as he turned progressively deaf to the lesser appeals he heard the answering Music too mount higher and higher in harmony and grandeur. This he has expressed in the final answer of the Godhead given to *Savitri* who is at long last granted the one boon she has sought:

*O beautiful body of the incarnate Word,
Thy thoughts are mine, I have spoken with thy voice.
My will is thine, what thou hast chosen I choose.
All thou hast asked I give to earth and men....
I lay my hands upon thy soul of flame,
I lay my hands upon thy heart of love.
I yoke thee to my power of work in Time."*

And this He concedes because He has assayed *Savitri* and not found her wanting—

*Because thou hast obeyed my timeless will,
Because thou hast chosen to share earth's struggle and fate
And leaned in pity over earth-bound men
And turned aside to help and yearned to save,
I bind by thy heart's passion thy heart to mine
And lay my splendid yoke upon thy soul.*

And not content with a mere reassurance, He cries out apocalyptically:

*O Sun-word, thou shalt raise the earth-soul to light
And bring down God into the lives of men;
Earth shall be my work-chamber and my house,
My garden of life to plant a seed divine.*

SRI AUROBINDO CAME TO ME —Continued from previous page

*When all thy work in human time is done,
The mind of earth shall be a home of light,
The life of earth a tree growing towards Heaven,
The body of earth a tabernacle of God.*

And therefore she, acting as the divine intermediary, will bring to the earth the Boon of boons—the Divine Grace and Love acting in its native power of bliss and light. For this to be possible the Divine Will must use her as His radiant Representative, the Avatar:

*I will pour delight from thee as from a jar,
I will whirl thee as my chariot through the ways,
I will use thee as my sword and as my lyre,
I will play on thee my minstrelsies of thought.*

And then she with Satyavan will do His Will:

*You shall reveal the hidden eternities,
The breath of infinitudes not yet revealed,
Some rapture of the bliss that made the world,
Some rush of the force of God's omnipotence,
Some beam of the omniscient Mystery.*

And at that fateful hour—

*The Mighty Mother shall take birth in Time
And God be born into the human clay.
In forms made ready by your human lives.
Then shall the Truth supreme be given to men....
The superman shall wake in mortal man*

*And manifest the hidden demi-god
Or grow into the God-light and God-Force
Revealing the secret deity in the œve....
Annulling the decree of death and pain,
Erasing the formulas of the Ignorance....
Ruling earth-nature by eternity's law....*

When

*Life's hope shall flame with the Immortal's thoughts,
Light shall invade the darkness at its base,*

because

*When superman is born as Nature's King
His presence shall transfigure Matter's world:
He shall light up Truth's fire in Nature's night:
He shall lay upon the earth Truth's greater law,
Man too shall turn towards the Spirit's call.*

And then—

*A divine force shall flow through tissue and cell
And take the charge of breath and speech and act
And all the thoughts shall be a glow of suns
And every feeling a celestial thrill....
Nature shall live to manifest secret God,
The spirit shall take up the human play,
This earthly life become the life divine.*

A REMINDER

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WORDS OF THE MOTHER (Third Series)

PAGES 99

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These are a few talks which the Mother gave during the years 1930-1931 to some disciples, as recorded by one of them. Some appeared in the Special Numbers of "Mother India," others in the Fifth Annual of Sri Aurobindo Circle. They touch upon many important points with the luminous directness and concreteness that are characteristic of the Mother. Truth after striking truth of spiritual knowledge in a wide and varying field is laid bare, and always each truth is brought into effective liaison with life. It is thus given a keen edge of practicality to enable us to cut through the inertia and obscurity impeding progress in the Integral Yoga.

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BOOKS in the BALANCE

A PRISM OF INNER VISION

POETS AND MYSTICS by Nolini Kanto Gupta (Sri Aurobindo Library, Madras: Rs. 3)

A poet, a writer, an artist is a source of Light or perhaps only a receiving and transmitting centre of the splendour-messages coming from the Unknown; and a critic is a mirror that receives, reflects and magnifies that light or splendour and spreads it far and wide; and if that mirror is not simply a mirror but also a prism, as is sometimes the case, we not only get the bare light but also the rainbow-hues that are shimmering in the inside of that Light or Splendour. Such a prism is Nolini Kanto Gupta's critic-consciousness and the pages of *Poets and Mystics* are a technicolour film on which the iris glow of many a splendour-message is imprinted. The gorgeous hues of the dawn-adorned East and those of the sunset-flushed West have been joined in a union of happy wedlock, by this priest of harmonious seeing. Vivekananda and Rabindranath Tagore, Blake and Blaise Pascal, Eliot and Aldous Huxley, Goethe and Nicholas Roerich, have all become integral parts of a vast cosmic design, which Nolini Kanto's inner vision has lucidly glimpsed.

It is the eye of a mystic, the vision of a seer, which alone can penetrate into the chequered pattern that Life is and Mind too is. Even the apparently and relatively clear surfaces of Life and Mind are not easy to understand, how much more difficult it is to grasp the inner trends and still more so to follow the ceaseless multi-channelled flux of the inner consciousness evolving in the varying forms of Life and Mind! Art and literature are the higher forms of manifestation in which the human consciousness expresses itself and, in doing so, it expresses also that which is behind itself and beyond itself, inarticulate yet pressing forward towards articulation. Hence, he alone can see, who can see behind and beyond the expressed word or form. Every line and every hue is only the outer front, the conical tip of an iceberg of consciousness-force submerged in the ocean of being. To understand poetry or art, one must delve deep into that ocean.

And that is what Nolini Kanto has tried to do. His whole being and thought are enveloped and permeated with Sri Aurobindo's stupendous world-outlook and inlook, and almost every page of the fourteen essays contained in this book bears witness to this fact. One almost sees and feels the Master's hand doing the work through the instrumentality of the disciple's.

Two of the essays, viz. "Mystic Poetry" and "The Poetry in the Making" deal with poetry in general; while the rest of them are each a short monograph on individual authors, excepting the first essay in the book with the heading of "Sri Aurobindo: The Age of Sri Aurobindo".

In the essay on "Mystic Poetry" the author makes a distinction between mystic poetry and spiritual poetry. When the Spirit speaks its own language in its own name, he says, we have spiritual poetry. If, however, the Spirit speaks—from choice or necessity—an alien language and manner, e.g., that of a profane consciousness, or of the consciousness of another domain, idealistic or philosophical or even occult, makes an imitation of its own language and manner, we have what we propose to call mystic poetry proper. And then he gives examples of both types from Baudelaire, Tagore, the Upanishads, Sri Aurobindo and others. Spiritual poetry is different from both religious as well as mystic poetry. It is not religious because although religion is an aspiration towards the truth and reality beyond or behind the world, it is too much tied down to man's worldly nature; it is more than mystic poetry, for it does not stop at being a signpost to the Beyond, but is itself the presence and embodiment of the Beyond. One is almost tempted to express this last distinction by way of a figure thus: Mystic poetry is like the audience seeing and appreciating a cinematographic film-show, but not participating in it, while spiritual poetry is like the actual life-events unrolling themselves and affecting the people who come under their influence. In the former, the author says, there is a play of imagination, even of fancy, but in the latter it is vision pure and simple.

Even more interesting, perhaps, than the above essay is the one on "The Poetry in the Making", which the author starts with the oft raised question whether the artist who is a genius is conscious in his creation or unconscious. The answer is that genius is neither conscious nor unconscious, but superconscious. In the normal individual the consciousness is identified with the brain or mind or rational intelligence. But there are other forms or other planes of consciousness which are higher than the mental and are attainable by men. Not only the Yogi but also the artist has access to these higher levels, but it is the Yogi who can simultaneously remain wakeful on both the conscious as well as the superconscious. An artist also can do the same, for there is no inherent incompatibility between spontaneous creation and self-consciousness. The poet need not be a mere passive receiving apparatus, he can be the master of his apparatus. Modern trends in poetry clearly show that the poet has become and is becoming more and more self-conscious and is exercising a deliberate will and choice; thus he has become a self-conscious creator to the pith of his bone. Genius had to be more or less unconscious in the past, because the instrument was not ready; the higher inspiration had very often to bypass it. But now it is becoming more and more ready and hence we can foresee that artistic inspiration which always has its origin only in the higher planes of consciousness will get a conscious and fully participating instrument for manifesting itself. And that manifestation must bring in the age of spiritual

art. The march of human consciousness demands and prophesies that the future poet has to be a mystic. The poet is a missionary: he is missioned by Divine Beauty to radiate upon earth something of her charm. It is only when he is fully conscious that all obstructing and obscuring elements lying across the path of inspiration can be entirely eradicated.

The remaining essays are on individual poets and mystics. Tagore, according to the author, had spiritual reality as the central theme of his poetic inspiration; and the world, being nothing but Spirit made visible, is supposed by Tagore to be fundamentally a thing of beauty. The world is beautiful because it is the image of the Beautiful. The fulfilment of the Spirit is in its expression through Matter. The three essays on Vivekananda, Pascal and Hilton try to bring out the mystic elements in those three great figures' life and works. Vivekananda is shown as a philosopher and a great Vedantin, but Pascal is better known as a mathematician and scientist. Pascal's ideas about Reason and Faith, as given in this essay, are very interesting. According to him there are two orders of faith—the order of the physical truths and the order of the Spirit or the order of the Heart. Reason posits physical fundamentals, but does not know the fundamentals of the Heart, such as God, Soul, Immortality, which are evident only to Faith. But Faith and Reason are not contraries. Because the things of faith are beyond reason, it does not follow that they are irrational. The last movement of reason is to know that there is an infinity of things that are beyond it. One must know where one should doubt, where one should submit. We know truth not by reason alone, but by the heart also. The heart feels and the reason demonstrates afterwards. Walter Hilton was neither a scientist nor a philosopher, but a visionary mystic of the 14th century. He says, "The more I sleep from outward things, the more wakeful I am in knowing of Jhesu and of inward things". When one thus goes within, the immediate result is a darkness, for the outward attractions are discarded but the inner attachments surge there still. If, however, one persists, one crosses that stage of darkness, but still the inner light is not visible. When one enters the deepest layer of the being, one gets to the soul, the image of God. This is the third degree of our inner ascension. But the further step in that ascension can come when one goes beyond the earthly form and soars into Heaven, in the company of the Trinity.

The essay on William Blake is only by way of explanation of his notion of the marriage of Heaven and Hell. This notion is not such a revolting idea, for by Hell Blake means simply the body, the Energy of Life. It is only a symbol of the life of the flesh, just as Heaven is a symbol of the life of the Spirit. The comparison of Blake's notions with those of a modern Frenchman, Gustav Thibon, are particularly interesting.

The essay on Aldous Huxley is a review of his *Perennial Philosophy*. In another essay the Russian Christian, Nicholas Berdyaev's notions are compared to and contrasted with certain Eastern Vedantic doctrines.

The essay on Goethe was a topical one, written as it was at the time of his 200th anniversary celebrations in 1949. Goethe, the essayist writes, showed how a language, perhaps least poetical by nature, can be moulded to embody the great beauty of great poetry. He made the German language sing, even as the sun's ray made the stone of Memnon sing when falling upon it. Later on is discussed Goethe's view of the problem of Evil; Good and Evil are, according to it, only apparently contrary, but not contradictory principles in essence. For, Satan is, after all, God's servant, even a very obedient servant. But the essayist says in the end that the total eradication of Evil from the world and the remoulding of life in the substance of the Highest Good were not envisaged by Goethe.

The Eliot essay is a review of his *Four Quartets*, in which the author shows how in that work Eliot becomes outright a poet of the Dark Night of the Soul. But even in the very heart of the Night can be sensed the Light beyond.

*I said to my soul, be still, and let the dark come upon you
Which shall be the darkness of God.*

Eliot's soul is a very Christian soul, but at the same time he is nothing if not modern. He seeks a synthesis, according to the author, between the dualities that we find around us. His is no escapist mentality. He wishes to go beyond, but only to find out the source and matrix of the here below; he wants a synthesis of transcendence and immanence, of the positive and the negative, of the known and the unknown, of the local and the eternal. He is a very self-conscious poet.

The last essay in the book is on the mystic Nicholas Roerich. In him the author finds a synthesis between the Eastern and the Western. Roerich is a soul of the mid-region, in more senses than one. He is an intermediary between the East and the West; born in the West he came to the East for Light: he loved the Himalayan mountain ranges and in that sense too he is a soul of the mid-region. He is a prophet and seer preparing the Golden Age; his is a yearning artist soul; his technique of expression is symbolical and his symbols and allegories are hieratic. His is not the classicist's or the Latin temperament; the prophet, the priest in him is the stronger element. His is an elemental personality and has a good deal of the unconventional and the irrational.

SRI AUROBINDO UNIVERSITY CENTRE FUND

An International University Centre is being established at Pondicherry in memory of Sri Aurobindo.

Sri Aurobindo consecrated his whole life to the realisation of a new consciousness in humanity that will make it transcend itself, rise out of falsehood and ignorance and live in light and truth. The University is meant to give a practical and concrete shape to Sri Aurobindo's life-long effort.

The education imparted in the University will be based upon his teaching. As desired by him, the education will be given free to chosen students from all nations, religions and professions. The institution will have no commercial basis or aim.

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Maharaja of Patiala, Rajpramukh, P.E.P.S.U.
HON. SRI G. V. MAVALANKAR,
Speaker, Parliament of India.
HON. SRI HAREKRUSHNA MAHTAB,
Minister for Commerce and Industry, Govt. of
India.
HON. SRI K. M. MUNSHI,
Minister for Food and Agriculture, Govt. of India.
HON. SRI JAGJIVAN RAM,
Minister for Labour, Govt. of India.
HON. SRI N. V. GADGIL,
Minister for Works, Production and Supply, Govt.
of India.
HON. SRI R. R. DIWAKAR,
Minister of State for Information and Broad-
casting, Govt. of India.
HON. SRI SATYANARAYAN SINHA,
Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs,
Govt. of India.
MAJOR GENERAL HIMATSINHJI,
Dy. Minister for Defence, Govt. of India.
SRI M. THIRUMALA RAO,
Dy. Minister for Food and Agriculture, Govt. of
India.
SRI S. N. BURAGOHAJAN,
Dy. Minister for Works, Production and Supply,
Govt. of India.
SRI D. P. KARMARKAR,
Dy. Minister for Commerce and Industry, Govt.
of India.
SRI RAJ BAHADUR,
Dy. Minister for Communications, Govt. of India.
HON. PANDIT GOVIND BALLABH PANT,
Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh.
HON. DR. SRIKRISHNA SINHA,
Chief Minister, Bihar.
HON. SRI B. G. KHER,
Chief Minister, Bombay.
HON. SRI K. C. REDDY,
Chief Minister, Mysore.
HON. SRI U. N. DHEBAR,
Chief Minister, Saurashtra.
HON. SRI V. L. MEHTA,
Minister for Finance, Bombay.
HON. SRI MORARJI DESAI,
Minister for Home Affairs, Bombay.
HON. SRI DINKARRAO DESAI,
Minister for Civil Supplies and Law, Bombay.
HON. SRI B. GOPALA REDDY,
Minister for Finance, Madras.
HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM,
Minister for Public Works and Information,
Madras.
HON. SRI P. K. DESHMUKH,
Minister for Revenue, Madhya Pradesh.
HON. SRI NITYANANDA KANUNGO,
Minister for Home Affairs, Orissa.
HON. PANDIT LINGARAJ MISRA,
Minister for Education, Orissa.
HON. SRI K. D. MALAVIYA,
Minister for Development & Industries,
Uttar Pradesh.
HON. SRI C. B. GUPTA,
Minister for Health & Civil Supplies,
Uttar Pradesh.
HON. MR. JUSTICE TEJA SINGH,
Chief Justice, P.E.P.S.U.
HON. MR. JUSTICE S. K. DAS,
Patna.
HON. MR. JUSTICE S. C. CHATTERJI,
Patna.
HON. MR. JUSTICE C. P. SINHA,
Patna.
HON. MR. JUSTICE N. H. BHAGAVATI,
(Vice-Chancellor, Bombay University)
Bombay.
HON. MR. JUSTICE S. N. GUHA ROY,
Calcutta.
SRI DILSUKH RAM,
Commissioner for Sales Tax and Customs
Depts. Govt. of Hyderabad.
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DR. C. KUNHAN RAJA,
University of Tehran, (Iran.)
SRIMATI INDIRADEVI,
Maharani of Cooch Behar.

Vice-Chancellor, Saugor University.
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Vice-Chancellor, Annamalai University.
LT. COL. C. V. MAHAJAN,
Vice-Chancellor, Agra University.
LT. COL. C. M. ACHARYA,
Vice-Chancellor, Utkal University.
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Vice-Chancellor, Nagpur University.
SRI H. V. DIVETIA,
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NAWAB ALI YAVAR JUNG,
Vice-Chancellor, Osmania University.
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Vice-Chancellor, Jammu & Kashmir University.
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PANDIT GOVIND MALAVIYA,
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SRI RATHINDRANATH TAGORE,
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SRI HARIBHAU UPADHYAYA
DR. AMARNATH JHA
LT.-COL. S. SINHA,
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SRI PRANLAL DEVKARAN NANJEE
SRI CHATURBHUJAS CHIMANLAL
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SRI SATYENDRA PRASAD ROY,
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SRI RADHAKRISHAN KHAITAN
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DR. RADHABINOD PAL
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SRI DEVADAS GANDHI
SRI TUSHAR KANTI GHOSE
SRI HEMENDRA PRASAD GHOSE
SRI CHAPALAKANTA BHATTACHARJEE
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CHOWDHRI KRISHNA GOPAL DUTT
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Ex-Vice-President, Constituent Assembly of India.
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LORD ARUN SINHA
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SRI MANILAL NANAVATI
SRI BEHRAM N. KARANJIA
SRI RUSTOM MASANI
LADY RUSTOM MASANI